

COLORED NATIONAL CONVENTION.

National Commemorative Holiday.

The St. Louis Democrat reports the national colored convention, which continued its session in that city last Monday:

The secretary called the roll, which showed sixty-seven delegates in attendance from Illinois, Indiana, Arkansas, Iowa, Nebraska and Missouri.

On motion, the rules were suspended to allow reference to the business committee of a resolution introduced by Mr. O. L. Smith, of Missouri, petitioning Congress to remove all political disabilities from the repentant rebels of the South. It was so referred.

Mr. G. B. Wedley, of St. Louis, proposed the passage of a resolution recommending the setting apart of the fourth of July in commemoration of the several events which have culminated in the full enfranchisement of the colored people as American citizens. Mr. Wedley stated that in the afternoon he would give his reasons why this day, above all others, should be set apart by the colored people as a national holiday. He referred to the business committee.

A resolution was introduced by Professor O. L. C. Hughes, of St. Louis, to wage an aggressive warfare against the use of spirituous and malt liquors, which met with the same reference.

Mr. Hughes also presented the following, which was also referred:

WHEREAS, We believe the right basis of government is equal rights for all her citizens, and all free governments rest upon the principle of the inherent right of the people to govern themselves as opposed to arbitrary or despotic power, and that this is the great underlying right, the broad principles on which a free government alone can safely rest. We also believe all citizens should participate on equal terms in the choice of the principles that shall rule them, and that suffrage is simply the expression, legally ascertained, of the voice of the majority of the people. Furthermore, in the language of the immortal Lincoln, we believe "he who would be no slave must consent to have no slave;" that those who deny freedom to others deserve it not for themselves, and under a just God can not long retain it; therefore, be it

Resolved, That woman being governed by the same laws and living in this free government where the rights of citizenship are determined by the law of equality, we deem it just, equitable and in harmony with the spirit of a true democracy and free government, that she shall exercise the same prerogative as we claim for ourselves.

Resolved, further, That no law in this free America is just where a person is taxed without representation, and tried by a jury less than their peers; that we believe in equality, not of sex, knowledge, fortune, color, strength or beauty, but of rights. Equality before the law is a favorite and prominent maxim in the Magna Charta of our people. If, then, all citizens are equal before the law, the law should be equal to all, without favor, partiality or prejudice. If laws bind alike, then all should alike have a voice in their enactment.

Resolved, That woman is justly entitled to all the prerogatives of a citizen, in the light of the spirit of our government, and the fourteenth amendment, which reads: "All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States," and that we demand them on those grounds

M. S. M. HUGHES,
S. V. ROBINSON,
JENNIE STORY,
MARY ROBERSON.

Rev. A. W. Jackson, of Illinois, offered a resolution settling about the twenty-second of September as a national holiday, commemorative of the enfranchisement of the colored race. Referred.

LETTER FROM REV. MOSES DICKSON.

KANSAS CITY, Mo., September 21, 1871.
B. R. Williams, Esq.:

DEAR SIR—I regret exceedingly that I can not meet the convention. Business over which I have no control will detain me here. You will please to give my kindest regards to the convention. The present meeting of the representatives of our people is, just at this time, one of great importance: the choice of a day to celebrate as a memorial of the sad events that have resulted in giving justice, freedom and political rights. If I have my choice, I say, give us the Fourth of July. The reason can be found in the declaration of independence. A most important matter that will come before the convention will be to tell the country where we are on the political issues of the day. Remember that you are the representative of 800,000 or more voters. I earnestly ask the convention not to dodge the question or to give an uncertain sound; in the plainest language tell the world in what party colored men will act. Take a position and lay down a platform that all can stand on. I have heard that it has been suggested that the convention say nothing about the political feeling of our people. This must not be as American citizens. We owe it to our common country to speak out. It is time. Fraternally yours,
MOSES DICKSON.

The secretary read a letter, addressed to the convention by G. Fredell, of Omaha, Nebraska, to which he presented a plan by which colored workmen may be enabled to secure homes on the public lands of the country. The colored people, the writer said, were left by the emancipation proclamation penniless and without education; and, although the statements of the freedmen's banks show a rapid and increased progress of accumulation yet there are many who become discouraged in their efforts, and are driven into the towns and cities on account of the dearth or scarcity of employment, and they often become serfs and drudges in the grove of life. Capitalists, with millions of money, are ever ready to loan portions of it when they can do so with a proper guarantee of the principal and interest. To secure this, bodies of from fifty to one hundred families could organize, with five or ten solid men at their head. Each man contributing fifty dollars would enable them to purchase reduced rates for emigrants, to reach Nebraska or some other Western Territory on government lands. By paying eighteen dollars they can secure a home one hundred and sixty acres after a tenure of six months; they will get a deed on the United States government, by pay, at the end of the year one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre. Failing to do this, they can homestead their farms, which the law requires them to live on and cultivate. Five years, becoming theirs at the end of that time, with a clear deed from the government. In order to do this, the settlers require some means to enable them to live and to prepare their homes and for the support of their families. The first year of plowing and cultivation increases its use five dollars and more on the acre, which the writer thought the settler could engage to a capitalist as security, to provide the means of making their homes permanent. Colored men must work and make the same sacrifices that the whites do to cure the end that all seek—to better their condition in life. The communications were received and filed.

Mr. Hughes moved the appointment of committee of seven to prepare an address to the people of the United States.

The motion was carried, and the chair appointed Mr. J. T. Smith, Rev. William Jackson, E. A. Dawson, W. G. Robinson, B. W. Stewart, Rev. R. T. W. James and E. O. Smith.

Mr. C. L. De Randamie was given the floor, to speak on a privileged question, and proceeded to read the call under which the convention assembled, as published in the Democrat of last Friday. We came here, he said, by that call, in the capacity of colored citizens, as such to place ourselves in a political attitude differing from that of white men. You acknowledge that you have equal civil and political rights by the fact of calling a convention to decide upon the political course of colored men in the campaign of 1872. You assert that you have different political interests. I hold that you have not. I consider that anything calculated to foster caste or encourage dis-

tinctions between the whites and blacks is mischievous, and calculated to harm everybody. The sooner caste and prejudice are done away with the better. Politically, we have no color. We are not colored; we are American citizens, pure and simple. [Cries of "Good, good."] Hence, to style ourselves colored citizens is to perpetuate, to your own detriment, the spirit of caste from which we have already suffered so much. Anything like conventions, or celebrations, or courses of political policy, as colored men, should not be encouraged. Colored conventions, as such, ought to be suppressed. And socially the convention can accomplish nothing, because you can not legislate away prejudice. Suppose white men organize themselves as white men, what would be the result? We want nothing colored, politically or otherwise. There have been quite a number of high-sounding political resolutions introduced into this body. They are foreign to the call, and have no business here. In addition to that, the St. Louis delegation are under instructions from a mass meeting, which passed resolutions to the effect that it was inexpedient that any definite line of policy should be determined on in a convention composed exclusively of one class of citizens. Well, Mr. Chairman, deprecating every movement as colored men, and everything calculated to perpetuate caste and militate against our advancement, and in view of the resolutions just read within your hearing, I now move the adjournment of this convention *sine die*.

Mr. Holmes, of St. Louis: I second the motion.

Professor O. L. C. Hughes, of St. Louis, moved to lay the resolution on the table, which was carried by a very heavy majority.

The committee on business here entered, and reported that they had adopted the following resolution on the subject of a national commemorative holiday:

Resolved, That we, the representatives of the colored people of the United States, in convention assembled, do hereby recommend the setting apart of the Fourth of July to commemorate the several events which have culminated in our present position in the full possession of all the rights of American citizens.

Mr. Alexander Clarke, of Iowa, presented a minority report in favor of the selection of the first of January and the Fourth of July. A second minority report declared in favor of the first of August.

Mr. J. T. Mahorney, of Indiana, rose to speak to the resolution. The great subject which the negro in this country is now debating is the celebration of a national holiday by the colored people all over the country, in commemoration of the great events that have culminated in the disenfranchisement of the race. One thing they must consider: that the negro is in a transitory state in this government. The circumstances that surrounded them were such as never surrounded them before.

Mr. Mahorney then reverted to the time of the issuing of the emancipation proclamation, and read extracts from the reports of the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Interior, and from the speeches of President Lincoln, to show that the proclamation was issued as a matter of expediency. He demanded that they know no negro in America. The whole question turns on this point. Let a German come to this country, and he soon becomes identified with America and American citizens. Should they always be considered negroes? They must act their part. The issue is upon us—we can not avoid it.

Mr. Hughes: I do not rise to make a speech now upon this all-absorbing question, but I have vanity enough to presume upon saying a word here which I think should enable the representatives of the people here assembled to give that undivided attention to the speaker, which I think is the right of every representative here, and that the merits of the question demand. We are here from all sections of the Union—from the North, the South, the East and the West. And there ought to be that largeness of heart and soul as will allow every gentleman who has a right on this floor to rise and express his own opinions on the instructions he has received from the constituents who have sent him here. I, myself, am under the impression that we can do no better than to celebrate the Fourth of July, the day upon which were declared the great principles upon which this government is laid.

Mr. E. R. Williams, the president of the convention, said that, as the only delegate present from Nebraska, he was instructed to give his voice for the thirtieth of March, the anniversary of the promulgation of the fifteenth amendment.

Mr. George B. Wedley: Mr. President—We have assembled here as representatives from the different States of the Union in a national convention. I think the idea was a grand one, when the citizens of Nebraska selected the city of St. Louis as the most appropriate place in which the convention could be held. What could have inspired Nebraska with the idea? Was it because this is the centre of the nation geographically, or was it because St. Louis is built upon the eastern bank of the mighty stream on this continent, whose turbulent waters wash the shores of thousands of miles of the most fertile land in the world—a city which is destined to be the brightest and most populous in the world, and at no distant day the seat of empire, where all the questions of public welfare and national policy shall be discussed. It is indeed an appropriate place to assemble, and feeling, as I do, that deep interest in the welfare of my race, allow me to suggest to the gentlemen of this convention the importance of calm deliberation and just decision. Mr. President, when I offered this resolution, "that we, the colored people of the nation, shall celebrate the fourth day of July in commemoration of the attainment of our citizenship, I promised I would give this convention some reasons why this is the most appropriate day to commemorate the disenfranchisement and enfranchisement of our race. My first reason for setting apart the fourth of July is that we could celebrate it in common with all the people of this nation. We find, in reading American history, that on March the fifth, 1770, six years previous to the signing of the declaration of independence, the citizens of Boston made an attack on the British troops, in which Christus Attucks, a colored man, was killed, who was the first martyr that fell in defense of American liberty and independence. All the subsequent events were but links in the chain of events which was eventually to place all the citizens of the United States upon the same political plane of equality—the agitation of the slavery question, the murder of Lovejoy, the repeal of the Missouri compromise, the subsequent difficulties in Kansas, the hanging of John Brown, the election of Abraham Lincoln, the arming of the South, the assault on Fort Sumter, the proclamation of emancipation, and the passage of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth amendments. I am for setting apart the Fourth of July, because the principles laid down in the great American Magna Charta assured us of our citizenship. The spirit of those principles which were set forth by the people on that day never ceased working until the citizens were made free and equal. I am for it, because it is the great national holiday on which the whole people of the republic send forth the grand and glorious anthem of freedom in remembrance of the day on which the nation was born. I am for it because I am an American citizen. I am for it because I believe it is our indispensable sacred duty as American citizens to do everything within our power to obliterate every line that marks us as a distinguished people, and to remove the prejudices which have been engendered against us on account of our former degraded condition.

J. T. Johnson, of St. Louis, proposed the thirtieth of August, when General John C. Fremont "issued his proclamation in the city of St. Louis, declaring that all property real and personal, of all persons in the State of Missouri who were in arms against the United States should be confiscated to the United States, and their slaves, if any they were, shall be decreed free men." It was, said, the first blow that the institu-

tion of slavery received, and one from which it never recovered [applause], and it was in August when Great Britain manumitted her slaves.

Alfred Cortes, of Indiana, then made a few remarks in which he strongly urged setting apart the thirtieth of August as the anniversary of the promulgation of the fifteenth amendment by President Grant.

The convention adjourned until Tuesday.