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Anacostia Community Museum Archives

Douglass' Monthly, November 1860, Vol. III, NO. VI

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[[line]]
[[3 columns]]
[[column 1]]

which we ought not to remain inattentive. To profit by this movement in welcoming men of our blood, the victims of these outrageous persecutions, is to continue the work of reformation undertaken by the founders of the Republic, and to remain faithful to the national traditions.

I will firstly exhibit what has been done by my predecessors and by myself to advance this question to a practical result; and then I will submit to your Excellency the conclusions which it seems to me proper to adopt.

On the 22d of August, 1859, the Government, by a circular of the Secretary of State of the Interior and of Agriculture, made an appeal to all persons of our race who suffer from the prejudice of color. Hayti offers them a refuge and facilities to come and establish themselves among us. To agriculturists, particularly, they guarantee an immediate position, in harmony with their pecuniary position. They may become landed proprietors, farmers, or laborers on half (a moiety fruits) or by the week. Those among them who had not the means of paying their passage, would be received at the expense of the Government.

It was stated that the immigrants would be excused from military service—the service of the National Guard alone being obligatory on all citizens.

Convinced of the importance of informing families who desired to come to our country of the liberality of our institutions in matters of religious belief, the Government guaranteed, conformably with the disposition of our laws, the public exercise of the worship that each of them professed.

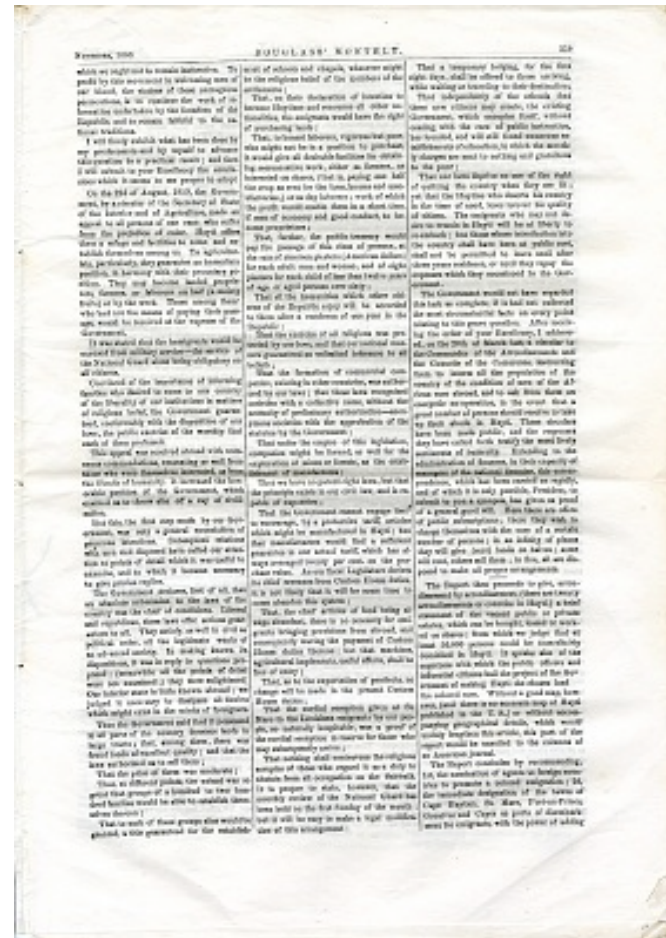
This appeal was received abroad with numerous commendations, emanating as well from those who were themselves interested, as from the friends of humanity. It increased the honorable position of the Government, which enabled us to throw afar off a ray of civilization.

But this, the first step made by our Government, was only a general enunciation of generous intentions. Subsequent relations with men well disposed have called our attention to points of detail which it was useful to examine, and to which it became necessary to give precise replies.

The Government declares, first of all, that an absolute submission to the laws of the country was the chief of conditions. Liberal and republican, these laws offer serious guarantees to all. They satisfy, as well in civil as political order, all the legitimate wants of an advanced society. In making known its dispositions, it was in reply to questions proposed; (meanwhile all the points of detail were not examined;) they were enlightened. Our interior state is little known abroad; we judged it necessary to dissipate all doubts which might exist in the minds of foreigners.

Thus the Government said that it possessed in all parts of the country demesne lands in large tracts; that, among them, there was found lands of excellent quality; and that the laws authorized us to sell them;

That the price of them was moderate;



That, at different points, the extent was so great that groups of a hundred to two hundred families would be able to establish themselves thereon;

That to each of these group sites would be granted, a title guaranteed for the establish- [[/column 1]]

[[column 2]]

ment of schools and chapels, whatever might be the religious belief of the members of the settlements;
That, on their declaration of intention to become Haytians and renounce all other nationalities, the emigrants would have the right of purchasing lands;

That, to honest laborers, vigorous but poor, who might not be in a position to purchase, it would give all desirable facilities for obtaining remunerative work, either as farmers, as interested on shares, (that is, paying one half the crop as rent for the farm, houses and manufactories,) as day laborers; work of which the profit would enable them in a short time, if men of economy and good conduct, to become proprietors;

That, further, the public treasury would pay the passage of this class of persons, at the rate of nineteen piesters (American dollars) for each adult man and woman, and of eight piesters for each child of less than twelve years of age or aged persons over sixty;

That all the immunities which other citizens of the Republic enjoy will be accorded to them after a residence of one year in the Republic;

That the exercise of all religions was protected by our laws, and that our national manners guaranteed an unlimited tolerance to all beliefs,

That the formation of commercial companies, existing in other countries, was authorized by our laws; that these laws recognized societies with a collective name, without the necessity of preliminary authorization--anonymous societies with the approbation of the statutes by the Government;

That under the empire of this legislation, companies might be formed, as well for the exploration of mines or forests, as the establishment of manufactures;

That we have no patent-right laws, but that the principle exists in our civil law, and is capable of expansion;

That the Government cannot engage itself to encourage, by a protective tariff, articles which might be manufactured in Hayti; but that manufacturers would find a sufficient guarantee in our actual tariff, which has always averaged twenty per cent on the purchase value. As our fiscal Legislature derives its chief revenues from Custom House duties, it is not likely that it will for some time to come abandon this system;

That, the chief articles of food being always abundant, there is no

necessity for emigrants bringing provisions from abroad, and consequently waving the payment of Custom House duties thereon; but that machines, agricultural implements, useful effects, shall be free of entry;

That, as to the exportation of products, no change will be made in the present Custom House duties;

That the cordial reception given at St. Marc to the Louisiana emigrants by our people, so naturally hospitable, was a proof of the cordial reception in reserve for those who may subsequently arrive;

That nothing shall contravene the religious scruples of those who regard it as a duty to abstain from all occupation on the Sabbath. It is proper to state, however, that the monthly review of the National Guard has been held on the first Sunday of the month; but it will be easy to make a legal modification of this arrangement; [[/column 2]]

[[column 3]]

That a temporary lodging, for the first eight days, shall be offered to those arriving, while waiting or travelling to their destination;

That independently of the schools that these new citizens may create, the existing Government, which occupies itself, without ceasing, with the care of public instruction, has founded, and will still found numerous establishments of education, in which the monthly charges are next to nothing and gratuitous to the poor;

That our laws deprive no one of the right of quitting the country when they see fit; yet that the Haytian who deserts his country in the time of need, loses forever his quality of citizen. The emigrants who may not desire to remain in Hayti will be at liberty to re-embark; but those whose introduction into the country shall have been at public cost, shall not be permitted to leave until after three years residence, or until they repay the expenses which they occasioned to the Government.

The Government would not have regarded this task as complete, if it had not collected the most circumstantial facts on every point relating to this grave question. After receiving the order of your Excellency, I addressed, on the 20th of March last, a circular to the Commander of the Arrondissements and the Councils of the Communes, instructing them to inform all the population of the country of the condition of men of the African race abroad, and to ask from them an energetic co-operation, in the event that a great number of persons should resolve to take up their abode in Hayti. These circulars have been made public, and the responses they have called forth testify the most lively sentiments of fraternity. Extending to the administration of finances, in their capacity of managers of the national domaine, this correspondence, which has been carried on rapidly, and of which it is only possible, President, to submit to you a synopsis, has given us proof of a general good will. Here there are offers of public subscriptions; there they wish to charge themselves with the care of a certain number of persons; in an affinity of places they will give (rent) lands on halves; some will rent, others sell them; in fine, all are disposed to make all proper arrangements.

The Report then proceeds to give, arrondissement by arrondissement, (there are twenty arrondissements or counties in Hayti,) a brief

statement of the vacant public or private estates, which can be bought, leased or worked on shares; from which we judge that at least 50,000 persons could be *immediately* *domieled* in Hayti. It speaks also of the eagerness with which the public officers and influential citizens hail the project of the Government of making Hayti the chosen land the colored race. Without a good map, however, (and there is no accutae map of Hayti published in the U.S.,) or without accompanying geographical details, which would unduly lengthen this article, this part of the report would be unsuited to the columns of an American journal.

The Report concludes by recommending, 1st, the nomination of agents to foreign countries to promote a colored emigration; 2d, the immediate designation of the towns of Cape Haytien, St. Marc, Port-au-Prince, Gonaives and Cayes as ports of disembarkment for emigrants, with the power of adding [[/column 3]]

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