

which this is done was adopted last year. It requires that the legislature shall provide for the permanent registration of voters after the year 1902, and that meantime they may be registered temporarily by county boards appointed by the governor and two other state officers acting as a board of appointment. The persons entitled to temporary registration by the county boards prior to December 29, 1900, are—

(1) males, (2) citizens, or foreign residents who have applied for naturalization, (3) 21 years of age, (4) having honorable military service, or being lawfully descended from persons with honorable military records, or having a good education and being able to understand the duties and obligations of citizenship under a republican form of government, (5) provided, however, that idiots, insane persons, convicts and vagrants are not entitled to registry.

After January 1, 1903, only the following can be registered:

(1) Those who can read and write any article of the constitution of the United States in the English language (unless physically disabled), and who are either physically unfit to work or have worked for the greater part of the year prior to their application for registry; (2) owners in their own right or in that of their wives of 40 acres of land in the state in which they reside, or of Alabama real estate or personalty assessed for taxation at \$300 or more, provided the taxes have been paid.

Nearly nine-tenths of the convention adopting this constitution were Democrats, and the constitutional convention had been called under the influence of the Democratic party of the state. The meaning and purpose of the suffrage clauses quoted above may therefore be regarded as having been authoritatively expounded when the Democratic State Campaign Committee, appointed for the purpose of conducting the ratification campaign, explained the instrument to the voters. The following quotations are from that explanation:

So long as it is necessary to maintain white supremacy in the counties having Negro majorities, and to prevent the inflicting upon any of our people of Negro domination, there has been a disposition in other parts of the State to condone the methods necessary to suppress the Negro vote. But to do that involves the doing of things which the white men in these counties have never desired to do, and which, if done at all, were done only because of what they regarded as a necessity for their own protection and government. . . . The reason for

adopting two plans—one temporary and the other permanent—is best shown by the difficulties which the convention had to meet. The Fifteenth amendment to the Federal constitution was the principal barrier, but there was another condition which good faith required the Democratic members to observe as fully as possible. . . . The party platform pledged that white men should not be disfranchised. To frame a provision that would observe this pledge and eliminate the mass of vicious Negro votes, and yet be constitutional, was no light task; but to it Democratic members of the convention addressed themselves. . . . And we unqualifiedly renew our party's pledge that under the operation of the registration feature of the new constitution no white man who can now vote will be disfranchised. . . . Under the temporary plan the Negroes cannot register. . . . When a man applies for registration he will not be asked to specify under which class he is entitled to register. The list will not show under what clause he is registered. When the party pledge not to disfranchise any white man is remembered, it is easy to see that the above plan will effectuate it. There is a general presumption that white men are of good character and understand the duties and obligations of good citizenship; the history of the race attests this. It is safe to say that the registrars will observe this presumption. This plan will not disfranchise all Negroes. It is well known that there are men of that race who are entirely competent to vote intelligently, and these will have no difficulty in registering. . . . White men insist upon their rights and will not submit to disfranchisement by any registrars, but if necessary will prove their right to register before a jury of their neighbors. The registrars will know this and will not refuse to register them except for good cause. . . . This is a white man's government and it will continue to be so. . . . The failure of the present movement for the new constitution . . . will be almost tantamount to an indorsement of the methods heretofore used, whether honest or dishonest, to control elections. . . .

The only other political news of the week of general interest is the calling of the Republican convention of Illinois to meet at Springfield on the 8th of May; of the Democratic convention of the same state to meet at Springfield on the 17th of June; the nomination on the 2d of the Republican State ticket of Oregon, headed by W. J. Furnish as candidate for governor, to be voted on in June; and the assembling of the first convention of a new national party, the

Allied party, at Louisville on the 2d. The Illinois conventions are of national importance because two factions of the Republican party in this state are so bitterly at war among themselves that the Democrats are confident of carrying the state next fall and securing a senatorship. The Allied party is another attempt to secure an organic union of the various "reform forces" of the country. The attendance of delegates on the 2d is reported as 75 from eight states. Col. J. S. Felter, of Springfield, Mo., was elected temporary chairman.

In Congress the Republican majority of the House of Representatives has agreed upon a bill regulating the tariff between this country and Cuba (see p. 673), by a general reduction of 20 per cent. on the Dingley law schedules. The measure was agreed to by the committee on ways and means of the lower house by 12 to 5. The majority included 3 Democrats and the minority 2 Republicans. The bill was thereupon, on the 31st, reported favorably to the House. Some Republican opposition to the reduction is looked for, but Republicans who are dissatisfied with the smallness of the reduction are expected to support the bill.

As the United States prepares to adjust its relations with the new republic, Cuba, a more amicable attitude is assumed by Colombia, with reference to the Isthmian canal, than what seemed probable at the time of our last report (p. 760) on that subject. She has submitted to this country for consideration a protocol, disclosed on the 31st,—

1. Embracing an entirely new concession to the United States, irrespective of the old concession to the Panama Canal company of France.
2. Consenting to and legalizing in every way the sale of the Panama company's property to the United States, and removing all question as to the validity of the title.
3. Proposing to grant the United States control, through perpetual lease, of a strip of territory amply wide for canal purposes.
4. Agreeing that all questions of police and sanitary control shall be satisfactorily adjusted.
5. Taking full cognizance of the existing treaty between the United States and Colombia, which binds the United States to preserve the freedom of transit through the Isthmus of Panama.

It is understood that the price asked for the concession is an annual sti-