

DEALER.

1890.

WHOLE NO. 363.

THAT ELECTION LAW.

AN ILLINOIS REPUBLICAN DISCOVERS GRAVE ERRORS IN IT.

Congress Should Make the National Election Law Apply to All Sections Alike—No Optional Law Will Fill the Bill

CHICAGO, Ill., May 13, '90

To the Hon. THOMAS B. REED,
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Washington, D. C.

DEAR SIR—I assume the liberty, as an American citizen, to address you this letter upon a subject which is being discussed by the American people. And if all reports are true, congress is determined to take action upon this all important question, in passing a National Election Law

I address you as an humble voter, and as an Afro American citizen, because I love my country and am ready to sacrifice my life for its protection, although my country don't care anything about me, because the Almighty to suit himself, made me colored.

I address you, as an individual, but feel that I am speaking in the interest of at least nine million American citizens. We owe the United States allegiance and it owes us protection. The American constitution knows no race and no color. But to the point:

If I am not misinformed, and I don't think I am, the Senate and the House have agreed upon a bill, which the framers think will pass both Houses. And if it passes both Houses, it is presumed that Mr. Harrison will approve it. This bill is known as a bill to regulate Congressional Elections in the various states of which the American Union is composed.

It seems to me *ten thousand times* better for the class of voters this bill is intended to protect, that the Republican party let the whole matter rest just as it is, and where it is.

I suppose you are well aware that at a very low estimate. *One Hundred and Fifty Thousand Colored Republicans* have been sacrificed for voting the Republican ticket since 1856. I suppose you are also aware that in the last Congressional Election in the Third District of Louisiana, Minor *ex-Prize*, that there were Three Hundred and twenty-five colored Republicans murdered, whipped and run away from their homes, and all because the white "Regulators" knew these Republicans would vote for Mr. Minor, and that these men exercised considerable influence among other Republicans. These "Regulators" would take a town like Thibodeaux, La Fayette or Houma, Louisiana, and pick out every intelligent colored Republican, put their names on a list and give them just so many hours to leave their homes. And for what? Simply because these men would vote the Republican ticket and advise other colored men to do the same. From the shape of this National Election Bill now, it seems that it is designed to be optional, that is, upon the petition of Fifty Voters, the United States Circuit Judge shall appoint supervisors to oversee the Congressional Elections in any district where the said Fifty Voters think that a fair election cannot be had. Well, it cannot be had anywhere in the South, and it cannot be had in a large number of big cities in the North.

But I think, and I know the colored Republicans feel in the South that enough blood has been shed, that too many lives have already been offered up, for voting the way one thinks best in the South, with the Republican House, Senate, and President making another *Gallows* for colored Republicans in the South. Will Congress buy the coffins? Will the President make the funeral arrangements? And will all the members—Republicans—attend the funeral of the victims which this bill will bring out in the South? Will the United States pension the families of these men, who will be murdered for signing a petition for federal Supervisors for a Congressional Election? Well, they have not been doing so, and I am reasonably certain they will not do so.

The idea of an optional Election Law is simply planning a scheme to murder colored Republican voters in Louisiana, South Carolina, North Carolina, Mississippi, Georgia, Alabama, Texas, Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia and other Southern States.

The Republican party have been a party to the political murders since 1856 and now they seem determined to create a machine by which it can be done faster, as fast as balls can be fired from a Gatling gun worked by an experienced operator.

The South has had twenty four years practice at killing colored Republicans—now the Republican House, Senate, President want to give the whole to the South a machine by which they can do the work much better than they have been or are now doing it. It seems as if our Republican friends are following the advice of the New Orleans Times, Democrat, which suggests that the colored people be killed out like American Indians have been. There is only one way to enact a National Election Law, and that is to make it *compulsory* and let the authority which shall be created to appoint the supervisors be at Washington and not among

these white liners and murderers in the South.

Let the Law apply to all sections alike. Let it be the same in Louisiana as in Vermont and don't have any discrimination, we have too much discrimination here in the Union now. You and every Republican member of Congress and the President and the American people *must* realize the fact that it is better to punish one hundred innocent men than to let one guilty man escape, take one bad apple and place it in a barrel of sound ones and it will spoil every good one. So will the South, if let alone, corrupt every American State.

So, if Congress desires to save itself, it must protect itself from corruption, otherwise it will be its own destroyer and the world will laugh at its down fall.

There is no use to be weak kneed about this compulsory Election Law, with the cry of the South about Africanizing the South, we don't want the South Africanized, nor we don't want the South Caucasianized, we don't want the white south to rule unless they are in the majority, nor do we want the Black South to rule unless they are in a majority. What we want is a government of the people, not of the white people for the white people and by the white people, because that will be *contrary* to the law under which we American people live. The American constitution knows no race and no color.

Mr. Speaker, I think you outlined the only course for the Republican party to take, in your speech at Pittsburgh, yes, cut loose from the state elections and they will soon fall out among themselves, and when thieves fall out, just men always get their dues.

Don't enact an optional election law unless you mean to commit murder.

Don't be a party to the committal of murder because God will find you out.

Don't help to make a machine to murder other men unless they have conspired to take your life.

Don't be a party to the committal of sin because it will find you out.

Don't be a party to any scheme to oppress others because some day they will turn the tables on you. History states this from the foundation of the world, and why should it be otherwise in our case.

Don't allow yourself and friends to be bulldozed into enacting an optional law, because it means nothing more nor nothing less than murder for colored Republicans in the South. I am a Southern man by birth, and a Union man by nature. I love fair play and love my race, or at least the race I am assigned to, my father being a white man and my mother a colored woman. I have in the last four months visited a large number of Southern states and made over five hundred personal investigations about the murdering of colored people, and I find the truthful stories told by the victims themselves to be simply this, if they vote the Republican ticket, all wrong. But if they don't vote either ticket, why they are slaves. If they content themselves as laborers in the cotton, sugar and rice fields, and do all the menial labor for the South—white South,—they are all right and good "niggers" but just as soon as they aspire to anything Civil or Political, why they become bad "niggers" and must be removed.

If the Republican majority pass a National bill Election Law let it be compulsory and not optionally.

Kindly hand this letter to Senator George F. Hoar, and Representative Rowell of Illinois.

Trusting you will grant me the favor of reading this letter carefully, I remain

Yours, very truly, a young colored Republican of Illinois.

W. M. Caldwell

2959 Dearborn St., Chicago, Ill.

What Howard Says.

New York Press.—Good for the colored brother. As is generally known the Harvard orator for the year is a colored man, and now it seems that in the annual competition, in Harvard, for declamation prizes, the first was won by a young colored man named Dubois. We congratulate him and his fellows that he is a student in a college where square dealing and fair treatment are on top.

What will our South Carolina Episcopal friends do when they get to heaven? Assuming that a Christian colored man will be as welcome at the pearly gate as the most distinguished descendant of a long hated South Carolina family, how will they manage their little differences in the heavenly choir? There must be harmony there, you know.

Democratic Inconsistency.

Inter Ocean.—A Southern Democratic contemporary thinks "a Negro will have to be conspicuous to be counted in the census this year." If Southern Democrats were as anxious to count the colored man's vote as they are to have him enrolled in the census there would be less complaint. They want him enrolled in the census to give the white man power, and they prevent his voting for the same reason.

Bravery Commands respect.

New York Tribune.—A Mississippi negro has had the courage to fire into a mob of whitecaps who were bent on burning him to death in his house, and the best part of it is that he killed one of his tormentors and wounded two or three others. His brave action will probably cost him his life, sooner or later, but in the meantime he enjoys the sympathy even of some of his white neighbors.

Read THE PLAIN DEALER