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The Press.

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SPEECH OF HON. HOWELL COBB, OF GEORGIA,

AT WESTCHESTER, SEPTEMBER 19, 1856.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—The questions upon which I propose to address you this evening are not only of an important character, as stated to you by our friend who has introduced me to you, but they are of a delicate and sensitive nature. The publicity imparted throughout the length and breadth of the land, has been such as to make it necessary for me to say, and speak in the spirit of frankness and candor. I have no opinions upon these questions which I desire to conceal. I have no positions to maintain before the people of my own State that I will not maintain before the people who favor me this evening with their presence. I appear before you, I trust, with no unkind or ungenerous spirit in my bosom. May I be permitted to indulge the hope that you are prepared to receive me in the same spirit of kindness? (Applause.)

There are questions upon which you and I differ. I shall not attempt to conceal the fact that this difference of opinion exists. There are other questions upon which I trust we stand agreed. At all events, my fellow-citizens, it is important that we should know whether we do agree or not upon these questions.

I stand before an audience whose faces are unfamiliar to me, and yet I cannot feel that I am a stranger in a strange land. To-day, when for the first time I trod upon this soil of your county, consecrated by the blood of your fathers, I felt that I was to the great cause of American freedom, though I was born upon the soil of Georgia, I felt that this, too, was my native land. (Applause.) This is America, and I am an American citizen. (Loud cheers.) I would invoke the same spirit to preside here tonight, more than twenty years ago my own land, that burned in the hearts of our forefathers, when side by side, and shoulder to shoulder, the Southern and the Northern man, the native and the naturalized citizen, the Protestant and the Catholic, stood upon your own soil, around a common flag, with a common freedom for their inheritance. (Applause.) Can we meet in this spirit, or shall those bitter waters which are now flowing through our land continue to pour their bitterness upon the people and upon their future peace, and happiness and prosperity? The question of my answer to that question is worth all the argument that can be presented to you, by myself, or by any one else upon these questions. Give me but the hearts of the American people, united together by brotherly love and affection—let me but plant the institution of liberty and the rights of the people as they once lived there, and I would not doubt that all these dark clouds that are now hanging over our country would pass away and be forgotten, and that peace, and prosperity, and happiness, and kind neighborly feeling would flow and swell in the land everywhere. (Applause.) I invoke that spirit. If I violate it in what I have to say to-night, condemn me; if I trample upon it, pronounce your judgment against me.

As I have remarked, there are subjects upon which we differ. You live in a non-slaveholding or free State; I live in a slaveholding State. The people of Pennsylvania and the people of Georgia differ upon the subject of slavery. I know it, and you know it. It is useless to disguise the fact. If we agreed, you would have the same institutions that we have or we would have yours. It was your right to have institutions conformable to your feelings; it was our right to have them conformable to our feelings. We differ. You have the right to tax my conscience with your peculiar notions on that subject; I have no right to tax your conscience with my peculiar notions on the subject.

The position which I occupy—the position occupied by those with whom I am politically associated—by the Democratic party of this country, North and South—makes no such demand at the hands of the people, either of the North or of the South, as a sacrifice of their opinions and sentiments on this question. The charge that is made in this section of the country, that the Democratic party is a pro-slavery party, and the charge that is made in my section, that the Democratic party is an anti-slavery party, are equally untrue. We are neither a pro-slavery nor an anti-slavery party, but we are a Constitutional party. (Applause.) That is the principle upon which I stand, and on which I invite you to co-operate with me. How strange it falls upon the ear of a Southern Democrat, when he hears from the public hustings the charge made against James Buchanan that he is a sectional candidate—a pro-slavery candidate—when the Southern man has just returned from his own South, and there heard the charge made, that this same James Buchanan is an abolitionist, and a free soiler. I leave the one opponent of Mr. Buchanan to answer the other. Both charges, in his judgment, can not unfrequently the case, the truth lies between the two charges. He is neither a pro-slavery nor an anti-slavery candidate, but he is the candidate of the great constitutional principle, which I shall discuss before you to-night, involving no question of the right or wrong of the institution of slavery, but standing alone upon the doctrines and teachings of the Constitution. (Applause.)

My fellow-countrymen, I propose to submit to you an argument upon these questions. I shall submit the views which I entertain, and the reasons why I entertain these views. I shall present, too, the objections made by the opposition—by the Fremont party. If I am unsandid in my statement as to the position of either the one or the other party, I most respectfully invite any one within the hearing of my voice to correct me, and I will receive the correction in a kindness. These interruptions are not objectionable to me. They enable us to arrive at the truth, and truth should be the object in all political discussions.

These troubles which now excite the public mind do not arise out of the questions which have heretofore divided the political parties of this country. Heretofore the questions have been—how shall the Government be administered? What shall be our financial system? What shall we do with our public lands? What shall we do with our steam and ocean commerce? In my honest judgment, the question now is, shall we have a Government at all? That result is involved in this issue. My reasons for entertaining this opinion I will give you before I conclude these remarks.

This question of slavery is the one exciting this deep interest—is the one that has created these bitter and unkind feelings among the people of this country. It has gone to that extent, until Massachusetts arraigns Carolina, and Carolina arraigns Massachusetts, and each charges the other with a want of fidelity in the struggle of the Revolution. I have no sympathy with either charge. (Applause.) I had hoped that the day would never come when the descendants of Revolutionary fathers in any part of our broad land would touch with sacrilegious hand the sacred spot where stood the mighty dead who won for us the freedom we, this night enjoy. (Applause.) But it is so. The evidence of this bad feeling is around and about us. You hear it in your daily intercourse with your neighbor; you read it in the public press; it is thundered from the hustings, and not unfrequently it falls from the sacred desk. Let this feeling go on; let this spirit be encouraged; let these bitter waters widen and spread until they cover the whole land; let every Northern man when he puts his eyes upon a Southern man feel that there is an enemy; and let every man from the South feel that the Northern man is his enemy; and, I ask you, my friends, how long will this glorious fabric, erected by the blood and wisdom of our fathers, be left to their degenerate offspring? How long can your Constitution and your Union stand? The day when there shall be run through out your land a line—a geographical line—I care not where—which divides enemies, where there formerly dwelt brethren of a common household? I ask you, then, to look to it; see to it; ponder well the results of these mighty issues which now divide the country; and whatever error you or I may commit; however far you or I may go astray, I appeal to you to-night, let not the hearts of the people be thus poisoned and estranged one from another. I would appeal to these mothers. See to it that the hearts of the rising generation; those who are to come up and occupy the seats which we to-day fill, are not imbued with this spirit of animosity, of undying hostility to their brethren of other sections of the country. Can we not, my friends, meet, as our fathers met before us, around a common altar, worship a common God, and ask His blessings upon a common country? (Applause.) I think we can; I feel that we can; I know that we ought; and it is to lend my feeble aid toward producing that feeling and restoring that spirit to the distracted land, torn by these bitter strifes, that I am here to-night upon the soil of Pennsylvania to commune with those whom, under the Providence of Heaven, I am permitted to call my brethren. (Applause.)

Now, let us proceed to the discussion of this question with as much of this spirit as we can bring to bear upon it. Let us discuss it in candor, in frankness; and if we err, put us right. If we state as a fact that which is not true, correct us; if we present an argument that is not well taken, expose its fallacy.

These difficulties have, to a very great extent—almost to an entire extent—been created by what is called the Kansas question. I propose to go right to the question which lies at the bottom of these difficulties, and meet it frankly. We are told that civil war rages in Kansas; that the blood of our brethren is spilt upon the soil of Kansas; that the property of our fellow-citizens is destroyed by the hand of the midnight burner of houses; that the freedom of the press, the freedom of speech, have been prostrated beneath the feet of ruffianism. These are the charges. The telegraph pours in, day by day, accounts of these difficulties—these troubles that are now existing among the people of Kansas. Whilst I know, and you know, that these accounts are greatly exaggerated—exaggerated, as we believe, to effect a political, a party purpose—yet my countrymen, it is true there is trouble there. There is murder there; there is robbery there; there is the violation of law; and civil war, if not commenced, hangs like a dark cloud over that Territory, and threatens, day by day, to burst in all its fury upon the devoted heads of the people of that Territory. That is true. The question is, who is responsible for it, and can it be remedied?

I do not propose to detain you to-night with an examination of all that mass of evidence going to elucidate the question. Who is responsible for these difficulties? If I were here as the apologist—as the defender of any particular class or any particular party in Kansas, that duty might very properly attach to me. But I am here, I trust, in a more elevated and dignified position. (Applause.) These difficulties originated, some say, in the passage of the Kansas bill. That bill violated or repealed the Missouri Compromise, and the charge is made that hence have flown all our troubles. Is that so? Let me ask you, my friend, who so charges, how is it that you say that in 1850, you repealed the Missouri Compromise in regard to a portion of the very Territory covered by the same restriction, no war, no bloodshed came? Tell me why is it that, by the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill, no war, no bloodshed was created in Nebraska? Nebraska and Kansas were provided for in the same bill, passed in the same hour by the same vote—the provision for both was signed and became the law of the land at the same moment of time. Nebraska is as peaceable and as quiet as Pennsylvania, while these scenes are transpiring in Kansas. If it was the mere passage of the bill that produced these difficulties, they would exist in Nebraska as well as in Kansas. The mere passage of the bill has not produced them. What, then, has? Why, at the very time that this bill was passed, a portion of those who were opposed to it in Congress organized themselves for the purpose of defeating the operation of the bill. Read the testimony taken by the Kansas Investigating Committee, and you will find that Mr. Mace, of Indiana, there testifies that he subscribed his money immediately after the passage of this bill; others subscribed their money—to do what? What did they want to do? To aid the law in its execution? That is not usual. When members of Congress and of the Legislature have passed laws, they generally consider that the execution is the ordinary machinery of government. But these gentlemen saw proper to organize and raise money, not to carry out the law, but to defeat it. They appealed to their brethren of Massachusetts, and of the North, to do the same thing; and your Emigrant Aid Society sprung into existence. Efforts were to be made by these extraordinary outside means to make Kansas a free State. No efforts were made in reference to Nebraska. That was allowed to go along quietly under the operation of the law. The people of Missouri stand idle while these efforts were being made. They insist that Missouri should be a slave State, as did the people of Georgia and Carolina. They resorted to means of a like character for the purpose of making it a State having their institutions. Efforts commenced at the North induced efforts at the South, and the struggle went on until men went there with bitter feelings and personal hostility; they quarrelled—they fought. All these unhappy results—the murder, the robbery, and these other violations of law—have flown from it.

The thing is past. It cannot be remedied, so far as the past is concerned; but when you of the North are hailed upon to condemn the people of the South, remember that all the blame, in my view that you may take of it, does not attach to your brethren of the South, nor did these difficulties originate by their action. Remember, my countrymen of the North and my countrymen of the South, that all the wrong, all the injury, all the bad faith, all the murder, all the robbery, all the violation of law, has not been committed either by Northern or by Southern men. Both have done wrong; both have violated the law; and my doctrine is, let the murderer and the robber,—be he a citizen of my own State or of yours, wherever he comes from, upon whatever soil he was born, whatever section he claims to belong to, whatever religion he professes—be he a violator of the law, let him be arrested, let him be convicted by the law, and let the law punish him. (Applause.)

One great difficulty in regard to these Kansas troubles—I have seen it—has been that men, in the violence of their feelings, in the extent of their prejudices, carried away by their passions, have given themselves up body and soul to the defense of their own friends, from their section of the country. I do not say that this partiality exists here more than with all people. We constantly see that our eyes are blinded by our prejudices. You have been told that our people of the South were determined, as soon as the Kansas bill was passed, that slavery should go there; that we are determined to have slavery in all the territories; that this is but the starting-point; that we are determined to force it upon your masters, and rule over you by forcing slavery into every portion of this country. Now, let us reflect for one moment. Do not be carried away by these passionate appeals. When the Compromise measures of 1850 were passed, and the Missouri restriction was removed from a portion of the territory now in New Mexico, where it had been prohibited by that restriction—when Utah was opened up under the provisions of a bill just the same as the Kansas bill, and when New Mexico was opened up to the people of the South—of our, your and my kindred, who were determined to force slavery there and the principles of these bills enabled us to do it, why did not the South then attempt to force slavery into Utah and New Mexico? The reason was that all that the South has asked for is the establishment of a principle—the right of the people themselves to determine this question for themselves; and when that principle was decided in the Utah and New Mexico bills, the South had gained her own triumph;—it was not a triumph of slavery, but it was the triumph of the principle of the Constitution. She resorted to no undue means; she made no unusual efforts to force slavery upon the people of New Mexico and Utah, though those bills contained the same principle as the Kansas-Nebraska bill. When the Kansas bill was passed, were there any efforts among our people, until these efforts had been begun at the North? and I tell you, that, but for the resort to these extraordinary efforts, Kansas would have been settled just as our other territories are settled. People would have gone there just as they go to our other territories, peacably and quietly; and just as the emigration from Ireland would have been the decision of the people upon this question. The South looked with no unusual anxiety to that decision. All she asked for was the recognition of her Constitutional right in Kansas and Nebraska, as it had been recognized in New Mexico and Utah; and in all human probability, if slavery shall ever be established in Kansas, and we be placed under obligations to any body for it, our obligation, will be to the Abolitionists, who have created all these troubles;—not that they intended it, but such has been the effect and operation of this thing.

I have passed over this branch of the argument for the simple purpose of maintaining the position that there is no party, North or South, that is endeavoring to force the institution of slavery upon any people of any Territory or of any State, and that blame as these efforts which you regard as such now made in reference to Kansas, are but the retaliatory measures which have been resorted to, in which our people in the South believe they were justified, when extraordinary efforts of a different character and for a different purpose had been made by our brethren of the North.

But perhaps it is useless to review this subject; it may or it may not result in any good. There are practical questions connected with it of far more importance. The past is gone. I am willing to stand here and justify those who are connected with me, North and South, in the history of the past. But now a crisis is upon our country, and the question is: Who is responsible for the existence to-day of this state of things in Kansas? Can it be remedied, and how?

This civil war could have been prevented by adhering to the two great principles upon which our government rests—the two great principles incorporated into our Constitution; the equality of the States, and the right of the people to self-government. There I stand. Are you agreed with me upon those two questions? I ask nothing more. I require at the hands of no man an admission of any other principle but the equality of the States and the right of the people to self-government, in order to justify the position of those who act with me, the course which they have heretofore pursued, and propose hereafter to pursue.

Your Constitution could not have been formed, if you had not recognized the equality of the States. I will not discuss it; I will go into no argument to prove it; I will present you a single thought that puts the argument at rest—a thought which perhaps may assail your pride, may wound your selfishness; but it is a thought which you read in the letter of the Constitution. You are to-night citizens of the proud commonwealth of Pennsylvania. You look around you and see her teeming population, her immense commerce, her vast resources. She stands among the first States of the Union, proud, and justly proud of her position. She looks down upon many of her sister States because they have less commerce, less population, less prosperity, less square. When you thus look, it is in the light of your selfish feelings, of your proud estate as Pennsylvanians. But let me ask you to come and look upon yourselves in the light of the Constitution, and see Pennsylvania, proud Pennsylvania, justly proud Pennsylvania, with her equally proud sister New York, and her other proud sister Virginia—see them, when viewed in the light of the Constitution, come down and sit around the council-board of your common country, the equals, but not the superiors of your little sister Delaware. (Applause.) Go stand at the door of the Senate Chamber, and in your pride, and in the pride of the Virginian and the New Yorker, stand there, you three States, and speak of your boasted greatness, and population, and power; but little Delaware stands by your side, and with the Constitution in her hand she says, "I am your equal, and my voice is heard here equally with yours." We see there exemplified the equality of the States—one of the foundation-stones upon which rests the fabric of our government. So tenacious were the framers of the Constitution of this great principle, that they provided that no State should be deprived, without her consent, of her equal representation in the Senate. The doctrine of the equality of the States is indeed a great and glorious principle. Let no sacrilegious hand touch it.

Do you recognize that great principle, the right of self-government? Are you capable of self-government? Your fathers thought you were. They thought that their posterity for all time to come would be capable of self-government, and they provided for your enjoyment of that great and inestimable privilege. Your fathers said that the people of any State in this Union were capable of judging for themselves what should be the nature and character of their institutions. They thought that the people of Pennsylvania understood better what would be for their interest, for their happiness, for their prosperity, than the people of Georgia, Virginia, or New York understood for you. They thought it was best that the people of each State should decide these questions of interests for themselves. They determined, not that any particular class of the citizens of Pennsylvania should decide these questions, but that every man who lived upon the soil and who was covered with the habiliments of citizenship, was as capable of self-government as his neighbor. Our fathers made no distinction between the proudest and the humblest—between the man who gains his support by his daily labor, and the man who lives upon the wealth amassed by frugal forefathers. When the great principle of the capacity and the right of the people to self-government was to be provided for, there was no distinction. You have maintained that principle; you have stood by it; and to-day you would stand at your door-sill and war upon any man who should dare to violate to one hair's breadth, this great and inestimable legacy bequeathed to you by your fathers. It is your right and your privilege; maintain it—guard it—protect it.

Twelve months ago there lived by your side a neighbor. He was as honest, as intelligent, as capable of self-government as you are. He walked with you to the polls, deposited his vote with yours, and you dared not say to him, "I know what is for your interest better than you know yourself." I had a neighbor who twelve months ago walked with me to the polls, and we deposited our ballots together. Why? I have said to that neighbor "Do come!" I will take care of your interest. I will provide for your happiness, your prosperity; I have studied it, and I know it better than you do?" Well, your neighbor has gone from among you—my neighbor has gone from among us; and they have met upon the soil of Kansas, the same question that you and I have met when they lived here—the question whether the people of Pennsylvania and of Georgia; and I say they are as capable of self-government in Kansas as they were in Pennsylvania and in Georgia. (Applause.) Give to them that principle; extend to them that right; let it be honestly and *bona fide* exercised, and I tell you that all will be peace and quiet; in my honest judgment not another cloud will rise upon your horizon from these difficulties connected with Kansas.

Let us see, by a practical application of these principles, what these scenes are transpiring in Kansas. If it was the mere passage of the bill that produced these difficulties, they would exist in Nebraska as well as in Kansas. The mere passage of the bill has not produced them. What, then, has? Why, at the very time that this bill was passed, a portion of those who were opposed to it in Congress organized themselves for the purpose of defeating the operation of the bill. Read the testimony taken by the Kansas Investigating Committee, and you will find that Mr. Mace, of Indiana, there testifies that he subscribed his money immediately after the passage of this bill; others subscribed their money—to do what? What did they want to do? To aid the law in its execution? That is not usual. When members of Congress and of the Legislature have passed laws, they generally consider that the execution is the ordinary machinery of government. But these gentlemen saw proper to organize and raise money, not to carry out the law, but to defeat it. They appealed to their brethren of Massachusetts, and of the North, to do the same thing; and your Emigrant Aid Society sprung into existence. Efforts were to be made by these extraordinary outside means to make Kansas a free State. No efforts were made in reference to Nebraska. That was allowed to go along quietly under the operation of the law. The people of Missouri stand idle while these efforts were being made. They insist that Missouri should be a slave State, as did the people of Georgia and Carolina. They resorted to means of a like character for the purpose of making it a State having their institutions. Efforts commenced at the North induced efforts at the South, and the struggle went on until men went there with bitter feelings and personal hostility; they quarrelled—they fought. All these unhappy results—the murder, the robbery, and these other violations of law—have flown from it.

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Do you recognize that great principle, the right of self-government? Are you capable of self-government? Your fathers thought you were. They thought that their posterity for all time to come would be capable of self-government, and they provided for your enjoyment of that great and inestimable privilege. Your fathers said that "Your appropriations for the support of the army shall be withheld, and your army shall be disbanded, unless you will agree to give all this power to the President in reference to the Territory of Kansas!" The pretence was that they were not willing for this army to be used to carry out those odious laws. I assert it to-night, that there never was the arm of a soldier of this country raised upon the soil of Kansas or elsewhere, to enforce any one of these odious and offensive laws.

I have given the opposition the benefit in the argument, of the admission that there were odious laws passed by the legislature of Kansas, and I shall not stop to discuss them. Nor is it strange that there should have been objectionable laws passed by that legislature. There are laws upon the statute book of my own State, to which I am opposed, and I apprehend the same remark would be made with truth by every citizen of your State in reference to your laws. If it was otherwise, and either your State or my own had obtained a perfect code of laws, our duty would be a sinecure, and that would be, to have no more legislatures. Whenever we have reached the perfection of law, we should relieve ourselves of the expense of future legislatures. The province of a legislature is to repeal bad laws, amend defective ones, and perfect incomplete ones. Whilst the law stands, it must be obeyed and enforced, the remedy always being in the hands of the people, speaking through the ballot-box.

Here, then, I have presented to you the remedy for these existing difficulties in Kansas. Are there other objections to the bill? I confess I had not heard of any others—I know of none others—I had seen no others urged with any degree of warmth, with any zeal, with any confidence until yesterday, when a worthy citizen of your county, while I was addressing the people at another point, mentioned one. I am willing to live by it; I ask you if you are willing to live by it. If so, why do you put a new condition in the bond. The bond, the Constitution, says, "now States may be admitted into the Union." The friends of the Constitution, the friends of the equality of the States, the friends of the rights of the people, have been heretofore the bill so low that no man could support it; that there was no precedent for it, and that such a principle never could be justified in this country. The very simple reply that I first gave him was, that he had supported, and sustained, and approved the admission of California, and yet he had been admitted under a constitution adopted just in the same way, and that he had sustained and approved the Topeka Constitution, which was no better, upon that principle. But I gave him another answer to that, and it is his other objection, which was, to a candid, frank man, satisfactory and overwhelming. I know not how my friend who asked me the question received it, as our discussion upon the point ceased there. His other objection was that that bill did not repeal all the laws, and therefore by repealing the one recognized the existence of the existence of those that were not odious. Well, I said to my friend, if the bill had passed and the delegates elected by a majority of the people had met together in convention and formed their constitution, the organization of a State government in the place of the territorial government would have ingored the territorial Legislature entirely, and the people would have had the power to repeal all the laws that were objectionable to them. (Applause.)

But when the charge was, that there were odious and offensive laws, and the bill repealed those odious and offensive laws, is it not a strange objection that it did not repeal the laws that were unobjectionable? But there was an answer to these objections, as there is to every possible objection that can be brought against this bill.

I have shown you that the bill was intended to meet—and by its provisions did meet—the two great difficulties: these odious laws, and the improper interference of outsiders from Missouri with the people of the Territory of Kansas. But if any other objection be made to the bill, I say, over, was that a reason for rejection, or was it not a reason for its amendment? The bill, having passed the Senate, was sent to the House of Representatives; it was placed upon the speaker's table of the House, and from that hour it slept there until the adjournment of Congress. We could not take it up; we wanted to pass it. We were in the minority; we had not the power. If the Fremont party had any amendments to offer to the bill—if it was not satisfactory to them—if they wanted other provisions—I put it to you, my countrymen, was it the right policy for those who had the power of the South, as he stood upon the soil of Kansas, the Constitution of his country in his hand, the flag of the Union over his head, should have the whole army of the United States at his back to protect him in the enjoyment of his right of suffrage. The Fremont men will not object when my argument is based upon the idea that their charges are true. I intend to apply my argument upon the admission of that state of facts; you cannot complain in my course in that respect.

The charge was that a territorial legislature had been elected in Kansas over the heads of a majority of the people by the armed interference of Missourians, that there was no protection to the people in there, took possession of the ballot-boxes, drove off the people, and would not allow the *bona fide* settlers to vote; and that a majority of the legislature were elected by virtue of these illegal and improper means. Upon the question of fact, whether this is true or not, I differ, widely differ from those gentlemen who make the charge; but I am not going to consume your time in the argument of that question, for it is unnecessary. I admit, in the argument, that the charge is true. What was your other charge? You say that that legislature passed odious and offensive laws, inductive of the Constitutional rights of the citizen, violative of freedom of speech, violative of the freedom of the press; and that no man ought to be held subject to these laws, thus passed against the will of the majority of the people of the South? Were these the difficulties? Were not these the troubles? Have I presented them fairly, fully, and frankly? If not, correct me.

It is admitted, then, that these were the troubles—these odious and offensive laws—this putting upon the people of Kansas a government by the armed interference of outsiders. Well, the effect of the bill which was passed in the Senate, by the members of the Democratic party and the National Whigs acting together, was to repeal these odious and offensive laws. Was not that a full remedy for that evil? If the laws were repealed, what complaint could there be in future against those laws? What more can you do with bad laws than to repeal them?

Is there other objection—the other evil to be cured, was that the legislature had been elected by outsiders, and that the voice of a majority of the people of Kansas had not been heard. If that was true, it was a valid objection; for no minority has a right to rule the majority, and no outsiders have a right to rule the people of the territory, any more than they have a right to rule and control the people of a State. This bill provided that the people of Kansas—the *bona fide* honest settlers—the men who had gone there and become citizens of that territory,—not the Missourians who had come into that territory, from Georgia, from Massachusetts, or Missouri,—but that the men from all the States who had gone there and become *bona fide* citizens of the territory, should at a given day go to the polls and elect delegates to a Convention; that that Convention should adopt a Constitution; that that Constitution should be submitted to Congress, and Kansas should be admitted into the Union as a State with this Constitution thus made by a voice of a majority of the *bona fide* citizens of the territory of Kansas.

That was the bill. Was that bill right or was it wrong? Did that bill meet the difficulty? Did it meet the evil complained of by our opponents? I think it did. But they had objections to it. They said, "We object to this bill, because under it the people of Kansas cannot elect their representatives, because the Missourians, these 'border-ruffians' will come in and prevent the people from electing their representatives, just as they prevented them before." If this was true, it was a good objection. Men who believed that this outrage had been committed upon the people of Kansas were right in objecting, if it was true that the people were going to be prevented from deciding that question, and were to be driven from the polls It therefore became necessary to meet the difficulty. The bill declared that the citizen should be protected; that he should enjoy his right; that every man who was a citizen should go to the polls and vote, if he could, though he be the humblest man in the land, his Government owes it to him, and the army shall be there." (Applause.) Either your whole government was powerless, and your army incapable of protecting the citizens of that territory, or your objection was met.

But another objection was made. The advocates of the free-State party who complained against the legislature that was elected—the Fremont men—said, "This territorial Legislature has the machinery of the Government, and it will not allow us to have a fair election under that territorial Government." The bill provided that that difficulty should be remedied, and that there should be appointed five commissioners who should superintend that election, and see that it was fairly and honestly conducted, so that these men, who, it was charged, having the machinery of the Government in their hands, would defraud and cheat the citizens, should not have it in their power to do so, the election being placed under the control and direction of these five commissioners to be selected and appointed by the President of the United States. "But," said the Fremont men, "if these commissioners should be fairly appointed, then there would be no difficulty, and the last objection would be removed; but we cannot trust the President to appoint these commissioners." Were they frank, honest and sincere when they made that objection? How was it they could not trust the President to appoint five commissioners to superintend the election in Kansas? At the time that this objection was made to the bill, knowing the extent of men's prejudices, knowing how the passion of man carries away and controls his judgment, I was charitable and generous enough to believe that there was some sincerity in this objection—that these men were so deeply prejudiced against the President that they were not willing to trust. I should have remained under that delusion down to the present day, but for the fact that before the adjournment of Congress, the very men and the very party who were not willing to trust the President with the appointment of five commissioners, voted to annul the existing government in Kansas—to put it in the power of the President of the United States to take armed occupation of that territory, to require the arms which had been distributed among the militia to be returned into the keeping of this very President They voted the whole military power into the hands of the President, and authorized him to take possession of the public highways to prevent men from going into the territory of Kansas, under certain circumstances, and all power upon your public highways leading towards Kansas, and all power in the Territory of Kansas, should be in the hands of this very President whom they would not trust with the appointment of five commissioners! (Laughter and applause.) When that vote was given I could not any longer believe in the sincerity of that objection. When was this monstrous vote given? Not in the ordinary course of legislative business, but the provision was placed upon the Army Appropriation Bill; and the very men who could not trust the President to appoint five commissioners said, "Give us this power, give us this power, give us this power, or your army shall be disbanded." Was that the time? Was that the place? Was that the occasion? Was that the question? Was that the time, when the President was about to withdraw the army, and your Fremont friends had been for weeks and months in the field, and had seen no others urged with any degree of warmth, with any zeal, with any confidence until yesterday, when a worthy citizen of your county, while I was addressing the people at another point, mentioned one. I am willing to live by it; I ask you if you are willing to live by it. If so, why do you put a new condition in the bond. 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