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Citation: *Debates in the Texas Constitutional Convention of 1875 Texas. Constitutional Convention (1875). Austin: Published by the University of Texas, c1930.*

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FIFTH DAY

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1875⁸

MR. COOK, of Gonzales, chairman of the Committee on Printing, reported the following proposals: The *Statesman* would furnish the required report, 900 copies, at 4 cents; 1,350 copies at 3½, and 1,800 at 3 cents. The *News* offered twenty papers to each delegate at 2½ cents. The proprietor of the *State Gazette* proposed to furnish the *Gazette* with full stenographic report of the proceedings of the Convention at 5 cents each, twenty copies for each delegate. The *Galveston News* offered to supply their paper in any number of copies at 3 cents. The *Telegraph* was offered, with the requisite report, at 5 cents for 500 copies, and cost of the composition of the journals. The committee did not feel at liberty to contract for the papers, but reported the above facts and asked for further instructions.

MR. COOK said that the committee did not feel authorized to contract for the papers of any publishing company, because of the individual prejudices of members. He suggested that Colonel Elliott, editor of the *State Gazette*, claimed consideration on the ground of the excellency of the *Gazette's* stenographic reports. But the committee thought it their duty to ask for instructions before proceeding further.

MR. MARION MARTIN, of Navarro, moved that the report of the Committee on Printing and Contingent Expenses be received, and that the further consideration of subscribing for newspapers be indefinitely postponed.

MR. MCLEAN opposed the adoption of the resolution and offered as a substitute that the Convention subscribe for 1,800 copies of the *State Gazette*. He said that delegates had seen enough to know that the proceedings were reported correctly only by that paper. He thought the people he represented expected the convention to make an appropriation for stenographic reports, in order that they might have the benefit of accurately preserved proceedings. He was very desirous that his constituency should have access to correct reports

⁸The proceedings for this day were taken from the *State Gazette* (Austin), September 11, 1875.

of the work of the Convention. His resolution was that the Committee on Printing and Contingent Expenses be instructed to contract with John D. Elliott for 1,800 copies of the daily *Gazette*, containing a synoptical report of the proceedings of the Convention with a statement of the position of each member who might express himself before that body. The substitute was lost.

MR. McCORMICK, of Colorado, then offered as a substitute to the motion of Mr. Martin that each member be allowed to subscribe for twenty copies of papers containing the proceedings of the Convention, as he might select, and at a cost not to exceed 3 cents a copy.

MR. McLEAN said he considered the question a very important one. They desired that the work of the Convention might be approved by the people. They expected to use their best efforts in the work and desired the approbation of the people, not personally to themselves as to representing the people of Texas on that floor, but of the Constitution they should submit for ratification. He thought the people were unanimous in a desire for a publication of the proceedings of the Convention, in order that they might know what the Convention was doing in time to vote intelligently upon the work submitted to them. Under the resolution of the gentleman from Colorado they were allowed to publish the proceedings, not by a paper friendly to the Convention and its purpose, but by any paper the delegates might select. He had no individual preference for papers or editors, but desired simply to take the paper which would most faithfully report the proceedings, and which would most honorably advocate what it thought for the best interests of the State in the action of the Convention. Delegates could assist or retard the work of the Convention by the manner in which they acted upon the printing question. If they desired to be sustained and helped they should depend upon their friends. He had no particular friendship or love for the *State Gazette*. Gentlemen who might have taken time to examine the course of that paper knew that he was under no obligations to it, but he knew that the *Gazette* was faithfully reporting the proceedings of the Convention, and that it was superior to others he might name, which were charged with being unfriendly to the Convention and were endeavoring to strike a blow at the Convention in the interests of officeholders. Knowing the patriotism and

honesty of the *Gazette*, he desired that if patronage should be extended to any, that it should be given to the paper which had been the friend of the Convention, which had always represented the State of Texas on public questions, which was upright, which lent itself to no cliques or rings, which reported most faithfully the Convention's proceedings, and which would advocate what the delegates would present to the people. Such a paper should have their patronage, and a paper which struck the Convention at every opportunity should not have their encouragement. They all knew the influence of the press for good or bad, and should not vote their patronage to sustain a press which would aim to defeat the objects of the Convention. For the reasons stated he insisted upon the adoption of some such resolution as that contained in the substitute he had presented.⁹

MR. MARION MARTIN said he was very much surprised that the last speaker should favor only \$4 per diem to members, and yet favor that expense in newspapers. He believed that in advocacy of the first subject he had been imbued with a spirit of retrenchment and reform. He, Mr. Martin, proposed to subscribe for what papers he wanted personally. If they were to subscribe out of the public funds, to do the thing essentially, they ought to subscribe for papers by the thousands, for twenty copies sent back to their constituents would be a mere farce.

JUDGE REAGAN said if the members of the Convention saw proper to subscribe for twenty papers a day, of course they could do so. But the way it operated was generally found to be as follows: They sent a copy to one constituent one day and to another the next day, but persons who received them did not get them consecutively, and could obtain no intelligent view of the Convention. Three papers published in Austin were publishing abstracts of the proceedings of the Convention and would go to whomsoever might subscribe

⁹Mr McLean was a man of considerable parliamentary experience, having represented an eastern Texas district in the Federal Congress. His praise of the *Gazette* was justifiable. It reported the proceedings of the Convention from six to ten times as fully as did its nearest rivals, and was the most consistent of all the papers in defending the action of the Convention throughout its sessions. It is unfortunate that Mr McLean's position was not sustained by the convention.

for them. The *Telegraph* and *Galveston News* were publishing synopses which went to their subscribers. Other papers had correspondents in Austin, or took their accounts from the papers referred to, and would inform their subscribers of the proceedings of the Convention, so that for the purpose indicated—informing the public of their doings—they did not need the number of copies asked for in the resolution. But if they needed what was suggested by the gentleman from Titus; if they wanted to pension a paper, to get it as an organ for the Convention, then he cared not what paper it was, he opposed it, for he had looked for many years upon organs as an evil to the country and a curse. Outside of the want of utility of subscribing for the papers asked for, there was another question pertaining to it. The people had demanded that the expenses of the State Government should be reduced. In obedience to the general demand they had met, and one of the earliest acts was to deduct \$270 a day from the per diem of members. In addition they had reduced the expenses of the Convention to one-third of that of the last House of Representatives. They had provided that the mileage of members should not exceed one-third of that formerly paid. Thus far they had started off in obedience to the will of the people in maintaining an economical expenditure. If they should, for the purpose of conferring benefit upon others, pass the proposition of the gentleman from Titus—not then before them—or that of the gentleman from Colorado, they would add \$54 a day to the expenses of the Convention. Multiplied by the number of days they would probably be in session it would make a large sum, but he would not object so much to it if there were compensating benefits. Was not the reading public advised through the current channels of the action of the Convention? If they sent a copy of a paper occasionally, and failed to send it regularly, the party did not get the whole story of the Convention and the papers sent became useless to him. He thought the proposition was wanting in utility, as it did not furnish a consecutive report. If they were to support papers friendly to the Convention and its objects, then they would not be doing their whole duty to confer their patronage on a single paper. The great mass of the Democratic papers of the State, as far as he knew, were supporting the objects of the Convention. Then why should they discriminate, when all were promoting the objects

of the Convention, in securing a good Constitution? He regretted having consumed so much time, but they had to meet the issue. If they were to maintain the unity of purpose they had commenced in the convention, they should not vote needless expenditures of the public money without receiving corresponding benefits. He would vote to indefinitely postpone the whole subject.

MR. MCLEAN said the gentleman from Anderson had charged him with having proposed to pension a paper, to advocate before the people anything they might do, in order that their work might be approved. He replied that he did not wish to do that, but desired to protect the people against the secret influence which had been at work since the question of a Constitutional Convention was proposed to the people. Everybody knew that the people desired a Convention, but one Legislature after another had postponed it from some cause, and when it was finally presented to the people there was still an influence, latent and insidious, the origin of which he did not intend to trace, which opposed all its influence to the call of a Convention and the adoption of a Constitution. He repeated that if the people were to be informed of their proceedings—and he knew their desire and willingness to pay for them—they desired that such information should come through a medium friendly to the Convention and its interests, and what they understood to be their true interests. He knew that prejudices were at work. He knew that gentlemen did not like this and that newspaper, and this and that editor. When men sought the positions of great men, and newspapers by their notices contributed to or retarded their progress to the ends desired, such men were apt to classify the politics and estimation of newspapers and were controlled, perhaps, in their public work by their prejudices and estimates of newspaper men. But having no reputation of that sort, and not desiring any, he simply proposed that the paper advocating the interests of the people in their Convention, publishing faithful reports, and that newspaper managed by a man known to be friendly to the interests of the Convention and of promoting the desires of the people, receive the patronage of the Convention. Hence, came the suggestions he had made and was prepared to defend. He cared not how much capital might be sought to be made out of his advocacy of a man who might be at that time unpopular with the politicians, but whom he knew

occupied a high position in the estimation of the people of his state. He favored him because he was friendly to the objects of the Convention, and considered him more capable of doing the work than the managers of the other papers. It was beneath the dignity of delegates to go into personalities. The honorable member from Anderson was above anything of that sort. His history as a public man, his reputation as a man of sense and propriety, placed him above anything of that sort; but he did feel that he had made an unkind allusion. He hoped he had misunderstood the gentleman from Anderson in connection with the subject, and perhaps he had done so. In reply to the charge of advocating the pensioning of a newspaper, he would state that they were not there to support those papers which supported their personal or individual interests before the people, and he had never claimed that they were.

JUDGE REAGAN interrupted to state that he wished to say that he had not used the words ascribed to him, or if he did he did not intend to do so. He had referred to the suggestion of compensating papers to support the action of the Convention.

MR. MCLEAN said he knew the gentleman would not make a remark of that sort. His character was above it. He hoped the Convention would return to the proposition he had made, but which had been voted down. They could resurrect it and give the *State Gazette* an order for twenty copies a day for each member of the Convention.

MR. MCCORMICK asked why Mr. McLean proposed to give the *Gazette* 5 cents a copy when he could get other papers for 3 cents a copy.

MR. MCLEAN said he did not know the price quoted by the committee, but he would prefer giving the *Gazette* 5 cents to giving the other papers 3 cents. Some papers were read and some were not. The people were willing to ascertain what the *Gazette* contained. They knew its sentiments. They were not willing to read the other papers, and would not read them even at the discriminating price of 3 cents. But they would be willing to give the *Gazette* 5 cents for an accurate account of the proceedings.

MR. J. F. JOHNSON, of Franklin, said he feared his colleagues would lead them back into the old rut they were trying to get out of.

In his opinion, Mr. McLean had used nothing but assertion. He, for one, was not willing to give any paper 5 cents a copy when he could get another for 3 cents.

MR. ROBERTSON, of Bell, said he did not propose to take part in the discussion on either side, but merely wished to submit a few practical remarks. Subscription for twenty papers, with postage added, would cost \$7,000. If the proposition to subscribe for papers should be voted down, he thought the best plan would be to employ a stenographer, which would not amount to one-seventh of the expense.

(Mr. John Henry Brown in the chair.)

THE PRESIDENT *pro tem* said the question was should the substitute of the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. McCormick) authorizing subscriptions for twenty copies of any daily papers, which the delegates might select, at a cost not to exceed 3 cents, prevail.

The substitute was lost.

THE PRESIDENT *pro tem* then said that the question recurred on the motion of the gentleman from Navarro (Mr. Marion Martin) to indefinitely postpone the whole subject.

MR. McLEAN asked if it was the opinion of the Chair that if the pending motion prevailed it would dispose of the question for the whole of the session.

THE PRESIDENT *pro tem* remarked that he had some doubts on the subject.

MR. STOCKDALE said that it would lose the question as he understood it.

The yeas and nays were called for and the whole question was indefinitely postponed by a vote of 48 yeas to 35 nays.

SIXTH DAY

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 1875¹⁰

The Printing Question

MR. W. L. CRAWFORD, of Marion, moved the following:

Resolved, That the special committee on printing be required to report a resolution authorizing the President to receive sealed pro-

¹⁰The proceedings for this day were taken from the *State Gazette* (Austin),
*September 12, 1875.