

COMMITTEE AT ODDS ON REAPPORTIONMENT

Three Reports on the Bill Submitted to the House.

One Calls for 357 Members, Another for 386—Third Deals with Disfranchisement in Southern States.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20.—Representative Hopkins, (Rep., Ill.) Chairman of the Committee on Census, to-day filed in the House the majority report on the Reapportionment bill reported by his committee, fixing the membership of the House for the next decade at 357, and gave notice that he would call up the bill immediately after the holiday recess. Representative Burleigh (Rep., Me.) filed a minority report signed by six members, in favor of a House to be composed of 386 members, and Representative Crumpacker, (Rep., Ind.) who signed the Burleigh report, also submitted an independent report in favor of reducing the representation in the Southern States to the extent of the abridgement of the suffrage. His independent report favors a House to be composed of 374 members.

Mr. Hopkins, in the majority report, cites many instances to show that the loss of seats by States under reapportionment bills was not uncommon. Massachusetts, for instance, which under the third census had twenty members, was reduced to ten under the sixth, seventh, and eighth, and Virginia, which had twenty-three under the third, had but nine under the ninth.

The report says the committee followed the plan adopted under the Sixth Census and followed continuously since. It has the sanction and approval of sixty years of National existence. The plan is to divide the Constitutional population by 357, the proposed membership. The quotient, 208,868, is the ratio of Representatives to population.

This ratio applied to the population of each State will yield in the aggregate a number somewhat less than 357, the number determined upon as the membership of the House. The difference is made up by assigning to the States having the largest major fractions additional Representatives until a sufficient number have been assigned to bring the total up to 357. A membership of more than 357, the report says, would make the House unwieldy.

The report of the minority bears the signatures of Messrs. Burleigh, Russell, (Rep., Conn.) Heatwole, (Rep., Minn.) Crumpacker, (Rep., Ind.) Griffith, (Dem., Ind.) and Wilson, (Dem., S. C.) Referring to the Hopkins apportionment, the report says:

The anomalous character of this proposed apportionment, as well as its obvious injustice, is clearly demonstrated by the fact that it is necessarily based, in part, upon majority fractions, and yet Colorado with a majority fraction of 121,367, Florida with a majority of 110,807, and North Dakota with a majority fraction of 105,586, do not receive a Representative based upon such majority fraction, while every other State with a majority fraction receives a representative for such majority fraction.

We believe that every State should be treated alike with reference to its majority fraction, as no valid reason has been or can be assigned for the discrimination between them. We also believe that in the new apportionment no State should lose a Representative. We therefore recommend a House consisting of 386 members.

In reaching this number we have adopted the method used by the committee, and have followed the precedent established by the House in 1872, when the House added to the whole number of Representatives a Representative each for the States of New Hampshire and Florida by reason of the fact that they each had almost a majority fraction, after the whole number of Representatives had been apportioned.

We take the computation based upon 384 Representatives, upon a ratio of one Representative for every 194,182 of population. Nebraska, with a majority fraction of 97,629, and Virginia with a majority fraction of 106,546, each lose a Representative, and get no Representative for the majority fraction in either case.

These are the only States having majority fractions that fail to get a Representative therefore. This seems to us an injustice. Therefore, following the precedent in the case of New Hampshire and Florida in 1872, we assign to each of these States one Representative for each majority fraction, thus adding two to the whole number, making in all under our proposed bill, 386 Representatives.

Under this the gain is as follows: Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin one Representative each; Minnesota, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania gain two; Illinois, New York, and Texas three.

We submit that this apportionment, involving an increase of twenty-nine in the membership of the House, is in line with the uniform practice of the House in increasing its size so as to keep pace, as near as may be, with the increase in population of the country. No practical inconvenience as to the seating capacity of the House can result from this increase. A plan prepared by the architect of the Capitol shows that a slight lengthening of the outer row of seats in the corners on each side of the chamber and a rearrangement of eight seats in the body of the hall will accommodate the additional Representatives.

The independent report, of Mr. Crumpacker is a lengthy document, which goes exhaustively into the abridgement of the right of suffrage in the Southern States. In the beginning he quotes the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution, providing that when the right to vote is abridged, except for participation in rebellion or other crime, the representation shall be reduced in such States in proportion to the abridgement.

"Congress in this matter," Mr. Crumpacker says, "must take cognizance of current history and of facts disclosed by official records. There is not a member of either House of Congress who does not know to a moral certainty that by direct operation of law the States of Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina have disfranchised sufficient number of citizens to deprive each of them of several Representatives they would otherwise be entitled to, to say nothing of the largely increased suppression of votes caused by unfair partisan administration of the laws.

"The question is, Will Congress make an apportionment of Representatives according to the plain requirements of the Constitution, or will it ignore those requirements and act according to its arbitrary will?"

Mr. Crumpacker adduces figures to show that in Louisiana 43.74 per cent. of the citizens are disfranchised. The representation should, therefore, he urges, be reduced from 7 to 4. In North Carolina, for the same reasons he figures that the representation should be reduced from 9 to 6; in Mississippi from 7 to 4, and in South Carolina from 6 to 4. The subterfuge resorted to in the South to evade the law, he says, marks the beginning of political demoralization and social decay. He then proceeds to a severe arraignment of the South in many localities of which "the trampling under foot of laws calculated to secure the exercise of political privileges to the negro has continued for so long that it is showing its vicious fruits in the prevalence of mob law."

He denounces the frequent resort to lynch law and its unspeakable horrors. "These atrocities," says he, "bespeak a deplorable condition of political morals. Their frequent occurrence is the legitimate result of a generation of disregard of election laws."

The solution of the problem this condition presents, Mr. Crumpacker says, is one of the burning questions of the hour. It is above partisanship, it involves the very life of the Government. He says in conclusion:

"The measure I propose carries no resentment toward any State, North or South. It is not designed for punishment, but it simply aims to place representation in the House upon its constitutional basis, and no State can justly complain if it be accorded its full rights. No compromise can be made with wrong."