

THIS WAS THE CIVIL WAR



LINCOLN FACED WITH DILEMMA—The twilight of the Union came in late March, 1861. President Lincoln was faced with the dilemma of Fort Sumter and other government forts—should they be reinforced with men, or just provisions? Secretary of State Seward, through a Supreme Court Justice, was negotiating with a "commission" from the Confederacy. The "commission" tried to

Sumter Dilemma to Lincoln

By MERTON T. AKERS
UPI Correspondent

The twilight of the Union came in late March, 1861.

And Ft. Sumter at Charleston, S.C., commanded by Maj. Robert Anderson and his short-rattled garrison of 85, was a symbol.

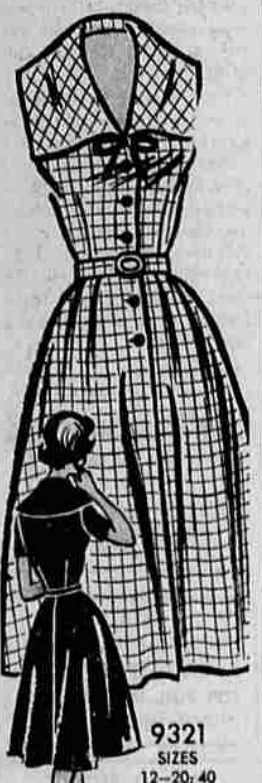
President Lincoln and his divided cabinet wrestled with the problem. The question could be boiled down to simple terms. But the answer was not so easy.

Should Ft. Sumter be relieved with provisions only? Or should it be both provisioned and reinforced? Or should it be abandoned to the young Confederacy? If the fort were provisioned only and Confederate forces shot at any mercy ships such as the Star of the West as they had two months before, then the South would be guilty of "firing on bread."

Southerners Would Fire
If an attempt was made to provision and reinforce Sumter with troops and ammunition, then the southerners most certainly would fire on the expedition. The result was to be civil war, of course. But the Confederacy would bear the responsibility of firing the first shot.

If the hungry garrison were removed as the Confederates were demanding and would be happy to facilitate, then the Lincoln administration would

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be backing down and in effect admitting its impotency to solve the crisis. Northern public opinion would not stand for that.

Most of the cabinet favored pulling out of the fort to avoid conflict.

William H. Seward, secretary of state, was negotiating most unofficially and most quietly through a Justice of the U.S. Supreme court with a "commission" from the Confederate government. He could not receive them officially. That would have constituted tacit recognition of the right of secession.

Knowledge Mystery
How much Lincoln knew about these talks remains a mystery, but certainly he knew that Seward was talking to the southern delegates through the go-between Justice John A. Campbell, who remained on the job in Washington despite the fact his state had seceded.

Seward committed himself unofficially to the "commis-

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Lenten Message

By THE REV.
R. J. McCracken, D.D.,
Minister, The Riverside
Church, New York
(Written for UPI)

Why is it that we hear so much about Lenten observance in the matter of diet and so little about Lenten observance in the matter of the disposition? A woman said ruefully, "It isn't his tobacco my husband needs to cut out; it's his temper."

There are men who are never tempted by wine or women, but who have no control over their tongue. Touchiness, fault-finding, readiness to take offense are indulgences and should be brought under control.

An old lady professed special fondness for the passage of Scripture, "In My Father's house are many mansions." Asked why, she answered, "My son-in-law William is a good man and well-deserving of the heavenly mansions, but I have no desire to live with William."

It takes little imagination to picture the type of person William was, a good man, not addicted to sins of the body, but with a disposition that made him difficult both to like and to live with.

Lent is a challenge to curb the tongue, control the temper, humble vanity and pride, get rid of prejudices and animosities.

Completion Date Set for Highway

Completion date for the Lake of the Woods section of the "Winnemucca-to-the-Sea" highway has been set for fall, 1962, according to W. C. Williams, state highway engineer.

Williams pointed out that, on the west side of the mountain, the 5 1/2-mile Henley Ranch-Forest Boundary section is under contract and is half completed. The \$658,000 project is to be completed by August.

From the forest boundary to about five miles east, grading has been completed. For the next 12 miles, to connect with the end of the paved road at the Lake of the Woods, the bureau of public roads has contracted the work. The \$1,200,000 project is expected to be finished this fall.

All in all, under present plans, "... we will have a completely surfaced highway by the fall of 1962," Williams said.

Construction on the Redwood highway, the nearly six-mile section between Grants Pass and the Applegate river, was contracted last fall. The majority of the work is expected to be completed by November, 1961, with minor construction to be finished in 1962.

The east Grants Pass interchange, a \$545,000 project, is to be contracted late this year, providing the right-of-way is obtained.

If coercion were used against South Carolina, Virginia surely would secede, and as Virginia went so would the other slave states—Kentucky, Missouri, Arkansas and perhaps even Maryland in addition to North Carolina and Tennessee.

At one point Lincoln must have agonized over the possibility of trading Sumter for Virginia's loyalty for he told John B. Baldwin of Virginia that "a state for a fort is no bad business."

But Baldwin, a Union sympathizer and a delegate to the Virginia secession convention, could make no such promise.

There hung the problem in the last week of March 1861, the last March for four years that the country would know peace and the most fateful one in its history.

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