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VERY LATEST NEWS BY TELEGRAPH.

THE PEACE QUESTION.

Return of the President and Secretary Seward.

THE NEGOTIATIONS PRONOUNCED A TOTAL FAILURE.

Particulars of the Conference Unknown.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4.—President Lincoln and Secretary Seward arrived here from Fortress Monroe this morning. They had an informal conference with Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell on board the steamer River Queen. The conference occupied four hours, and resulted in no change of the opinions of the Government or of the rebels.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4.—Much surprise was occasioned this morning by the early return of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward. It was not long before many conflicting rumors were circulated regarding the result of their mission. The antagonistic positions of the two Governments were known on the return of Mr. Blair to Richmond; one desiring peace on the basis of unconditional submission to the Union and the other on the basis of separate independence and recognition. It was clear that the rebels, themselves, did not anticipate ready compliance with their demands while there was unanimous desire on the part of the President to do all that was compatible with honor and public expediency, in promises and who evinced not a little anxiety to induce accommodation.

It was briefly announced by telegraph this morning that President Lincoln and Secretary Seward had returned to Washington after a conference with the rebel commissioners, which resulted in no change of the attitude of the Government or of the rebels.

Private telegrams have since been received making enquiry as to the truth of this statement, because the whole truth had not been stated with regard to prospective and immediate results from Richmond. Now that brief telegram sent over the wires this morning is reliable and it was obtained from the best authority. No details have yet been made known nor is it probable that they will transpire; the President and Secretary Seward being the only parties present on our side, and the conference being entirely informal, more in the character of a general conversation to elicit the views of all who composed it than grave diplomatic discussion. Beyond this, whatever may be said, must be mere speculation.

The consultation did not result in any agreement, the main feature, involving the question of separation of and submission to, having been left undecided. Of course those of a minor character could have no existence and so the parties separated. As far as can be ascertained nothing was said as to a future meeting and the time seems to be left precisely where it was before the conference.

There is no verification of the report circulating to-day that they had agreed upon a general exchange of prisoners.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5—It is difficult to procure details concerning the recent conference between the President and Secretary of State and the rebel commissioners, but it is reported that the President throughout the conversation insisted that he should continue the prosecution of the war on the principle heretofore declared, namely, of compelling obedience to the Constitution and on the basis of union, and admitting no parley on these terms. With him there was to be no deviation from this course; so the commissioners were left in no doubt, whatever, on this material point. The conversation was conducted in the most courteous and respectful manner, and the commissioners returned to Richmond thoroughly understanding the views expressed by the President; therefore, if anything further is to be said on this subject, it must come from the Confederates themselves. As heretofore stated, there was no agreement upon any point at issue.

It is confidently asserted by intimate friends of the President, that no concession or compromise was made by him in the least degree of yielding his position as above stated, and which he has in public and private communications maintained.

Whatever may be the speculations as to the peace movement in future, it is certain that there will be no attempts in the meanwhile in our military operations, but that an effort will be made to prosecute the war with additional vigor, so that our success may produce an early peace.

NEW YORK, Jan. 5.—The morning papers throw no new light upon the negotiations between Lincoln, Seward and the rebel commissioners. The interview lasted sixteen hours, according to the *Herald's* correspondent. The President is reported to have proposed to Messrs. Stephens, Hunter and Campbell that if they would propose to promise a return of their states to the Union he was ready to waive all minor questions, but as chief magistrate of the nation, sworn to maintain the Union, he could take no consideration on terms which insisted its division. This grand point the rebels confessed they did not feel authorized to decide; and so the negotiation ended.

The conference took place entirely on board one of the steamers which were anchored in Hampton Roads, where the negotiators could not be interrupted in their proceedings. It was conducted in a most cordial and frank manner on both sides, but, on the part of Mr. Lincoln, all dignity, with equal firmness. Great anxiety is felt to hear from Richmond.

NEW YORK, Feb. 5.—*The Herald*, this morning, thinks the rebel peace mission will prove a stepping-stone to their submission to the Union. It predicts that peace will come from Lee, while Jeff. Davis, driven out of Richmond, is flying for some other temporary place of refuge.

The *Herald's* Washington letter says that Mr. Blair received in Richmond that a majority there have a bitter feeling against France and England and prefer a union with the United States. Only those who have been benefited by blockade running and illegitimate trade, with Europe have any desire to form an alliance with France; the majority are in favor of uniting with the North. This desire was manifested by the soldiers cheering when they saw the Peace Commissioners pass through. It is certain that a large majority prefer reunion, provided they can have it without too degrading terms and can be assured that the radical measures of confiscation, &c., will not be rigidly enforced.

The precise nature of the propositions brought by Mr. Stephens and his associates has not fully transpired, but the fact must be borne in mind that the President, through Mr. Blair, refused to receive or treat commissioners, except upon the basis of a re-union and the abolition of slavery. Mr. Lincoln's departure cannot be interpreted in any other way but that Jeff. Davis is willing to take the responsibility of commencing a negotiation on the basis of re-union.

BALTIMORE, Feb. 4.—A special dispatch to the Baltimore *American* from Annapolis, after announcing the arrival there of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward, says that it was rumored on board the steamer which brought them, that an armistice of thirty days would take place to settle our difficulties. This is, of course, all rumor.

The *Post's* Washington special says: Mr. Seward declares, without reserve, that the peace negotiations were a total failure. There are indications that peace will speedily be won by war. Decisive news is expected from Sherman early next week.

FROM THE ARMY OF THE JAMES.

Movements of the Rebel Fleet.

LIVELY ENGAGEMENT REPORTED.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5.—A letter from the Army of the James, dated Friday night, says. It is reported that the rebel fleet started down the river early this morning, but after proceeding a short distance, turned back and anchored in their old position. It is thought they were in apprehension of not getting back as safely as they did before, if they had attempted to go as far as they did on that occasion.

A good deal of firing has been heard in the direction of Petersburg. There was a report that it was caused by some new mortars which were practicing on Petersburg, while another represented that there was an engagement of a lively character between the two lines near the Appomattox. The firing ceased at about five o'clock in the afternoon.

Victory Over the Imperialists in Mexico.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4.—The *Post* says: There are rumors that the forces of Juarez have achieved a victory over the imperialists in Southern Mexico, and have captured an important city, but no particulars are yet known. These rumors have the countenance of the Mexican Minister at Washington.

Illinois Black Laws Checked.

CHICAGO, Feb. 4.—The bill repealing the Black Laws, passed the House to-day, and had previously passed the Senate.

FROM FORT FISHER AND WILMINGTON HEAD.

Gen. Sherman's Latest Movements.

THE ARMY ADVANCING VICTORIOUSLY.

Union Men Captured in Florida.

PARTICULARS OF THE LOSS OF THE PATAPSCO AND DAI CHING.

PORTRESS MONROE, Feb. 2.—The steamer Governor Chase arrived here last evening from Fort Fisher, with the mails and dispatches from our army operating against Wilmington.

Nothing had transpired in the movements of General Terry's army.

The steamer George Leavey arrived here today from Hilton Head with Major Anderson, bearer of important dispatches from General Sherman. Sherman's forces were still advancing victoriously into the very heart of South Carolina, with every prospect of striking a disastrous blow on the rebel forces concentrated in the vicinity of Charleston.

NEW YORK, Feb. 5.—The *Herald's* correspondence from Sherman's army describes the opening of the new campaign. The left wing of the army under Gen. Sherman had arrived at Sisters Ferry, on the Savannah river, fifty miles above the city of Savannah, without meeting any opposition whatever from the enemy. Two divisions of the 20th corps which struck out for that point through the State of South Carolina, had considerable difficulty getting through the swamps. The other troops which marched directly up the Georgia bank of the river, had no such embarrassments to contend with. On the 20th all of Slocum's men were at Sisters Ferry, and supplies were being rapidly received. The right wing of the army is operating in a better country for marching than the left, and at some distance from it, but communication between the two is kept up.

One correspondent states that Gen. Sherman prophesies stirring up South Carolina at the rate of twenty miles a day.

Port Royal papers give full particulars of the loss of the Mantic, Patapsco and the Gunboat Dai Ching, already recorded. The Patapsco struck in the harbor of Charleston on the night of the 17th of last month, by one of the rebel torpedoes. She went down in twenty seconds after she was struck, and 60 persons on board of her were drowned, 34 being saved.

The Dai Ching got aground on the Combahee river, South Carolina, on the 20th ult., and after maintaining a very gallant fight with the rebel fort for some hours, and it becoming apparent to her officers that she could not be got up, she was burned. Her officers and crew, excepting four, succeeded in escaping. A few hours previous to the accident which befel her the Dai Ching captured the blockade runner Coquette, from Charleston for Nassau, with a cargo of cotton.

NEW YORK, Feb. 5.—A letter from the Department of the South to the *Times*, dated the 1st, states that a company of the 4th Massachusetts cavalry, under Lt. Col. Bennet, of Gen. Hatch's staff, made a raid last week on the town of Gainesville, 10 miles from the Charleston and Savannah railroad and 11 from Grahamville. Arrived in the Court House, jail and one or two other buildings, they returned to Pocotaligo, accompanied with the Court House seal, a number of Beaufort county records, at the loss of which the few inhabitants of the place were especially grieved. Nearly all of the documents destroyed were of a recent date.

A few days before our troops entered the place, a squad of the rebel Wheeler's men had paid the same place a brief visit, and made themselves extremely odious among the townspeople, by taking all the cattle, chickens, hogs, and such like property, that they could lay hands on.

The same letter states that a steamer recently in from Florida ports, brings the news of the capture of a portion of the 75th Ohio regiment, stationed at Jacksonville. On last Thursday, forty men in command of a Captain, left Jacksonville and proceeded about fifteen miles in the direction of Baldwin, their object being to assist a resident family in removing themselves and household goods to within our lines. They reached the house without meeting the enemy, and while engaged in loading the wagons, were surrounded by four hundred mounted rebels. Our men fled to the woods which they were closely followed by the rebels. The result was that only fifteen of our men, including the Captain, succeeded in getting back to the Union lines. From the statement of an officer who recently left Jacksonville, it appears that the whole affair was made up by the party whom it was sought to rescue.

NEW YORK, Feb. 5.—The *Herald's* correspondent at Sisters' Ferry, of January 30th, says: In coming up the country from Savannah to Sisters' Ferry for fifty miles considerable forage was found, but chickens, turkeys, beef cattle and sweet potatoes were scarce. The foraging parties pursued entirely a different course from that followed during the march from Atlanta. Every families were permitted to retain possession enough to support them. No houses were burned, and the troops generally conducted themselves towards the contiguous to a friendly manner. It is feared, the South Carolina people will have more cause to complain.

NEW YORK, Feb. 5.—The *Tribune's* Fort Fisher letter of the 30th says: In the recent interview with the rebels by flag of truce the latter were eager to learn everything possible concerning Blair's mission to Richmond.

The rebels are holding a fortified line from Cape Fear river to the ocean. The central portion of the Peninsula is swampy and impracticable for marching troops over it. The only background lies in sandy strips along the river and ocean shores within the reach of the gunboats. On the river side the light draught gunboats have worked their way up through within two and a half miles of Fort Anderson, which is, apparently, a very strong work located on the West bank nearly opposite our infantry advance line on the Peninsula side. Its rear work commands a third to a half mile of ground, and near it are several smaller works.

FRIGHTFUL RAILROAD ACCIDENT.

Ten or Twelve Lives Lost.

SEVERAL PASSENGERS BURNT TO DEATH.

CINCINNATI, Feb. 4.—A bad accident occurred on the Marietta and Cincinnati Railroad at Lee's Creek bridge, sixty miles from Cincinnati, this morning. The middle pier of the bridge was carried away during the night by the gorging of the ice and high water, leaving the bridge standing. The accommodation train, consisting of one baggage and two passenger cars, reached the centre of the bridge when it gave way, precipitating the train into the creek, a distance of fifty feet. Ten or twelve lives were lost besides a number seriously injured. The rear car fell on its end and took fire. Several passengers were burned to death.

The eastern express train on the Central Ohio Road ran off the track near Newark, this morning, throwing the cars down an embankment. No one seriously injured.

Negotiations for Exchange of Prisoners—More Vigorous War Policy Indicated.

NEW-YORK, Feb. 4.—The *Commercial's* Washington special says: The Secretary of War was informed yesterday that General Grant contemplated negotiations with the enemy for a general exchange of prisoners, at the rate of three thousand per month, which is as fast as the rebels can deliver them.

The indications are that a more vigorous war policy will now be adopted.

The Cabinet was called together to-day, and doubtless had the result of the President's visit to Fortress Monroe laid before them.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4.—It is said that the President and Mr. Seward have agreed upon a general exchange of prisoners, which will forthwith take place.

From Before Richmond.

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF POTOMAC, Feb. 4.—All the hospitals in the field were cleared a day or two since, the inmates being sent to City Point general hospital, where they could receive more care and be in better quarters. This change, no doubt, gave rise to the various rumors of an intended forward movement.

Deserters who came in to-day report the return to our front of the troops recently sent to North Carolina to meet a Union force said to be marching on Weldon.

The rebels in front of Petersburg have been very jubilant for a day or two, indulging in frequent cheering but on what account is not known here.

Col. Biggles, one of the oldest officers in the army, has been assigned to duty as Assistant Adjutant General at these headquarters.

The Electoral Vote.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5.—Both Houses of Congress have agreed to the joint resolution that the electoral votes of the States of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Tennessee shall not be counted next Wednesday for President and Vice President of the United States. This is placed on the ground that none of them were in a condition to vote on the 8th of November last.

Rebels Burning Cotton at Washington.

PEOPLE OF RICHMOND THREATENED WITH STARVATION.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4.—The *Herald's* Army of Potomac special says: There can be no mistaking the fact of a widespread desire and expectation in Lee's army that they have fought their last battle, and that within a short though indefinite time terms of peace will be agreed upon, their military organizations disbanded and the men permitted to return to their homes.

The *Herald's* Fort Fisher letter of the 30th says that for two days vast volumes of black smoke have been rising in the direction of Wilmington. The impression prevails that the rebels are burning the cotton which is known to be accumulated there.

A reconnaissance on land and water made this evening failed to disclose any diminution of the rebel strength in our front.

A Fortress Monroe letter says: According to the stories of deserters from the enemy the damage to the Danville road threatens to become more serious. They say there were only three weeks supplies in Richmond at the time of the accident, and famine is threatened. The Danville road is the only one that carries supplies to Lee's army to any extent, and with its loss the army must very soon suffer for provisions. The canaly back of Richmond is filled with trains destroying rapidly. Even the cavalry have been stripped of their horses to facilitate the transportation, and all rations that can be brought into the city are needed for the army. Markets are completely denuded of all provisions, and everything eatable commands fabulous prices. Unless something can be done soon the people of Richmond will starve.

Deserters also report that Lee is to go South this self for the purpose of leading the forces operating against Sherman and say that Davis orders that Sherman must be defeated by all means.

Late Rebel News.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4.—The Richmond *Whig*, of the 2d, says: General Robert E. Lee was yesterday confirmed by the Senate as Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the Confederate States.

Gen. Beauregard, T. S. Pinney, John Slidell, The mayor of Lexington and Gen. Gardner, and Governor of Georgia, addressed a large and enthusiastic audience at the Seat of the Federal Judiciary, on the subject of the prosecution of the war on the same side to an have at a future date.

Petersburg, Jan. 31—All the movements of the enemy indicate that Angus's and Beckith's ville are their points of destination. The 20th name corps resembles Robertsville. This place is about five hundred miles above Savannah and fifty miles from Charleston.

A heavy force of infantry, artillery and cavalry is reported as encamped near the junction of the Sadlerville and the old Union Road. This force is said to consist of the 10th and 18th army corps.

Yesterday morning the enemy advanced in considerable force of infantry and artillery from White's Point, and drove in our skirmish line three miles to King's creek. Our infantry line shortly advanced and drove the enemy back to White's Point, recrossing the Nottoway bridge. Since then a lull has been at that point.

There is no sign of a demonstration on our part. Yesterday the rebels burned the rest of a short portion of the bridge over the Stony Creek, but without result.

It is reported that they burned Meherrin, on the Meherrin. This village is five miles Northwest of Hicksford.

NEW YORK, Jan. 5.—The Richmond *Whig* says Gen. Lee's nomination to General-in-chief was proposed last week at the War Department in the office of the President. The delay in sending it to the Senate arises from the President's inability to sign the commission, in consequence of a severe attack of neuralgia in the right arm and hand.

The *Sentinel* calls attention to an appeal of Gen. Lee urging the Governors of the Confederate States officers, of all arms and cavalry equipments in the hands of citizens.

The *Dispatch* says a committee of the North Carolina legislature met in secret session last Friday.

Gov. Brown has convened the legislature of Georgia in extra session. They meet at Macon on the 6th of February.

The Richmond *Examiner* declares that Sherman's movement is now the paramount interest of the military situation. It is publicly rumored that Sherman will strike for Augusta and Branchville.

The Richmond *Examiner* has an article upon the urgent necessity of filling up the rebel armies, and in which it thinks neither peace nor negotiation will settle all difficulties, and proposes to end the war without the aid of Peace Commissioners and without alliance with Napoleon.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5.—From Richmond papers of the 3d inst. the following items of Southern news are gleaned: It is stated on good authority that Beauregard had reached Augusta and taken charge of affairs in that vicinity.

The Petersburg *Express* of the 3d says that preparations for the passage of the Commissioners through the lines on Thursday last, were delayed one address on account of a heavy fog, which rendered it impossible to see a musket, but to depend on the sound of the feet.

The rebel gunboats ascended the Chowan river toward Weldon, and to have been abandoned before they accomplished anything.

Several days since a party of Yankees landed at Sheafe's Farm, on the lower James, and destroyed all the forage on the farm, twenty planks, stealing and killing the stock, destroying all the valuable farm machinery, and burning and carrying off his large crops of grain and provisions. On Saturday evening last a party of fifty Yankees cavalry were three miles west of Prentsville.

Everything below Wilmington is quiet, says the *Journal*. No change in the position of the enemy's land or sea forces.

The weather is very cold.

Gen. Lee is said to have remarked that he saw and appreciated the difficulties surrounding us, but he was hopeful and confident that any compromise now would procure but a temporary armistice, and would be an unmanly speaking from our present duties, and entailing upon our children ills which we should meet and overcome.

Sherman's army is reported to be burning all the goods and houses along the line of march. Prisoners taken vary in their statements as to Sherman's destination.

An expedition, 15,000 strong, was reported sitting out at New Orleans, to be loaded at Pascagoula. The intended destination is supposed to be Mobile.

The Richmond *Examiner* of the 3d, says: On the whole, we believe the Confederacy has given up the idea of making a present of itself to England, France and Spain, and that however willing we might be to give up slavery as the price of independence, there is no more talk of offering that as a bribe to some foreign power, in order to induce it to do for us what we should prefer to do and be able to do for ourselves. In short, the country has recovered from its temporary nervous affection, brought about by the failure of Hood's campaign and the capture of Savannah, and again looks calmly at the situation, which is found to be encouraging after all.

NEW YORK, Feb. 5.—Richmond papers, in announcing the confirmation of Lee's appointment as General-in-Chief, says that he will remain in the field with the army around Richmond. He has published an appeal for arms, and calls for the delivery to the authorities of all in the hands of citizens.

Gen. Breckenridge is expected to assume the position of Secretary of War to-morrow.

They have a story in Richmond that troops from Thomas' army to reinforce Gen. Grant in front of the rebel capital, have recently passed over the Baltimore & Ohio railroad.

A committee of the North Carolina Legislature recently had a conference with Jeff Davis. It is said they urged a more vigorous prosecution of the war.

An Atlanta correspondent of the Richmond *Sentinel* says, that it will require several months yet to rebuild the railroads in Georgia that Sherman destroyed. It also says that it is folly to attempt to dispute the fact that in North Carolina, Georgia and South Carolina, there is a wide-spread disaffection, which, if not timely checked, threatens to produce the greatest disasters.

Gov. Brown has called an extra session of the Legislature, to meet on Wednesday next.

Gold Advanced--100 Guns Fired.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4.—The gold market, on receipt of the news of the return of President Lincoln and Secretary Seward, became stronger, with an upward tendency, opening at 210; it fell to 208, but under the news, advanced to 210½.

At noon, to-day, one hundred guns were fired in City Hall Park, in honor of the ratification, by the State Legislature, of the amendment to the Constitution, abolishing slavery.

Maj. Gen. Pope.

ST. LOUIS, Feb. 4.—Major-General John Pope arrived here last night.

It is stated that the North-west Department is to be added to the Department of Missouri and Kansas, and that this military division is to be commanded by General Pope. General Curtis is to be transferred north, with headquarters at St. Paul.

SENATE.

Mr. Wilson introduced a bill to amend an act for the protection of Passengers.

Mr. Wilson offered a resolution instructing the Committee on Military Affairs to inquire into the expediency of so amending the existing laws, military rules, regulations and usages, that no soldier or other person, shall be tried by any court martial or military commission, for any offence, except such as may be specified in the Constitution, upon conviction in any Court of the United States, be punished by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars, or by imprisonment of not less than six months. *Provided*, That nothing herein contained shall interfere with any executive order made under the laws of the United States. This was ordered to be printed.

Mr. Wilson offered the following, which was ordered to be printed, concurrent resolutions declaring the rule on ascertaining the three-quarters of the several States, required in the ratification of a Constitutional Amendment:

WHEREAS, Congress by a vote of both houses has proposed an amendment to the constitution prohibiting slavery throughout the United States, which according to the existing requirements of the constitution will be valid to all intents and purposes as part of the constitution, and all treaties made under the authority of the United States are valid throughout the United States, although certain rebel states fail to participate therein, and that the same rule is equally applicable to an amendment of the constitution, *Resolved*, That the amendment of the Constitution prohibiting slavery throughout the United States will be valid when ratified by three-fourths of the states under the constitution,

Resolved, That any other rule requiring the participation of the rebel states in Congress in the amendment of the constitution, would be a recognition of the rebel states, without any participation of the rebel states.

Resolved, That any other rule must tend to perpetuate the great day when the prohibition of slavery will be valid to all intents, and as part of the constitution of the United States; but the rule here will be defeated, will assume the immediate ratification of the prohibition, and the consummation of the national desires.

Mr. Wilson moved that the consideration of the joint resolution, relating to the Electoral vote of this year, be postponed, in order that the provisions of the constitution, relating to the counting of the electoral votes, be considered and the joint rules of the two Houses be adopted, which he hoped would be done in one day.

Mr. Doolittle contended that Congress had no right to decide the question; that it must be decided by the President of the Senate and the president of the joint convention in which the vote is announced.

Mr. Trumbull took issue with Mr. Doolittle as to the manner in which the electoral vote should be counted. He held that the President of the Senate had no right to count the vote, but only announce the result when it was counted. He said it was a great deal better for the rule of a State which has people it is a retaliation by the laws of war to be traded. The State of Louisiana was in the Union when the government. It the doctrine contended for by the opponents of the bill, for the Senate were to prevail, and the war were to continue for four years, what is to hinder a State in rebellion from shutting the next four years. Only fifteen out of the 300 electors of the Union voted at the election of the legislature which chose electors.

Pending Mr. Ingersoll asked leave to offer a joint resolution to provide for an informal ratification of a new pending treaty on the United States and the so called Confederate States, therefore *Resolved*, That it is the deliberate and the sense of this House that no peace commission should be made to recognize the rebellious Indians of the rebellion, as they are not entitled to equal rights and immunities of loyal people.

Mr. Stevens said he was informed that no treaties was are pending, as the contracting parties are separated, nothing admissible have in view, he stated.

Mr. Blair offered a resolution instructing the Committee on Military Affairs to inquire into the alleged facts as to soldiers recently killed at Fort Schuyler, having died of opium or laudanum, or otherwise. The resolution was adopted.

The House passed the joint resolution to terminate the Treaty with Great Britain for the right of the naval forces on the Lakes.

The House resumed the consideration of the Navy Appropriation bill.

Pending Mr. Wood opposed the pending amendment to a Board of Admiralty. In the course of his remarks he said that it was reported, the Secretary of the Navy had failed to acknowledge the independence of the rebel authorities to return to their allegiance and duty, and because he refused to make an attack in the light of the Constitution, so far as he represented the people in the world he was ready to do so in his power. If the door was thrown open by the President, and if the answer of the rebels was favorable and recognition, and nothing else, so far as he represented the people he was willing to go with the conquering armies of his country to obtain by force what they had been unable to obtain by peace.

Mr. Davis, of Maryland, offered his amendment.

Messrs. Pike and Grinnell opposed, and Mr. Blair advocated the Admiralty Board Amendment, which was rejected by 48 against 85.

The House concurred in the Senate amendment to the joint resolution declaring certain States not entitled to representation in the Electoral College, whereupon the House adjourned.

GEN. POPE'S NEW COMMAND.

Absurd Rumor to Cease Hostilities.

THE TAX ON PETROLEUM AND SEGARS.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4.—Advices from Washington say that Major General John Pope is appointed to the command of the military division of the Missouri, which is to comprise the present division of Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas and the Northwest. Gen. Curtis is relieved from the Department of Kansas and assumes the command of the departments of Kansas and Missouri, all united and placed under command of Maj. Gen. Pope. Maj. Gen. Reynolds retains command of the department of Arkansas. Maj. Gen. Pope left Milwaukee to-day to assume his new command. Orders were sent from Washington to-day to order him at St. Louis, which will be the headquarters of the military division of the Missouri.

There was a rumor yesterday that the steamer Illinois which was taken, and sailed for Port Royal, was detained on order from the Government to carry dispatches to Gen. Sherman instructing him to cease hostilities at once.

The *World's* Washington special says that the news of the occupation of Branchville and Augusta by Sherman is looked for hourly, as well as the evacuation of Charleston. The enemy admit that they cannot hold it.

The same special says: The Ways and Means Committee to-day decided definitely in regard to the tax on petroleum. Upon crude oil they impose a tax of six cents per gallon. They leave the tax on the manufactured article as it now is, 20c per gallon. Segars are to be taxed by the pound and not by the thousand. Tobacco is not to be taxed in leaf.

Peace Talk in Washington.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4.—The *Herald's* Washington special describes the peace rumor as absorbing all the public interest. It says a great change has taken place in the tone of the peace Democrats in Congress. Heretofore they have scouted the idea that the rebels would negotiate upon any other basis than recognition; to-day they say they have been mistaken and that there is a good prospect of a settlement without recognition and without further fighting. Military operations are not delayed or relaxed but are being pushed forward as rapidly as possible. Should peaceful means fail to secure peace the army and navy will do it without unreasonable or unnecessary delay. It is well known that Secretary Stanton has heretofore not only been strongly opposed to a negotiation with the rebels on any basis other than an unconditional submission, but has had no faith in the possibility of obtaining a settlement upon any admissable terms at present. To-day, in conversation with an ex-member of Congress, he conveyed the idea that there was a probability of an early and amicable termination of the war.

Another dispatch says that the climax in peace negotiations is at hand. Davis has made a temporary alliance with Gen. Lee, but fears that the fight upon him (Davis) at Richmond will soon force Lee to break loose; he is therefore determined to agree upon terms at once to save himself.

Galena and N. W. Railroads Consolidated.

CHICAGO, Feb. 4.—The bill approving the consolidation of the Galena and N. W. railroads passed the Illinois Senate yesterday.

The Canadian Alien Bill.

TORONTO, C. W., Feb. 4.—The alien bill passed the Upper House last night, and will receive the Governor's sanction on Monday.

PEACE SPECULATIONS.

Demonstration in Front of the Ninth Corps.

GEN. CHAMBERS ASSIGNED TO A NEW COMMAND.

NEW YORK, Feb. 4.—The *Tribune's* City Point dispatch, dated February 1st, says: It is understood here that Mr. Stephens is instructed by Jeff. Davis and his cabinet to make peace on the best terms he can. It is also thought here that Mr. Stephens will not return to the Confederacy if he does not succeed in the object of his mission.

From various demonstrations in front of the 9th corps last night and this morning, it was apprehended by some that the rebels intend to make an attack to-day, and by others that they are about to evacuate Petersburg. There was considerable artillery firing last evening brought on by the enemy, particularly in the neighborhood of Battery No. 5. I think, however, that all demonstrations of strength by the rebels at this time are for the purpose of giving tone to Mr. Stephens' peace mission.

The *Times'* Washington special says: It is understood here that President Lincoln and Secretary Seward are on their way back, but nothing is known of the result of the conference.

The *Tribune* says Major General Gillmore and staff sailed on Thursday for Hilton Head. Gen. Gillmore is appointed to command a new department of the southwest, including South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, and part, if not the whole, of North Carolina. He supercedes General Foster, but General Sherman of course still remains in command of the army in the field as heretofore.

The *Herald's* Washington Special says: It is known here to night, that on this day, the President and Secretary Seward and the Richmond Commissioners, had a long interview at Fortress Monroe, and that the radical Congressmen who yesterday assumed a threatening attitude, do not hesitate to admit tonight that their faith is now the other way. It is not averred that the President and Secretary Seward will return before Sunday.

The double headed editorial on peace, in the *Chronicle* of to-day, rendered emphatic by its large capitals, has attracted great attention everywhere, and is regarded as being officially inspired.

Representatives from Insurrectionary States—Rebellion—Virginia Representatives.

WASHINGTON, Feb. 5.—Representative Wilson, of Iowa, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, has introduced a bill to establish the supremacy of the Constitution in insurrectionary States, declaring that hereafter no Representatives or Senators shall be elected to Congress in any States which have been in insurrection until it has been announced by a Presidential proclamation that such State is entitled to recognition, and a supplementary legislation has been adopted and approved by Congress.

The *Daily Chronicle* now says the blind fanatics which possessed the rebel leaders at the outset of the rebellion, rules them inexorably still, and the sword of justice must execute the work which the folly of the misled leaders would record in acts of pacification.

Hon. Joseph Segar will, it is understood, present his credentials to-morrow or next day as Senator from the State of Virginia. This will lead to a decision of the question by that Body, whether the State is entitled to recognition. He has no representative in the House, those who represented the State in Congress having been excluded for by the opponents of the bill.

If the Senate were to prevail, and the war continue other four years, what is to hinder a State in rebellion from shutting the next four years. Only fifteen out of 300 electors of the Union voted at the election of the legislature which chose electors.

Pending Mr. Ingersoll asked leave to offer a joint resolution to provide for an informal ratification of a new pending treaty on the United States and the so called Confederate States, therefore *Resolved*, That it is the deliberate and the sense of this House that no peace commission should be made to recognize the rebellious Indians of the rebellion, as they are not entitled to equal rights and immunities of loyal people.

Mr. Stevens said he was informed that no treaties was are pending, as the contracting parties are separated, nothing admissable have in view, he stated.

Mr. Blair offered a resolution instructing the Committee on Military Affairs to inquire into the alleged facts as to soldiers recently killed at Fort Schuyler, having died of opium or laudanum, or otherwise. The resolution was adopted.

The House passed the joint resolution to terminate the Treaty with Great Britain for the right of the naval forces on the Lakes.

The House resumed the consideration of the Navy Appropriation bill.

Pending Mr. Wood opposed the pending amendment to a Board of Admiralty. In the course of his remarks he said that it was reported, the Secretary of the Navy had failed to acknowledge the independence of the rebel authorities to return to their allegiance and duty, and because he refused to make an attack in the light of the Constitution, so far as he represented the people in the world he was ready to do so in his power. If the door was thrown open by the President, and if the answer of the rebels was favorable and recognition, and nothing else, so far as he represented the people he was willing to go with the conquering armies of his country to obtain by force what they had been unable to obtain by peace.

Mr. Davis, of Maryland, offered his amendment.

Messrs. Pike and Grinnell opposed, and Mr. Blair advocated the Admiralty Board Amendment, which was rejected by 48 against 85.

The House concurred in the Senate amendment to the joint resolution declaring certain States not entitled to representation in the Electoral College, whereupon the House adjourned.

Oil in Indiana.

A letter from Warren county, of the 25th inst., says:

Great excitement prevails in Indiana. An oil well has been opened in Harrison county. It was struck about nine o'clock on Saturday, and at the latest advices had flowed fifteen inches. Nothing like this was ever before heard of on the American continent. Most wells are put down from three to four hundred feet, and many of them to five or seven hundred, but this well yields several barrels a day from a spring running nearly on the surface, and that, too, without pumping. It is situated on Mosquito Creek, about four miles back from where it empties into the Ohio.

Mosquito Creek is destined to compete with Oil Creek, of Pennsylvania. It is directly in the centre of the great Hamilton group of rocks, and is pronounced by geologists to be one of the best places for petroleum in the country. There are oil springs scattered all along this stream, which have been for years, ever since the State was first settled. Some of them produce specimens of oil which has long been used by the inhabitants as medicine. It is said to be a sure remedy for sprains and rheumatism.—*Terre Haute Express.*

To compel peace on the basis of Freedom and Union, is the object of the war. To denounce, repudiate and scorn the suggestion of such a peace has been, since 1861, the pride of the rebel leaders and the rebel press. Still, we have carried on the war in the firm conviction that in the end this pride would be conquered by necessity, and forgotten in returning patriotism and wisdom. It may be that we have already reached the end. The victories of Sherman may be greater than we know; the defeats of our enemies greater than we have guessed; their despair profounder; their foresight keener than even ours. The rain that seems to us certainty in the future may be to them the great fact of the present.

The intended submission of the rebels to the Union is not to be assumed because Messrs. Stephens, Hunter, and Campbell have come within our lines as accredited peace commissioners from Richmond. Stephens, more than a year ago, attempted to offer peace with separation, and was refused. But it cannot be supposed that Mr. Lincoln should leave Washington to meet these gentlemen at Fortress Monroe, unless he had assurance that submission was to some shape or be tendered.

Our hopes of an immediate ending of the war are not extreme. There are the odds of armies against it. Up to yesterday, almost, the rebellion was defiant. If it has submitted, its repentance has been sudden as the miraculous calm that stilled the Sea of Galilee when the God of Peace stretched forth his arms and the storm ceased at his bidding. Yet, when the reconciliation of the North and South does come, it will be swift and sincere, and never to be broken. Even if this peace embassy should prove to be a heartless mockery of our hopes, the great fact remains that as in ponies, between the opposing lines the armies forgot they were enemies, and cheered, not as Northerners or Southerners, but as Americans.—*Phila. Press.*

GOLD AND SILVER IN SAN FRANCISCO.—The San Francisco correspondent of the New York *Times* says: "As I go to my breakfast I pass Wells & Fargo's corner, and there is scarcely a morning that I do not walk over thousands, in leather bags and silver bars, that bestrew the sidewalk, as they are passed out to be delivered by the wagons to the mint, Kellogg, Henstons & Co., and other mellers and assayers. The evening boat averages a ton a day, as her freight down, of gold and silver, and I have seen over three and a half tons come aboard at Sacramento at one time, mostly in bars from Virginia City. There is a good deal of solid currency floating about this town, and it is not in Wall street yet, and a mere fraction finds its way there direct. Since the piratical Confederate steamers cruise your waters, most of it goes to England, and lately large shipments have been made to China.

ABOUT a week since, Dr. T. S. Jeffries, a Government detective, doing duty under orders from post headquarters at Cincinnati, left there for Lexington, Ky., from which place he was to make a trip into Bourbon County, for the purpose of investigating the case of some guerrillas who were supposed to have their headquarters at the house of a woman in that vicinity. Jeffries took with him a rebel deserter, whose knowledge of the country and of the men with whom he was to deal was to be brought into the affair. It seems, however, that, instead of succeeding in his work, the unfortunate detective was betrayed into the hands of the guerrillas, who murdered him, took from him his gold watch, diamond ring, pin and revolver, and left his body in the woods, where it was found last Saturday.

Fresh Cairo and Below.

CAIRO, Feb. 5.—The steamer Marble City, from Memphis, has arrived with 800 bales of cotton, principally C. S. Government property.

It was reported that Gen. Veatch had been relieved from duty at Memphis and assigned to command at Little Rock. His successor is said to be Gen. Roberts.

Fifteen deserters, principally from the 1331 Tennessee (rebel) infantry, including a sergeant, came in to-day and took took the oath, their furlough expiring to-day. They were issued by Major General Hood, and signed by Gen. Cheatham, Division Commander.

The Surgeon was direct from Tupelo, Miss., where, he stated, Hood's army had gone into winter quarters. He contradicts the report that Gen. Cheatham made a speech to the troops at that place advising them to do so. He had merely given them furloughs that they might go home to assist their friends and recruit.

The Surgeon also stated that many who had declared their intention to desert on account of the destitution in the army, on learning that they would have comfortable winter quarters and be better fed and clothed, were again returning to the rebel army.

A baker of Memphis named Speech, who was found raiding outside the lines four miles from the city, was arrested and lodged in the military prison on a charge of smuggling and trying to bribe. A barrel of quinine was found in his wagon, which it said he held for disposal to the rebels. He had obtained a permit to take a barrel through the lines, representing it to be flour for the use of his family.

From Missouri.

ST. LOUIS, Feb. 5.—The Missouri Senate yesterday passed the following bill: Providing pardon to convicts sentenced for a term of years at the expiration of three-fourths of their term; if sentenced for life, at the end of fifteen years, if their conduct should have such merit, the inspector shall certify their good behavior and recommend the government to pardon them.

A bill providing that any person whose husband or wife has been engaged in rebellion against the government of the United States, shall be entitled to a divorce on proper application to the courts.

A bill declaring that no license of any kind be granted foreigners who have not taken the first steps for naturalization.

Pope has issued an order dated the 4th, as under command