SOUTH NOT FREE FROM PEONAGE

States In Which This Form of Slavery Still Exists.

EXTENT OF THE EVIL NOTED.

Decision of the United States Supreme Court In the Alonzo Bailey Case—Attorney General's Efforts to Enforce the Thirteenth Amendment—Favorable Attitude of Federal Judges.

Washington.—Colored citizens generally are very often heard to complain bitterly that the federal government does not enforce the war amendment of the constitution. Much that the federal government does in this respect very often goes unnoticed. Undoubtedly the most important of these amendments, if any one of them may be said to be more important than another, is the thirteenth amendment, which abolished slavery and which was intended to secure to every man the right to individual liberty and freedom from servitude of any kind except as a punishment for crime whereof he has been duly convicted

Therefore the decision of the supreme court in the Alonzo Bailey case, rendered by Mr. Justice Hughes, holding unconstitutional the state law of Alabama which held Bailey as a peon, in which Attorney General Wickersham and Assistant Attorney General Harr appeared, was a distinct triumph for the cause of freedom.

It should be remembered that it was not the official duty of the attorney general to appear in this case, but his act was wholly voluntary in the interest of the enforcement of the thirteenth amendment and the peonage statutes. The report of the attorney general for 1911 gives two pages to the subject of the enforcement of the peonage statutes. The report says:

The vigorous enforcement of the statutes against peonage, conducted by the department in the last few years, it is believed, has done much toward stamping out that form of involuntary servitude in many districts, but in some of the southern states this practice appears to be still quite extensively carried on. Prosecutions under the peonage statutes have been instituted in nearly all the southern states and in a few states not in the south.

The reports also recommends that—

The statutes of the United States upon the subject of peonage and slavery should be amended so as to render them more effective for the protection of persons against slavery and involuntary servitude except as a punishment for crime.

Make Amendment More Binding.

Here it would seem is a large field for the workers of the race to secure from congress laws necessary to render more effective the thirteenth amendment and thus make more secure the lives and liberty of our brethren in the south. The records will show that prosecutions of persons for violating the peonage statutes have been instituted in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia, Tennessee, Texas and other states. Convictions have resulted in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia, with prosecutions still pending in Kentucky, Louisiana and Texas.

In a number of cases prison sentences have been imposed upon men of wealth and standing, in addition to being sentenced to pay heavy fines. The local United States attorneys have had the assistance of special agents of the department of justice and the assistance of special attorneys in the prosecution of these cases. Great credit should be given them for the courage and vigor with which they have tried to enforce these laws under circumstances where juries might be expected to be slow to convict.

Federal judges, notably Judge Emory Speer of Georgia and Judge Thomas Jones of Alabama, have been most outspoken and courageous in their charges to the grand juries considering these cases in their respective districts. A few more years of this kind of campaign, with the assistance of congress, ought to result in stamping out peonage and involuntary servitude of all kinds. It will be recalled that just after the war the southern States passed a great many black laws for the purpose of re-enslaving the Negro, all of which they were required to strike from their statutes before being readmitted into the Union or participate in the national government.

Various devices have been used since to accomplish the same result, such devices as "vagrant laws," "landlord and tenant laws," "false pretenses," the "claim of indebtedness," etc. Many a man has been held as a virtual slave in the turpentine camps and contractors' stockades by coercion and brute force. One of the methods used if a person desires the services of a laborer who has broken his contract or been guilty of other misdemeanor is to swear out a warrant, take the prisoner before a justice of the peace, go surety on his bail bond, then take the man to his farm or plantation and compel him to labor.

Other Illegal Methods In Practice.

Sometimes the case is dropped with the above action, or if it is prosecuted a fine is paid. The person desiring to hold the laborer in his service will pay his fine and compel him to work out the fine. One of the methods used is to have a man confess to the commission of a crime and sign a criminal court contract whereby he undertakes to work out the fine for the person who pays it. This person is called the confessor. At the July term of the United States district court for the southern district of Alabama twenty-one indictments were returned against twenty-six defendants for holding nine different persons as peons and slaves. These indictments are still pending.

In one case a man was convicted of petty larceny in the state court, fined $15 and costs, judgment and all amounting to $43.75. One John Doe, a stranger, came into court under the state laws and confessed judgment for the defendant and paid the fine and costs. Thereupon the defendant entered into what is called a criminal contract to work out this amount at $6 a month. The defendant ran away after working over a month. He was rearrested on an affidavit by John Doe, fined one cent and $97.05 costs.

Then another stranger, Richard Roe confessed judgment; another contract is entered into by which the defendant in the state court agrees to work fourteen months and fifteen days at the rate of $6 a month. A little later the defendant ran away again, was rearrested and this time fined $300 and $112.80 costs, making $412.80, and sentenced to hard labor for more than a year.

Steamboat Case on Alabama River.

There was another case of old fashioned slavery where a man was working on a steamboat plying up and down the Alabama river. Three persons took him off the boat, carried him to their plantation and forced him to go to work. This man refused to work was cruelly beaten and whipped and when he was unable to work was told to go. He was afterward arrested on a charge made by the kidnapers of carrying concealed weapons and fined $53.85 costs, judgment confessed upon him, and he was taken away into slavery again to work it out at $10 a month.

White men, as well as colored men, have been held in peonage. Indeed, one of the peons named in one of the indictments above referred to is a white man. The Harlan and Gallagher cases decided at the December term of the supreme court, 1910, were cases in which white men were held as peons in the lumber camps of Florida under "a most atrocious system of enforced labor."

While these state laws making peonage possible are made with special reference to compelling the labor of the Negro, they occasionally catch white men as well, particularly immigrants working under contract, as in the Harlan case, all of which goes to show that the liberty of no man is safe as long as the humblest black man may be held as a peon or a slave.

NEWSPAPER DRAWS COLOR LINE IN PRIZE CONTEST.

Race Resents Insult by Advising Withdrawal of Its Patronage.

In one of the large cities of the country a certain newspaper opened a voting contest for women. The prize for the winner was announced as being a trip to Europe. One of the bright, intelligent young colored women of the town entered the contest and had received 890 votes when the manager of the contest found out her racial identity and informed the young lady that she was not eligible, so it is said.

This is but another instance of the unfair treatment which respectable, honest and industrious colored people are daily receiving at the hands of the so called best white people. From such injustice and hypocrisy may God deliver us.

When the action of the contest manager became known one of the prominent colored citizens of the town immediately advised every member of his race who had been reading the paper which drew the color line to read it no more. This was a manly stand to take, and it is hoped that his advice will be strictly adhered to.

Nothing is so mean and base as the act of one person or persons to withhold from others that which is legally and civilly due them simply because of their color. When one looks at the present status of things, however, from a moral standpoint and from the standpoint of honesty it would seem that the colored people should rather rejoice in the fact that they are not of the class here spoken of

As Dr. Booker T. Washington well says, we belong to a young race, a race which has opposition and prejudice to fight, a race whose future is before and not behind it. If others would be mean and low and cowardly, let us be good and kind, honest and brave.

The Benefit of Summer Schools.

The custom of holding summer normals at the various institutions for higher learning is becoming more general. It gives teachers an opportunity to perfect themselves in those branches which they desire to know more about and also brings them in direct contact with the more advance methods of imparting instruction. It is well to hold such summer schools, and even a larger number of them would no doubt receive full patronage.

Miss Jones an Honor Pupil at Ithaca.

At the third public recital of the advanced students of the Ithaca (N. Y.) Conservatory of Music recently held Miss Clarice Jones, daughter of Attorney Thomas L. Jones of Washington, was given the honors of the evening by her finished knowledge of the critical works of the old masters, which were used on this occasion.

TAFT A PROGRESSIVE SURE ENOUGH

The Roster of His Supporters Furnishes Legal Proof.

SOME OF THE MEN BEHIND HIM

Corporation Lawyers, Standpat Senators, Trust Organizers, Machine Politicians, Are All Working For Taft.

A respected member of Mr. Taft's cabinet has been circulating a pamphlet containing a speech written by himself to prove that Taft is a progressive. That ought to settle it, especially as Mr. Taft himself says he is a progressive. The best proof as to Taft's progressiveness, however, lies neither in the pamphlet of the cabinet member nor the statement of Mr. Taft, but in the list of progressive American statesmen who are leading the fight for Mr. Taft in the United States and who have declared Mr. Taft's progressiveness as the only genuine brand which they were willing to invest in or indorse.

As a nation of lawyers—for that, it seems, is our chief magistrate's conception of the American people—we are entitled to the best evidence—to legal proof. And the best legal proof of what Mr. Taft is and what Mr. Taft stands for is to be found in who the men are and what the men stand for who are leading the fight for his renomination. They know him better than the average citizen, for they are daily working with him and for him.

Here is a small list of the main Taft enthusiasts who have put the brand of "progressive" on the Hon. William Howard Taft and are now booming him for four more years of "progress." It is not a complete list, and the reader is at liberty to add to it from the store of his own political knowledge. It is arranged for convenience by states.

New York.

The Hon. William Barnes, Jr., whom Taft made chairman of the Republican state committee, boss of Albany county, recently charged, in vice report now before the New York legislature, with protecting gambling and prostitution; old guard dictator in the legislature; implacable foe of Roosevelt, Hughes and direct primaries, and leader of the combination between Tammany and the Republican machine.

J. B. Duke, who recently promised Taft his support, head of the tobacco trust, whose "dismemberment" as a result of Wickersham's prosecution has simply amounted to an immunity bath and a license to continue its dishonest warfare against competition at a profit already of more than $100,000,000. Mr. Duke is also head of the southern water power combine.

Chauncey M. Depew, ex-railroad senator, officer in seventy corporations and trusts, lieutenant of the late Thomas C. Platt.

The Hon. James Wadsworth, stock raiser and ex-congressman, who lost his seat in congress as the result of his fight against Roosevelt's meat inspection bill.

Washington State.

Richard A. Ballinger, late secretary of the interior, forced from office by public opinion in spite of President Taft's determination to keep him, supporter of the Morgan-Guggenheim-Cunningham Alaska interests.

Jacob Furth, representing the Stone and Webster water power, electric railway and electric light corporations throughout Washington and other western states.

The Hon. Wesley Jones, standpat senator, supporter also of Senator Lorimer.

Minnesota.

Ex-Congressman James A. Tawney, Taft leader of Minnesota, principal lieutenant of Cannon, the man who helped Cannon in his fight to oppose Roosevelt's pure food and drug law, the chief representative in congress of the lumber interests and one of the strongest opponents in congress of progressive legislation, supported by Mr. Taft, Mr. Cannon and the cabinet in his unsuccessful fight for re-election to congress.

James J. Hill, the most active friend of corporate privilege and foe of progressiveness in the west, who recently called upon the president and gave public assurance of his support of Taft's candidacy.

Iowa.

Ex-Senator Late Young, an old fashioned reactionary politician, who succeeded Dolliver through Taft's influence.

Massachusetts.

The Hon. Murray Crane, boss of Massachusetts Republican politics; one of the largest individual holders of General Electric, Bell Telephone and Western Union securities in the United States; deeply interested in the New England textile industry and in the water power enterprises in the west and south; also one of the most powerful influences in the J. P. Morgan merger of New England's steam railways, electric railways and steamship lines; since Aldrich's retirement the most powerful friend of corporate privilege in the senate.

Oregon.

Ex-Senator Fulton, made famous by Heney's land graft prosecutions. Mr. Taft offered Senator Fulton the positions of minister to China and federal judge.

California.

Pat Calhoun, boss of the ring of San Francisco and traction magnate. Mr. Calhoun at a recent dinner in Boston sat by President Taft, spoke in his support and denounced Roosevelt's progressive policies.

William F. Herrin, who is counsel and political boss for the Southern Pacific political machine and who in this capacity dictated the choice of both Republican and Democratic nominees throughout the state until Governor Hiram Johnson put the Southern Pacific out of Republican politics in California.

Idaho.

Senator Heyburn, arch standpatter and reactionary, who agreed to help the Cunningham claimants get their patents. He has always been a strong special interest man and a clamorous enemy of conservation in congress.

New Hampshire.

Senator Gallinger, the representative of the New York, New Haven and Hartford system; for many years chairman of the District of Columbia committee in the senate and who during this time has opposed every measure to control the public service corporations in the District of Columbia, also an active opponent of self government in the District of Columbia.

Rhode Island.

Nelson W. Aldrich of the rubber trust, ex-boss of the United States senate, the framer of the Aldrich tariff bill, the man who more than any other made the senate an instrument of special privilege and a body unrepresentative of the people of this country. Supported and publicly praised by Taft for putting over the Aldrich bill.

Senator Henry F. Lippitt, who succeeded Aldrich. The man who wrote the cotton schedule of the Aldrich tariff bill for Mr. Aldrich.

Delaware.

Senator du Pont, political boss of the state of Delaware and head of the powder trust.

Wisconsin.

Senator Isaac Stephenson, lumber baron and lumber interest representative in the senate.

Colorado.

William G. Evans, gas, water power, public service and political boss of Colorado.

Senator Simon Guggenheim of smelter trust and Alaskan fame, the henchman and representative of the Evans interests.

Bob Speer, mayor and boss of the city of Denver.

Utah.

James F. Smith, president of the Mormon church, a political, religious and financial oligarchy which controls Utah and which has promised to throw its support to Taft. Smith is not only president of the Mormon church, but director in the Union Pacific railway and president of the Utah Sugar company, whose stock is controlled by the sugar trust and the Mormon church jointly.

Senator Reed Smoot, one of the twelve apostles of the Mormon church. A sugar and wool senator and now leader of the reactionaries in the senate.

Pennsylvania.

Senator Boies Penrose, one of Mr. Taft's closest advisers, boss of the state of Pennsylvania.

"Divine Right" Baer, president of the Philadelphia and Reading railway and head of the anthracite coal trust; the man who during the hard coal strike in 1902 promulgated the theory that Providence had placed the anthracite coal in the hands of the hard coal trust and given to him and his friends "the divine right" to dispose of the hard coal for what price they saw fit.

Montana.

The Amalgamated Copper company, a corporation organized by H. H. Rogers and William Rockefeller and controlled at present by Standard Oil, is the political and financial boss of the state. Taft's strength in Montana is due to the all powerful political ring which is owned by Amalgamated Copper.

Illinois.

Joseph G. Cannon, reactionary ex-boss of house of representatives, whom Mr. Taft unsuccessfully supported for re-election as speaker

William B. McKinley, Cannon's first lieutenant in house, the traction magnate of Illinois. Manager of the Taft campaign and strong opponent to government by the people.

William Lorimer, now on trial by the senate on the charge of buying his seat and who hopes to win through Mr. Taft's support.

Wyoming.

Senator Warren, head of the Warren ring in Wyoming. Washington representative of the combination between the wool producers and wool manufacturers, the man who helped the Union Pacific Coal company to acquire the coal fields of Wyoming, which operation is spoken of by Chairman Knapp in his report to the interstate commerce commission as having been accomplished by violence, fraud and theft.

Congressman Mondell, reactionary member of public lands committee, the most conspicuous enemy of conservation in the house.

Ohio.

Boss Cox of Cincinnati, prizefighter, ex-saloon keeper and boss of a political machine in comparison with which Tammany Hall is a good government club.

Charles P. Taft, who, with his brother, William Howard, backed the Cox machine in the last Ohio state election in its fight against the Ohio progressives.

John R. McLean, newspaper owner

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