

granting suffrage to the negro at this time. The Thirteenth Amendment was ratified and the negro was granted certain civil rights, but the Legislature did not enfranchise him.^a

The vital question before the Legislature in 1866 was the Fourteenth Amendment, which had already passed the national Congress. Governor Walker recommended its rejection, as it virtually disfranchised most of the intelligent people of the South. The Legislature refused to ratify it.^b

The record left by this body of men stands out against the screen of subsequent events as a conscientious effort to bring about the reorganization of the State government in the only sensible way. They saw with unclouded vision the chaos that would result if the negro were given the vote at this time, and their logic and foresight were thoroughly verified later. What they did was in accordance with the policy outlined by Abraham Lincoln and followed by Andrew Johnson, as was repeatedly pointed out by President Johnson in his numerous vetoes of Congressional Bills designed to bring about political upheavals in the South.

The people of Florida were just becoming reconciled to the new state of affairs, when the State was invaded by the Freedmen's Bureau under the protection of the armed forces of the United States.

Freedmen's Bureau (1865-74)

The Federal Congress passed an act establishing the Freedmen's Bureau in March, 1865, before the close of the war. The purpose of the legislation was to furnish provisions, clothing, shelter, and fuel to the needy and dependent freedmen and their families. One of the provisions of the act was the allotment of abandoned or confiscated land, 40 acres, under special conditions, to worthy freedmen.^a Out of this grew the famous "Forty acres and a mule" lure that was so often dangled before the eyes of the bewildered negro by his so-called benefactors, and always to his undoing. This act was to remain in force one year.

Nothing much was done by the Bureau the first year; but in the meantime the halls of the Federal Congress were reverberating with the thunder of radical leaders, who saw in this legislation the groundwork on which to build their efforts to force their doctrines on the South. So in February,