

Lincoln on State of the Union

By MERTON T. AKERS
UPI Correspondent

"Fellow citizens, we cannot escape history."

President Lincoln was writing to Congress on Dec. 1, 1862, in his State of the Union message.

He was speaking of slavery and in favor of the adoption of a constitutional amendment providing for compensation of any state which would abolish slavery before 1900.

Lincoln wrote on: "We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves."

"No personal significance or insignificance can spare one or the other of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation."

"We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We even we here hold the power and bear the

responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free-honorable alike in what we give and what we preserve."

"We shall nobly save or meanly lose the last, best hope of earth."

"Other means may succeed; this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just—a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless."

Something for Slavers

Then Lincoln threw in something for the slaveholders of the South.

"It is no less true for often having been said that the people of the South are no more responsible for the original introduction of this property than are the people of the North."

He also threw in something to improve his public relations with members of Congress.

"I do not forget the gravity which should characterize a paper addressed to the Congress of the nation by the Chief Magistrate of the nation. Nor do I forget that some of you are seniors, nor that many of you have more experience than I in the conduct of public affairs. Yet I trust that in view of the great responsibility resting upon me, you will perceive no want of respect in any undue earnestness I may seem to display."

Times have changed, he told them.

"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise to the occasion. As our case is new, so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves."

That was Lincoln making one last plea for an orderly solution of the red-hot slavery problem—a solution which might appeal to the border states, to northern Democrats who were lukewarm on the issue and to the small but hard-core northern proslavery advocates.

In a month from the time the message was written Lincoln was on record as pledging himself to make permanent his Emancipation Proclamation. Many thought, and some feared, he would not go through with his promise.

Lincoln hazarded no guess whether the South would accept the constitutional amendment but spoke hopefully that adoption "would end the

struggle now, and save the Union forever."

Secretary of Treasury Salmon P. Chase was more realistic. When Lincoln read the draft of the message to the cabinet, Chase predicted the compensated emancipation plan would come to nothing and that Lincoln's repeated suggestion of colonization of Negroes would suffer a similar fate.

A two-thirds vote in Congress for the amendment was out of the question, Chase said. Even if it stood that test, a three-fourths vote of states for ratification meant that all the border states must approve. Earlier negotiations with Delaware had failed and Kentucky congressmen had registered their disapproval.

Newspaper comment ran along those negative lines, too, and senators—particularly Radical Republicans—ignored the proposal. Nothing ever came of it in Congress.

Lincoln's plan for compensated and gradual freeing of the slaves was one more step in the transition from his earlier stand that slavery was constitutional where it existed and his eventual position that the "peculiar institution" must be abolished and Negroes made full citizens.

One of the forces pushing Lincoln toward a firmer stand on slavery was the Radical Republican group in Congress, led in the House by Thaddeus Stevens, of Pennsylvania.

Stevens was well ahead of his party on the slavery question and had been for years. He already was thinking in advance on penalties to be assessed against the Confederates when the war was won.

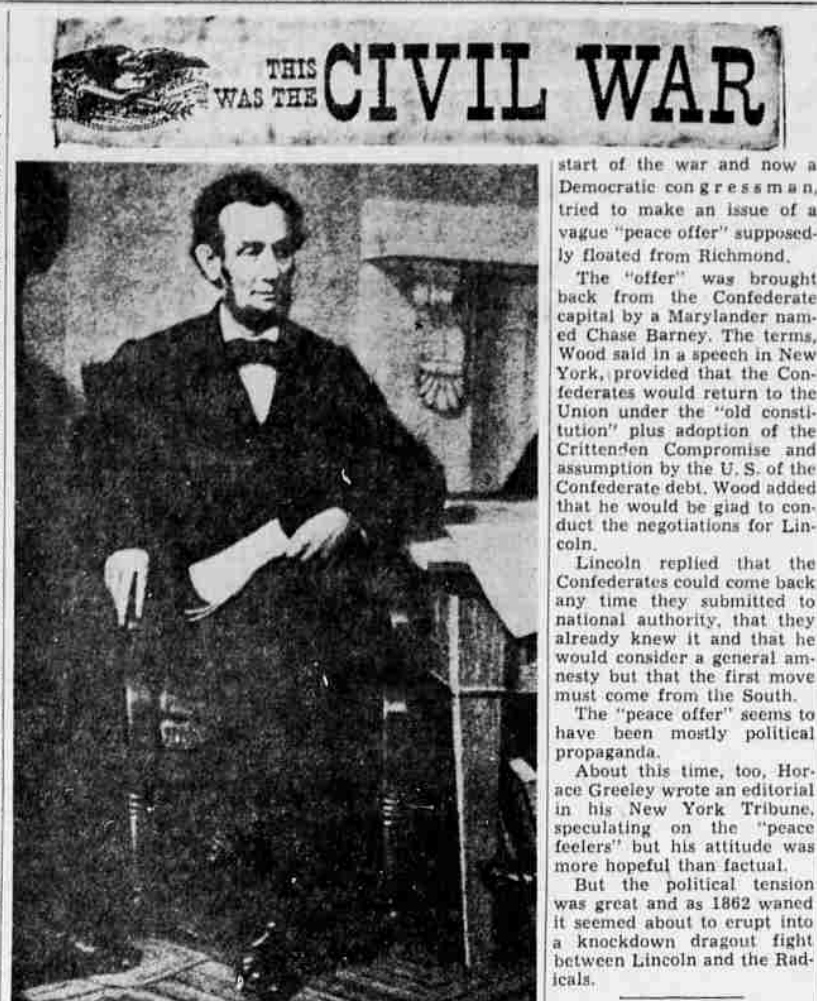
Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was not strong enough for Stevens, even after it was formally proclaimed on January 1, 1863.

Had Endurance

Early in '63, Stevens had reminded the House of what he thought should be done to win the war and bring the seceding states back into the Union.

Nothing short of "actual extermination or exile or starvation" would force the Confederates to surrender, he told the House. They have pluck, energy he went on. Only by freeing and arming the slaves and turning them against their masters, could the South be conquered.

Stevens' views were shared



WROTE OF SLAVERY—On Dec. 1, 1862, President Lincoln was writing his State of the Union message to Congress. He wrote of slavery and in favor of adoption of a Constitutional amendment providing for compensation to any state which would abolish slavery before 1900. He wrote of history and he wrote of an idealistic future. He appealed to the slaveholders of the South, and tried to improve his public relations with Congress. He was, in the message, making one last plea for an orderly solution of the red hot slavery issue, and was trying for some sense of unity. But political tension was great and as 1862 waned, a knockdown dragout fight was shaping up between Lincoln and the Radicals. Here, from the Library of Congress collection, Lincoln is shown at the time the battle was shaping.

in the Senate by Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, Zach Chandler of Michigan, Ben Wade of Ohio and Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, among others. This was formidable opposition for Lincoln to buck even though he felt the Radicals were ahead of the country and that he, as commander-in-chief, had more power to tack-

le the slavery question and the arming of Negroes than Congress had.

As Stevens and the Radicals stirred up the issue in Congress, the Democrats, making the most of their election victories of November, piled more fuel on the fire.

Fernando Wood, pro-Southern mayor of New York at the

start of the war and now a Democratic congressman, tried to make an issue of a vague "peace offer" supposedly floated from Richmond.

The "offer" was brought back from the Confederate capital by a Marylander named Chase Barney. The terms, Wood said in a speech in New York, provided that the Confederates would return to the Union under the "old constitution" plus adoption of the Crittenden Compromise and assumption by the U. S. of the Confederate debt. Wood added that he would be glad to conduct the negotiations for Lincoln.

Lincoln replied that the Confederates could come back any time they submitted to national authority, that they already knew it and that he would consider a general amnesty but that the first move must come from the South.

The "peace offer" seems to have been mostly political propaganda.

About this time, too, Horace Greeley wrote an editorial in his New York Tribune, speculating on the "peace feelers" but his attitude was more hopeful than factual.

But the political tension was great and as 1862 waned it seemed about to erupt into a knockdown dragout fight between Lincoln and the Radicals.

Actor Dick Powell To Leave Hospital

Santa Monica, Calif.—(UPI)—Actor Dick Powell was expected to be released from St. John's hospital today following treatment for what doctors described as a muscular spasm of the back brought on by a cold.

Powell, 58, also undergoing treatment for cancer, entered the hospital last Monday. His physician said there was no connection between the two ailments.

DISCUSS STEEL OUTPUT

New Delhi—(UPI)—West German industrialist Alfred Krupp meets Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at lunch today to discuss plans for tripling the output of the Rourkela steel mill, built by German technicians.

Final Power Test Administered to 'Nonflying Bird'

Jackass Flats, Nev.—(UPI)—The sixth and final powered test of the KIWI "nonflying bird" was run off Friday in the \$46 million program to develop a nuclear rocket for the U.S. space effort.

Results of the test, one in a series of stationary rockets in Project Rover, were expected to be completed by the end of the year.

"No real positive conclusion of how well we did will be available for well between two weeks and a month," said Keith Boyer, technical director of the Rover Program

from Los Alamos, N.M.

The Atomic Energy commission said the run on liquid hydrogen lasted for approximately 280 seconds at half the planned power. Test officials decided to shut down the reactor before planned power was reached when flashes were observed in the exhaust flames.

Cause of the flashes was not determined, but the AEC said the orderly shutdown procedure should allow useful data to be obtained. It said the initial recorded data showed normal reactor operation, leaving unexplained the visual flashes.

The KIWI roared like a multi-jet bomber and shot a bright orange flame into a cloudless sky.

Weather and scientific prediction said fallout from the experiment would fall harmlessly in remote desert areas.

BALD-HEADED THIEVES?

Miami—(UPI)—Detectives are working on a hair raising case. Somebody stole 20 pounds of human hair and 214 wigs valued at more than \$25,000 during the week end.

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