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THE BLAIR
Sunday Rest Bill
AND
JOINT RESOLUTION.

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The Blair Sunday-Rest Bill.

It is well known to most of our readers that United States Senator Henry W. Blair, from New Hampshire, introduced in the Fiftieth Congress, May 21, 1888, what has been commonly known as the "Blair Sunday-Rest bill," which was read twice, and referred to the Committee on Education and Labor. It was quite fully discussed pro and con. before the committee, with decided favors shown to those who favored the bill, by Mr. Blair, the author of the bill, who was also the chairman of the committee. Many millions of signatures to petitions for and against the bill came before Congress.

Over this bill and the proposed Constitutional Amendment, noticed in another column, the religious part of the country was greatly agitated; nor has that agitation ceased. Circulation of petitions has gone forward since. While that bill died with the last Congress as a matter of legislation, the friends of Sunday laws have labored hard for a similar bill, which they expect will crystallize into law during this present Congress. This expectation has been partially met, and Mr. Blair again comes before the country as the Sunday-law champion, the advocate of measures advocated by the American Sabbath Union and the Sabbath department of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union.

On December 9, 1889, Mr. Blair introduced a modified form of his first Sunday bill. We give it below, numbered line for line as it appears in Senate document, number "S. 946":—

A BILL.

To secure to the people the privileges of rest and of religious worship, free from disturbance by others, on the first day of the week.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*
3 That no person or corporation, or agent, servant, or employee

4 of any person or corporation, or in the service of the United
5 States in time of peace, except in the necessary enforcement
6 of the laws, shall perform, or authorize to be performed, any
7 secular work, labor, or business to the disturbance of others,
8 works of necessity and mercy and humanity excepted; nor
9 shall any person engage in any play, game, or amusement
10 or recreation to the disturbance of others on the first day of
11 the week, commonly known as Sunday, or during any part
12 thereof, in any Territory, district, vessel, or place subject to
13 the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States; nor shall it
14 be lawful for any person or corporation to receive pay for
15 labor or service performed or rendered in violation of this
16 section.

1 SEC. 2. That no mails or mail matter shall hereafter be
2 transported in time of peace over any land postal route, nor
3 shall any mail matter be collected, assorted, handled, or de-
4 livered during any part of the first day of the week: *Provided*,
5 That whenever any letter shall relate to a work of necessity or
6 mercy, or shall concern the health, life, or decease of any per-
7 son, and the fact shall be plainly stated upon the face of the
8 envelope containing the same, the Postmaster-General shall
9 provide for the transportation of such letter or letters in pack-
10 ages separate from other mail matter, and shall make regula-
11 tions for the delivery thereof, the same having been received
12 at its place of destination before the said first day of the week,
13 during such limited portion of the day as shall best suit the
14 public convenience and least interfere with the due observance
15 of the day as one of worship and rest: *And provided further*,
16 That when there shall have been an interruption in the due
17 and regular transmission of the mails it shall be lawful to so
18 far examine the same when delivered as to ascertain if there
19 be such matter therein for lawful delivery on the first day of
20 the week.

1 SEC. 3. That the prosecution of commerce between the
2 States and with the Indian tribes, the same not being work
3 of necessity, mercy, or humanity, by the transportation of per-
4 sons or property by land or water in such a way as to interfere
5 with or disturb the people in the enjoyment of the first day
6 of the week, or any portion thereof, as a day of rest from
7 labor, the same not being labor of necessity, mercy or human-
8 ity, or its observance as a day of religious worship, is hereby

9 prohibited, and any person or corporation, or the agent, serv-
10 ant, or employee of any person or corporation who shall
11 willfully violate this section shall be punished by a fine of
12 not less than ten nor more than one thousand dollars, and
13 no service performed in the prosecution of such prohibited
14 commerce shall be lawful, nor shall any compensation be
15 recoverable or be paid for the same.

1 SEC. 4. That all military and naval drills, musters, and
2 parades, not in the time of active service or immediate prep-
3 aration therefor, of soldiers, sailors, marines, or cadets of the
4 United States on the first day of the week, except assen-
5 blies for the due and orderly observance of religious worship,
6 are hereby prohibited, nor shall any unnecessary labor be per-
7 formed or permitted in the military or naval service of the
8 United States on the first day of the week.

1 SEC. 5. That it shall be unlawful to pay or to receive pay-
2 ment or wages in any manner for service rendered or for
3 labor performed or for the transportation of persons or of
4 property in violation of the provisions of this act, nor shall
5 any action lie for the recovery thereof, and when so paid,
6 whether in advance or otherwise, the same may be recovered
7 back by whoever shall first sue for the same.

1 SEC. 6. That labor or service performed and rendered on
2 the first day of the week in consequence of accident, disaster,
3 or unavoidable delays in making the regular connections upon
4 postal routes and routes of travel and transportation, the pres-
5 ervation of perishable and exposed property, and the regular and
6 necessary transportation and delivery of articles of food in
7 condition for healthy use, and such transportation for short dis-
8 tances from one State, District, or Territory into another State,
9 District, or Territory as by local laws shall be declared to be
10 necessary for the public good shall not be deemed violations
11 of this act, nor shall the provisions of this act be construed to
12 prohibit or to sanction labor on Sunday by individuals who
13 conscientiously believe in and observe any other day than
14 Sunday as the Sabbath or a day of religious worship, pro-
15 vided such labor be not done to the disturbance of others.

The changes made are evident attempts by Mr. Blair to avoid the merciless though just criticism to which his former bill was subjected. These we note below, with the changes asked by the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. The

bill introduced in last Congress we will call the "old bill." The bill as changed by the American Sabbath Union we will call the "revised bill." The bill as now before Congress we will call the "new bill."

1. The title of the old bill was as follows:—

"A Bill to Secure to the People the Enjoyment of the First Day of the Week, Commonly Known as the Lord's Day, as a Day of Rest, and to Promote Its Observance as a Day of Religious Worship."

As revised by the American Sabbath Union, December 12, 1888, the title read as follows (changes in *italic*):—

"A Bill to Secure to the People the Enjoyment of the *Lord's Day, Commonly Known as Sunday*, as a Day of Rest, and to *Protect* Its Observance as a Day of Religious Worship."

Other differences are as follows:—

2. *Section 1.* The old bill did not contain what comes between the words "corporation" in line 4 and "shall perform" in line 6. See copy above.

The revised bill inserted, (1) "on Sunday" after the word "that" in line 3; (2) "show, exhibition," after the word "game" in line 9; (3) and "open to the public, or of a public character," after "thereof" in line 12. It did not contain "to the disturbance of others" after the word "business" in line 7; and in the place of "or recreation to the disturbance of others" in line 10, it read "open to the public," etc., as above stated.

3. *Section 2.* This section of the old bill was not changed. The revised bill changed "the first day of the week" in line 4 to "Sunday," and omitted all that came after.

4. *Section 3.* In this section the only change made in the new bill is the insertion of the word "servant" after the word "agent" in line 9. The revised bill omits the words "the same not being work of necessity, mercy, or humanity" in lines 2 and 3, also all the words *between* "week" in line 6 and "is hereby" in line 8.

5. *Section 4.* "First day of the week" in line 8 was, in the old bill, "Lord's day." The revised bill substituted "Sunday" for "Lord's day."

6. *Section 5.* No change was made in this section whatever; it stands as in the old bill.

7. *Section 6.* The old bill was the same as the new down to the word "act" in line 11. The remainder read as fol-

lows: "But the same shall be construed, so far as possible, to secure to the whole people rest from toil during the first day of the week, their mental and moral culture, and the religious observance of the Sabbath-day." The revised bill changed "the first day of the week," in line 2, to "Sunday." The remainder of the revised selection after "transportation, the," in line 4, read as follows: "Transportation and delivery of milk before 5 A.M. and after 10 P.M. shall not be deemed violations of this act, but the same shall be construed, so far as possible, to secure to the whole people rest from toil during Sunday, their mental and moral culture, and the protection of the religious observance of the day."

Our readers have before them the new Blair Sunday bill.

Section 1 might legitimately raise the question as to how little and what kinds of labor would not disturb religious bigots.

Section 2 opens the way for any amount of fraud and deception in the matter of letters.

Section 5 makes it a crime to pay wages or to receive payment for work which may have been honestly performed on Sunday, and permits a religious bigot or a knave to take the money which may be necessary for the support of a poor man's family.

Section 6 offers a boneless exemption clause to those who observe religiously other days than Sunday, neither prohibiting nor sanctioning labor on that day.

And this is the bill which Congress is asked to pass, and it is strenuously claimed that it is not religious legislation. Let the bill itself answer.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION.

WITH the Fiftieth Congress perished, among other things (it could well be hoped, forever perished) the "joint resolution" introduced by Mr. Blair, which proposed an "amendment to the Constitution of the United States respecting establishments of religion and free schools." Its first section was born of Rhode Island freedom; its second section smacked of the Dark Ages. That bill is resuscitated. With a few slight changes, Mr. Blair has introduced it

again. We give it below, lined and numbered as it is found in Senate document "S. R. 17," introduced in the Senate of the United States, December 9, 1889; it was read twice and referred to the Committee on Education and Labor:—

JOINT RESOLUTION

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States respecting establishments of religion and free public schools.

1 *Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives*
2 *of the United States of America in Congress assembled*
3 *(two-thirds of each House concurring therein),* That the
4 following amendment to the Constitution of the United
5 States be, and hereby is, proposed to the States, to become
6 valid when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the
7 States as provided in the Constitution:

8

ARTICLE .

9 SECTION 1. No State shall ever make or maintain any
10 law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting
11 the free exercise thereof.

12 SEC. 2. Each State in this Union shall establish and
13 maintain a system of free public schools adequate for the
14 education of all the children living therein, between the ages
15 of six and sixteen years, inclusive, in the common branches
16 of learning, in virtue and morality, and in knowledge of the
17 fundamental and non-sectarian principles of Christianity.
18 But no money raised by taxation imposed by law or any
19 money or other property or credit belonging to any municipal
20 organization, or to any State, or to the United States, shall
21 ever be appropriated, applied, or given to the use or purposes
22 of any school, institution, corporation, or person, whereby in-
23 struction or training shall be given in the doctrines, tenets,
24 beliefs, ceremonials, or observances peculiar to any sect, de-
25 nomination, organization, or society, being, or claiming to
26 be, religious in its character, nor shall such peculiar belief,
27 doctrines, tenets, ceremonials, or observances, be taught or
28 inculcated, in the free public schools.

29 SEC. 3. To the end that each State, the United States,
30 and all the people thereof, may have and preserve govern-
31 ments republican in form and in substance, the United States
32 shall guarantee to every State, and to the people of every

33 State and of the United States, the support and maintenance
34 of such a system of free public schools as is herein provided.

35 SEC. 4. That Congress shall enforce this article by
36 legislation when necessary.

The difference between this and the old resolution is as follows:—

1. In the title of the old it was “free schools” instead of “free *public* schools” as in the new.

2. In section 1 there has been no change.

3. In section 2 the words in lines 16 and 17 of the present resolution read in the old as follows: “of knowledge, and in virtue, morality, and the principles of the Christian religion.”

The first section forbids in each State what the Federal Constitution forbids in the United States. It is true that modified forms of Church and State exist in some of our States at the present. The second section establishes just what the first forbids. Christianity is a religion, and the teaching of the principles of Christianity by State institutions establishes Christianity as a State religion. And who is to decide what the “non-sectarian principles of Christianity” are?

A full analysis of the Blair Sunday-Rest bill and Joint Resolution as first introduced may be found in Nos. 4 and 5 of the *Sentinel Library*, respectively. Price of No. 4, seven cents; No. 5, three cents.

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