

## THE NATIONAL COLORED LABOR CONVENTION.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—The National Colored Labor Convention assembled at noon to-day, in Union League Hall, about 200 colored delegates were present, representing Louisiana, Florida, North and South Carolina, Alabama, Virginia, Tennessee, Maryland, Kentucky, District of Columbia, Delaware, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, New-York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Michigan, Ohio, California, Nevada, Missouri, and Illinois. There are eight or ten white delegates present as follows: S. P. Cumming and Charles McLean of the Central Committee of the Labor party, Gilbes B. Stebbens of Michigan, Capt. Mackey and the Hon. Simon Corley, Members of Congress from South Carolina, and Mr. McGrew, Representative elect from Virginia. Richard Trevellick, President of the National Labor Union and Congress, was early recognized, and invited to a seat on the platform. There was also some 10 female delegates, one being colored; they were all admitted without question.

The call for the Convention proceeded from the colored delegates who were admitted last August to the Philadelphia Congress, who there signalized themselves by a strong support of our financial integrity. Mr. Myers of Baltimore, a colored shipwright, who is at the head of a successful Coöperative Shipyard there, opened the Convention by a brief appeal for harmony, and the reading of the call. George T. Downing of Rhode was elected temporary Chairman, and Mr. Harmon of Florida, Secretary.

Mr. Downing made a very neat and appropriate address in taking the chair, urging the Convention to work in earnest, recognizing the fact that labor was the great interest of all civilization, and affirming that capital could never be safe where labor was unjustly dealt with, as between them there was no issue. When equity ruled in a large part of the land, such was not the case. The colored man, just emerging from bondage, must necessarily be in the closest sympathy with the great movement now making for the uplifting of the toilers here and elsewhere, but the slavery from which he emerges leaves traces that must necessarily direct his present action. That must be to organize for protection on the one side and for mutual self-helpful and coöperative efforts on the other. Protection and amelioration were to be the objects. Political action must be governed by local circumstances.

In substance, such was the policy Mr. Downing presented while the Committee on Credentials was performing its work.

Richard Trevellick was then called for. He referred first to a remark made by Mr. Langton, and declared that the rights of labor were first; that capital was the result of its efforts, and that therefore the creature could not be made superior to its creator. He said that for himself he had long since buried both political parties, believing that, as they had been constituted in the past, there were but two divisions—that of the skinner and the skinned. On that question, however, he would not elaborate. Chattel slavery was but a part of the great slavery of labor to monopoly, of the wages system, and the unequal distribution of its results which had still to be fought. The destruction of chattel slavery had cleared the decks for the greater fight. Mr. Trevellick spoke at length on the evils of labor complained of, declaring, among other things, that 83 per cent of all the children employed in our factories died within the first eight years of their employment. He asserted that the transportation monopolies of the country, centering as they did into so few hands, must become dangerous not only to our economical well-being, but to civil liberty. The land grant system received a fierce denunciation the speaker availing himself of THE TRIBUNE'S recent summary of the extent to which it was now proposed to continue them. He declared that it was because the fathers of the Republic had failed to declare free the mother earth, which the father God had given to man, that Slavery had obtained such a foothold and brought the nation through its baptismal struggle. Mr. Trevellick closed by declaring that only by bringing together and recognition of all without regard to race, color, and sex, and uniting them in a common effort, could the security of freedom be maintained, and the progress of the laboring millions be assured.

A permanent organization was effected by the election of the Hon. James H. Harris of North Carolina as permanent President, and of a number of Vice-Presidents and Secretaries.

Mr. Harris, in taking the chair, made a stirring speech, which was marked by a bitter denunciation of the spirit still displayed by the old rebel element in the South.

Aaron M. Powell, a delegate from New-York, was then called. He spoke at considerable length, referring to the significance of the Convention, marking as it did a great transition. Slavery impoverished the whites as well as degraded the slave, but free labor will elevate and enrich both. Education, sobriety, skill, and better compensation, are the present needs of the wages class, and organization is the especial need of colored labor. Especially was it necessary for the agricultural labor of the South to organize and obtain lands. The rural freed people have peculiar disabilities which can only be met by coöperative effort, and the Freedmen's Bureau being about to cease all operation, we need some other machinery. Mr. Powell offered the following resolution, which would have been adopted had the Convention been fully organized:

Resolved, That we ask Congress to authorize at once the appointment by the President of a Land Commission, to be composed of six or more well-known and disinterested friends of the freed people, to serve without compensation, to have authority to appoint, with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, a limited number of agents whose duty it shall be to coöperate with individuals and associations among the hitherto enslaved, for the selection and purchase of eligible lands for homesteads, to hold titles thereof for a given period, until, by instalments, they shall have been paid for at actual cost to the Government, when the money so employed, not to exceed \$2,000,000, shall be refunded to the National Treasury.

The evening session was held in the Church of the Rev. J. Sella Martin, which was crowded. The business proceedings were in the main preliminary and unimportant. The principal events of the evening was the delivery by Mayor Bowen of an earnest address of welcome, and one of sympathy and approval by the public printer, Col. Clapp. The Convention passed resolutions thanking Mr. Clapp for his right treatment of the colored printer question.

It is generally remarked by all who attended the Colored Convention last year, that this one shows a remarkable advance on the part of the Southern Delegates. Its average ability is more than respectable, and while certain prominent men are missing, it brings out a good deal of new and practical talent. No hostility is manifested by any one so far to the Republican party, and the prominent leaders in the labor movement who are here seem disinclined to interfere with the evident faith of the Colored Delegates in that direction.