

Hon. J. B. Reed:

Dear Sir:

I notice from an editorial of the Tribune (2, 3) which has generally come to be accepted as the exponent of the prevailing ideas of the Administration, that there is a purpose to try and satisfy the general demand for an election law that will be effective at the South by an extension of the Supervisor's law which the Tribune says has "been very effective in New York for twenty years" and "has been repeatedly sustained by the courts."

In New York, through the agency of that remarkable man, Deserfont, it has it is true been a quite efficient detection system — nothing more. And the courts has sustained it as a detection system and as nothing more. It has been of some value in Cincinnati too and perhaps one or two other Northern cities. At the South during the same period, it has been as worthless, as a blank sheet of

paper.

The reason is evident: it is fitted for one set of conditions and not fitted for the other. You can make a detective system work in a Northern city. No power on earth can make it work at the South!

The few Supervisors at the South who are at all efficient or try to be, are Northern men. Even they are practically useless. A man can be a detective in New York safely enough. At the South he knows it is all his life is worth and doesn't care to risk it. There too the detective—the agent of the law must always be a native. You can't send detectives from the North to work up the matter. The Southern tongue is an infallible Shihabith. I can travel the South over and not be suspected of being a Northern man but it is only because I have had 15-years exposure and am naturally apt at catching dialect.

At the North, you have to look out

for fraud in the city: Ah the South it is even
more frequent in the country.

You can get men through ^{out the South} who
will make good Registrars and poll-holders
in nearly every precinct, and I have pro-
bably left it so that the Registrar need
not be a resident of the precinct, in
Mr. Kelley's bill — but you cannot
get enough men who dare risk their
lives in spying over a lot of state of-
ficers. Under it as you may the Super-
visor's law will always be a force
ah the South as it always has
been.

In its immediate effect, ^{on} this
Fall's elections, I mean, the especial
question is going to be in regard to the
Party's intentions. If it passes a gen-

eral election law, the people and north
and south will believe it is in earnest
— that it means business. If it tinkers
the Supervisor's law everybody will believe
that it means simple evasion, pretence, the
desiring of another way not to do it!

The claim is made that the general
election law would interfere with "State
Rights." Unfortunately we have some Re-
publicans who would still ~~to~~ strain the
Constitution ~~ag~~ until it breaks asunder
rather than do even half justice to eight
millions of our citizens, if there is any danger that
any one might term them "sectionalists" or
"Federalists." They would rather dam up the
press in a part of the body politic and
scream that there is no suppurating
than give it a clean, open trench to

run off through and thus give an opportunity for recovery.

~~If~~ ^{It} ~~is~~ this sort of sentiment which is really responsible for the "hell-time" at the South. If Congress had kept a hold upon the South by providing for the election of Representatives by Congressional law, the Kullux and Rifle Clubs would never have become controlling elements of Southern civilization.

One more thing: we are told that by keeping the State and Congressional elections mixed we keep a hold on the latter which is of great value in the chain of legislatures. The results do not justify this assertion; but if they did it is a mere and cowardly interference with state

affairs which any "state-right, Republican" should
be ashamed of. It results in a mixed, irri-
tating jurisdiction which is and always must
be ineffective, discredited and dangerous.

The straightforward fact is a thousand
times more effective. A well regulated national
election will do more to effect your
fair state elections at the South, in one
year, than the strongest Supervisor's law
~~that~~ ^{can} be planted out of ^{the} English
~~words~~, ^{words} can ^{do} in a score of years.

How on earth is the Supervisor's law
going to remedy the Dutch law with its
mixed boxes and prohibited explanation?
Will it send a Supervisor to violate the
state law, by showing the voter where to
deposit his ballot?

What will it do with the new state

"Mississippi ^{plan} law which is to require the Judges of election to "stand aside" every man who is challenged until all ^{the} unchallenged have voted?

You see — and it is strange any one can overlook the fact — all the In-
spector can do is to see that the State law is fairly executed and indirect disfranchisement under the State laws is now the influence most to be feared. The Southern legis-
latures are experts in disfranchisement — much of which is so deftly done that few Northern Republicans have time or opportunity to study and appreciate its effect.

I have now, with any hesitation in saying, that in my opinion, without an apparently thorough and effective election law which will show a determination on the part of the Republican Party to give secure, free speech a free election and a fair count at the South, so far at least as Congressmen are concerned, the House of Representatives will beyond doubt be Democratic during the next Congress. Such a bill, taken in connection with the vigor and determination shown by the party in other respects and the other valuable legislation it will no doubt give will in all probability secure us a majority.

Samuel J. Jones,