

Remarks by Speaker Colfax.

Loyal Men only should Govern a Rescued Republic.

The Hon. S. D. Colfax, Speaker of the U. S. House of Representatives, was serenaded at Washington on Monday night, April 9, by citizens of Indiana, and acknowledged the compliment in the following speech:

I have no doubt that you, like myself, rejoice with exceeding great joy, and are prouder to day of being citizens of this great country than ever before.

Again the policy of reconstruction was indicated by Congress in the winter of 1864-65, when it passed nearly unanimously and without a dissent, a joint resolution that the Vice President, in assenting to the presidential votes, should not count the electoral votes of any State that had been engaged in the rebellion.

When your armies needed reinforcements, they took voluntarily upon themselves the odium of conscription laws and drafts, because they were necessary for the country!

In 1863 our noble and great-hearted President issued his proclamation of emancipation, striking with the battle-axe of the Union that powerful element of rebel strength, and the Union party of the country stood by him, determined to give that proclamation vitality, as they did by an endorsement of the people in the winter of 1864 and 1865, when the constitutional amendment was proposed in the Congress of the United States, banishing slavery forever from the country, as an unclean thing, and declaring that henceforth and forever it should be the home of the free.

That great organization again and unitedly rallied to its support, and placed its sanction upon the statute book, and it is now the supreme law of the land. Again, in this great year 1866, in the Senate chamber and in the Representative hall, they have placed by overwhelming majorities that civil rights bill on your statute book which declares that every one born on American soil shall have a birthright as an American citizen.

Every one born on the soil of the Republic owes to it allegiance, and it is not the right of a citizen to give his allegiance to any foreign power.

The President of the United States, in eight months between the collapse of the rebellion and the opening of this Congress, was engaged in the work, in that policy which seemed to him the most fitting, and the Congress has been engaged for the past four months in collecting testimony, in comparing opinions and action to lay the foundations of that plan of reconstruction which shall make our Union eternal as the ages.

The law known as the last oath declaration...

ing that no man should be eligible for any Federal office who could not swear that he had not voluntarily borne arms against the Union and had not voluntarily given aid and comfort to bloody conspiracy and treason—that law was well understood by the American people, South as well as North.

And I stand by those declarations. Yet they can be condensed into one single sentence, and that is "Loyal men shall govern a preserved Republic."

Mr. Alexander H. Stevens, of Georgia, in his testimony before the Congressional committee on the condition of the states lately in rebellion, expressed the opinion that the general government had no right to make any condition precedent to the admission of the states which rebelled, to all their rights and privileges in the Union.

But the Constitution has to all planter language declared where the responsibility of reconstruction should rest. It has declared that every State shall be guaranteed a republican form of government, and in a subsequent section it declares that Congress shall have power to make all laws necessary and proper to carry into execution all the powers vested in it, or in any department or officer of the Government.

The President of the United States, in his proclamation last May appointing provisional governors, declared that the States which had been in rebellion were without civil government. That was a fact as palpable as the stars when they shine in the heavens.

The Constitution of the United States declares that the President, on extraordinary occasions, may convene Congress, and it has always seemed to me that last April was an extraordinary occasion.

I believe he entered upon and proceeded with that work patriotically, and that he thought as an experiment, it would be well to test it before Congress reassembled.

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appeals to justice and the Constitution—the state of Georgia consists of the men in it who remained faithful to the Union throughout the late struggle; if we are, at the bidding of Mr. Stephens, to come to strict legal action, they alone and no others will either vote or hold office, represent or be represented.

We have on several occasions urged that Congress should admit to seats such loyal men as Colonel Johnson, of Arkansas; but it has not occurred to us to advocate this course upon Mr. Stephens' extraordinary theory of the inalienable rights of traitors to rule, according to their own notion.

What Mr. Stephens Thinks. Mr. Alexander H. Stevens, of Georgia, in his testimony before the Congressional committee on the condition of the states lately in rebellion, expressed the opinion that the general government had no right to make any condition precedent to the admission of the states which rebelled, to all their rights and privileges in the Union.

The people of Georgia, as I have said, would not willingly, I think, do more than they have done for restoration. The only view, in their opinion, that could possibly justify the war which was carried on by the federal government against them, was the idea of the infidelity of the Union; that those who held the administration for the time were bound to enforce the execution of the laws, and the maintenance of the integrity of the Union under the Constitution; and since that was accomplished, since those who had assumed the contrary principle—the right of secession and the reserved sovereignty of the states—had abandoned their cause, and the administration here was successful in maintaining the idea upon which the war was proclaimed and waged, and the only view on which they supposed it could be justified at all, and when that was accomplished, I say the people of Georgia supposed their state was immediately entitled to all her rights under the Constitution.

Radicalism. Radicalism means the rejection of what it had, and preservation of what is good, and it always means the right of the majority of the people to govern.

He who imposes an oath breaks it, not he who for convenience takes it.

If the heart is not on the lips the oath is a mockery. Tennessee radicalism is which is but another name for Unionism—does not desire rebels or their sympathizers to rule the State of Tennessee or the Government of the United States.

There is little in names or titles. "Worth makes the man, The want of it the fellow."

A rose by any other name smells as sweet. A pole-cat or conservative by any other name emits the same odor.

Live or die, sink or swim, survive or perish, we plant ourselves on the platform of the so-called radical party of the country.

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