

SIMON CAMERON – USCT GRAND REVIEW SPEECH

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“I cannot let this opportunity pass without thanking the African soldiers for the compliment they have paid me, but more than all to thank them for the great service which they have been to their country in the terrible rebellion. I never doubted that the people of African descent would play a great part in this struggle, and am proud to say that all my anticipations have been more than realized. Your services, offered in the early part of the war, were refused; but when the struggle became one of life and death, then the country gladly received you, and thank God, you nobly redeemed all you promised.

Like all other men you have your destinies in your own hands, and if you continue to conduct yourselves hereafter as you have in this struggle, you will have all the rights you ask for, all the rights that belong to human beings. [Applause] I can only say again that I thank you, I thank you from my heart for all that you have done for your county, and I know the country will hold you in grateful remembrance.

I cannot close without saying that there is at the head of the National Government a great man, who is able and determined to deal justly with all. I know that with his approval, no State that was in rebellion will be allowed to return to the benefits of the Union without having first a constitutional compact which will prevent slavery in this land for all time to come; which will make all men equal before the law; which will prescribe no distinction of color on the witness-stand and in the jury-box; and which will protect the homes and the domestic relations of all men and all women. He will insist, too, on the repudiation of all debts contracted for the support of the war of the rebellion. Remember, when this war began there were 4,000,000 of slaves in this country protected by law. Now all men are made free by the law. Thank God for all this! for He alone has accomplished the work!”