

By James Morton Callahan 1913

...the white population which had built up half a dozen states in the northwest. "Make West Virginia free," they said, "and she will Invite immigrants, Her coal and her iron can be mined only by free labor. Negro slavery is wasteful everywhere, but less profitable in West Virginia than in any other part of the southern states." Some also feared that •Congress might refuse the admission of the new state if it should appear so wedded to slavery that it could not apply for admission with a free state constitution. On the other hancr, many in the convention, believing perhaps that slavery would gradually become extinct, thought it unnecessary to make any provision for it. The convention finally inserted in the constitution a clause forbidding the importation or immigration into the state of any slave or free negro with a view to permanent residence; but, feeling that there might 'be some objection to this clause in Congress, it adjourned (on February 18, 1862) subject to recall in case any change should be necessary. *

5. FINAL STEPS TO STATEHOOD.

The remaining steps necessary to secure statehood were promptly taken. On the fourth Thursday of April, the constitution was ratified .by the people by a vote of 18,062 to 514. On May 13, the reorganized legislature of Virginia gave the state's consent to the formation of the new state; and on May 29, Senator Willey (representing Virginia) in a speech ably setting forth the causes and conditions which led to the request, presented to the United States senate West Virginia's petition for admission to the Union. On June 13, the committee on territories reported the bill for admission, drawn up largely by Carlile who had previously been an ardent newstate man, and providing that, before the state should be admitted, its boundaries should be extended to include the fifteen valley counties, 8 new convention should be held, and a new constitution framed with the provision that all children of slaves born after Julv 4, 1863 should be free. It was evident to those who understood conditions that such a bill, even if

desirable, was unpracticable and could not succeed, and some even asserted that its intent was to block admission.

•The convention determined that the constitution should be silent on the question of slavery, and that at the time the constitution should be submitted to a vote of the people on its adoption a kind of Elde vote should be taken for emancipation and against emancipation. When the vote was taken it was 6,052 for emancipation to 610 against, or ten to one in favor of a free state. The vote on the adoption of the constitution taken at the same time was 18,862 in favor to 514 against it.