

MINUTES
OF
VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
NINETY-FIRST
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
STATE OF NEW JERSEY.

CONVENED AT TRENTON, JANUARY 8th, 1867.

CAMDEN, N. J.:
S. CHEW, STEAM-POWER PRINTER, 13 MARKET STREET.
1867.

"An act for the relief of William S. Hunt, of the county of Hunterdon."

Was taken up, read a second time, considered by sections, agreed to, ordered to be engrossed and have a third reading.

Assembly bill No. 167, entitled

"An act to incorporate the Hackettstown Mutual Fire Insurance Company."

Was taken up, read a second time, considered by sections, agreed to, ordered to be engrossed and have a third reading:

Assembly bill No. 168, entitled

"A supplement to the act entitled 'An act to incorporate the Millville and Glassboro Railroad Company.'"

Was taken up, read a second time, considered by sections, amended, agreed to, ordered to be engrossed and have a third reading,

On motion the House adjourned.

WEDNESDAY, March 13, 1867.

House met at 10 A. M.

Prayer by Rev. W. E. Perry.

Upon calling the roll, the following gentlemen answered to their names:

Messrs. Atwater, Ayres, Bruere, Brown, Beesley, Baldwin, W. W. Clark, H. F. Clark, Christie, I. D. Condit, Collings, Coate, Custis [Speaker], Coles, Crozer, Dwyer, Davenport, Estler, Evans, Fulmer, Fort, Falckenbury, Garrison, Givens, Hendrickson, Hedden,

W. M. Iliff, W. J. Iliff, Jarrard, Lippincott, Moore, Murphy, Mount, Morris, Newell, Perrine, Pickel, Sayre, Stansbury, Trimble, Thompson, Taylor, Tyrrell, Vail, Voorhees, Vliet, Ward, White, Wolsieffer, Wilson, Yawger—51.

The minutes of yesterday's proceedings were read and approved.

Mr. Murphy from the Special Committee presented the following:

The Committee to whom was referred the petition of the ladies of New Jersey asking that the words "white male" might be stricken from the Constitution, would, after a fair hearing and explanation of the subject, respectfully report that they find it a question of the highest importance, and worthy of great consideration. Prejudice against female suffrage has so long governed the American people that the question has not had that investigation its merits properly demand. Your committee feel that the time has arrived when the question should be carefully considered, and the people have the opportunity of giving an expression of opinion on this most important matter. If intelligence should be a qualification for the right of suffrage—or property, or a residence for a term of years—either or all of these would seem to be not sufficient reason to deny women the right of the elective franchise. In fact, in the examination of this subject, your committee have failed to discover any reason why women should not vote. They pay taxes to support the government, and are subject to all its laws, yet taxation without representation we all agree is tyrannical.

We fought Great Britain for seven long years to free ourselves from this bondage, and for eighty years and more we have been practising the same thing on a class we claim as our best and truest friends. Her right, therefore, should not longer be withheld. As a matter of justice, it should be granted.

This subject, also, is worthy of great consideration, when we remember that to-day a great moral question is now agitating the public mind, and more difficult of solution than even the reconstruction of the state. From time immemorial a curse has afflicted the human family that has no parallel. History furnishes us with no nation that has been exempt from

its blighting effect. And as the years roll on, it gathers volume and power, until to-day it comes like a mighty army, crushing out the life-blood of the nation and encircling within its deadening folds the brightest ornaments of society and the loveliest of the human race. It has been fought by the church and the State, but never conquered. It has been wounded only to gather new life and determination for a more vigorous contest. To-day, in the State of New Jersey—the pride of all her sons—it wears a spectral crown, and defies even the action of this Legislature.

Excise bills are sent here to be passed by towns and cities, which they have not the moral courage to pass themselves; which if they did the parties passing them would be driven from power at the first subsequent election. The best mind of the State have no practical remedy, and find themselves only mourning at the sad devastation they are daily witnessing. Give to women the right of suffrage and you have the only remedy for this blighting pestilence. Like the magician's wand, its power would be instantly felt, and health and peace and order would be given the nation. New Jersey would then, indeed, be a land of promise and a land of hope. The great curse of the human family would be so mangled and mutilated that if it had any life, it would be recognized only to be despised and avoided.

Woman has no sympathy with the causes of crime and debauchery. Her instincts are pure, and naturally incline to the right of all questions of good order, good government, and to that principle in man which is noble and elevating in his character. Give her the ballot and you instantly bring into action that earnest penetration of mind which will not be satisfied with an exaltation to office of those who are not worthy of their representation.

Your committee have as yet failed to discover why, if woman is a help to man in household affairs, in the education of children, in the many business relations of life, and in all that pertains to the best interests of the church—why she should be found wanting when her attention is turned to the affairs of the state. In striking out the word "white" your committee think that little need be said. It is evident that sooner or later this must be done.

The National Government in the organization of the Southern States, have set a noble example of doing justice to

a race heretofore dishonored and dispised, but who, through the four years that imperilled the life of the nation, won for themselves a name that shall live untarnished on the page of history.

If ever a people have won for themselves a right to the elective franchise, these black men of our country did, when to uphold the ensign of our nation and perpetuate the principles of our glorious institutions, they faced the iron hail at Fort Wagner, Port Hudson, Richmond, and a hundred other fields, where they gave themselves a willing sacrifice, and suffer to-day the scorn of their former oppressors.

If we are willing to sympathize with the suffering masses of Europe—if the struggling sons of Hungary and Italy are worthy of our sympathy and recognition—if the down-trodden masses of Ireland, who have been suffering for centuries under the iron heel of despotism, and are now vainly struggling to gain for themselves the right of self-government, excite within us any meed of approbation, surely these son of toil, who have been so instrumental in saving for us the nation's life, cannot be longer denied a voice in the government under which they live, and which they have helped to perpetuate.

Never before has the state had so good an opportunity of doing justice to these men. Never before were the people so ready and willing to endorse the right of citizenship on the "discharge papers" from the successful strife through which they have passed. They are worth the name of citizens to day. Give them the elective franchise, you make them better citizens still. You attach them to all the interests of the state and elevate them to that condition in life that calls out a nobler ambition and a higher aspiration for all that is good and desirable in life. Longer delay is a punishment they do not deserve. Give them the ballot and the state is honored by rendering justice and adding lustre to its reputation.

The investigation of this question is not only interesting, but is overwhelming in the conclusion that the time has arrived when the people should have the privilege of expressing their opinion on this most important question. In several of the Northern States, the question is now fairly before the people for their action, and your committee would recommend the adoption of the following resolution;

Resolved, That the Judiciary Committee be and they are hereby instructed to report the bill calling a convention to

alter the Constitution, to consider this and other matters, that the question may be fairly brought before the people for their action.

(Signed)

WM. H. MURPHY,

Chairman of Committee

Which was read.

Mr. Atwater moved to adopt the report.

Mr. W. W. Clark moved to lay the whole matter on the table.

Upon agreeing to which motion, the yeas and nays were ordered, and taken as follows:

Gentlemen voting in the affirmative, were

Messrs. Allen, Brown, W. W. Clark, Christie, Collings, Coles, Crozer, Davenport, Fulmer, Fort, Garrison, Givens, Henry, Hendrickson, W. J. Iliff, W. J. Iliff, Moore, Nixon, Newell, Perrine, Pickel, Van Emburgh, Vail, Vliet, Ward, White, Wilson—27.

Gentlemen voting in the negative, were

Messrs. Atwater, Bruere, Ball, Beesley, Baldwin, H. F. Clark, I. D. Condit, Coate, Custis (Speaker), Dwyer, Edwards, Estler, Evans, Falkenbury, Hedden, Jarrard, Lippincott, Murphy, Mount, Morris, Sayre, Stansbury, Trimble, Thompson, Taylor, Tyrrell, Voorhees, Wolsieffer, Yawger—28.

So said motion was not agreed to.

Mr. H. F. Clark moved to indefinitely postpone said report and resolutions, and called for the previous question.

Upon agreeing to which motion, the yeas and nays were ordered, and taken as follows:

Gentlemen voting in the affirmative, were

Messrs. Allen, Brown, Beesley, W. W. Clark, H. F. Clark, Christie, Collings, Coate, Coles, Crozer, Davenport, Fulmer, Fort, Garrison, Givens, Henry, Hendrickson, Hedden, W. M. Iliff, W. J. Iliff, Jarrard, Moore, Nixon, Newell, Perrine, Pickel, Van Emburgh, Vail, Vliet, Ward, Wilson, Yawger—32.