

CHANGES IN ORIGINAL DRAFT

1 — Mr. Seward proposed to omit from the words—"The more modern custom, (down to)" "By no other course could I meet the reasonable expectations of the country" or to amend the paragraphs to read: "The modern custom of nominating a Chief Magistrate upon a previously declared summary of principles supersedes in a great measure the necessity of restating those principles in an address of this sort. It is necessarily implied, if not expressed, that the summary binds the officer elected to nothing either unconstitutional or inexpedient. With this explanation I deem it my duty, as I am disposed in feeling, to follow, as far as they apply to the Executive sphere, the principles on which I was brought before the American People." The latter suggestion was adopted, and no reference made to the Chicago platform.

2 — Mr. Seward proposed "will be cheerfully given in every case and under all circumstances to all the States." Mr. Lincoln did not adopt the suggestion but changed the sentence to read "will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause—as cheerfully to one section, as to another."

3 — Mr. Lincoln added the remainder of this paragraph of his own accord.

4 — Mr. Seward suggested the change from "and on the whole, with great success" to "and generally with great success."

5 — Mr. Seward suggested the change from "A disruption of the Federal Union is menaced, and, so far as can be on paper, is already effected. The particulars of what has been done are so familiar and so fresh that I need not waste any time recounting them" to "A disruption of the Federal Union, heretofore only menaced, is now formidably attempted." This suggestion was adopted.

6 — Mr. Lincoln of his own accord changed "It was further matured and expressly declared and pledged to be perpetual" to "It was further matured, and the faith of all the then thirteen States expressly pledged and engaged that it should be perpetual."

7 — Mr. Seward suggested that "and therefore is absurd" be stricken from the original draft which read "The Union is less perfect than before, which contradicts the Constitution, and therefore is absurd." Mr. Lincoln remodeled the whole sentence to "The Union is less perfect than before the Constitution, having lost the vital element of perpetuity."

8 — Mr. Seward's suggestions to substitute "void" for "nothing" and "revolutionary" for "treasonable" were adopted.

9 — Mr. Seward's suggestion to use "will constitutionally defend and maintain itself" instead of "will have to own and defend itself" was adopted.

10 — Mr. Seward's suggestion to strike out the words "tangible way" and substitute therefor the words "authoritative manner" was adopted.

11 — Mr. Seward's suggestion to strike out "will have its own and defend itself." and insert "will constitutionally defend and maintain itself," was adopted.

12 — In the original draft this paragraph, after the first sentence, stood as follows: "All the power at my disposal will be used to reclaim the public property and places which have fallen; to hold, occupy, and possess these and all other property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects, there will be no invasion of any State. Where hostility to the United States, in any interior locality, shall be so great and so universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object. While the strict legal right may exist in the Government to enforce the exercise of these offices, the attempt to do so would be so irritating, and so nearly impracticable withal, that I deem it better to forego for the time the uses of such offices."

Mr. Seward proposed to strike out the above, and to insert the following:

"The power confided to me shall be used indeed with efficacy, but also with discretion in every case and exigency, according to the circumstances actually existing, and with a view and a hope of a peaceful solution of the national troubles, and the restoration of fraternal sympathies and affections. There are in this Government, as in every other, emergencies when the exercise of power lawful in itself is less certain to secure the just ends of administration than a temporary forbearance from it, with reliance on the voluntary though delayed acquiescence of the people in the laws which have been made by themselves and for their own benefit. I shall not lose sight of this obvious maxim."

Mr. Lincoln did not adopt this proposal, but made the change which had been suggested by Hon. O. H. Browning, who wrote to Mr. Lincoln (February 17, 1861) referring to this paragraph: "Would it not be judicious so to modify this as to make it read: 'All the power at my disposal will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government, and to collect the duties and imposts, etc.,' omitting the declaration of the purpose of reclamation, which will be construed into a threat or menace, and will be irritating even in the border States? On principle the passage is right as it now stands. The fallen places ought to be reclaimed. But cannot that be accomplished as well or even better without announcing the purpose in your inaugural?"

Mr. Lincoln adopted Mr. Browning's advice, and modified his own phraseology as proposed. He also made in this paragraph another slight change of phraseology. For, "there will be no invasion of any State," he substituted, "there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere."

13 — This phrase originally was, "The mails, unless refused, will continue to be furnished," etc. Mr. Lincoln himself changed this to read: "The mails, unless repelled."

14 — This paragraph originally closed with the following sentence: "This course will be pursued until current experience shall show a modification or change to be proper." Mr. Lincoln himself changed this so as to read: "The course here indicated will be followed unless current events and experience shall show a modifi-

cation or change to be proper." He also added a part of the language proposed by Mr. Seward for the previous paragraph.

15 — This sentence originally stood: "That there are persons who seek to destroy the Union," etc. Mr. Seward proposed to amend so as to make it read: "That there are persons in one section as well as in the other, who seek to destroy the Union," etc. Mr. Lincoln changed the amendment to, "That there are persons in one section or another who seek to destroy the Union at all events, and are glad of any pretext," etc.

Mr. Seward also proposed to add to the last clause of the sentence, after the word, "them," the following: "because I am sure they must be few in number and of little influence when their pernicious principles are fully understood." Mr. Lincoln did not adopt the suggestion.

16 — Mr. Lincoln himself struck out the word "Union," and inserted in lieu the words "fabric, with all its benefits, its memories, and its hopes."

17 — Mr. Seward proposed to insert the word "distinct" after the words, "Is it true, then, that any," in the second sentence of this paragraph. Mr. Lincoln did not adopt the suggestion.

18 — In this sentence Mr. Lincoln himself changed the word "constructed" to "constituted."

19 — The phrase, "by affirmations and negations," Mr. Seward proposed to make, "by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions." Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

20 — The phrase, "applicable to every question," Mr. Seward proposed to change to, "applicable to every possible question." Mr. Lincoln did not adopt the change.

21 — Mr. Seward proposed to substitute the words "acquiesce" and "acquiescence" for "submit" and "submission." Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

22 — The original phrase, "a minority of their own number will secede from them," Mr. Lincoln himself changed to, "a minority of their own will secede from them."

23 — In the original these sentences are: "For instance, why may not South Carolina, a year or two hence, arbitrarily secede from a new Southern Confederacy, just as she now claims to secede from the present Union? Her people, and, indeed, all secession people, are now being educated to the precise temper of doing this." Mr. Seward proposed to substitute the names, "Alabama or Florida" for "South Carolina;" and the word "communities" for "people." Instead of adopting this, Mr. Lincoln re-wrote the whole, as follows: "For instance, why may not any portion of a new confederacy, a year or two hence, arbitrarily secede again, precisely as portions of the present Union now claim to secede from it? All who cherish disunion sentiments are now being educated to the exact temper of doing this."

24 — For the original phrase, "a Southern Union," Mr. Lincoln himself substituted, "a new Union."

25 — The original sentence, "A constitutional majority is the only true sovereign of a free people," Mr. Seward proposed to change to, "A majority held in restraint by constitutional checks and limitations, and always changing easily with deliberate changes of popular opinions and sentiments, is the only true sovereign," etc. Mr. Lincoln adopted the change.

26 — The final clause, "while they are also entitled to very high respect and consideration in all parallel cases by all other departments of the Government" was suggested by Mr. Seward and adopted by Mr. Lincoln. (Seward's suggestion follows Lincoln's language in the debates with Douglas).

27 — In the original this phrase ran: "the greater evils of a different rule." Mr. Seward proposed to substitute "practice" for "rule," and Mr. Lincoln struck out the word "greater," making it read, "the evils of a different practice."

28 — In the original this sentence stood: "but if the policy of the Government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, it is plain that the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having turned their government over to the despotism of the few life officers composing the court." Mr. Seward proposed to amend it as follows: "At the same time, the candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government, upon vital questions affecting the whole people, is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, made in the ordinary course of litigation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having practically resigned their government into the hands of that eminent tribunal." Mr. Lincoln adopted the amendment, first changing the phrase, "made in the ordinary course of litigation," to "the instant they are made, in ordinary litigation," and also the phrase, "having practically resigned," to, "having to that extent practically resigned."

29 — Mr. Seward proposed to strike out: "The Republican party, as I understand, have avowed the purpose to prevent, if they can, the extension of slavery under the national auspices; and upon this arises the only dispute between the sections." Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

30 — In the original this phrase stood: "One section believes slavery is right," etc. Mr. Seward proposed to make it read: "One section of our country believes slavery is right," etc. Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

31 — The phrase, "as well enforced as any law," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "as well enforced, perhaps, as any law," etc. The suggestion was adopted.

32 — The phrase, "where the moral sense of the people is against the law itself," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "where the moral sense of the people imperfectly supports the law itself." The suggestion was adopted.

33 — The phrase, "would be revived," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "would be ultimately revived." The suggestion was adopted.

34 — Following the words, "dismember and overthrow it," the original reads:

"As I am not much impressed with the belief that the present Constitution can be improved, I make no recommendations of amendments. I am rather for the old ship and the chart of the old pilots. If, however, the people desire a new or an altered vessel, the matter is exclusively their own, and they can move in the premises as well without as with an Executive recommendation. I shall place no obstacle in the way of what may appear to be their wishes."

Mr. Seward proposed to change the first sentence of the above to the following: "While so great a diversity of opinion exists on the question what amendments, if indeed any, would be effective in restoring peace and safety, it would only tend to aggravate the dispute if I were to attempt to give direction to the public mind in that respect." Mr. Lincoln did not adopt Mr. Seward's suggestion; but struck out all the above, and remodeled the whole paragraph to the form in which it now stands in the text, adding the reference to the new constitutional amendment.

35 — The original "can do this if they choose," Mr. Lincoln himself changed to read, "can do this also if they choose."

36 — The original, "is either party without faith in the right?" Mr. Lincoln himself changed to, "is either party without faith of being in the right?"

37 — The original, "be on our side or on yours," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "be on the side of the North, or of the South, of the East, or of the West," Mr. Lincoln changed it to read: "be on your side of the North, or on yours of the South, that truth and," etc.

38 — The original, "While the people remain patient and true to themselves, no man, even in the Presidential chair, can," etc. Mr. Seward proposed to change to "While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no legislature and no administration can," etc. Mr. Lincoln changed it to read as follows: "While the people retain their virtue and vigilance, no administration, by any extreme of wickedness or folly, can," etc.

39 — The original, "take time and think well," Mr. Seward suggested should read: "think calmly and think well." Mr. Lincoln changed it to, "think calmly and well."

40 — The original, "Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. Nothing worth preserving is either breaking or burning." Mr. Seward proposed to strike out. Mr. Lincoln retained the first, and struck out the second.

41 — In the original sentence, "The Government will not assail you, unless you first assail it," Mr. Seward suggested striking out the last clause. Mr. Lincoln adopted the suggestion.

42 — The original draft, after the words, "preserve, protect, and defend it," concludes as follows:

"You can forbear the assault upon it, I cannot shrink from the defense of it. With you, and not with me, is the solemn question of 'Shall it be peace or a sword?'"

Mr. Seward did not like this termination; and suggested that "something besides or in addition to argument is needful—to meet and remove prejudice and passion in the South, and despondency and fear in the East. Some words of affection—some of calm and cheerful confidence." He submitted two separate drafts for a closing paragraph, from which Mr. Lincoln might choose one to substitute for the two sentences which he proposed to strike out.

Suggestions for a closing paragraph:

No. 1. "However unusual it may be at such a time to speak of sections or to sections, yet in view of the misconceptions and agitations which have strained the ties of brotherhood so far, I hope it will not be deemed a departure from propriety, whatever it may be from custom, to say that if in the criminations and misconstructions which too often imbue our political contests, any man south of this capital has been led to believe that I regard with a less friendly eye his rights, his interests, or his domestic safety and happiness, or those of his State, than I do those of any other portion of my country, or that I would invade or disturb any legal right or domestic institution in the South, he mistakes both my principles and feelings, and does not know me. I aspire to come in the spirit, however, far below the ability and wisdom, of Washington, of Madison, of Jackson, and of Clay. In that spirit I here declare that in my administration I shall know no rule but the Constitution, no guide but the laws, and no sentiment but that of equal devotion to my whole country, east, west, north, and south."

No. 2. "I close. We are not, we must not be, aliens or enemies, but fellow-countrymen and brethren. Although passion has strained our bonds of affection too hardly, they must not, I am sure they will not, be broken. The mystic chords which, proceeding from so many battlefields and so many patriot graves, pass through all the hearts and all hearths in the broad continent of ours, will yet again harmonize in their ancient music when breathed upon by the guardian angel of the nation."

The first of these drafts, containing 139 words in its opening sentence, and made up of phrases which had become extremely commonplace by iteration in the six years' slavery discussion, was clearly inadmissible. The second draft, containing the germ of a fine poetic thought, Mr. Lincoln took, and, gave it the life and spirit and beauty which have made it celebrated in the text.