

# PROPOSED PLAN NOT EVEN A TEMPORARY EXPEDIENT

(From The Cordele News.)

OUR esteemed tri-weekly contemporary, "The Cordele Rambler," an ardent supporter of the candidacy of Hon. Hoke Smith for governor, in its issue of November 9, discusses the "negro ballot" in connection with the recent Maryland election, in which the proposed amendment to the constitution of that state was so overwhelmingly defeated, carrying with it a crushing defeat of the democratic party in that state, because the leaders of the party endorsed such amendment.

The Rambler says:

"The great trouble with this amendment is that it disfranchises the old antebellum darkey who gives no trouble, and allows the new negro who has a smattering of education to vote.

"It was a hell blooming piece of corruption to ever enfranchise the negro, but, if we are going to disfranchise him we should not begin with the old-time darkey who got his training when negroes were 'niggers.'"

Now, we entirely agree with The Rambler that this is one of the very great troubles with the proposed amendment advocated by Mr. Smith. The language of the constitution of the United States is plain enough for any one who reads to understand. It says: "The rights of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color or previous condition of servitude." Mr. Smith says: "I am in favor of passing a state law to disfranchise the negro." Does Mr. Smith hope to convince the white people of Georgia that he can, if elected governor, bluff the legislature into making a foolish effort to nullify the constitution of the United States, which they are sworn to support? We think not. He is too shrewd a man, and we are driven to the conclusion that the quoted portion of his platform is only a—we hesitate to use the word—demagogical effort to catch the unthinking voter. Hence we welcome a discussion of this question as an educational feature and we especially welcome such a strong, concise presentation of the fundamental defects of the proposed amendment, coming from The Rambler, one of Mr. Smith's ablest and strongest supporters among the Georgia press. It would indeed deprive the "old, true," antebellum darkey, whose fidelity to the white man is proverbial, of the ballot and place it in the hands of "the new negro, who

has a smattering of an education, to vote," and the danger that would confront the white people of Georgia is obvious.

Indeed, to quote again from The Rambler: "If we are going to disfranchise him we should not begin with the old-time darkey who got his training when negroes were 'niggers.'"

Again, The Rambler says: "Another trouble about this amendment will be, that in a short time, they will practically all be voters, as every negro preacher and school teacher will have a further incentive to educate.

"This is nothing but a temporary expedient, and a statesman should build for the future as well as for the present.

"The result of a constitutional amendment of this kind might serve to divide the white voters, and later the educated negro would heap up lots of trouble on the coming generation."

Again we agree with The Rambler, but we cannot see how The Rambler reconciles its position with that of its candidate for governor. Indeed, Mr. Smith's position is "but a temporary expedient." Nay his proposition is not entitled to the dignity of an "expedient temporary" analyzed. It is demagogic—it is but the attempt of a man labeled with a "divine call to seek office" to catch the unthinking voter. Indeed (again quoting from The Rambler), "the result of a constitutional amendment of this kind might serve to divide the white voters and later the educated negro would heap up lots of trouble on the coming generation."

Certainly The Rambler is right. "A statesman should build for the future as well as for the present."

The Rambler suggests the following remedy: "Give the negroes the Philippine islands, and let all of them who want to mix up in politics go to that section, and leave the field hands and house servants here who will not need any education or politics."

We are not prepared to admit the feasibility of The Rambler's suggestion, but there is more statesmanship in it than there is in Mr. Smith's platform.