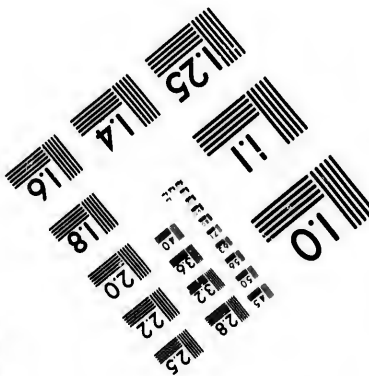
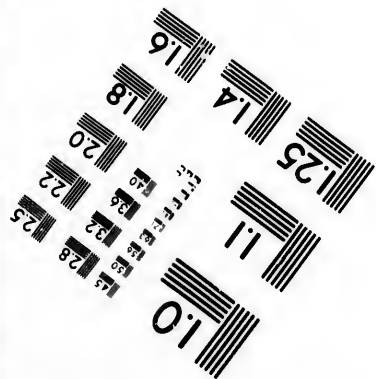
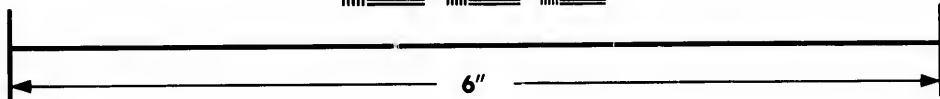
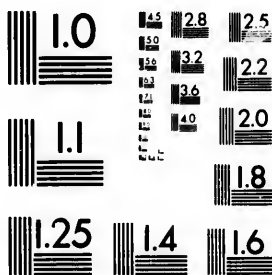


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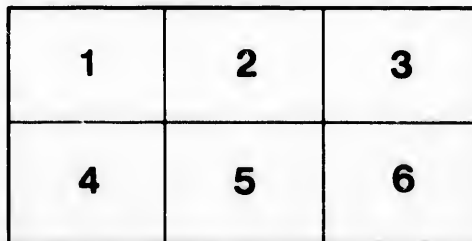
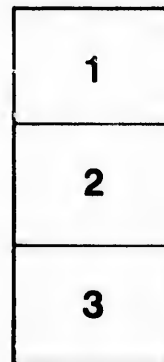
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*Report*

**SPEECH**

**OF**

**WILLIAM W. CAMPBELL, OF N. Y.**

**ON THE BILL FOR RAISING A**

**REGIMENT OF MOUNTED RIFLEMEN,**

**DELIVERED IN**

**THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE U. STATES, APRIL 8, 1846.**

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**WASHINGTON:**

**PRINTED BY J. & G. S. GIDEON.**

**1846.**

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## SPEECH.

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The House being in Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union on the Bill providing for the raising of a regiment of Mounted Riflemen to protect the emigrants on the route to Oregon, and an amendment having been offered, providing that the officers and soldiers of such regiment should be American born citizens—

Mr. CAMPBELL having the floor, observed—

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am pleased to learn from the gentleman who has just taken his seat (Mr. YELL, of Arkansas,) that he is, in part, a good Native American. He says, and I think truly, that, to render this regiment effective, it should be composed of men who are capable of discharging the peculiar duties required of them—of men who are skilled in riding on horseback—who can fell a tree and build a picquet fort—who can hunt the Indian or the buffalo in the wild prairies of the West. For such a service there can be no doubt but our own native born citizens, and especially our hardy pioneers and borderers, are most eminently fitted. And now, sir, that this amendment, which was offered by my friend from Philadelphia, (Mr. LEVIN,) has brought the subject of an alteration of the naturalization laws indirectly before the House, I propose to devote the time allotted to me to a brief consideration of this most interesting question.

When the Massachusetts resolutions were presented, early in the session, I desired to address the House, but others more favored—I mean physically favored, of course—and equally desirous of being heard, gained precedence, and stepped down into the troubled waters of the pool of Bethesda before me.

I do not propose to discuss the question of the power of Congress to regulate the elective franchise in the separate States. This has been ably done by my friend from Philadelphia. I may be permitted to add, however, that the power of admitting to virtual citizenship, assumed by the States of Michigan and Illinois, seems to me to be a plain violation of the spirit, if not of the letter, of the Constitution. In the debate on the Massachusetts resolutions we were told that we must go to the different States if we wished to regulate the right of suffrage, and that Congress has no power over the subject. The Constitution of the United States vests in Congress the power to pass uniform laws for the naturalization of men born in other lands. As the right of suffrage has been considered as of great moment ever since the foundation of the Government, and as one of the highest attributes of a freeman, so it has almost universally been deemed to belong to a citizen alone. It



remained for the States which I have mentioned to break down this barrier which our fathers erected for the preservation of the ballot box in its purity—to assert the doctrine that the States alone, having the power of determining the qualifications of electors, can admit aliens as well as citizens to the full exercise of the great right of freemen—the right of suffrage. I do not, sir, believe in the doctrine. I consider it as among those heresies which, one by one, are engrafted upon political creeds, and which are destroying the vitality of the Constitution. The State of New York was referred to, and we were told that we must regulate the privileges of naturalized foreigners in the convention which will assemble during the coming summer. I trust we shall do so, and that a provision will be inserted in the new constitution withholding from all persons who shall hereafter be naturalized the right of voting until at least one year after they shall have been admitted to citizenship. This would strike a sure blow at political naturalization—would put an end to the corrupt and corrupting influences and practices which immediately precede almost every general election, and which are oftentimes a disgrace even to the courts before whom the formal ceremony takes place. But, sir, of whatever political sins the State of New York may have been guilty, it may be said of her that she has always adhered faithfully to the Constitution of the Union, in its letter and its spirit. The first constitution of that noble State which I in part represent, and of which I glory in being a native-born citizen, provided that the legislature of the State should have the power of passing uniform laws for naturalizing persons of foreign birth. That constitution was ushered into being in 1777, during the most trying and eventful year of the Revolution. It was framed by a body of patriotic men, who were driven before the enemy from place to place, and who literally accomplished their work by the light of their burning dwellings, and amid the smoke and the roar of the enemy's cannon. But though such a provision existed in the constitution, authorizing the legislature to pass general laws for naturalization, no such laws were ever passed, from 1777 down to 1789, when the Constitution of the United States went into operation, and took from the States the power to admit to citizenship. And, during that period of twelve years, but one special law was passed, naturalizing about one hundred persons *by name*. That was all New York ever did. Our fathers, when they had the power, by State legislation, to open wide the door of citizenship, did not think it wise so to do. They had passed through a severe struggle, and, with a great price, had purchased their American birthright. And, though the land wanted occupants, though population was sparse, and the character of the immigrant population was

generally unexceptionable, they did not choose to make American citizenship too cheap.

But there was a further provision in that constitution which required that all citizens of the State, before they could cast their suffrages, should possess a property qualification. In order to vote for the higher officers of the State, a freehold estate of the value of two hundred and fifty dollars was required. I do not mean to discuss the question whether such a provision was wise or not. I merely state the fact. This constitution remained in force down to 1822, when a new constitution was adopted. This new constitution provided that the elector should have done jury duty, or military duty, or worked upon the highway, during the year preceding that in which he proposed to vote. An amendment to that constitution was adopted shortly afterwards, which dispensed with these qualifications, and under which every white male citizen of the United States, of the age of twenty-one years, and who had been a resident one year in the State, casts his vote for all elective officers of the State and General Governments.

So much for the State of New York. The history of that State is the history of most of the States of the Union. And now, let us see how this change of qualifications has operated upon the native and adopted citizen. It may, at first glance, seem a strange assertion, but it is nevertheless true, that the effect in part has been to give to the alien a decided advantage over the native citizen—in other words, to constitute the alien inhabitant virtually a member of a privileged class of society. A foreigner arrives upon our shores. He intends to become a citizen, and declares his intention. He remains five years. He is not required to do jury duty or military duty—at least, such is the law in New York. He pays a tax only in the event of his having property which can be assessed. He may, soon after his arrival, have entered the alms-house and have been a public charge. At the expiration of the five years a general or important election is at hand, and the alien, upon whom none of the burthens of citizenship has ever rested, goes to the court—is naturalized—goes from the court to the ballot-box, and deposits his vote. By his side stands a young man—a native-born citizen, just arrived at his majority—and who is also about to cast his first vote. For three years preceding, the burthens of citizenship have been borne by this young man. He has been obliged to conform to all the provisions of the military law. He may have been compelled to shoulder his musket, and to go forth to the tented field. When he arrived at the age of eighteen years, the question was not asked, whether he intended to become a citizen, and whether he intended to vote when he arrived at the age of twenty-one

years. No; the law of the land made him a citizen, and imposed the burthens of citizenship upon him, because he had been born upon the soil. When he arrives at the age of twenty-one years a new duty devolves upon him, and for the same reason—the duty of a juror—a duty necessary and responsible, but oftentimes burthensome. The alien remains, as long as he pleases, free from these duties and burthens, and is liable only after he shall elect, and shall have exercised the rights of citizenship. This is not equal and exact justice.

In the course of the previous debate, the Declaration of Independence was alluded to, and the gentleman from New York, (Mr. GROVER,) said, exultingly, that George the Third was the first Native American, because, in the language of that memorable instrument, he had obstructed the laws of naturalization of foreigners. Has that gentleman ever examined the writings of the distinguished author of that declaration? Does he not know that Mr. Jefferson was not only an early but most zealous Native American? I will read for his edification certain passages from his Notes on Virginia, a work written just at the close of the Revolution, and prepared with care, in which the great founder of the Democratic party gives his advice to the people of his native State. The part which I shall read may be considered as a commentary upon the part of the Declaration of Independence referred to. And while I am reading it, I would ask also the careful attention of the distinguished representative (Mr. DROMCOOLE) who addressed the committee yesterday on this subject, and also all of his colleagues from the Old Dominion:

“ Here I will beg leave to propose a doubt. The present desire of America is to produce rapid population, by as great importation of foreigners as possible. But is this founded in good policy ?”

Again:

“ Civil government being the sole object of forming societies, its administration must be conducted by common consent. Every species of government has its specific principles. Ours, perhaps, are more peculiar than those of any other in the universe. It is a composition of the freest principles of the English Constitution, with others derived from natural right and natural reason. To these nothing can be more opposed than the maxims of absolute monarchies. Yet from such we are to expect the greatest number of emigrants. They will bring with them the principles of the governments they leave, imbibed in their early youth; or, if able to throw them off, it will be in exchange for an unbounded licentiousness, passing, as is usual, from one extreme to another. It would be a

miracle, were they to stop precisely at the point of temperate liberty. These principles, with their language, they will transmit to their children. *In proportion to their numbers, they will share with us the legislation.* They will infuse into it their spirit, warp and bias its directions, and render it a heterogeneous, incoherent, distracted mass. *I may appeal to experience during the present contest for a verification of these conjectures," &c.*

Thus the experience of the war of the Revolution had satisfied Mr. Jefferson that it might be wise to obstruct laws for the naturalization of men born beyond the seas. His opinion was that—

"Cælum non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt."

They change their sky, but not their mind, who pass beyond the sea.

That far-seeing and able statesman, in his moments of cool reflection, while looking forward and shadowing forth the career of his own beloved Virginia, has drawn a picture true to the life, grouped and colored by his own masterly hand.

I know very well, sir, that afterwards, when Mr. Jefferson came into the Presidency, that he recommended that the term of residence required before admitting to citizenship should be abridged. The alien and sedition laws, passed during the previous administration, had rendered that administration unpopular. The opposition to these laws had proceeded chiefly from those who sympathized in the movements of France. And Mr. Jefferson, in his first annual message, asks the startling question, "shall oppressed humanity find no asylum on this globe?" I would have answered that question then as I would answer it now. Yes; oppressed humanity shall find a home and refuge here in our own free land. God forbid that this land should ever become other than our fathers designed it to be, the home and the refuge of the exile and the oppressed, come from what old and despotic government of Europe or the world he may. The wings of the American eagle shall cover and protect him; but we should see to it that in doing so the object of our love and sympathy shall not destroy the vitals of the noble bird. This protection and care of the poor and the oppressed we owe to the world and our mission, only when it does not interfere with the care and protection due from the Government to great masses of our own people. When there shall come collisions of interest between him who seeks a home here from abroad, and him who was born upon the soil, I shall be on the side of my own kith and kin; on the side of those who have inherited with me our institutions and our privileges, from an ancestry who obtained them with their blood, and handed them over to us as a precious legacy.

I have observed that Mr. Jefferson recommended a modification of the naturalization laws when he came into power in 1801. But let us compare the state of things as they then existed with the present. Of the thirteen original States, most of them required by their constitutions property qualifications of their voters. In some of the States the amount was considerable, and in Mr. Jefferson's own State of Virginia, the elector was required to own a farm of at least forty acres. The resident of a city, who might own and occupy a stately house, could not vote unless he was possessed also of a farm. How stood the case then? He who had remained five years in the country, and complied with the requirements of the law, still could not vote unless he had become the owner also of a sufficient freehold. If, sir, you will for a moment consider the character of the great portion of the immigrant population to this country during the latter part of the last, and the earlier part of the present century, composed as it was of the Lutherans of Germany, the Huguenots of France and Switzerland, and the Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Episcopalians of Scotland, England, and Ireland, with some noble republican patriots of other creeds, many of them persons of education and influence; and then further consider, that after a residence of five years, they were required to possess a freehold before voting, I think it would be safe to state that the restrictions upon suffrage were greater or more conservative under the law passed during Mr. Jefferson's administration, than they would be now, if a residence of twenty-one years was required.

My colleague (Mr. WOOD) asks me whether any foreigner of mature age would not be as well qualified for American citizenship after a residence of five years, as after a residence of twenty-one years? I answer—no, certainly not. But a small portion of the immigrant population can in that period of five years make themselves acquainted as they ought with the great interests of the country, so as to be able to vote intelligently.

And now I have a word to say to the Judiciary Committee, and especially to its chairman, (Mr. RATHBUN,) my colleague from the State of New York. He seems to think that our present laws of naturalization require no modification. I doubt whether he has read the voluminous report of the committee of the Senate; for I am sure if he had, he could not have gravely argued that no reform was needed. Let me read for his information, and that of the Committee on the Judiciary, one or two depositions taken under the commissions issued by the committee of the Senate:

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*“Southern district of New York :*

“George Henry Paulsen, aged 52 years, agent, residing in the city of New York, being duly sworn fully and truly to answer the several interrogatories which shall be put to him by the said commissioners, and in such answers to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—

“To the first interrogatory annexed to said commission, he answereth thus :

“I have frequently been present as an interpreter during the process of naturalization; *that the instances of persons applying to be naturalized who are wholly ignorant of the English language are frequent; and though they understood the terms of the oath when translated to them in words, yet they were frequently unable to comprehend the meaning of said oath; and that there are now hundreds of Germans, who have been admitted citizens, who do not now understand the English language, or the meaning of the oaths to which they have been sworn; and as to the principles of the Constitution of the United States, they have no knowledge or comprehension of them. Many of them are aged persons without any education, and who are naturalized at the solicitation of others, and without any desire of their own, merely to become the tools of political parties. I have been present, and been asked to interpret the oaths, and my interpretation has been received without my having been previously sworn.*

“To the second interrogatory annexed to said commission, he answers:

“That he has no personal knowledge of such instances, but has heard of many, and believes them to be frequent. It is a general practice to advertise in a German paper in this city, that all Germans wishing to be naturalized should apply to the German committee at Tammany Hall, where they will receive their naturalizations gratis. I am well informed that it is the practice, previous to elections, for persons, employed for that purpose by Tammany Hall, to call on the Germans and to persuade them to be naturalized; *and I have learned, in their general conversation, that it is often the case, the certificates of naturalization are kept by said committee until the day of election, when they are handed to the parties, to be presented by them at the polls—they being accompanied thereto by some one of the said committee.*

“Question. At the times such votes are given, have the parties voting any knowledge of the principles or policy of the party in whose favor they deposit their ballots?

“Answer. They have not; they are led by the word *democrat*. I do not take any part myself in politics, but my knowledge of these facts is chiefly derived from being agent of the German Emigrant Society. I formerly conducted a German paper in this city.

“To the fifth interrogatory annexed to said commission, he answers thus:

“I know of many instances where convicts have been pardoned and sent to this country at the expense of the Government by which they were pardoned. Ten or twelve such cases have come to my knowledge; and I know a case where four on board of one vessel were sent from a house of correction, in the dukedom of Brunswick. These I know of my own personal knowledge, having seen an endorsement on the passports, that the persons were convicts, transported by a guard from station to station to the frontier, where they are taken by an agent of the ship from the police officer to the vessel in which they are embarked. The instances which came to my knowledge occurred within the last three years; a large number of the Germans, arriving here soon after, became chargeable for their support to the city or to their bondsmen. Such instances we have very frequently; they call on me for aid immediately. There are also very numerous instances of foreign paupers, sometimes from the poor-houses, in other instances supported by the communes, being shipped to this port. This importation of paupers has increased very much during the last year; they are sent here to save the expense of supporting them in Europe, by the public authorities, at the public expense; some of these persons, frequently owing to their having been bonded, are not received in the alms-houses; and, not being aided by their bondsmen, very often become street beggars.

“To the third and fourth interrogatories annexed to said commission, he answers:

“I know of no such instances.

“To the sixth interrogatory annexed to said commission, he answers:

“I know of no other facts pertinent to the subject.

“GEORGE HENRY PAULSEN.

“JANUARY 29, 1845.

“Examination reduced to writing in presence of the witness, and by him subscribed and sworn to before the commissioners, on the 29th of January, 1845.”

What a picture does the foregoing deposition present. In view of it, can the Committee on the Judiciary say, our naturalization laws need no reform? Sir, there can be no mistake in this matter. Let me read again. I call the attention of the committee to the examination of Henry E. Riell, a member of the General Committee of Tammany Hall, and who testifies, that, for many years, he was actively engaged as such member in making out naturalization papers. The members of the Democratic party in this House will certainly not question this testimony:

Question. Has it been usual to advertise for the attendance of aliens at that place, of persons desirous of being naturalized?

Answer. I believe it has been customary pretty generally to advertise merely that the naturalization committee was in session. In 1840, I think, I published, for some two or three months previous to the election, a brief exposition of the laws, that applicants might know what qualifications were necessary. At each election it has been customary for many hundreds to apply from the counties adjoining this, principally owing to the witnesses residing in this county, or the respective courts where the applicant resided being closed.

Question. Have you known instances of persons attending here from other States?

Answer. I remember one young man from New Jersey, who was naturalized by Judge Betts, of the United States court. He had resided in this State one year, but not the last year preceding his admission. I remember no other instance.

Question. Has it been usual for said committee to issue tickets or vouchers, intended to answer as payment of the fees in any court?

Answer. Yes, it was. I redeemed the tickets.

Question. How large a proportion of the naturalizations effected through the agency of said committee were gratuitous?

Answer. A large proportion, as the applicants were generally very poor people; as those who wished to pay for themselves generally applied at the courts.

Question. About what number were thus paid for or naturalized on such tickets at the last election, or shortly previous?

Answer. I should suppose the General Committee naturalized from twelve to fifteen hundred persons for the last election.

Question. About what number were thus naturalized at the spring election, 1844?

Answer. I believe about thirteen hundred. I ascertained this number from the clerks of the courts.

Question. About what number were thus naturalized at the spring election of 1843, or at any election previous thereto?

Answer. I believe about the usual number naturalized at the spring and fall elections, with the exception of the Presidential election, 1840, would average about one thousand at each election; and on that occasion I was engaged some four or five months in making out the preliminary papers, and, to the best of my remembrance, about three thousand were naturalized during the period of five months. I paid several hundred dollars myself towards defraying these expenses on that occasion.

Thus it will be seen that in 1844 nearly three thousand persons were naturalized by this sub-committee of Tammany Hall, and the fees paid out of monies of individual members, and of funds of a political party.



In that year some five thousand persons were naturalized in the city of New York—a number sufficient to determine the election of the State of New York; and thus, by the electoral vote of that great State, control the political destinies of the Union. Well may the gentleman from that State (Mr. GROVER) boast, as he did on this floor on a former occasion, that with the foreign vote his political friends secured a great political victory. I call the attention of every well wisher to his country to this astounding fact. The evils of which we complain are not local. They affect directly the well-being of every man in this broad Union, let him belong to which of the great political parties he may. When I spoke, a few moments since, of the exemption of aliens from the burthens of citizenship, I was asked by my colleague (Mr. RATHBUN) if he did not pay taxes. I answered—yes, if he possessed property which could be assessed. I now call the attention of that gentleman to the deposition of his political friend (Mr. RIELL.) He avers that the fees of naturalization of nearly three thousand persons, naturalized by his procurement in a single year, were paid by him because the applicants were too poor to pay for themselves; and yet it appears, from testimony of the clerks of the courts in New York State, the fees of naturalization in some of the courts were less than one dollar for each individual. And now let me not be misunderstood. Poverty is no crime. Far be it from me to impute it to any man as a reproach. But it does nevertheless seem very strange that three thousand men should have been residents of that section of the country for a period of five years, and yet be so deficient in this world's goods as to be unable to pay one dollar to enable them to enter the great family of American citizens. They must certainly be very deficient in that thrift which so eminently characterizes the native born American. It is notorious, sir, that many of the immigrants arrive upon our shores in very destitute circumstances; and may we not fairly infer that many of these *better citizens* had but recently arrived from their far-off homes across the water, and were thus, soon after their arrival, introduced into the full enjoyment of the rights of freemen.

Mr. Chairman, in looking over a file of the London Times, of September last, I find that the leading journal of England devotes a column or two to abuse of our Government and people, but more especially directed against the Native American party. I will read one or two of the concluding paragraphs:

*“Brother Jonathan, however, knows what he is about, and is too wise, we apprehend, to fix the young Republic in a narrow nationality. Where*

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*will the free States get their "helps," but from the outpourings of Irish misery? How will he get up the steam against the Britishers, but with the newborn Irish citizens? How will he return a POLK? How will he decide on annexation, but with these Democratic materials? How will he people Missouri and Arkansas—how Oregon and California? How will he hang like a cloud over Mexico, without the continued addition of these vast foreign swarms? How, on an emergency, will he man his fleets and recruit his armies? HOW KEEP DOWN THE CONTINUAL AND FEARFUL AMBITION OF LABOR, AND ITS INCREASING DEMANDS AGAINST PROPERTY?"*

The enemies of the Native American party are welcome to the support of their new and powerful ally, the great leading Tory paper of England. But, sir, I repeat the emphatic interrogatory, "*How keep down the continual and fearful ambition of labor, and its increasing demands against property?"* Sir, honest labor is not over-ambitious, nor is it fearful in its character or exacting in its demands. I am no friend of radicalism—no exciter of hostile feelings between different classes and pursuits; but there is a startling truth in the question propounded. It is greatly to be feared that the labor of our native citizens will not meet its just reward, so long as we give equal, ay, greater encouragement to the "vast foreign swarms" of which the Times in its article speaks. Who wants cheap labor? I answer, the General Government, when it requires sailors and soldiers yes; when it wishes to raise regiments of mounted riflemen; the State, when it wishes to build canals and railroads. Chartered companies wish it when they construct their works; the American laborer certainly does not wish it. The native born American mechanic and laborer feel already this fearful competition which now meets them at every turn, and which may, ere long, reduce them to the condition of their European competitors.

It is a melancholy picture to contemplate, but it is a true one. The American mechanic, who has passed his long years of apprenticeship in acquiring his trade—who has been taught to consider that a competency would reward his skill and his industry—who has been accustomed to clothe well his family and to educate his children, and generally to contribute his share to the advancement and support of society—is now finding by sad experience, in many of the large cities especially, that his hopes and his prospects are darkening under the influence of cheap foreign labor. It certainly would seem but just that some legislation should be had which should impose equal burthens upon the alien mechanics and laborers, or

which should afford equal exemption to the American born. At all events, the balance of political power should no longer be in the hands of those who thus force the American laborer into this competition, and who, by holding this power, demand of dominant parties most of the subordinate offices of profit. It is needless to speak of the radical influences which the power of the foreign vote has introduced. Those who dream on in peace, fearing nothing, will yet wake up to the reality of danger when it will be difficult to avert it.

I appeal to every upright native born citizen to aid in averting the evils which I have only briefly alluded to in the foregoing remarks. I appeal to that great class of adopted citizens, who, from long residence, from education, from association and habit, have become strongly identified with us, to aid in the great work.

The Native American organization seeks to protect the rights of property, and to perpetuate our free institutions, by guarding and preserving the purity of the ballot box. It seeks to elevate the character and reward the skill, and the industry, and enterprise, of the American laborer, in all branches of business, by freeing him, as far as possible, from the ruinous competition of the pauper labor of Europe. It is an organization which is at the same time conservative and democratic; and more, and most of all, it is *American*, holding as a leading idea that Americans should rule America.

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