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HON. R. P. HUNTER TO THE CITY ITEM.

HE EXPLAINS HIS VOTE ON THE UNIVERSITY AND OTHER BILLS.

BATON ROUGE, June 27, '84.

Editor City Item:—

I avail myself of your invitation in your article headed "The University Grab and Reform," in your issue of yesterday, to "demonstrate to the country," and to give some reasons why the University should be removed.

First—It was and is now by law established and located near Alexandria. There has ever since the building was burned been both an express and implied recognition of the intention to rebuild the college building at Alexandria when the State was able to do it. The title to Act No. 145 of 1878, which united the Agricultural and Mechanical College with the University, is as follows:

"To unite the Louisiana State University, as now established and located near Alexandria, (the italics mine) in the Parish of Rapides, and the Agricultural and Mechanical College, as now established and located in the Parish of St. Bernard, into one and the same institution of learning, to be known and designated under the name and title of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, and to establish and locate the same temporarily at Baton Rouge, in the Parish of East Baton Rouge."

The journal of that session shows that an effort was made to locate the institution permanently, as far as legislative action might accomplish that purpose, at Baton Rouge, and failed. Now, what better time could ever come to accomplish the removal than when the present bill was introduced, *two hundred and sixty-nine thousand one hundred and twelve 8-100 dollars (\$269,112.08)* of surplus funds in the State treasury for past years and to the credit of the general fund? The bill under consideration only asks for \$30,000 of this amount? Not very much of a "grab" about that, is there? The rebuilding has already been postponed *fifteen years* and there never can be a more appropriate and suitable time than the present to settle the matter finally.—The interests of the University and of everybody concerned demand that it should be settled *now*.

Second—The building now occupied by the University belongs to the Deaf and Dumb, and they are now crowded together in a building entirely too small for them; located in the centre of the Town where there are no grounds or room for recreation, and where their misfortunes are brought into unnecessary and unpleasant prominence. They should be restored to their rightful home, provided for them by the bounty of the State.

Third—The Agricultural and Mechanical College is paid \$9500 per year by the State as interest on the fund realized from the sale of lands donated by the United States upon the express condition that it should be used to endow an agricultural

and mechanical college. The University at Baton Rouge has had the benefit of this fund since 1878—six years—and in that time it has amounted to \$59,000, and *nothing has yet been done to carry out the purposes of the donation*, nor can ever be done as long as the institution is situated in a town. Agriculture has never flourished to any considerable extent in the Towns of the worm, so far as I know; the farm donated by Baton Rouge is rented to outside parties. Good faith to the United States requires requires that either the money should be returned or the purposes of the donation carried out.

Fourth—The beneficiary cadet system, under which the institution flourished at Alexandria, has been discouraged and entirely abandoned at this place, and would not, if revived, find at this place a suitable habitation or that countenance and encouragement which it would in the country.

Fifth—The interest of the institution itself requires that it should be removed and reorganized as the following facts and figures taken from its catalogues, reports and statements furnished officially conclusively show:

Of the 200 matriculates during the present session; seventy were day scholars and eighty of the whole number have resigned, been dismissed or are absent on furlough. There must be some cause or reason which should be corrected, when there is a loss to the institution of eighty out of two hundred students at one session—two-fifths of the whole number.

At my request I was furnished with a hospital report by the secretary of the institution and it is signed by the surgeon, and is for the seventy days ending with February, 1884. It shows an average daily hospital list for seventy days of twenty-three. I must, in justice to the institution say that it was stated by the officer who furnished the report to me that frequently cadets get themselves sent to the hospital trivial complaints to escape military and college duties, and the diseases also given show that the complaints in most instances were not very serious, but the loss of study remains the same. Liability to epidemics and the impossibility of isolating the inmates of the institution in case yellow fever, small-pox, cholera, scarlet fever, or other epidemics should prevail in Baton Rouge, and the healthfulness of the location in Rapides, three miles from Alexandria and in the pinewoods, are strong reasons for the removal.

The catalogue of 1883 publishes the list of graduates since 1869. In that year there were eight; in 1870 there were seven; in 1871 there were twenty; in 1872 there were ten; in 1873 there were eight; in 1874 there were five. From 1874 to 1882, eight years, there were *none*. In 1882 there were two. Those of 1883 are not given. This year there is a regular graduating class of five.

These figures show that in the five years following the removal of

the institution from Rapides to Baton Rouge and while it had the corps of cadets brought here with the institution, it graduated fifty-three young men, and that during the succeeding nine years, after it was thrown on its own resources at this place, it had graduated up to and including 1882 but *seven* young men. Here is a significant decline in the usefulness of the institution which suggests the absolute necessity and propriety of doing something to elevate the standard of it.

All inspection of the course of studies published in the same catalogue shows that the trouble does not arise from any difficulty presented by the curriculum, which, in my opinion, is very low in grade; and the preparatory classes and studies provided for therein, is suggestive of where the real trouble is.

Fifth—The capital city of the State, and, for that matter, any other city, furnishes too many diversions and interruptions of the studies of the student at the University, and too many temptations to contract evil habits. This assertion may be formulated as an axiom, and is expressly recognized in the location of such institutions as the University of Virginia at Charlottesville; the Washington-Lee at Lexington; the University of the South at Suwanee, Tenn., and numerous other old and flourishing institutions.

Sixth—There are on the west side of the Mississippi river forty-two Parishes, having a population of 577,589, which raise 240,000 bales of cotton; 90,606 hogsheds of sugar, and 7,615,100 bushels of corn, and in the forty-two Parishes, there is, so far as I am informed, but *one* high school for boys, the one at Grand Coteau; and, in the whole section of this State, known as North Louisiana, *there is none at all*. Of course I anticipate the reply on this point, that all of those Parishes do not desire the removal, and that I am not authorized to ask it in their name, but the facts above stated remain nevertheless.

Seventh—As inducements and contributive reasons it may be mentioned that the bill introduced by me as amended, provides that before the appropriation of \$30,000 can be drawn from the treasury, the citizens of Rapides shall pay \$25,000 into the treasury to the credit of the building fund; that the State owns not less than \$30,000 of buildings and 900 acres of land in Rapides; that the location there is exceedingly healthy, with an abundance of pure water, wood, parade grounds, etc., and that the creeks furnish fine sport at fishing, the woods abound in game of all kinds, and all this sufficiently near to Alexandria to give the students the benefit of its society, churches and facilities of communication with the world by river and two lines of railroads completed and in operation, the river, and two more lines in contemplation and partially constructed, all of which will cross each other at Alexandria, making that town the railroad centre of the State.

[CONTINUED ON SECOND PAGE.]