

QUESTION OF THE HOUR.

Colonel F. W. Foster Recognizes the Gravity of the Situation.

The Only Other Republican Leader Who Has a Business Standing Coincides With Postmaster Chadbourn About the Condition in Wilmington---Property Holders of Intelligence and Morality Who Pay the Taxes Should Control.

A reporter of The Messenger last evening called upon Colonel F. W. Foster, one of the most prominent and influential of the republican business men of Eastern North Carolina, and lately chairman of the Board of County Commissioners of New Hanover county, for the purpose of ascertaining his views upon the present condition of affairs in our city.

The colonel received the reporter pleasantly and answered all questions freely and fully. He said he fully recognized the fact that the situation here was extremely grave, with imminent danger of trouble between the races, which, as a business man and a citizen, he earnestly deprecated, as he believed that the city would not recover from the ill effect of such a conflict in years to come. He recognized the unrest that prevails in the community, and said:

"Taking into consideration the determined will and set purpose of the citizens who represent the class of our citizens who pay 95 per cent. of the taxes, to take control of affairs, I have remarked to quite a number of people, and am still of the opinion, that it would be best at this time for the republicans not to put a county ticket in the field. While I say this, I want to emphasize the fact that I firmly believe in the principles of the republican party."

In speaking further of the terrible condition of affairs here, Colonel Foster said he recognized the fact that the present movement was one by the business men and tax payers of the community to administer and control their affairs. "I think," he said, "that the representatives of 95 per cent. of the taxes paid ought to control. They ought not to be deprived of their privilege of controlling the administration of their affairs. I want no citizen deprived of any of his rights or privileges to which he is entitled by reason of his intelligence and moral worth, yet I am heartily in favor of the control of affairs by the intelligence, character and property interests of any community."

Being asked with regard to the number of colored officeholders in New Hanover county, Colonel Foster said that before reading Postmaster W. H. Chadbourn's letter stating that there are thirty-six colored magistrates in the county, he had no idea that there were over a half dozen.

The colonel added that in giving the advice about not putting a republican county ticket in the field and expressing the views above, he fully believes that he is acting in the best interest of the colored man.

The above views by Colonel Foster ought to have very great weight on the unhappy situation here. He is a republican by principle, but all classes of people in Wilmington fully recognize that he has always been interested in the welfare of the community. He is one of our most public spirited citizens, and no man here has been more earnestly interested in the upbuilding and prosperity of our city. He has been particularly interested in the industrial development of Wilmington, and as secretary of the committee which was appointed to induce enterprises to locate here under the special act of the general assembly exempting new manufactories from taxation for a period of ten years, he has done and is still doing splendid service.

Colonel Foster has been a citizen of Wilmington for more than thirty-three years. Coming here at the fall of Fort Fisher, many of our citizens remember his generosity to the officers and soldiers of the Confederacy. While in charge of the commissary he not only issued food supplies to soldiers and citizens, but supplied 500 needy confederate soldiers with clothing. In his official capacity as a member of the legislature, as a member of the board of county commissioners, and as chairman of the board of county commissioners, he has always manifested great interest in the prosperity of our community. All our citizens, without regard to politics, admit his economical administration of the financial affairs of the county while chairman of the recent republican board of county commissioners. It will be remembered that when the board first organized with him as chairman he offered and the board adopted a resolution requesting a committee of the Chamber of Commerce, composed of a large majority of democrats, to co-operate with the board in securing the best and most economical administration of the affairs of the county.

Colonel Foster, in the views he expresses above, shows that he still has the best interests of Wilmington at heart, and his opinion must necessarily have great influence in the crisis which now involves the best interests of Wilmington and New Hanover county.