

THE MORNING SUN.

"IF IT'S RIGHT WE'RE FOR IT"

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CLAUDE L'ENGLE, EDITOR

This news paper belongs entirely to the people of Florida. The expenses of its publication are met from a fund made up by the people of Florida.

This fund was turned over to me for this purpose—because in the fullness of their charity, the contributors confided in my humble capacity and limited experience to use it well, and in the integrity of my purpose to use it only for good, in strict conformity with the impulse that prompted them to raise it.

When asked to edit it, I said that I would be glad to do it, IF I WERE LEFT ENTIRELY FREE. I reminded them that the motto of The Sun was—"If it's right, we are for it," and that a paper sailing under this flag, carried NOTHING BUT TRUTH AND GOOD INTENT for ballast.

This accounts for the Morning Sun. I ask all good men to help me.

CLAUDE L'ENGLE.

JIRAGORE IS DUBBED A WHINING WHELP

Speaker Farris Pays Respects to Representative of Jacksonville Plunderblatt.

Lost by vote of 31 yeas and 32 nays, the motion to reconsider the vote by which the Jacksonville charter bill passed Saturday takes this bill out of the way of other important bills in the House. The fight over this bill has been long and vigorous as is generally the case in charter fights. Some of the features of the fight were highly discreditable. A strong light is thrown upon the whole affair by Mr. Farris' speech to reconsider the motion which he made yesterday.

Mr. Farris said:

Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to have anything further to say upon this question in moving to reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed, but such dirty, contemptible, foul means have been resorted to by those who are seeking its passage that I feel obliged to speak.

In the speech made by my colleague here Saturday, when this bill was under consideration, an affidavit was referred to. I have been informed that an affidavit made by one J. Ira Gore, representative of the Times-Union, had been circulated among the members of this House, or the contents of this affidavit communicated to members of this body. My information is that this affidavit contained the statement that I had said that Mr. J. M. Barrs, the city attorney of Jacksonville, had offered me \$2000 to change my position on this question. I want to say for the information of this House that when on Saturday I put on notice those people who were responsible for this reprehensible conduct, that I intended to make this a personal matter on the floor of the House this morning.

Threats have been made against me, I have been dared to get up here and undertake to answer this proposition. I want to say that I have not seen the affidavit, but if my information as to its contents is correct, I denounce it and every word of it as absolutely false from beginning to end, and the man who made it as unworthy of the recognition of decent men. I understand that certain members on the floor of this House have been prejudiced against me because their friends had gone to them with this communication in their hands, saying that they had the evidence in their hands to the effect that I had been paid this money. I want to say that any man on the floor of this House, or any outsider, I don't bar any man, that made that statement knew that he was speaking falsely and I am personally accountable for the

lie that I give it on the floor of this House, either here or after this House adjourns.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am not desirous of consuming any further time with the consideration of this subject. If these matters had been brought to me in a manly, fair manner, if they had put me on notice that these methods were going to be resorted to, there might have been some semblance of fairness and justice about it. But when the minds of the members of this body are sought to be inflamed against my position on this question and against me by these foul means, when I submit that it is my duty to myself, to my family and to the people that I represent, to make this public presentation on the floor of this House.

J. Ira Gore makes an affidavit. And who is J. Ira Gore? I have seen at least two communications that on last Saturday afternoon this man Gore wrote to two members of this body,—to Mr. Calkins of Nassau and Mr. Stokes of Escambia,—threatening communications,—that it was the wish of the Times-Union that this bill should pass, that he was astonished that they were opposed to it, and that he and his friends on the Times-Union would not forget the matter. I understand further that he made a personal demand on Mr. Alexander of Volusia to the same effect. This is the man representing the Times-Union and the interests represented here by the Times-Union, who undertakes to make an affidavit to besmirch my character. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that it doesn't make a particle of difference to me what the members of this body do with this question, but I am getting tired of being bullied and dared by an element of people who are connected with and back of this proposition, and I don't propose to stand it one minute longer. I have said and I again repeat, that I am personally accountable for what I say and I am prepared to defend myself now or at any other time, against such attacks.

Now there is one thing by way of further explanations. I realize the fact that in taking a different position on this question last Saturday afternoon from what I had taken two evenings previous it was a shock, to a certain extent, to my friends on the floor to whom I had had no opportunity to speak. I realize that to change positions on any public question, on any question at all, will cause somewhat of a shock to those who are unaware that a change has taken place. But I challenge any men to show that my motives in making this change on this question were other than of the purest and in the interest of the people that I represent on the floor of this body. I am not here to make any defense of those who are opposing this measure possibly because of selfish reasons. I am not here to represent Mr. Barrs and undertake to keep him in office, or any other man in Jacksonville, but I am here to condemn the methods that have been resorted to secure the passage of this measure. I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, why it was that the affidavit of J. Ira Gore was made. I don't intend to go into personalities or create any sensation on the floor of this House, but among other things the reason, and one of the chief reasons why I changed my position on this question was because only a few days ago, realizing that I had not taken the active interest in the matter that was expected of me to take in any measure that I was interested in, and that lack of interest being, as I have stated to the members of this House at the time that measure was under consideration before, and also on Saturday, because it embraced a principle that I did not believe in, although I hoped to accomplish something—I say that my lack of interest became manifest, and when it became apparent to certain gentlemen that my efforts were necessary if this bill was to be pushed through in time, I want to state on floor of this House that I was offered a campaign fund sufficient to make the race for Congress if I would put my shoulder to the wheel and push the bill through, and for that reason, if for no other, I would repudiate this proposition, and I denounce the methods behind it as unworthy the consideration of any decent man.

I want no man to leave this Legislature questioning my honor or integrity. It has never been questioned before and I don't propose to have it questioned by such a whining whelp as J. Ira Gore, the representative of the Times-Union,—threatening members of this body if they didn't support this measure what he and the Times-Union would do for them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I move the reconsideration of the vote by which the bill passed.

One word more before Mr. Chase begins to speak. I communicated with my colleague with reference to the affidavit and he informed me that he was not responsible for its circulation and I have no reason to suspect that he was, in fact I am confident that he was not responsible for it.

SPEECH OF REPRESENTATIVE FARRIS ON THE JACKSONVILLE CHARTER BILL

Mr. Speaker, and gentlemen of the House, I first desire to offer an apology to each and every member of this body for the length of time consumed in the consideration of this measure. More than two hours this morning have been consumed in its consideration. For the reason that there are many important measures pending on the calendar of this House yet undisposed of—measures affecting the interest and welfare of the people of Florida—and the time being limited, I feel it due the members of this body that at the outset I offer this apology for the time already consumed and the time will be consumed by me in further presenting my position on this question.

I stated to this body the other evening that in the consideration of the charter bill prepared by the committee, which provided for the election of the five Commissioners named in this scheme of government—I say that when we came to the consideration of that measure, a serious conflict arose between Mr. Chase, Mr. Buckman and myself upon the question of the manner of selection of these Commissioners.

I took the position that I have always taken on this question, and that I have always taken on every other question affecting the rights of the people. I proclaimed the doctrine that the people of Jacksonville, as the people of every other country or State, had the right to say who would govern them, who should constitute their governing body; that it was not right for three members of the Legislature to arrogate to themselves the right to prescribe who the governing body of that city should be.

In the hope that by giving my assent to this measure, by yielding to the wishes of my colleagues in the selection of Commissioners named in the bill, by writing another section which I dictated and originated, I hoped that I might go back to Jacksonville and renew the fight under the section of this bill that I was responsible for, and I hoped that the people of Jacksonville might finally elect their Commissioners, or elect them within the next few months.

When this measure was under consideration a few evenings ago the referendum amendment was offered by the gentleman from Madison. My objection, as stated on the floor of this House, to the consideration of that amendment was that I had been informed by a reputable lawyer that the referendum amendment would make the bill unconstitutional; that no provision of our Constitution gives the right of the referendum. In the hope of ultimately bringing back to the hands of the people the right to govern themselves I was willing to swallow this proposition.

Ever since the introduction of this measure, I never have been very ardent in my efforts to push or secure the passage of this measure, because I had the consciousness that the principle involved in the proposition was wrong. I swallowed the proposition, but it came up again.

In the Legislature of 1907 a joint resolution was offered for an amendment to the Constitution, by Mr. Pettigrew, the initiative and referendum. The initiative and referendum was indorsed by the greatest leader that Democracy has had since the days of Jefferson. It was written into the platform of the Democratic party as a fundamental principle of democracy. I believed it to be sound doctrine, and I voted for the amendment to the Constitution providing for the initiative and referendum. I voted for it because I believed that the people had a right to initiate legislative reform, and they had a right to have legislative enactment referred back to them for their ratification.

Now the question that is in the mind of each and every one of the members of this body is, why did I change my position on this question? Why do I now come before you and stand for a proposition that a few evenings ago I would not stand for? Why is it that I voted against the referendum amendment offered by the gentleman from Madison and now offer a referendum amendment myself?

I am going to be perfectly frank with the members of this body. I have investigated this question. The idea of legislating men into power to control a great city, for however limited a time, was repulsive and repugnant to me.

I have investigated thoroughly the question of the constitutionality of this provision in the Supreme Court library, and I challenge any member on the floor of this House to show to the contrary—that it is unconstitutional. It IS constitutional. The weight of authority is in favor of the proposition. There is no authority against it.

Not one-thousandth part of the people of Jacksonville