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HON. T. H. LEWIS ON DIVISION

Argues Against Dividing Line Proposed--Would Be Almost Ruinous to Old Parish

The Times-Democrat has received from Hon. Thos. H. Lewis of Opelousas the following statement in opposition to the division of St. Landry parish along the line proposed by the enabling act of the legislature:

The proposed line is wholly arbitrary, unjust and indefensible, has been frequently and publicly stated and never denied. No line dividing St. Landry parish in two can be just, unless the same runs from east to west, because only such a line will assign to a new parish created out of the existing territory its due proportion of the inhabitable and uncultivable swamp area. Of the 340 square miles of swamp area in the parish, only forty square miles lies within Evangeline, 300 square miles remaining to the mother parish, now only valuable for the timber that is on it, and which will be removed according to the estimate of competent sawmill men within the next ten years. The greater portion of that swamp area will become of little, if any, taxable value, and much of it will go to the state. An east-and-west line would traverse that swamp area at right angles, and would give to a proposed new parish its just proportion of that comparatively valueless territory.

Second, the enabling act not only assigns to the proposed new parish the fairest and most eligible portion of St. Landry parish, nearly all of which is high land, suitable for habitation and cultivation, but takes from the mother parish 755 square miles, 130 square miles of territory more than the area required by the Constitution, the extra territory taken being mostly populated and fertile land. The number of inhabitants taken from the old parish also far exceeds the constitutional limit of 2000.

Third, the proposed new parish contains within its limits 200 square miles of habitable and cultivable territory in excess of the inhabitable and cultivable territory remaining to the mother parish.

Fourth, the scheme of division takes from the parish a population almost exclusively whites, and leaves the mother parish with a negro population enormously in the majority. An east-and-west line would not only assign to the new parish its fair share of the swamp area, but would more equitably divide the negro population, thus imposing upon the new parish the duty and responsibility of governing and maintaining its due proportion of negroes, who cause the chief expense necessary in the enforcement of the criminal law, to contribute but a small proportion of the taxes, and whose residence within the limits of the mother parish in enormously disproportionate numbers to the whites would certainly become a serious problem in the future.

Fifth, while the territory of the proposed new parish contains no streams, nor expensive systems of bridges and highways, that remaining to the mother parish is, for the major part, alluvial land, covered in its entire extent by many deep and wide streams, requiring many very long and expensive bridges, including three steel structures crossing the Bayou Courtableau and Rouge, and a fourth one in contemplation across the wide and deep Courtableau. The entire eastern portion of the parish also requires an expensive system of roadways and drainage in order to make even a portion of it inhabitable. It is certain that the amount of drainage that is increased, which can be done by raising the assess-

ments, the bridges, roadways, drainage and public works will fall into neglect and decay. The maintenance of the public schools, which now depends to a considerable extent upon local taxation, will also suffer seriously for lack of adequate support. Now, the entire farming territory embraced within the mother parish is devoted almost exclusively to the culture of cotton as a source of revenue and support to the people, and to enable them to support the burden of taxation. The problem of paying the taxes now imposed is a serious and distressing one to many, very many, hundreds of our land-owners and farmers. How much more unbearable will be the prospect of an increase of the burden of taxation now that the boll weevil has practically destroyed the revenue-producing crop of the old parish.

Lastly, the proposed line of division comes within six miles and a half of the city of Opelousas, when there was no necessity to locate it nearer than eleven or twelve miles from that point, because a straight line of division running due north and south could have been adopted, which would not have given to the proposed new parish the full amount of territory and population required by the constitution. Such a line would have left in the old parish several large communities, which are opposed to being transferred to the proposed new parish, and at least two of which communities would be farther off from any county seat than could be located within the new parish than they are from Opelousas, thus, in so far as these communities are concerned, contradicting the pretense of the divisionists of giving to the inhabitants of the new parish nearer access to the county seat. Here the inquiry naturally arises: What induced the legislature to adopt such an inequitable and unfair line of division in the enabling act? I answer that the parochial committee of both houses were thoroughly informed on this subject, for I appeared before both bodies, as the representative of the Opelousas Protective Association, and set forth in detail most of the objections to the line above stated, urgently appealing for justice to the old commonwealth of St. Landry, but my appeals passed unheeded. The four members of the House from St. Landry, elected by a combination with some of the influential candidates for parochial office, and all residents within the proposed new parish, in conjunction with two senators from this district, stood solidly together in support of the demands of the divisionists, and by their powerful influence induced both senate and house to support and vote for their measure, though many of the members of both bodies admitted privately not only the unconstitutionality of the act, but the injustice and unfairness of the line of division proposed. The influence of the four members of the house over their fellow members, and of the two senators from this district over the members of that body, was paramount, and on every hand I was met with the remark that the question was a local one, and that the members of the legislature not interested were bound to presume that the representatives of St. Landry parish in the house and senate correctly represented their constituents. So that the citizens of Opelousas and of the mother parish have been compelled to appeal to the courts to protect them against this great wrong, which, if brought upon them, would be irreparable. Nor

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SUICIDE OF A YOUNG GIRL

Kate Demerit Shoots Her- self With a 38-Caliber Pistol as She Stood Before a Mirror

Kate Demerit, a young Italian girl about seventeen years of age, committed suicide at the residence of her brother-in-law, Mike Mandino, in South Main street, about two o'clock Thursday afternoon, by shooting herself through the breast with a 38-caliber pistol. It is said that the girl and her sister, Mrs. Mandino, at whose home she lived, quarreled frequently, and it is believed she killed herself in a fit of anger or despondency following one of these periodical disagreements. It is known that Kate and Mrs. Mandino had a violent quarrel the evening preceding the tragedy, and also on Thursday shortly before she killed herself.

Judging from the position of the body where it fell on the floor, and other evidences, it is supposed that the girl was standing before a mirror when she inflicted the wound that caused her death. There was but one shot fired which entered the body about the center of the chest and came out near the middle of the back ranging downward, and death was almost instantane-

ous. The clothing was so scorched and the body blistered and powdered, indicating that the suicide had held the weapon close to her chest when she fired the fatal shot.

On Thursday afternoon Coroner R. M. Littell impaneled a jury and held an inquest over the body. Owing to the frequent quarrels and disagreements between the girl and Mrs. Mandino and her husband, there was a suspicion in the minds of some that possibly the death of the young woman was attributable to foul play, but the coroner's jury, after hearing the evidence, rendered the verdict that death was due to a gunshot wound, self-inflicted and with suicidal intent.

The tragic occurrence created considerable excitement in the neighborhood, and in a few minutes a large crowd had congregated at the scene. The young girl was unusually good looking, and is reputed to have possessed more than the average intelligence of her race, and other than the reason assigned there appears to have been no motive for the rash deed.

Elks Elect Officers.

At a meeting of the Elks of Opelousas last Tuesday night, the following officers were elected: Frank Dimmick, exalted ruler; Dr. Robt. M. Littell, est. leading knight; Charles Ventre, est. loyal knight; L. Austin Fontenot, est. lecturing knight; Lorenzo H. Morinveg, secretary; L. J. Larcade, treasurer; Fred. Hollier, tyler; Phil. L. Asher, grand lodge representative; W. C. Perrault, alternate; Robt. M. Coltrin, trustee.

The new officers of the lodge will be installed next Tuesday and all members are cordially invited to attend. "A good time is promised" says Uncle Phil.

Notice to Teachers.

The meeting of the institute which has been published to take place on Saturday, April 10th, has been postponed on account of the Easter holidays until Saturday, April 17th, at which time the published program will be rendered.

Respectfully,
W. B. PRESCOTT.

L. N. G. Encampment.

It is probable that the encampment of the Louisiana State National Guard will begin July 12th, and continue about ten days. This will be the first encampment in two years. The encampment of 1908 was not held, owing to the fact that the Guard, without funds for this purpose. The fiscal affairs of the soldier boys, however, are in better condition this year. The encampment will be held near Alexandria, on the grounds of the state set aside for this purpose.

Hunting Advice.

Messrs. Dudley L. Guilbeau, L. J. Dossman and R. L. Derouen were in New Orleans last Wednesday in connection with the injunction suit brought by the anti-divisionists in St. Landry to prevent the holding of the election on the 13th of this month to pass on the matter of the creation of the parish of Evangeline. It is understood they had gone to consult counsel bearing on the injunction application having been set for today.

KNOCKED OUT

The Divisionists Get Another Set Back--The Court Rules Against Their Petition to Dissolve the Injunction

A large number of citizens from the surrounding country, representing nearly every section of the Empire parish, had gathered around the courthouse Friday evening to hear the result of the case of the divisionists in their suit to bond the injunction filed by the anti-divisionists against holding the election on the 13th inst.

Judge Edwards arrived on the 6 p. m. train Friday, and lost no time in getting down to business. Court was opened about 8 p. m. and the session lasted until near midnight. Several matters were taken up and promptly disposed of, but the one of general interest and most importance to our people--the parish division question--was not reached until Saturday afternoon shortly after twelve o'clock, when the judge ruled that the petition of the divisionists to dissolve the injunction was refused.

That disposes of the parish division question for the present at least.

FIRST SERVICE IS HELD TODAY

The New Catholic Church Opens Its Holy Portals to the Christians of St. Landry

The first service in the new St. Landry Catholic church of this city was held this morning (Friday) at 7:30 o'clock.

Immediately after high mass on Palm Sunday pews will be sold for the next six months. The blessing of palms will also be after high mass.

The following is a letter written to all the priests of this diocese by his grace, Rev. J. H. Blenk: New Orleans March 21 1909.

Reverend and Dear Father:

The collection that should have been taken up last year on the Sunday within the Octave of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul for the Holy Father, Pope Pius X, was at our request put off till a more opportune time. The financial crisis then at its height and the distress prevalent throughout a large part of the diocese from the failure of the cotton crop made it advisable not to make a general appeal to our devoted people in behalf of the pressing needs of the Holy See for carrying on the government of the universal church. Even as yet prosperity is slow in returning, but, nevertheless, our projected visit to the Eternal City immediately after Easter, when we will render to the Supreme Pontiff and strong Legation affairs of the diocese, and it is probable that the attendance will be as large as that which has taken part in any similar occasion in this section of the diocese.

Therefore, order that the Peter's Pence Collection for this year and the previous one be taken up on Palm Sunday, at all the masses in the churches and chapels of this diocese, and that the amounts be immediately forwarded to the Very Rev. Peter Scotti, Chancellor, who is to place in our hands the entire offering no later than Tuesday of Easter week.

Last year the celebration of the

Holy Father's golden jubilee inspired his faithful children throughout Christendom to give signal proofs of their strong attachment to him. From all parts of the world, loving hearts and loyal hands, giving out of their abundance or of their poverty, came generously to the aid of Christ's Vicar on earth; and our own Catholic America, second to none of the nations of the earth in its veneration for, and attachment to the Holy See, responded most nobly to the call of duty. The archdiocese of New Orleans, we are confident, will hold a place of honor amongst the great dioceses of the United States in the amount it will contribute and enable us to hand in person to the Holy Father.

Our beloved sons of the clergy, always ready and willing to lead by their example in every good cause, have cheerfully promised to contribute their share; the Rev. Recorders making the minimum of their personal contribution ten dollars, and the assistants that of five dollars we ourselves will deem it a sacred obligation to contribute generously of our slender means.

We most earnestly request you, Reverend Dear Father, when reading this letter to your congregation on Passion Sunday and on Palm Sunday, to add to what we have here written your own strong appeal to your devoted people, in from this occasion in this section of the diocese, which every member of your congregation children as well as grown up people in a substantial and unprecedentedly generous manner their gratitude and devotion to our Holy Father Pope Pius X.

We desire also to avail ourselves of this opportunity to bid you and to say a affectionate farewell and to record ourselves to the good prayer of all for a safe voyage and a happy home-coming.

Pray, on all God's best blessings and prayers we remain,
Devotedly in Christ,
JAMES H. BLENK,
Archbishop of New Orleans.

Laymen Movement.

Rev. W. A. Turner, pastor of the Methodist church, organized the Laymen's Movement at Opelousas last Tuesday night at the Masonic Temple.

The special purpose of this organization is to cultivate sociability among the men of this community.

Durin; the evening addresses were made by the following gentlemen: Rev. F. A. Vaughan of Lafayette, J. A. Haas, T. H. Lewis, Leon S. Haas, Mayor Halphen and Rev. W. A. Turner, who was pastor of ceremonies.

A banquet followed the speeches, and every one attending report having spent a very enjoyable evening.

The Sugar Refinery Again.

We learn that the Opelousas Progressive League acting in conjunction with a number of our citizens, were in consultation this week with a gentleman in a position to take up the matter of a sugar refinery at Opelousas, and some go so far as to predict that it can be built in time for the coming season. As to further details, we are assured that the project is being systematically worked out, but for certain reasons it is not advisable to give them out at this time.

Sidewalk Material Rejected.

City Engineer J. J. Naff on Tuesday rejected a quantity of lime, cement, bricks, etc., intended for use by the contractors in the construction of the new sidewalks recently contracted for by the city. Engineer Naff declares the material does not come up to the requirements of the specifications, and for that reason he could not permit of its use in the work. The rejection of the material will have the effect of delaying construction of the sidewalks, but for no appreciable length of time. With favorable weather conditions, the contractors hope to complete the work within a short time.

Muzzle Your Dogs.

Alderman Roos' dog-muzzling ordinance became effective on Thursday, and now you may see canines galor roaring the streets with their peculiar headgear. Under the terms of the ordinance, all dogs found roaming at large unmuzzled may be shot by the police. Muzzle your dogs.

The latest hats in feminine fashions look like nothing quite so much as inverted waterbuckets. Far be it from us to suggest, however, that the women who wear them look like as if their heads might need soaking.