

Voting Rights and the Virginia Constitution of 1902 (page 1 of 2)

Mr. President, the assaults upon this plan of suffrage have been of a varied nature. It has been attacked from one direction because it does not contain a permanent "understanding clause," and from another side because it does contain a temporary "understanding clause." Some gentlemen assail it because it makes prepayment of the poll-tax a prerequisite to the right of suffrage, and others because it does not exact the prepayment of all taxes as a prerequisite to the right of suffrage. Objection is heard because ownership of property is employed to enlarge the body of voters; and, again, criticism is made because property is not used as an exclusive qualification of voters. One section wants manhood suffrage, which for another section would mean either negro supremacy or continued revolutionary control by the whites. We are thus between the cross-fire of those who protest that the scheme is too drastic in the elimination of the negro and those who think it is not drastic enough. But, Mr. President, in the midst of differing contentions and suggested perplexities, there stands out the uncontroverted fact that the article of suffrage which the Convention will to-day adopt does not necessarily deprive a single white man of the ballot, but will inevitably cut from the existing electorate four-fifths of the negro voters. (Applause.) That was the purpose of this Convention; that will be the achievement.

Mr. Pedigo: Will it not be done by fraud and discrimination?

Mr. Glass: By fraud, no; by discrimination, yes. But it will be discrimination within the letter of the law, and not in violation of the law. Discrimination! Why, that is precisely what we propose; that, exactly, is what this Convention was elected for—to discriminate to the very extremity of permissible action under the limitations of the Federal Constitution, with a view to the elimination of every negro voter who can be gotten rid of, legally, without materially impairing the numerical strength of

DEBATES OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF VIRGINIA. 3077

the white electorate. As has been said, we have accomplished our purpose strictly within the limitations of the Federal Constitution by legislating against the characteristics of the black race, and not against the "race, color or previous condition" of the people themselves. It is a fine discrimination, indeed, that we have practiced in the fabrication of this plan; and now, Mr. President, we ask the Convention to confirm our work and emancipate Virginia. I ask for a vote on the article of suffrage.

Citation: Carter Glass, excerpt from April 4, 1902 speech printed in Report of the Proceedings and Debates of the Constitutional Convention State of Virginia Held in the City of Richmond June 12, 1901, to June 26, 1902 (1906), 2: 33076–3077.

Voting Rights and the Virginia Constitution of 1902 (page 2 of 2)



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HURTS WHITE FOLKS MOST.

THE unconstitutional "Constitutional" Convention after doing all the damage it could to the Negro has decided to adjourn. That it was a failure goes without saying. There is scarcely a sensible man in the state who doesn't wish that it had been drowned before it was born. It came to this city for the avowed purpose of injuring the Negro, curtailing his rights and abridging his privileges.

When its labors were completed, the howls were mostly from the white men, with a limited number of protests from the Negroes. The latter had been least injured.

The Democratic white men in convention assembled at Norfolk, Va., agreed to the calling of a Constitutional Convention with the understanding and promise: 1st, that no white men would be disfranchised. As a matter of fact, white men have been disfranchised. 2nd, that the revised Constitution should be submitted to the people for ratification. It was not submitted to the people for ratification, not even to the white people.

All colored men had been put out of office and all white men put into office.

The unconstitutional "Constitutional" Convention proceeded to put white men out of office by abolishing certain offices. The colored men were not injured, because they held no office.

The unconstitutional Constitutional Convention reduced the tax rate from 40cts to 30cts per hundred dollars.

This benefited the white man because he owned property and it benefited the colored man because he owned property too. The unconstitutional "Constitutional" Convention dealt a blow at trusts by establishing a corporation commission. As only white men owned the railroads, this affected the white men and did not interfere with the colored.

The unconstitutional "Constitutional" Convention decided that no officer of the state should enjoy the luxury of a free railroad pass. As the colored folks held no office and did not have any railroad passes, this was a blow at the white brother and he is crying yet, reminding one of a colicky baby yelling for its mother's milk.

Colored employees of the railroads are not affected by this provision and their families ride as heretofore, free of charge. The unconstitutional "Constitutional" Convention decided that all men who did not pay as much as \$1.50 in taxes should not vote, and also that many who did should not exercise the privilege. This caused some colored folks to complain and nearly all of the poor white folks to howl, but in as much as the colored people had been trying to vote and when they did vote, their ballots were not counted, or if they were counted, they went to the credit of the other fellow for whom the colored brother did not vote, the thoughtful ones can not see much difference in this game of chance.

The result is that the white man has been dancing a jig ever since his own unconstitutional "Constitutional" Convention began its sessions and he is hoping and praying that somebody will take the matter into the courts and thus relieve him of the most unfortunate predicament in which he now finds himself.

The new instrument is bad enough for the colored folks, but from our point of observation from the howls now coming from the white man's larn-yard, it has done most damage in that quarter.

Citation: John Mitchell Jr., "Hurts White Folks Most," *Richmond Planet*, July 5, 1902.