

written by a simple recourse to old statute books. If a negro is to rise and prove himself a man and a citizen he must follow a white man's standard and a white man's law in a white man's country. It is the purpose of the Republican party to build up in the South as strong Republican organizations as exist in the North. This can only be done by adopting Northern methods, and this means almost purely white organizations in the South, which can command the respect of the intelligent and respectable voters of the South. With strong white Republican organizations in the South the negro can then expect recognition from both sides. As it is now, he is urging a purely negro party with absolutely no hope of recognition. They overlook the fact that a negro has as much right to be a Democrat as a Republican, and that since the war the negroes of their own free will have voted the Democratic ticket as often as they have the Republican ticket.

As far as I have observed, there is absolutely no sentiment in the South against negro suffrage when the negroes are in the minority. We have pursued the same course in the South that this government is pursuing in the District of Columbia, in the Philippines and Porto Rico, and it is the policy of Anglo-Saxon domination. It is the same policy that would be pursued in the North if the negroes got in the ascendancy. I have lived in Washington three years and have been absolutely astounded at the race prejudice which exists towards the colored people by the people of the North. It goes further and cuts deeper than anything that exists at the South. He is deprived of almost every means of a livelihood that he enjoys in the South, and if he wishes to retain even this he must prove himself worthy in the unequal contest with the white man. As a race, his future is dark, but much brighter than in any other country on the globe. If the negroes unite for the preservation of those rights which no other country on the globe has accorded to him and which many wise men of the nation of both parties are considering the propriety of divesting him, they themselves will bring on the race conflict, and the white people of both parties will withdraw from him even the few privileges that he enjoys, but which they are ever ready to accord to the negroes of thrift and intelligence.

Ex-Governor Pinchback in his speech at this meeting spoke in a very pessimistic mood. He saw no future whatever for the negro. He grieved that every day their white friends were falling away from them. He was disturbed because the negroes took so little interest in the matter of disfranchisement. He had organized a District Council of negroes, which dissolved on account of lack of interest. If interest could not be created in the movement he was ready to quit. We must fight this cause by contributing to the fund to pay the lawyers in the courts.

The meeting above referred to was entirely one of a political character, though the speakers denied it. It was to agitate the matter of disfranchisement and to secure funds for fighting the Virginia cases in the courts. They applauded every reference to President Roosevelt and nearly every man in the audience was carried away with the mistaken idea that a new era of negro office-holders is at hand.

John C. Dancy, the colored Recorder of Deeds of the District, was more optimistic. He decried political unity, and pointed with pride to the recent utterances of ex-President Cleveland, John S. Wise, Admiral Schley and Captain Hobson. His was by far the best speech of the occasion. He prophesied the downfall of the race if it persisted in political unity, and urged broader and more intelligent political action.

I am a white man, and thank God for it. If I were a negro I would get as good an education as I could and use it to the upbuilding of my race. With my lot I would rest content. I would strive to build up a reputation for honesty in the section where I lived and I would never trust a man, white or black, whom I had never seen. I would keep out of politics, unless my services were desired by white men of known worth and intelligence. I would never go where I was not wanted, preferring to live a life of contentment, safe from the rapacity of political hucksters and unprincipled demagogues. I would prefer the good opinion of my employer to the smiles and grimaces of a licentious negro preacher or lawyer, who is going around the country trying to turn your own white boss against you. To the negroes of Virginia, I would advise you to be true to your position in life, to cultivate the friendship of the good white people and stick to them, for there will be a time when you will need their protection. Your political preachers and lawyers are stirring up devilry and you are paying the expenses of it, and if this thing goes on much further you will find all the white people North and South dead against you. Let politics alone and give the white Republicans of your State a chance to build up a strong party. When that is accomplished they will look after your interests and the Democrats themselves will be in a better position to give you what you desire.

The people of Washington city do not vote, and there is more intelligence here, white and black, than can be found anywhere else in the country. No one is deprived of any right and this city is the best governed in the world. Your voting never did you any good, and you never got much satisfaction out of it. I ask you the question: "Ought you to vote? Is it to your interest to vote, even if you can legally do so? Thousands of Southern white men haven't voted for thirty years, and yet the government moves on, and it would still move on if there wasn't a vote cast from Maine to California.

You have had your turn in Virginia politics, and haven't gained a thing by it. Now let the white people take a hand in this business and see if they can't build up a respectable party in Virginia, after which you will come in for your part of the recognition. President Roosevelt has made a few colored appointments in the South, but they were men of character, and that's the only kind he is going to appoint. In this country the negro enjoys more privileges than most of the white people of Europe do, yet you are blindly shutting your eyes and going to work to destroy all the advantages that a generous government has placed in your reach. If you can't vote in Virginia you can't vote in Massachusetts, and it is much harder to vote in the States of the North than in the States of the South. A nation must protect itself against ignorance. The ignorant negroes of the South have been disfranchised, and the next step will be the disfranchisement of the ignorant white people of the South. If you can't keep up with the procession you must get out of line or get a quicker gait on you by coming up to the legal qualifications.

But if you follow Hayes you will follow a lost cause and will discredit yourself at home and abroad.

Very respectfully,

SHANNON PEEL.