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Pennsylvania Telegraph

INDEPENDENT IN ALL THINGS--NEUTRAL IN NONE

XIV. HARRISBURG, PA. FRIDAY AFTERNOON, JANUARY 25, 1861. NO. 19.

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STATE OF THE UNION.

The hour of half past eleven having arrived, Agreeably to order.

The House proceeded to the consideration of the joint resolutions presented by Mr. ARMSTRONG, on the 9th inst.

The resolutions were read, as follows:

Resolved, That we recognize the Constitution of the United States as the Supreme Law of the Land; and that all laws enacted either by Congress or the Legislatures of the several States, which are contrary to its provisions, are null and void.

Resolved, That the laws of the United States are of paramount authority in every State of the Union, upon all matters within the exclusive jurisdiction of Congress, and that every attempt on the part of a State, by State laws, to annul or hinder their due execution, is in violation of both the letter and spirit of the obligations due from the people of each State to the general government, and to each other.

Resolved, That the citizens of this State, in common with the citizens of other of the free States, have just cause to complain that their constitutional rights have been denied to them in some of the Slave States; that the freedom of speech and of the press have been abridged—the right of personal security has been violated—they have been arrested on frequent occasions, imprisoned and punished without trial, even to the taking of life by lawless violence, and without interference on their behalf by the constituted authorities of the State.

Resolved, That we recognize the right of every Slave State to regulate and control slavery within her limits each in its own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States; and that we deny the right, either of Congress or any of the States, to interfere with it, either to limit, modify, abolish or control it within such States. But, on the contrary, it is the duty of Congress, when required, to suppress insurrections and domestic violence, by military force, if necessary.

Resolved, That it is contrary to the first article of amendment to the Constitution to abridge the freedom of speech or of the press, and contrary to the genius of free government to submit either to any other control than the responsibility for its abuse; and that we cannot, in the interests of slavery, ever so great a sacrifice even upon the altar of peace.

Resolved, That the Territories of the United States, previous to their recognition as States, are under the exclusive control of Congress, which has the right to make all needful rules and regulations respecting them; that whilst we do not recognize the doctrine that the Constitution of the United States carries slavery into the Territories, or exempts it from the control of Congress, we are in favor of an adjustment of the whole question of slavery in the Territories in such manner as shall settle it forever; and to this end we recommend that a line not farther North than the Missouri Compromise line be established and sanctioned by an amendment to the Constitution, whereby, in all territory North of such line, slavery or involuntary servitude, except for crime, shall be forever prohibited; and South of which neither Congress nor the Territorial Legislature shall interfere with or abolish it.

Resolved, That Pennsylvania is loyal to the Union, and faithful in her observance of the Constitution and the laws; and in manifestation thereof, the Judiciary Committee are hereby instructed to inquire whether there is any law in force in Pennsylvania which conflicts with her constitutional obligations to the Government of the United States, or which prevents or obstructs the due execution, within her jurisdiction, of any law of the United States; and if there be any such law to report by bill or otherwise.

Resolved, That we cherish for our brethren of the slave-holding States the most cordial and fraternal regard; and whilst we claim and insist upon the recognition and protection of all our constitutional rights, we cheerfully admit in them an equal and inviolable right to the same constitutional privileges, and to the equal and impartial protection of the government.

Resolved, That it is contrary to the first article of amendment to the Constitution of the United States, and to the seventh section of the ninth article of the Constitution of Pennsylvania, to abridge the freedom of speech, or of the press, and contrary to the genius of free government, to submit either to any other control than the responsibility for its abuse; and whilst we deprecate every abuse of such freedom, we cannot, in the interests of any section or people, ever so great a sacrifice, even upon the altar of peace, as their subjection to any other restraint.

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Resolved, That Pennsylvania is loyal to the Union, and faithful in her observance of the Constitution and the laws; and in manifestation thereof, the Judiciary Committee of both the Senate and the House are hereby instructed to inquire whether there is any law in force in Pennsylvania which conflicts with the constitutional obligations to the government of the United States, or which prevents or obstructs the due execution within her jurisdiction of any law of the United States; and if there be any such law, to report by bill or otherwise.

do not mean anything. The resolutions of the gentleman from Lycoming mean something; there is something in them. I do not care if they do represent the views of a party; I am ready to vote for them.

Mr. THOMAS. I trust that the motion of the gentleman from Mercer (Mr. HOFFER) will prevail. We have been debating the Senate resolutions for nearly two weeks. I think that this House will be ready before the adjournment to take the final vote.

On the motion to postpone the yeas and nays were required by Mr. LEISENING and Mr. BALL, and were as follows, viz:

YEAS—Messrs. Ackler, Alexander, Barnaby, Bartholomew, Bixler, Blanchard, Bliss, Butler, Crawford, Cowan, Craig, Gordon, Graham, Harvey, Hoop, Hoffus, Lowther, M'Connell, Marshall, Mullin, Petros, Reilly, Robinson, Shaffer, Taylor, Thomas, Williams—28.

NAYS—Messrs. Abbott, Anderson, Armstrong, Austin, Ball, Bied, Blair, Boyer, Bressler, Brodhead, Butler, (Carbon), Byrne, Clark, Collins, Cope, Dismant, Divins, Donley, Douglas, Duffield, Duncan, Eisenberger, Ellett, Gaskell, Gibbons, Goehring, Happer, Hayes, Hill, Hillman, Huhn, Irvine, Kline, Koch, Lawrence, Leisinger, Lichtenwalner, M'Donough, Manfield, Moore, Morrison, Myers, Ober, Osterhout, Patterson, Preston, Pughe, Randall, Reiff, Rhoads, Roller, Schrock, Selzer, Smith, (Berks), Smith, (Philadelphia), Stehman, Strang, Wilder and Davis, Speaker—59.

So the question was determined in the negative.

The question recurring on the adoption of the resolutions, Mr. ARMSTRONG. To avoid a number of minutes amendments, which otherwise it might be necessary to offer, I will move to amend the resolutions by striking out all after the word "Resolved," and inserting the following resolutions, which are in substance the same, and for the most part in the same phraseology.

Resolved, That we recognize the right of every Slave State to regulate and control slavery within her limits each in its own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States; and that we deny the right, either of Congress or any of the States, to interfere with it, either to limit, modify, abolish or control it within such States. But, on the contrary, it is the duty of Congress, when required, to suppress insurrections and domestic violence, by military force, if necessary.

Resolved, That it is contrary to the first article of amendment to the Constitution to abridge the freedom of speech or of the press, and contrary to the genius of free government to submit either to any other control than the responsibility for its abuse; and that we cannot, in the interests of slavery, ever so great a sacrifice even upon the altar of peace.

Resolved, That the Territories of the United States, previous to their recognition as States, are under the exclusive control of Congress, which has the right to make all needful rules and regulations respecting them; that whilst we do not recognize the doctrine that the Constitution of the United States carries slavery into the Territories, or exempts it from the control of Congress, we are in favor of an adjustment of the whole question of slavery in the Territories in such manner as shall settle it forever; and to this end we recommend that a line not farther North than the Missouri Compromise line be established and sanctioned by an amendment to the Constitution, whereby, in all territory North of such line, slavery or involuntary servitude, except for crime, shall be forever prohibited; and South of which neither Congress nor the Territorial Legislature shall interfere with or abolish it.

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Mr. ARMSTRONG. I rise, sir, to address myself to the consideration of these resolutions, under a deep impression that we are about to consider the most important question which will engage our attention during this session of the legislature.

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But whilst I say this, I believe that their utterance is uncertain. They do not express the sentiment of this House, or of Pennsylvania, in that manner which would carry the weight that is due to the individual position of this State.

I do not propose, sir, to discuss all these resolutions at length. The first and second resolutions may be considered as truisms, for they assert only the supremacy of the Constitution and of all laws made in accordance with its provisions.

"That the citizens of this State, in common with the citizens of other of the free States, have just cause to complain that their constitutional rights have been denied to them in some of the Slave States; that the freedom of speech and of the press have been abridged—the rights of personal security have been violated—they have been arrested on frequent occasions, imprisoned and punished without trial, even to the taking of life by lawless violence, and without interference on their behalf by the constituted authorities of the State."

This applies to every State and all forms of grievance. Certainly there are no grievances of the South that exceed those in violence, or in the tendency to provoke retaliation. When we, therefore, express to the South our willingness and determination to submit these grievances, which are greater than theirs, to the arbitration of the laws, it is putting ourselves in the strongest position which it is possible to assume in respect to this question.

The fourth resolution recognizes the right of every Slave State to regulate and control slavery in its own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States. Upon this, all parties in the North are entirely agreed; and I shall not further discuss it.

The fifth resolution declares that it is contrary to the Constitution, both of Pennsylvania and the United States, to abridge the freedom of the press or of speech. This is a sentiment which it is peculiarly proper that this Legislature should express at this time.

But, without further comment, I proceed to consider the sixth resolution, upon which I may well aware there is some, perhaps much diversity of opinion in this House.

the people at the last election, if we supposed it had any other effect than simply to pronounce the verdict of the people against the fraud committed in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and against the frauds perpetrated in Kansas.

But, sir, we are not standing in a position to examine party platforms with critical aloofness. We are now in an emergency which rises above all party considerations.

What is the present condition of the territories of the United States? At the present time they are covered by the Dred Scott decision.

Now let me call the attention of the House to another consideration; the location of the line, and the character of the territories it designates.

Is it possible that slavery can go into that territory? Sir, nature itself has set bounds to it, stronger than any constitutional restriction which the people of the United States could by any possibility devise.

As to Arizona—a small territory lying North of Texas—a territory not equal in size to the single State of Pennsylvania, I am not particularly informed as to its physical characteristics, because I have not been able to get information upon the subject.

I have brought here a map to show more distinctly the position of our territory with respect to this question, and how the line proposed will affect it.

This is a different question and a totally different proposal. Let us return again to the map. Here you see all the territory which, by any possibility, would by this compromise line be thrown open to slavery.

Now what are we contending for? Do gentlemen say we are contending for principle? What principle? That slavery shall not be carried into the national territories? We do not propose to carry slavery into any territory by any direct and positive enactments of law.

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ritorial Legislature, depriving it only of the power, during the territorial condition, to prohibit or abolish it. But when a constitution is prepared for the admission of the territory as a State, the people may make it a free State if they please.

My resolution provides that this arrangement in regard to the territories shall be sanctioned by a Constitutional amendment. There is reason for this.

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highest tribunal known to our laws, been declared to carry slavery into every foot of national territory. We say to them: "Your share shall not plant its foot in any part of that which lies north of this line."

Is this humiliation? Admit it, if you please, to be concession, is there nothing at stake of equivalent value? All legislation is a compromise.

Mr. BYRNE. Will the gentleman allow me to ask him a question? Mr. ARMSTRONG. Certainly.

Mr. BYRNE. Did not Congress, in 1850, as part of the compromise measures of that year, pass an act providing for the capture of fugitive slaves in the territories of the United States?

Mr. ARMSTRONG. Certainly they did—Congress might pass any such act, not by virtue of powers conferred by the Constitution of the United States, but in virtue of the sovereignty of the United States as vested in her by right of purchase.

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