DISTURBANCES AT HAMBURGH, SOUTH CAROLINA.

SPEECHES

OF

HON. LUCIUS Q. C. LAMAR,

OF MISSISSIPPI,

AND

HON. JULIAN HARTRIDGE,

OF GEORGIA.

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

JULY 18, 1876.

WASHINGTON.
1876.
SPEECH
OF
HON. L. Q. C. LAMAR.

Mr. LAMAR said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I do not propose to discuss or analyze this terrible and disgraceful affair at Hamburgh, although I think that the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. GARFIELD] has not given a fair and impartial statement of the circumstances in which it originated. But those circumstances are of no moment here upon this question, nor are the provocations which led to the final fearful tragedy involved in the proposition now before us. Nor are they in my opinion (and here I differ with the member from Ohio) the legitimate topic of debate or discussion on this floor; they belong to another tribunal to which the constitutions of States as well as that of the Federal Government remit these subjects.

Whether in the circumstances and these provocations the whites or the blacks were most to blame is a question to which I shall not now recur. Through all the confusion which has been thrown around this transaction, (and I must say, notwithstanding the honorable character of the informant of the member from South Carolina, which I do not question in the slightest degree, his document was evidently written, and perhaps very naturally, under great exasperation and excitement,) through all the uncertainty which exasperation and exaggerations have thrown around this subject, there is one fact which gleams out acknowledged, or, if not acknowledged, is indisputable. It is that a body of white men did without authority of law put to death a number of black men, who had been taken as prisoners; I mean who had been captured and deprived of their liberty, but who were not prisoners in the legal sense of the term, inasmuch as those capturing them had no right under the law to deprive them of their personal liberty.

Now, sir, I wish to say here in my place—and what I say here just as it drops from my lips and falls upon the reporter's notes is at once sent throughout the entire South and every constituent of mine in every home and hamlet will read what I say; and even if I were base or ignoble enough to utter here what I would swerve from there, as has been falsely charged against southern men, the RECORD would always convict me—in my place here and with the responsibilities surrounding me, I assert that no excuse or palliation can possibly be found for these outrages and this barbarism. [Applause.]

As a southern man and as a democrat I have a remark or two to make upon this subject. Mr. Chairman, we of the South have a lawless class precisely as you of the North have lawless classes. As a consequence we have riots in which human life is lost.
you have such riots, with this difference: Ours without preconcert
flame up in different localities and are confined to short periods of
time, while yours in more than one instance have held several coun-
ties in terror, have extended over months of time, and have involved
a larger loss of human life, defying the authorities of your States.

There is another fact which I wish to mention. In those Southern
States where disorders and violence occur there are governments of a
peculiar character and type, invariably governments of one character
and type. They are governments which are called republican gov-
ernments, but it is a spurious republicanism which has no identifica-
tion or sympathy with the views and purposes that have inspired the
following of the great republican party of this country. And, sir, those
State governments have invariably encouraged these disorders and
these murders by their inefficiency, by their imbecility, by their cow-
ardice, and by their connivance, for they have in every instance not
only failed to punish these murders, not only failed to administer jus-
tice, not only failed to execute the laws, but they have used the
occurrences as occasions to appeal to Congress and to the North for
help in maintaining the power which they are so ruthlessly exercising.

Mr. GARFIELD. I hope the committee will allow the gentleman
from Mississippi [Mr. LAMAR] to conclude. I very much want to hear
the statement he is making. If no member objects, I hope the Chair
will not interpose.

After some debate leave was granted and Mr. LAMAR proceeded as
follows:

Mr. LAMAR. Mr. Chairman, I shall speak as rapidly as I can. The
gentleman from Ohio [Mr. GARFIELD] asked if this was a sporadic case
or one typical of the general condition of things South. I answer
that there is no community in the South that is not thrilled with
horror at such occurrences. Sir, it is a wonder that society does not
go to pieces under the operation of governments that allow such law
lessness to stalk abroad in the land unpunished. They are govern-
ments which live on violence and disorder, and when they cannot have
violence they provoke it in order to use it as an instrument of politi-
cal power.

A word in answer to the argument of the gentleman from Michigan
[Mr. CONGER] Saturday, in all good-temper. The use of the Army
never produced any good effect in such cases as this. The troops al-
ways get to the scene of the disturbance after the occurrence and too
late to prevent it, and as a means of righting personal and private
wrongs, as a means of preventing violence to personal security, the
Army is slow, cumbersome, is ineffective, and almost useless; and in
spite of the efforts of the Army officers to the contrary, whose actions
cannot be too highly commended, it is converted into a monstrous en-
gine of political oppression and corrupt political intrigues. That is
the only use to which it is put in the South. The gentleman must
see how utterly inappropriate the use of the Army is in such cases.
A riot like this in the streets of a town or village is not a thing for
the Federal Government to intervene about; for it violates no Federal
law, it does not conflict with national authority, it has no relation to
the exercise of the right of suffrage.

This was a riot like the riots which occurred in the State of Penn-
sylvania in the mining regions, or in Indiana, where, on the day of the
last election, three or four colored men were killed; or like that which
occurred the other day in New Jersey, where seven men were killed,
two of them put to death by stoning. Why do you not apply the
same remedy there? Why confine your Federal intervention to prevent murder and riot to one section alone?

What is the remedy in this case? It is clear. It is the duty of the governor of South Carolina to take prompt and severe measures to have apprehended and punished the men who committed such a crime. He cannot use measures too vigorous or too summary to bring the men who shot down these prisoners in cold blood to a swift retribution. I understood the eloquent and gifted gentleman from Georgia [Mr. Hartridge] to promise the co-operation of the governor of Georgia, if the case touches Georgia in any way, to bring these men to condign punishment. Is the governor of South Carolina doing anything in that direction? If he is he will meet my support and praise and that of the good citizens of South Carolina; but if instead of doing that he is rushing to Washington to invoke once more the demon of discord and sectionalism, to drag their material of passion through this Chamber, he will not be doing that which will prevent disorders in that State. I say, sir, if there is lawlessness, it is because these so-called republican governments have been not only corrupt and lawless themselves, but also because they have encouraged it by giving it impunity through their imbecility and cowardice, and often by actually inciting it. I say that wherever, as in the State of Arkansas to-day, the governor has ruled with a firm hand and enforced the law, lawlessness has been crushed out and all citizens, black and white, are alike secure. Governor Garland has in one year put down the spirit of lawlessness in that State, and it is now as peaceable a community as any in the country. I repeat, it is not the fault of the people, whose property interests and business investments and industrial arrangements depend upon peace and order, and are utterly ruined by such disorders, but of governments either too inefficient to put down crime or so much interested in producing that they furnish provocations to it.

Why, sir, the other day Governor Kellogg, of Louisiana, appointed as a tax-collector to a parish in that State—so I read in the press—a man who was a captain of a band of murderers and robbers. If he had sent his police to hunt him down and shoot him like a wolf, him and his marauding band, he would have done his duty. But instead of that he legalizes robbery and theft by making the robber a public officer, and when riots and disturbances grow out of such actions as these he comes here to Washington and calls on this Government to bring about order. Sir, these occurrences are ruinous to the South, they are unnatural and morbid elements, and disappear wherever this kind of men is eliminated from political and social control in the South and the management of affairs falls into the hands of her own people.
Mr. HARRIDGE said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I did not intend to participate further in this debate, and I should not now do so were it not for certain words which have fallen from the gentleman from Iowa [Mr. KASSON] who has just taken his seat. I desire to state to that gentleman and to this House, simply as a repetition of what I had the honor to utter in his hearing on Saturday last, that I deplore this occurrence as much as any gentleman upon this floor; that the people of the State of Georgia deplore it, and, as I then said, I now say that the people of Georgia, through their press, are calling for a rigorous and thorough and vigorous investigation of this matter; and they stand pledged, when the truth is elicited, to stamp with their condemnation all who are to blame and to aid in their punishment. Can anything be clearer or plainer than that?

I not only deplore, but I here pledge my constituents, I pledge my State through its official authorities, to aid in the investigation of this matter and to punish those who are guilty. But I desire to wait until we learn who are guilty. I am not prepared now, from what I have heard and what I have read, to give my judgment as to who is guilty or who is innocent. I am not prepared to say upon this floor that the people of Georgia or the people of South Carolina, white or black, are guilty in this transaction. I am not prepared so to say upon the statements of Governor Chamberlain and his attorney-general, and to give a judgment now.

I wait for the evidence that is to be given under oath. I wait for the evidence upon which the governor of South Carolina shall base his official action; and if he sees fit to demand any one from the State of Georgia who has been guilty of this crime, when that demand comes, based upon his official investigation, based upon evidence setting forth the facts, my word for it the authorities of Georgia will respond according to justice and the Constitution.

Why, sir, gentlemen upon the other side of the House do not understand our condition to-day in the South. You seem to think that there is all the time a war of races there between the blacks and the whites. Is it not our interest to live together there in peace? Is not the black race the only race fit to furnish us labor? Must not the white race furnish the capital? Is it not the interest of capital and labor to live in peace and friendship? Why, then, should we provoke these disturbances? Why should we excite these outrages? Why should we seek to overturn and subvert all the means of our prosperity and happiness?
The cupidity of the North, engaging in the African slave trade, put this race in our midst as slaves. The power of the North has left them to us as freemen. There they must live; with them we must live; and unless the two races live in accord and harmony there is no future of happiness or prosperity for us. More than that, there is something in the hearts of southern people. We are not savages. There is some feeling on our part toward this race among whom we were born and reared, and with whom we daily live. There is scarcely one of us upon this floor from that section who can look back to the days of his infancy or childhood without seeing something to bring up pleasant and loved memories in connection with this race. For my part, were I to seek to outrage this colored race, there would rise to rebuke me the memory of the nurse of my infant years—the memory of her whose bosom, although dark with the hue of slavery, yet tenderly and softly pillowed my infant head; whose hands, although hardened by toil, yet kindly ministered to my infant wants; whose voice, although untrained and untutored, sweetly sang the lullaby that soothed my infant slumbers. I tell you, gentlemen, there are ties of interest, there are ties of policy, there are ties of memory and the best emotions of the heart to bind the white people of the South to the colored race. [Applause.]