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THE ISSUE STATED.

SPEECH OF

HON. C. R. BUCKALEW,

AT DANVILLE, SATURDAY, SEP. 29, 1866.

Fellow citizens of Montour County:

THERE are two capital questions proper for discussion at this time by those who address the people in meetings such as this. These questions are, first, the restoration of the Union; and, second, the extension of the right of suffrage to the colored population of the United States. I shall pass all topics of minor importance and confine myself on this occasion to these; and I shall endeavor to speak to you with entire fairness while I speak briefly.

Gentlemen, in the month of December last the Thirty-ninth Congress convened in its first session under the provisions of the Constitution of the United States. A message was transmitted to the two Houses by the President, in the performance of a constitutional duty. In that message he communicated to the two Houses, and through them to the people of the United States, the political situation of the country, and his views upon public affairs and upon public policy. He found it necessary to detail at length, and he did it very ably, what had occurred between the date of the assassination of Mr. Lincoln in April 1865 and that time; that is, during the period in which he had exercised the office of President of the United States. He stated to the representatives of the people and of the States in Congress assembled, how the country stood at the time when he assumed the duties of his high office; he detailed the successive steps which he had taken with reference to the States of the South; he portrayed the existing condition of things; and finally he submitted to Congress the question of the admission of members from those States; and the submission of that question was in a peculiar form. It was not to the two Houses jointly; it was not to them in their collective and legislative capacity; but it was to each House separately and distinctly. His language was, "you fellow-citizens of the Senate, and you fellow-citizens of the House of Representatives, each of you for yourselves have charged upon you the duty of judging of the elections, returns, and qualifications of the members of your respective Houses."

Prior to the meeting of Congress the President had proceeded, in accordance with his convictions of public duty, to instigate the organization of what were called loyal governments in the States of the South which had seceded. He held those which had been concerned in the Rebellion as unlawful; that, inasmuch as they were hostile to the Government of the United States and had cast off all allegiance to the Constitution of our country, they were not to be regarded as legitimate and lawful institutions for purposes of local government even in the States where they were established. At his instance, then, upon the conclusion of the war, the inhabitants of those States proceeded to reorganize their local governments, and in reorganizing them they followed the advice which he gave them with reference to the form in which that reorganization should be made. He suggested to them that they should in their State Constitutions insert a provision for the permanent abolition of slavery in the Southern communities. They followed his advice and his opinion also, in putting in their State constitutions an express repudiation of the Rebel indebtedness as it is called; and in other respects they conformed to the views which the President held and expressed to them in connection with this process of reorganization.

At the time of the assembling of Congress all the southern States which had been engaged in the Rebellion were reorganized with the exception of two I think, Texas and Florida. Observe, that the proceeding of reorganization had been prosecuted thus far with the general assent of the people of the United States. No fact is more certain, none is better established than that there was a general acquiescence throughout the whole of the adhering States (by which term I mean those States which were represented in the Federal Government during the war and represented now) in this policy of the President connected with reorganization of government in the South. You all know that fact. And when the President communicated to Congress at the opening of the session an account of what he had done, is it not the fact that throughout all the adhering States, all the States of the North and of the West, there was a general approval of what he had done, a general popular assent to what he had caused to be done, or had instigated in the Southern country, a general approval of his conduct throughout? I doubt whether there ever was a message from a President of the United States to Congress which received more general and hearty assent and approval from the people of the United States than that message of Andrew Johnson, communicated to Congress in December 1865, received from them. I am speaking now to matter of fact within your own knowledge and to the point of time only to which I have alluded.

Then those States, reorganized, appeared before the respective Houses in the persons of representatives; members elected to the Senate appeared before the Senate claiming membership therein, and members elected to the House appeared at the bar of the House claiming membership there: and the question was directly raised upon their admission to seats in the respective Houses. The President submitted that question, as I have already explained, to the decision of each House for itself; and he did this in view of a very clear and explicit provision of the Constitution of the United States which declares that "each House shall be the judge of the elections, returns, and qualifications of its own members." This power is clear. This power is express. This power is exclusive; one House cannot interfere with a question of membership in the other House; and the two Houses together cannot act upon this subject because the Constitution has committed the decision of any case to the judgment of the particular House in which membership is claimed. There was delay, however, in the admission of Senators and Representatives. A little later, upon a motion submitted by my colleague, Mr. Cowan, a resolution was adopted by the Senate calling upon the President for information with reference to the existing condition of the Southern States. That resolution was answered by the President, and along with his reply came a very interesting communication from the Lieutenant-General of the armies of the United States, General Grant. The President in that answer to the Senate stated that the people of the South desired to be represented in Congress. He stated also that throughout those States which had been in hostility to us, which had levied war against us, there was a complete acquiesence in our authority and jurisdiction and that everywhere throughout them the people were peaceful and disposed to bear true allegiance to the Government of the United States for the future. And General Grant, who had been called upon for his opinion, responded in a very emphatic manner that in his judgment there was a general submission among the people of the South to the authority of the Constitution and Government of the United States, and that the people of those States in good faith desired to resume their places within the Republic and be subject to our Government.

This was the official information submitted to Congress by the President in his annual message, and in his reply to the resolution of the Senate early in the session. This was the action of the Executive Department of your Government, the one charged with the execution of the laws. Now what was done by Congress, the law-making power? What I have stated happened in December and January of last Winter, at the very beginning of the late session. That session continued for eight months and the two Houses adjourned recently, and the members returned to their homes. Now what was done by Congress during those eight months toward restoring the Union which had been broken by secession, and which had continued broken during the war? What was done by the Senate and House of Representatives respectively under the clear constitutional power which they possessed, toward restoring membership in their respective Houses from those States which had gone unrepresented so long? With the single exception of Tennessee, there was no admission of Senators or Representatives from those States during the eight months of the Congressional session, although the subject was one of repeated consideration in each House. There was no action by the majority in Congress toward restoring the Union in that vital particular, the representation of the people and of the States, except in the case of Tennessee, a tardy and exceptional proceeding which took place just before the adjournment.

Thus was an issue formed between the Executive and Legislative Departments of your Government. I have recalled to your memories what was done by the President, and done with the concurrence in opinion of the Lieutenant-General of our armies who had been more prominent than any other man in this country in subduing the Rebellion and who, better perhaps than any other man in the United States, was authorized and qualified to pronounce an opinion upon the military aspects at least of the future, to wit, upon the question whether it was safe to restore those States to the representation which they desired or not.

Then, beside pointing out what the Executive branch had done and how it stood, and what was its recommendation to Congress, I have called your attention to the attitude of Congress—an attitude of entire inaction, a policy of do-nothing during a session of eight months with reference to the whole of the eleven States save Tennessee. The two Houses of Congress adjourned without having discharged the duty imposed upon them by the Constitution of judging in their respective Houses the questions which arose upon the elections, returns, and qualifications of their own members. And hence complaint is made against the majority in Congress; for this they stand arraigned before the people of the United States; and I and others who differ with that Congressional majority in opinion, call for the judgment of the people upon that majority, for a judgment of disapproval and condemnation upon the men who compose it. We ask you who are really sovereigns in this country, who possess the ultimate power, that power above which there is none other upon earth—we call upon you to pronounce your opinion upon the attitude and conduct of the Congressional majority, to condemn those who constitute that majority, to select others in their stead, and to make the Legislative or Congressional branch of the Government in harmony with the Executive, thus restoring, throughout the whole Government of the United States, one spirit, one policy, one line of conduct, resulting in peace, in security, and in prosperity for the future.

That policy which has been so often spoken of, sometimes jeeringly as "my policy" when reference is made to the President, at other times and more properly as "the policy of restoration"—that policy is easily described. It is stated in a word; it does not require an elaborate argument to expound it. Its mere statement is sufficient to give the humblest man in the country possession of the whole subject so far as the affirmative is concerned. The policy of restoration is simply this: That the States and people that were severed from us, who became contumacious to our authority and resisted our jurisdiction, but who have laid down their arms and submitted to our power, shall be restored to their former position in the Union, entitled to all the rights which they formerly enjoyed, and bound by all the duties which were formerly imposed upon them by the Constitution and laws of the country. That is the whole of it. It is so simple and so plain that no man need mistake it, nor become embarrassed in attempting to comprehend it. In other words, and to state it in a different form, the policy of restoration is simply a proposition that the Constitution of the United States shall be restored in full force throughout the Republic, and that it shall have complete effect in every respect precisely as it had before the war broke out.

Why should this not take place? Why should we not be restored to the condition of things in which we were before the war? Why should not all the citizens of the United States be restored and re-instated in the position in which they stood before these troubles and be bound again (because this is the correlative of the other) by all the duties and obligations which before the war rested upon them? I propose to discuss tonight the answer which is made to this all-important and searching question; for the majority in Congress have their excuse for their delay in the work of restoration; they have their reason or their alleged reason for their conduct, and it is respectful to them and it is proper that the people should consider their answer before pronouncing judgment upon them.

I will not discuss the first branch of their answer as we get it, ordinarily, and which is, that the people of those States are not at heart willing to become subject to our government and to perform their duties under it. I am relieved from discussing that when I cite to you the opinion of your own chief Magistrate; I am relieved from that when I cite to you the opinion of General Grant and the opinion of General Sherman and of men of that description, whose opinions upon a question of this kind ought to be, if not conclusive, at least in the highest degree persuasive with the American people. We ought to accept their opinions upon the question of the safety of this thing for the future. Because their opinions have been pronounced and are before you, I am relieved from discussing that point.

But these gentlemen of the Congressional majority proceed to say that before the Union is restored there ought to be guaranties, there ought to be some conditions agreed to by the people who are to be restored in their civil and political rights. A great many guaranties have been suggested or mentioned. It depends upon the temper of men, what kind of guaranties they want; it depends somewhat on their past associations or mental constitution. Mr. Wendell Phillips would want a particular sort of guaranty, while a member of Congress from our own State, of the opposite party, would think a guaranty of a different sort would answer; and so there may be all sorts and all varieties of opinion on that subject when you come to apply the general doctrine. But I suppose I shall be told, and I may be fairly told, that in considering the guaranties as they call them, or the stipulations for the future, which are desired by the Congressional majority, I should take the resolution proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States which that majority passed through both Houses by a two-thirds vote, and which is now pending before the American people for their consideration. I grant you this is a fair statement upon the point in question. If I am referred to that resolution of amendment as the platform of the Congressional majority, as the ground upon which they stand in resisting representation in the Senate and in the House, although I shall not admit that this answer even if well made would justify the two Houses in refusing to perform their Constitutional duty of acting upon the question of membership in each House, I will yet agree that if that resolution of amendment be necessary and be wise and satisfactory in its provisions, there will be a considerable degree of excuse; that, although a justification will not be made out for the Congressional majority there will be, to some extent, an excuse established for them. Now, let us consider for a short time that resolution proposing amendments to the Constitution of the United States. It has been very little debated; it is now perhaps but partially and imperfectly understood in the county, and if I were to judge of that amendment by the description which I have had of it from the stump in discourses to which I have listened, I am confident I should form a very incorrect opinion upon it.

In the first place, observe, gentlemen, in how objectionable a manner that resolution of amendment is submitted. We have a provision in the Constitution of Pennsylvania that when the Legislature submits amendments of our State Constitution to the people for adoption or rejection, they shall submit each amendment separately and distinctly; and why? In order that the people may vote for or against each, upon its own merits, without reference to the rest, so that the people may be enabled to adopt one amendment which may be good and reject another which may be bad at the same time; in order that they may discriminate between what they may deem good and what they may deem evil in propositions submitted for their judgment and approval, in order that only what they approve fully may be incorporated in the fundamental law of the State. This is a very wise provision in our State Constitution. But you will observe that these Congressional Constitution-makers, or tinkers, as they have been perhaps very impertinently called, do not proceed as the Legislature of Pennsylvania must proceed in submitting amendments. They do not submit amendments separately, each upon its own merits. They have framed and adopted a resolution proposing amendments for adoption by the States in which there are four or five propositions of amendment grouped together, lumped together, combined, and to be acted on as if they were one proposition. It is to be adopted in whole or rejected in whole. I think this is a very unfair mode of submitting Constitutional amendments to the people of the United States; I think it is very objectionable. You see what alternative is presented to you in acting upon a resolution of this sort, in your respective State Legislatures. You must adopt everything that is in the resolution of amendment, although a large part of it may be objectionable to you, in order to get one good thing which may be in it; and you are obliged to reject a great many good things that may be in it if you have made up your minds to reject any one thing which is bad. There is no discrimination, there is no choice left to the people, no volition. It is unfair; I say that upon the very face of this proceeding that Resolution of the Congressional majority ought to stand condemned by the people, because it is not a fair mode of amending the Constitution of the United States.

But if we proceed to take up the different propositions of amenendment embodied in the one resolution and consider them separately, I think the eulogiums which you have probably heard passed upon that resolution will be found entirely unwarranted. There is a proposition there that neither the United States nor any State shall ever assume or pay any portion of the Rebel debt. Well, why was that put in? It was to catch votes for other parts of the resolution, and to make the whole pass the ordeal of ratification. Was it put in for any practical purpose, any useful purpose, any necessary purpose? No, just consider it. Follow me for a few moments while I depict the uselessness of that clause of the amendment. If that appear you must conclude that it was put in simply to carry the others by giving an odor of popularity to the whole resolution.

In the first place, be it remembered, that the Confederate States negotiated most of their debt abroad, only a small portion of it at home because there was not capital among their own people. The great mass of the securities issued for that debt upon their face were made payable after the recognition of Confederate independence by the Government of the United States. That is, men in France and Great Britain loaned money to the so-called Confederate Government, and agreed to take their pay at the expiration of a certain length of time, I think one year, after the United States (our own Government), should recognize the South as an independent power. Well, gentlemen, the Government of the United States has not recognized Confederate independence; Confederate independence is not a fact; Confederate independence is not even a possibility. Our brave men upon the land who went into the military service, and our brave men upon the ocean who carried our flag, have rendered the day of payment for the Confederate indebtedness impossible. Does any man here believe it will ever arrive? If I were to put the question separately and distinctly (as Constitutional amendments ought to be), to each individual present in a private discourse, he would laugh in my face, and he would doubt my sanity in asking so foolish a question.

Thus you see the Confederate creditors hold securities which are payable at no time; which are not due now, and which they and the whole world know will never become due. Is there any necessity then for guarding against the payment of that debt? Are men apt to pay their debts before they are due? They are often dilatory in their payment even after they become due, and hence we have to have legal machinery to enforce the collection of debts which have matured and which are just and recognized by the law of the land.

But in addition to this, gentlemen, you will remember that this recently much abused man who is President of the United States, suggested to the Southern people in the reorganization of their State Governments, that they should expressly repudiate this rebel indebtedness. He held that the whole of it was illegal because the whole Rebellion was illegal. He held that their State governments were illegal for the same reason because they were organized for the purposes of the war. Following out logically his own doctrines, he held, therefore, that this Rebel debt was in itself illegal and utterly void, and he recommended provisions to be put into the Southern Constitution that it should never be assumed or paid in order to terminate and foreclose forever all debate and all question on the subject. State after State of the South did this. In the reorganization of their State governments the first step was the formation of new State constitutions, and in every Southern constitution the whole of the Confederate or Rebel indebtedness was expressly repudiated and its payment forever forbidden. This was the solemn act of the whole population of the South acting in their sovereign capacity in the formation of new fundamental laws for themselves.

Let me call your attention to one other point and then I shall pass from this topic. I have already suggested to you that according to your experience and mine there is very often difficulty in obtaining the payment of just indebtedness. We have sheriffs, and constables, and courts, and legal process for the purpose of enforcing good faith among our people as to debts which are legal in their origin and unquestionably due from the debtor to the creditor, against the payment of which there is no legal bar or impediment—debts which are just and lawful in the fullest sense of those terms. Now how ridiculous and absurd it is to suppose that the time can ever come when the people even of the South themselves would willingly assume these rejected obligations and render themselves liable to their payment! And how much more unreasonable and unlikely it is that the people of the United States should assume and pay any portion of a debt which was contracted in contempt of their authority, against their interests, in flagrant violation of the Constitution of the United States, and in violation of all considerations of propriety and legality as held by us!

Understand, then, here is a debt not due and which can never become due; a debt repudiated by Constitutional provision in every State concerned; a debt which in itself was a speculative one because the foreign creditors loaned their money somewhat as a gambler would put up a stake. They loaned their money as a sort of bet on the issue of the war. For a very small sum of money loaned to the Confederacy they obtained securities for a considerable amount, say five dollars for one. If the Confederacy triumphed in the war and the United States should recognize their independence, these creditors would make enormous fortunes upon small sums loaned, while on the other hand if the Confederacy failed in the war the time of payment would never arrive and they would lose their money. It was a gambling transaction; if the gamblers were fortunate their gains were to be large, but if the chances of war turned out to be against them, the amount loaned was to be a total loss. So the world will regard this question in all future time. So it will be regarded in the United States North and South. So it will be regarded in Europe. These creditors bet upon the war and they lost their stakes. Nobody North or South would ever think of paying that debt. Besides, there are all necessary guaranties against its ever being paid—guaranties in human nature itself, that our people never will pay a debt so odious, so illegal, always undue, and in which there are no equities on behalf of the creditor, nothing upon which he can appeal to our good faith. He stands in the attitude of a gambler, instead of a creditor as to us. His securities are worthless upon their very face. He has no reason, no shadow of justice in his claim, and human nature itself would everlastingly rise up in all parts of the Union against the payment of any portion of it. And yet these Constitutional tinkers propose gravely that we should pause in this work of restoration, of bringing our country and our States together, of becoming again united and peaceful and harmonious from Ocean to Ocean, until we say in the fundamental law that we will not do what is morally impossible, what no reasonable man in the whole country believes ever will be done—pay this illegal, irregular and odious debt contracted by our enemies in the prosecution of hostilities against us,

Now why was that put into the resolution of amendment? It was to catch ignorant and silly people, to make men who do not reflect much, think that there was something valuable here, some great security against mischief in the future. It was put in for that reason, to leaven the mass of amendments, to give an odor of popularity and of merit to the whole mass; and yet you see how absurd, ridiculous and unnecessary this clause of amendment is!

Then there is another amendment which is, if possible, more absurd than this, and closely allied to it. What is that? When we were engaged in this war, which was a gigantic affair, it taxed our energies to the utmost. It took from our side our brothers and relatives and consigned them to suffering, and many of them to death. It mortgaged our property enormously. It brought great evil and great distress upon us. In the hour of our extremity, when we were in want of means, when we could not command resources at the moment for the prosecution of our great work of restoring the Union, what did we do? We went to men who had money in our own country and abroad and we borrowed the means by which we paid our soldiers upon the land and our sailors upon the ocean, the means with which we purchased our supplies to support our armies, the means that enabled us to carry on the civil administration of the Government, in short, to work this engine of government with energy and with power and to strike heavy and powerful blows against the enemy who was resisting us and scouting our jurisdiction and power over the Southern portion of the Republic. We borrowed this money and we did not say to the creditor that we would pay him when Confederate independence should be acknowled, or that we would pay when the Confederacy should be subdued. We said we would pay at all events at a fixed day, and in the meantime we would pay a certain rate of interest either in paper or in coin. This is what we said, and by the obligations arising out of this contract we are most solemnly bound. I say gentlemen, that neither now nor at any future time in this country will there be any considerable number of men hardy enough and base enough to impeach or deny the obligation of the Government and people of the United States to those who loaned them the means with which they saved the unity of the Republic. There will never be any considerable number of such persons in this country. Their number never will be great or formidable, and the apprehension that they will be numerous or formidable need not disturb any one's mind.

But what security has the public creditor for the honest payment of his obligation by us? There is only one—the public faith. If the people of the United States could be base and wicked enough to unite together and resist the payment of the debt, it never could be collected. The creditor can rely only on the good faith of the people of the United States which was pledged to him when he loaned his money. That pledge was given in the form of a contract reduced to writing or printed at the time, and executed by the appropriate public officers of the Government of the United States, who for the time being represented the people of the United States in the transaction. Those who want to amend the Constitution of the United States, propose to put into the Constitution a provision that this debt shall be paid. Now what advantage is that to the creditor? Does that add any obligation which is valuable to him? Does that give to him any security which he does not already possess? What is that but pledging the public faith in a particular way that this debt shall be paid? Inasmuch as that public faith is already pledged and in the most solemn manner and under all the securities and forms of law, it is impossible by any device which can be adopted to render that debt more sacred or its payment more secure and certain than it is. Why then was this put into the Resolution? It was put in to please and to catch the eye of those thousands and thousands of people in the country who hold these securities; it was to impress them with the silly, with the idle conviction that their debt would be more secure by the adoption of such an amendment, whereas in point of fact that amendment would not add in the slightest degree either to the sacredness or to the security of the debt.

There is another provision in this resolution of amendment which provides that any person who at any time held an office which involved an oath to support the Constitution of the United States, and who may have engaged in the Rebellion in any way whatever, shall never hold any office, civil or military, under the United States or under any State for all future time. This prohibition is universal; it strikes without discrimination and without limitation the whole class of persons against whom it is directed, and there is only one possibility of its mitigation, and that is by a two-thirds vote of both Houses of Congress removing such disability either in a particular case or generally. In other words, this proposed amendment is one of disfranchisement from all office of all persons who may have been engaged in the Rebellion, who were prominent enough previously to have held any office of consequence whether State or Federal, but to Congress is given a dispensing power which may be exercised by two thirds of both Houses upon grounds of favoritism, partiality, party interest, or any other which shall be agreeable to their pleasure or their interests.

I confess that this clause in the resolution of amendment appeared to me, at first reading, to have been inserted with a special object. And what was that? To defeat the whole Resolution, to prevent its acceptance by three-fourths of the States. Of course it is not likely that any State in the South will adopt an amendment of that description. Observe, it is not merely a disfranchisement from holding office under the Government of the United States. There might be some reason for a provision of that kind, at any rate for a temporary one; but it is to prohibit all of the class of persons in question from holding any office under their own States; so that out of all the enormous number of men included in that amendment it would be impossible in any Southern community to select one as Constable or Justice of the Peace, or to fill any other State office without the consent of a two-thirds majority in Congress! What an inconvenience every where, what a sweeping disfranchisement, and how unnecessary in its extent. This sort of war against State Magistrates and State Constables could not, of course, have been sincerely proposed as a provision of the Constitution of the United States.

The people of the United States have no interest in interfering in the local or municipal affairs of Southern States; but you observe that a provision of this kind would surely prevent this amendment from being adopted by those States. It is annoying to them; it interferes with them in their own local neighborhood concerns down to the small precincts into which their communities are divided, and it disfranchises them from holding and exercising all local employment which involves an oath of fealty to the Constitution of the United States, without reference to any interest which the Government or people of the United States may have in the question. It appears as if it was intended to make the amendment so offensive by reason of its extent, that the States of the South would not adopt it, and that its defeat should thus be insured. We can conceive a motive for a policy of this kind, for so long as the amendment is not adopted the Congressional majority can complain against the people of the South, that they do not agree to what was proposed, and they can hold this question open and retain political power for themselves in the Government of the United States by continuing the existing condition of things.

There is another clause of the amendment which appears intended to put into the fundamental law some of the provisions of what is called the Civil Rights Bill. I shall not discuss that clause of the amendment, because it was spoken to on a former occasion at this place by Mr. Clymer when he was here and addressed you as the candidate of one of our great parties, for the office of Governor. I pass on to the remaining provision in this resolution of Constitutional amendment, and the last one. That provision is this, in effect—if I do not cite the exact words, I cite the substance accurately—That wherever in any State there shall be a disfranchisement of males above twenty-one years of age, on account of race or color, from the elective franchise, the whole population in that State of such race or color shall be excluded from computation in assigning to such State representatives in the Congress of the United States.

What is meant by this clause? It is the vital one in the amendment. We may consider all the others as secondary and subordinate to it, as quite inferior in importance, and perhaps we are entitled to say that all the other amendments contained in the Resolution (except, perhaps, the one just examined) were incorporated into it in order to carry this one which relates to the right of suffrage in the several States. Described, in short, what is this proposition? It is, that whenever any State shall refuse to permit Negroes or Asiatics within her limits to exercise the right of suffrage, she shall lose a portion of her political power in the Government of the United States; but if she permit her negroes to vote she shall have representation exactly as she has it now under the Constitution as our fathers made it and sent it down to us to be our frame of Government as well as theirs. If we refuse to permit the negro population of the State to vote we are to be shorn of a portion of our power, we are to sink in political consequence in the Government of the United States, and to take such rank only as we can obtain by virtue of our white population, the male members of which we *do* permit to vote at our popular elections.

You see, gentlemen, that the State which adopts negro suffrage is to enjoy fully and entirely her present Constitutional power in the Government of the United States, and the State which refuses negro suffrage is to be punished; yes, the lash is to be applied to her people, she is to be scourged as a culprit before the fundamental law of the United States. This, then, is a proposition of punishment to those States the freemen of which, in the exercise of their impartial judgment, shall refuse to permit their ballot-boxes to be contaminated and polluted and degraded and corrupted by suffrage by those who are unfit, grossly and notoriously unfit, to exercise it, and who, if they do exercise it, will become the instruments of the man of money, of the man of passion, and of the man of intrigue. The demagogues of the land, and the rich men of the land, will have cast to them the opportunity of controlling your elections, and of corrupting and polluting them beyond any example which our history affords.

I say, then, that the leading and principal provision of the resolution is intended to force negro suffrage throughout the United States upon every State which would otherwise refuse it. It is intended as the entering wedge by which the introduction of negro suffrage to the ballot-boxes of the country shall be secured, and by which all the results which I have indicated may be brought upon the people of the United States.

Gentlemen, in the face of this exami-