

DOINGS OF CONGRESS.

Dec. 16th, in the Senate, Mr. King presented a petition from the New York Chamber of Commerce, asking that the New York assay office have the privilege of coining, which was referred to the finance committee.

Mr. Grimes presented a petition, from citizens of Iowa, for a change in the law which excludes Jewish chaplains from the army. Also a petition that, in consequence of the present rebellion, slavery be absolutely and unconditionally abolished.

Mr. Wilson introduced a bill providing for the abolishment of slavery in the District of Columbia, which, it is said, will come up for consideration at an early day.

Mr. Hale offered a resolution, which was adopted, that the committee on military affairs be requested to inquire into the expediency of providing a uniform manner for dealing with the slaves of the rebels, and those made prisoners or escaping from their masters.

Mr. Sumner offered a resolution that the commissioners of patents inquire if any additional legislation is necessary to secure persons of African descent the right to take out patents.

Mr. Wilkinson offered the following preamble and resolution:

Whereas, Jesse D. Bright, Senator from Indiana, did, on the 1st of March last, write a letter to Jefferson Davis [a letter was here read introducing a Mr. Lincoln to Mr. Davis as having an improvement in firearms], and,

Whereas, Such letter is evidence of disloyalty, therefore,

Resolved, That Jesse D. Bright be expelled from the Senate of the United States.

After considerable discussion, the reading of letters and a short explanatory speech from Mr. Bright, the matter was referred to the committee on the judiciary.

Mr. Trumbull called up the resolution asking the Secretary of State if persons had been arrested in the loyal States, and by what authority.

A lengthy discussion followed, which was participated in by Messrs. Dixon, Trumbull, Hale, Kennedy, Doolittle, Pearce, Bayard, Wilson, Latham, Fessenden and Browning.

Mr. Dixon opposed the resolution. He thought it best not to go into such questions in times like these, when the very safety of the country is threatened. The time had passed by when this abominable rebellion could be crushed by mild means. He would make no discrimination between the property of rebels. A great deal has been said about the opinions of conservative men. He had occasion to know something about such opinions, and knew them. He was for using any means for the suppression of the rebellion.

Mr. Trumbull said he was as eager as any one to crush rebellion. He would not waste the powers of the government in arresting persons in the loyal States, but would strike, with the power of six hundred thousand men, and crush the rebellion to earth. It seemed the very essence of despotism if men could be arrested by telegraph, without power to reply or to have a trial. What becomes of constitutional liberty? Are you willing to trust the liberties of citizens in the hands of any one man, no matter who? The people are engaged in the defense of constitutional liberty, and the Constitution as our fathers made it. That Constitution is broad enough without any violation of it. He thought no harm could come out of the resolution.

If the reply of the secretary showed that arrests had been made, and there was no authority for them, but that they were still necessary, would it not be better to make a law to effect the like result?

Mr. Hale thought the resolution eminently proper and appropriate, and should feel mortified if it was not passed. Our fathers fought for principle, for constitutional liberty regulated by law, and not for mere independence. The government had better fail than be faithless to that great principle. And, sir, if the time ever arrives in the history of this country, when constitutional liberty, regulated by law, cannot exist, let the nation die. Let it perish, and its memory be blotted from among the nations of the earth, for it has failed in its high mission. It will be faithless to the principles which gave it birth, and wanting in all the elements of life and power. What are we striving for to-day? Why are our ships of war on the sea? And our hundreds of thousands of men, why have they left the plow in the furrow and left their fields un-reaped? Why have mechanics left their benches and gone out exposing their living breasts as a bulwark of defense about the Temple of Liberty, but that they may preserve constitutional liberty, regulated by law? That is it, sir: that is the beginning and end of this nation—its high mission—and if it does not vindicate that, then it had better never be born.

Mr. Latham could see no necessity for trampling on the Constitution in order to sustain it. Let treason be punished by law, and if men must be arrested let them be arrested according to law.

The resolution was finally referred to the judiciary committee by a vote of 25 to 17.

In the House, on the 16th, the Speaker presented the memorial of the Legislative Assembly of Colorado, asking for the establishment of a branch mint in that territory, which was referred to the committee of ways and means.

Mr. Conway rising to a question of privilege, alluded to a dialogue between himself and Mr. Fouke on Thursday. The former had included the battle of Belmont as in the series of defeats to our army.

Mr. Fouke made a statement of the battle

of Belmont to show that it was a victory to the Federal troops, and insisted that it was unkind in Mr. Conway to insist in characterizing it as a defeat.

Mr. Conway, replying, said that Mr. Fouke had refused to avail himself of his generosity. He submitted to the candid judgment of the House whether such conduct did not clearly manifest a deliberate purpose to bring on a personal collision without cause, and whether such conduct was not only unworthy a member of this House, but characteristic rather of a blackguard and scoundrel.

Mr. Richardson immediately called the gentleman to order. This was not the place to settle such difficulties.

Mr. Fouke wanted to say one word in reply. Mr. Stevens and others objected. They had had enough of such things.

The Speaker informed Mr. Fouke that no debate was in order.

Mr. Fouke, amid the cries of "Order," was understood to say that Mr. Conway was a disgrace to the nation and humanity.

Among the bills introduced and referred was one by Mr. Morrill, donating land to the several states for the founding of agricultural colleges.

The House passed a bill to strike from the pension roll the names of all persons who have taken up arms against the government, or in any manner aided the rebellion.

Mr. Cradlebaugh introduced a bill to establish a branch mint in the Territory of Nevada, which was referred to the committee on commerce.

Mr. Vallandigham introduced a preamble and resolution to the effect that inasmuch as the conduct of Capt. Wilkes in the taking of Mason and Slidell from the British mail steamer Trent had been indorsed by the government, that it is the duty of the President to now firmly maintain the stand thus taken, approving and adopting the act of Capt. Wilkes, in spite of any menace or demand of the British government, and that this House pledges its full support to him in upholding now the honor and vindicating the courage of the government and people of the United States against a foreign power.

Mr. Vallandigham moved the previous question. They had heard the first growl of the British lion. It remained to be seen who would cower.

The House refused to second the demand for the previous question, and the preamble and resolution were referred to the committee on foreign relations.

The House resumed the consideration of the bill authorizing the raising of a volunteer force for the better defense of Kentucky, upon which a lengthy discussion passed, Messrs. Richardson, Wickliffe, Dunlap, Diven, Wright, Bingham, Maynard, Morrill and Blair favoring, and Messrs. Lovejoy, Stevens and Hickman opposing the bill, which finally passed.

Dec. 17th, in the Senate, the Chaplain, Rev. Dr. Sunderland, offered up the following prayer:

Oh, Thou God of nations, who dost bestir the world by every gale of Providence, in the conscious justice of that which has been done upon the high seas to defeat the machinations of the insurgents against his government, we appeal to Thee. In the menace of the hour, give us firmness to do our duty and to meet all its consequences, whether they be of foreign war or of domestic strife. Thou art, and Thou shalt be, most righteous King, the judge between us and our enemies. On the deep and desperate wickedness which has constrained this nation to the sacrifice of so much blood and treasure, we pray Thee to breathe Thy blast of annihilation. Our hope is in Thee alone, nor will we in any wise turn from Thee, but pray that in the mighty struggle Thou mayest purify and vindicate us before the present and all coming generations of men through Jesus Christ. Amen.

A bill was received from the House to authorize the raising of a volunteer force for the defense of Kentucky, which was referred to the military committee.

Mr. Foote offered a resolution that the commissioner of public buildings inform the Senate by what authority a portion of the national capitol has been converted into a bakery, which was agreed to.

Mr. Latham offered a resolution that the Secretary of War be requested to inform the Senate by virtue of what law and what reason passports are required from passengers from New York to San Francisco, which was agreed to.

Mr. Lane called up the resolution that the Secretary of War be requested to furnish to the Senate copies of the orders for the erect on of barracks for Kansas troops.

A discussion followed, which occupied most of the day, as to the inactivity of the army, the impropriety of going into winter quarters before a decisive blow was struck, and the question as to what should be done with the four millions of slaves in the South, being the principal matters discussed.

The resolution was tabled.

Mr. Foster moved to take up the Kansas contested seat case, which was taken up, and postponed till next day.

The Chair announced as the committee to investigate into the general conduct of the war, Messrs. Wade, of Ohio, Chandler, of Michigan, and Johnson, of Tennessee.

In the House, on the 17th, the House resumed the consideration of the special order, being Mr. Eliot's resolutions, proposing the emancipation of the slaves of rebels, &c.

Mr. Harding opposed the resolutions, which were, with all others pending in relation to the same subject, referred to the committee on the judiciary by a vote of 77 to 57.

Mr. Morrill introduced a bill, which was

passed, to suspend the appointment of assessors and collectors of the income tax until the 1st of April next.

Mr. Blair reported from the military committee a bill providing for the allotment of pay certificates among the volunteer forces, which was passed.

Mr. Cox, from the committee on foreign affairs, reported a bill appropriating one thousand dollars, as full compensation to the owners of the British ship Perthshire, in consequence of her detention by the steamer Massachusetts in June last, for a supposed breach of the blockade upon which a spirited discussion arose. The bill was passed.

Mr. Sedgwick, from the committee on naval affairs, reported a bill, which was passed, further to promote the efficiency of the navy by the reiracy of officers, &c.

He also reported a bill authorizing the Secretary of the Navy to construct twenty iron-clad steam gunboats, by contract or otherwise. He stated that each would cost from \$500,000 to 580,000.

After a brief debate the consideration of the bill was postponed, and the House adjourned.

Dec. 18th, in the Senate, Mr. Teneyck introduced a bill for the establishment of an armory on Burlington Island, New Jersey.

Mr. Doolittle introduced a bill for the collection of direct taxes in the insurrectionary districts. It provides for taking the land in such districts to pay the direct tax; that the President shall before the 23d of February next make a proclamation specifying what districts are in such insurrection, the owners to have power of redemption.

Mr. Sumner offered a resolution that Truett Polk, now a traitor to the United States, be expelled from the Senate. Referred to the committee on judiciary.

Mr. Wilson offered a resolution that the military committee be instructed to inquire if any legislation was necessary to correct the evils which now exist in the condition and management of the military hospitals. Agreed to.

Mr. Foster moved to take up the case of the contested seat of the senator from Kansas (Lane). The report of the judiciary is, that Mr. Stanton is entitled to the seat.

Mr. Lane asked that a memorial be read, also an order from the War Department. He said the committee could not have had before them a correct copy of the paper called an appointment.

Mr. Sumner said that the case should be recommended to the committee, which was ultimately agreed to.

The resolution offered by Mr. Sumner, that the army shall not be used to surrender fugitive slaves, was taken up, and, after some discussion, agreed to.

A resolution offered by Mr. Latham, of California, asked the Secretary of State "Why passports are required from passengers going from New York to San Francisco?" was taken up and adopted.

In the House on the 18th, Mr. Dawes, from the committee on elections, reported that Charles Henry Foster is not entitled to a seat in this Congress, either from the First or Second Congressional District of North Carolina.

Mr. Dawes said that the committee had pursued the investigation so far as to be entirely satisfied that the claim was founded on imposition, and so well satisfied of this fact was Mr. Foster himself, that he had voluntarily abandoned the claim.

The House then resumed the consideration of the bill to secure homesteads to actual settlers, heads of families, or those who have attained the age of twenty-one years, and are citizens of the United States, or filed an intention to become such. The provisions of the bill are extended to all who have performed services in suppressing the rebellion. In lieu of bounty lands, the three months' volunteers are to receive thirty dollars in addition to the right of a homestead, and all who have served six months one hundred dollars.

The bill was discussed at length, and finally postponed till the first Monday in February by a vote of 88 to 50.

Mr. Stevens from the Committee of Ways and Means, reported the civil appropriation bill, also a bill for the appropriation of \$1,000,000 for gunboats in the western waters, in addition to the former sum.

The latter bill was passed.

The House then went into committee of the whole on the state of the Union, Mr. Washburne in the chair, and took up the bill for the payment of invalid and other pensions.

The bill was amended on the motion of Mr. Blair that no pension shall be paid under this act to any person engaged in the present rebellion against the United States, or who has in any way given aid and comfort to those engaged in the rebellion.

The bill was subsequently passed.

The House passed the bill authorizing and requiring the Secretary of War to pay to the officers and men heretofore actually employed or mustered into service in the Western or Missouri Military Department the pay and bounty as in regular enlistments.

Mr. Steele offered a resolution, which was adopted, that the select committee on alleged contract abuses be requested to inquire as to the policy of abolishing sutlerships or regulating the system in accordance with the requirements and protection of the soldiers.

Mr. Colfax called attention to a communication from the Postoffice Department, stating that it has been ascertained that members of Congress frequently give envelopes to cover matter unknown to them; that franked letters, without address, are being circulated among the camps, and sold by sutlers at

from one to two cents apiece; that franked envelopes are sent to merchants in various parts of the country to cover their own correspondence in return, and that franks of members of Congress are forged. He hoped that the simple statement of facts would correct the abuses without further legislation.

Dec. 19th, in the Senate, Mr. Wade presented a petition from citizens of Ohio, asking that John C. Fremont be appointed a lieutenant-general. There was an ineffectual movement made to adjourn till the 6th of January. No quorum voting the Council adjourned.

In the House on the 19th, Mr. Stevens, from the committee on ways and means, reported a bill making an appropriation for the construction, preservation and repair of fortifications and works of defense. Referred to the committee of the whole on the state of the Union.

The House resumed the consideration of the bill providing for constructing twenty iron-clad steam gunboats, to be built by contract or otherwise, as the Secretary of the Navy may deem best for the public interest.

Mr. Colfax (Ind.) from the committee on the postoffice, reported a bill to promote the efficiency of the dead-letter office, based on recommendations from the Postmaster-General in his annual report, which was passed.

Mr. Colfax also reported a bill abolishing the franking privilege, the consideration of which was postponed until the second Tuesday in January.

The consular and diplomatic appropriation bill was considered and passed.

Dec. 20th, in the Senate, Mr. Wilson presented a petition for the establishment of a system of exchange of prisoners; also, a report from the military committee, and a joint resolution expressing recognition of the gallantry of General Lyon and the soldiers under his command at Springfield.

Mr. Trumbull reported back from the committee on the judiciary the bill to abolish the United States Supreme Court, and asked to be discharged from further consideration of the subject. Whereupon the committee was discharged.

Mr. Harris reported a bill to prohibit the sale of liquors to soldiers in the District of Columbia. The bill is an amendment to a former bill, and prohibits not only the sale of liquors to the soldiers, but the drinking of it on the premises. The penalty is a fine and imprisonment and revocation of license.

Mr. Saulsbury's resolution calling on the Secretary of War for a copy of the proclamation by Gen. Phelps, and by what authority it was made, was taken up.

Mr. Trumbull moved to amend the resolution so as to include the proclamations of all the generals.

Mr. Wilson thought there was no necessity of sending for the proclamations. Generals were appointed to use their sword and not the pen. If they could not use the sword better than the pen they should be mustered out of the service. The best thing to do was to make a statue that no generals be allowed to make any proclamations.

The resolution was tabled.

In the House, on the 20th, Mr. Bennett, delegate from Colorado, introduced a resolution, which was adopted, instructing the committee on ways and means to inquire into the expediency of establishing a branch mint at Denver.

Mr. Bernheisel moved that the committee on Territories inquire into the expediency of providing for a geological survey of Utah Territory.

Mr. Stevens, from the committee on ways and means, reported a bill appropriating \$150,000 to complete the defenses at Washington. The bill was passed.

The House passed the Senate bill providing for transmitting certificates of allotment of pay of the volunteers to their families and friends. Each state is to appoint three persons to visit the several departments of the army to receive the money. The provisions of the former law allowing liens to sutlers on the pay of soldiers is repealed, and all regulations on the subject are abrogated beyond the rules and articles of war.

Mr. Heman's resolution instructing the committee on military affairs to report a bill amendatory of the present laws, so as not to exclude in the appointment of chaplains any religious societies, was adopted.

Mr. Arnold introduced a resolution, which was adopted, thanking Col. Mulligan and his command for their heroic defense of Lexington, and authorizing the Twenty-third Regiment of Illinois to bear on their colors the name of "Lexington."

UNOSTENTATIOUS MEN.—Mr. Hamlin, the Vice President, is one of the most unostentatious men in Washington. He has comparatively quiet quarters at the Washington House—a very respectable, but not fashionable house. He dresses as plainly as a New England farmer; his coat is of coarse cloth, made by no eminent hands; but all concede him marked ability, and a resolution and determination of a high order. The next plainest man of rank is General George B. McClellan. Few men can find him, and few men know him when he is found. At the best he only wears the undress uniform of a colonel, and his shoulder straps—if any he wears—are covered with a coat much the worse for wear. He has no fixed location, and moves from spot to spot as duty calls. Of course, those who have business with him know where to find him. Not so the eager throng who wish to see the young shoulders on which the armor of Scott has fallen.