

Reply to Committee Notifying Lincoln of His Renomination, June 1864

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[Mr. Chairman and] [2] Gentlemen of the Committee: I will neither conceal my gratification, nor restrain the expression of my gratitude, that the Union people, through their convention, in their [3] continued effort to save, and advance the nation, have deemed me not unworthy to remain in my present position.

I know no reason to doubt that I shall accept the nomination tendered; and yet perhaps I should not declare definitely before reading and considering what is called the Platform.

I will say now, however, [that] [4] I approve the declaration in favor of so amending the Constitution as to prohibit slavery throughout the nation. When the people in revolt, with a [5] hundred days of [6] explicit notice, that they could, within those days, resume their allegiance, without the overthrow of their institution, and that they could not so resume it afterwards, elected to stand out, such [an] [7] amendment of the Constitution as [is] [8] now proposed, became a fitting, and necessary conclusion to the final success of the Union cause. Such alone can meet and cover all cavils. Now, [9] the unconditional Union men, North and South, perceive its [10] importance, and embrace it. In the joint names of Liberty and Union, let us labor to give it legal form, and practical effect.

Annotation

[1] Copy, DLC-RTL; New York Tribune, June 10, 1864. The manuscript copy (not in Lincoln's autograph) preserved in the Lincoln Papers provides the text as reproduced. Variants in the Tribune are given in succeeding footnotes. The remarks of William Dennison, president of the convention and chairman of the notification committee, are reproduced from the Tribune:

“MR. PRESIDENT---The National Union Convention, which closed its sittings at Baltimore yesterday, appointed a Committee consisting of one from each State, with myself as Chairman, to inform you of your unanimous nomination by that Convention for election to the office of President of the United States. That Committee, I have the honor of now informing you, is present. On its behalf I have also the honor of presenting you with a copy of the resolutions or platform adopted by that Convention, as expressive of its sense, and of the sense of the loyal people of the country, which it represents, of the principles and policy that should characterize the administration of the Government in the present condition of the country. I need not say to you, sir, that Convention, in thus unanimously nominating you for reelection, but gave utterance to the almost universal voice of the loyal people of the country. To doubt of your triumphant election, would be little short of abandoning the hope of a final suppression of the Rebellion and the restoration of the Government over the insurgent States. Neither the Convention nor those represented by that body entertained any doubt as to the final result, under your administration, sustained by that loyal people, and by our noble Army and gallant Navy. Neither did the Convention, nor do this Committee doubt the speedy suppression of this most wicked and unprovoked Rebellion. (A copy of the resolutions was here handed to the President.) I would add, Mr. President, that it would be the pleasure of the Committee to communicate to you, within a few days, through one of its most accomplished members, Mr. [George William] Curtis of New-York, by letter, more at length the circumstances under which you have been placed in nomination for the Presidency.”

The Platform of the Union National Convention presented by Dennison is as follows:

“1. Resolved, That it is the highest duty of every American citizen to maintain against all their enemies the integrity of the Union and the paramount authority of the Constitution and laws of the United States; and that, laying aside all differences of political opinion, we pledge ourselves, as Union men, animated by a common sentiment and aiming at a common object, to do everything in our power to aid the Government in quelling by force of arms the Rebellion now raging against its authority, and in bringing to the punishment due to their crimes the Rebels and traitors arrayed against it. [Prolonged applause.]

``2. Resolved, That we approve the determination of the Government of the United States not to compromise with Rebels, or to offer them any terms of peace, except such as may be based upon an unconditional surrender of their hostility and a return to their just allegiance to the Constitution and laws of the United States, and that we call upon the Government to maintain this position, and to prosecute the war with the utmost possible vigor to the complete suppression of the Rebellion, in full reliance upon the self-sacrificing patriotism, the heroic valor, and the undying devotion of the American people to their country and its free institutions.

``3. Resolved, That as Slavery was the cause, and now constitutes the strength, of this Rebellion, and as it must be, always and everywhere, hostile to the principles of Republican Government, justice and the National safety demand its utter and complete extirpation from the soil of the Republic [applause]:---and that while we uphold and maintain the acts and proclamations by which the Government, in its own defense, has aimed a death-blow at this gigantic evil, we are in favor, furthermore, of such an amendment to the Constitution, to be made by the people in conformity with its provisions, as shall terminate and

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forever prohibit the existence of slavery within the limits or the jurisdiction of the United States. [Tremendous applause, the delegates rising and waving their hats.]

``4. Resolved, That the thanks of the American people are due to the soldiers and sailors of the Army and Navy [applause], who have periled their lives in defense of their country and in vindication of the honor of its flag; that the nation owes to them some permanent recognition of their patriotism and their valor, and ample and permanent provision for those of their survivors who have received disabling and honorable wounds in the service of the country; and that the memories of those who have fallen in its defense shall be held in grateful and everlasting remembrance. [Loud applause and cheers.]

``5. Resolved, That we approve and applaud the practical wisdom, the unselfish patriotism and the unswerving fidelity to the Constitution and the principles of American liberty, with which ABRAHAM LINCOLN has discharged, under circumstances of unparalleled difficulty, the great duties and responsibilities of the Presidential office; that we approve and endorse, as demanded by the emergency and essential to the preservation of the nation, and as within the provisions of the Constitution, the measures and acts which he has adopted to defend the nation against its open and secret foes; that we approve, especially, the Proclamation of Emancipation, and the employment as Union soldiers of men heretofore held in slavery [applause]; and that we have full confidence in his determination to carry these and all other Constitutional measures essential to the salvation of the country into full and complete effect. [Vociferous applause.]

``6. Resolved, That we deem it essential to the general welfare that harmony should prevail in the National Councils, and we regard as worthy of public confidence and official trust those only who cordially endorse the principles proclaimed in these resolutions, and which should characterize the administration of the government. [Applause.]

``7. Resolved, That the Government owes to all men employed in its armies, without regard to distinction of color, the full protection of the laws of war---[applause]---and that any violation of these laws, or of the usages of civilized nations in time of war, by the Rebels now in arms, should be made the subject of prompt and full redress. [Prolonged applause.]

``8. Resolved, That foreign immigration, which in the past has added so much to the wealth, development of resources and increase of power to this nation, the asylum of the oppressed of all nations, should be fostered and encouraged by a liberal and just policy. [Applause.]

``9. Resolved, That we are in favor of the speedy construction of the Railroad to the Pacific coast. [Applause.]

``10. Resolved, That the National faith, pledged for the redemption of the public debt, must be kept inviolate, and that for this purpose we recommend economy and rigid responsibility in the public expenditures, and a

vigorous and just system of taxation: and that it is the duty of every loyal State to sustain the credit and promote the use of the National currency. [Applause.]

``11. Resolved, That we approve the position taken by the Government that the people of the United States can never regard with indifference the attempt of any European Power to overthrow by force or to supplant by fraud the institutions of any Republican Government on the Western Continent---[prolonged applause]---and that they will view with extreme jealousy, as menacing to the peace and independence of their own country, the efforts of any such power to obtain new footholds for Monarchical Governments, sustained by foreign military force, in near proximity to the United States. [Long-continued applause.]" Proceedings of the National Union Convention. . . . (New York, 1864), pp. 57-58.

<http://www.thelincolnlog.org/view/1864/6/9>