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FALACIES REFUTED

Real Facts Bearing on the Capital Removal Question

THE BUILDING IS ALL RIGHT

It is Not the Shell Jacksonville is Trying to Make it Appear.

Those citizens and tax-payers of Florida, residing in Tallahassee as well as every other section of the State, who are at this time opposed to the movement to transfer the State's Capital from Tallahassee to some other town, have endeavored to explain to all the people of the State plainly and candidly the grounds of their opposition to this scheme. The chief reasons against removing the Capital now are: First, there is no necessity or good reason for it; and second, the tax-payers of Florida can ill afford the great additional expense which this movement would impose upon them.

It is not claimed that the present State House is a palace. The people of Florida are not averse to build palaces. It is not denied that a number of other States, more populous and wealthy than Florida, have much more imposing and handsome Capitol buildings than ours. It is simply stated as an indisputable fact that the present Capitol in Tallahassee is a large, roomy, substantial, safe, comfortable building, sufficient in every respect for all the needs of every branch of the State government.

In this building no damage has ever happened to any of the State's records or valuables, and it is the opinion of entirely competent persons that every facility is there afforded for the abundant protection of the State's property.

The work of the several departments, as every one having business dealings with them knows, is daily transacted without inconvenience or delay to either officials or the people. There has been, and can be, no complaint as to the manner in which the work of the several departments is conducted, nor can it be said that any of the departments is in any way hampered in the proper discharge of its duties by lack of accommodations in the present State House.

For over twenty years the Democrats of Florida have been sending their ablest and most representative men to the Capital to conduct the State's business affairs. That these men have performed their duties intelligently, promptly and satisfactorily to the people is the chief glory of Florida's Democracy today. Those men have not complained, and are not now complaining, that the State House does not afford sufficient room or abundant conveniences for the proper discharge of the people's business. Neither are those citizens who have direct business dealings with any of the departments complaining of any such cause.

The present Capitol, in all respects, is in excellent condition and no complaint can be found with it except by individuals who for special reasons desire a new, handsome, expensive State House, in another town. The insignificant incident of the falling of a little plastering from one of the ceilings several years ago has been cited as proof that the Capitol is decaying and dangerous. Sensible and experienced people will at once see the laughable side of this contention, for they know that plastering is liable to fall and does fall in the finest buildings erected anywhere. However, the ceiling of the hall of the House of Representatives, where the little piece of plastering fell, is now ceiled in a first-class and permanent manner.

It should be remembered that, allegations to the contrary notwithstanding, the State convention held in Jacksonville in June, did not pass upon the condition of the present State House, or the desirability of changing the seat of government or the necessity of erecting a new Capitol or the question as to the increase of the State's debt, or the increase of taxes which must be paid by the people if the present Capital removal plans are carried through. The State convention simply authorized the submission of the question of deciding which place in Florida shall be the Capital of the State.

The many thousand voters who are opposed to the removal scheme, with the tremendous cost attached, contend that this is a business matter, pure and simple, and that, judged from business principles, it would be

a very poor and undemocratic policy for the State of Florida to abandon the entirely suitable State House which she now has at Tallahassee and incur an unnecessary debt of over a million dollars, which will bear interest, to be paid by the tax-payers of the State, for a long term of years, just to build a more imposing Capitol, which is not needed, to please a comparatively few people who would profit thereby.

Should \$1,000,000.00 of State bonds be issued, as is intended by the removalists shall be done, there can not be, and is not, any denial that before these bonds mature and can be retired, another million dollars must be collected from the tax-payers of Florida to pay interest on the bonds.

Because the State has a very small public debt is no reason why that debt should be more than doubled, if no necessity or good reason is shown therefor.

The present excellent and gratifying condition of the State's finances is extremely creditable to the several Democratic administrations, whose consistent practice of economy and opposition to every form of extravagance have made this satisfactory condition possible.

If Florida had been investing in million dollar buildings, in handsome Governor's Mansions and similar extravagances during past years, does any one suppose her public debt would now be only \$1,032,500.00, or her taxes for State purposes as small as they are?

Considering the present embarrassed condition of a very large proportion of Florida's tax-payers, wouldn't it be a better policy, if they must be taxed further at the time on account of the State's public debt, to apply the taxes collected to a reduction and cancellation of that debt, rather than to the support of an increase in its amount?

The present debt can not be reduced at any time in the future unless a sinking fund is collected to take up the bonds. This must be in addition to the other taxes collected for State purposes. No part of the public debt, evidenced as it is by bonds, can be paid from the general revenue funds of the State, because no appropriation therefor has been made by the Legislature.

Are the tax-payers of Florida ready at this time to add \$894,000.00 or even \$600,000.00 to their annual tax burden, when there is absolutely no necessity for it? Is it reasonable? Is it business? Is it Democratic? If not, vote against Capital removal.

When the money in the several State school funds is invested in bonds of the State of Florida, this does not pay or take up or satisfy or redeem or cancel the bonds so invested in. On the contrary, the State merely becomes the debtor to such school funds instead of being the debtor of individuals. The bonds held by such school funds continue to bear interest, which the people are taxed to pay, and they must ultimately be redeemed in full by the State. It is nonsense to argue that the indebtedness to the State is decreased by the investment of school funds in Florida bonds. Such investments do not decrease taxes a single penny.

Because one of the most populous and prosperous counties of the State desires an additional tax levy for the erection of handsome State buildings within her borders, furnishes no reason why all the other counties of the State should desire or authorize an increase of their taxes when they will get no corresponding benefit therefrom.

Because the railroad and telegraph companies will have to pay one-fifth of the great expense incurred in the erection of unnecessary new Capitol buildings is no reason why citizens should have their taxes materially increased to meet the other four-fifths required.

The pleasure and convenience of travelers and sight-seers have been urged as substantial reasons for changing Florida's seat of government to a more easterly town. In answer to this, it may be said that Tallahassee's transportation and hotel facilities are first-class and constantly improving; the hospitality and courtesy of her people are proverbial, her natural scenery and natural advantages are unequalled in Florida, and all persons desiring to do so can see the Legislature in session, the Supreme Court sitting, and all the other officials, from the Governor down, in their offices whenever they see proper by visiting the Capital, where it is.

But of far greater interest to the intelligent sight-seer must be the scenes where for three-quarters of

a century have been performed many of the most stirring and eventful acts in the State's political history. Associations that must always be regarded by Floridians as the noblest, proudest and dearest in the life and traditions of their State government cluster around the present Capital. Can these scenes and these associations also be removed by legislative enactment or constitutional amendment?

It is a significant fact of interest and value to the people of Florida at this time, that all the States on the Atlantic and Gulf seaboard with one exception — Massachusetts — have their State capitals in the interior and, with the same exception each of these capitals is a place which is not the largest city in the State.

The reasons for this are clear and weighty. Coast towns, especially in southern climates, are much more liable to invasion by epidemic diseases than are interior towns. This fact needs no amplification to be fully appreciated by the people of Florida, who have vivid and frequent reminders of the visitations of yellow fever epidemics to the seaport towns of the State. Tallahassee's superior healthiness and freedom from danger of epidemics have long been recognized and generally admitted.

The desirability of having the seat of State government away from the possible reach of a hostile navy in time of war is equally clear, and has been a prime consideration in deciding other seaport States to keep their capitals well in the interior. During the Civil War Tallahassee was one of the few important places in Florida which the northern armies made serious but vain efforts to capture.

Located in a high, rolling, healthy interior town, the danger of interruption to the officials of the State government by either pestilence or war is minimized; in a low, seaport city the same danger would be greatly increased.

In a large town, a commercial centre, the moral influences which would surround both the legislative and administrative officers would be unfortunate, if not dangerous to the cause of good government. Plausible arguments that the people should elect officers too strong for temptation. So they should, but much has been learned by experience, and the voter will be guided in weighing the danger of this influence by his observation of human nature rather than by abstract theory.

Extravagance of Capital Removal.

It has ever been the purpose of the Democratic party to secure the best form of government at the least expense to the people, and this has been the course pursued by the State Administrations of Florida from 1876 to the present time. For twenty-four years Democratic government in this State has stood for economy, low taxes and opposition to every form of extravagance. What are a few of the many great benefits that have resulted from this wise and conservative management of the financial affairs of the State Government? The bonded indebtedness of the State has been reduced from \$1,388,800.00, on January 1st, 1877, to \$1,032,500.00 on July 1st, 1900, a total reduction of \$356,300.00 during the period named, although the collection of a tax for the Sinking Fund was suspended in 1883, thereby relieving the taxpayers from the payment of many thousands of dollars. The burden of taxation for State purposes has been made lighter. Unnecessary expenditures have been discontinued and disallowed.

The conditions now existing are so satisfactory that it may be the people do not fully appreciate the danger of inaugurating a different policy by the issuance of interest bearing State Bonds in the sum of \$1,000,000.00 to procure what in reality is a luxury, and not a necessity, that is, the erection of a new Capitol Building, though the present Capitol Building is one of the most substantial buildings in the State, and entirely sufficient for every necessity of the State Government. If \$1,000,000.00 of bonds are issued for such purpose, the interest that will have to be paid on them will amount to an additional \$1,000,000.00 before the bonds are paid, making a grand total of \$2,000,000.00, which will have to be collected from the tax-payers in order to pay for the new Capitol Building.

The framers of the State Constitution very wisely inserted a provision therein that "The Legislature shall have the power to provide for

issuing State bonds only for the purpose of repelling invasion or suppressing insurrection, or for the purpose of redeeming or refunding bonds already issued, at a lower rate of interest."

The Constitution, itself, further provides that amendments thereto shall be submitted only by the recorded vote of three-fifths of all the members elected to each House of the Legislature, and the adoption of the amendment so submitted shall be by a majority of the electors voting upon the amendments. If a plurality of the white Democratic voters, which will undoubtedly be less than a majority of the white Democratic voters, at the coming Capital primary can force the Legislature to pass an amendment to the Constitution, fixing the Capital at some place other than Tallahassee, the same vote will certainly force an amendment to the Constitution, providing for the issuance of bonds to erect the necessary buildings at the new Capital. If one amendment can be secured by this irregular method, then all the safeguards provided in the Constitution are in danger of being destroyed by a plurality vote of a portion of the electors of the State.

There is another matter which was first brought to the attention of the people by a plank in the platform adopted by the Democratic State Convention of 1900 involving another useless expenditure of money which must be derived from the people by taxation, and that is the proposition to call a Constitutional Convention, for which there has been no demand, and for the necessity of which no valid reasons have been given. This is another inflation of the trend of affairs which was brought about by the idea of removing the Capital. It is evidently a part of the same scheme and is intended to afford another opportunity for an attempt to secure the removal of the Capital, if the method of securing an amendment to the Constitution should fail.

Thus it will be seen that further evidence is given of the extravagant expediency which is involved in the question of Capital removal, and how far reaching this question might become, if the tax-payers are not aroused to their interests.

Accessibility of the Capital

Those who advocate the removal of the State Capital, base their arguments in its favor principally upon the matter of accessibility, endeavoring to create the impression that their respective candidate-cities are the most accessible places in the State, and for that reason should be selected as the Capital.

The question naturally arises, to what extent does the question of accessibility affect the great body of citizens and tax-payers?

The population of Florida, according to the census of 1895, was 464,639. Assuming the population at the present time to be the same as it was in 1895, it is safe to say that not more than one per cent. of this number ever had business to transact at the State Capital, either in person or by letter and eight-tenths of this small percentage transacted their business satisfactorily by correspondence. It will thus be seen that there are about 460,000 people today in the State who have never had any business to transact at the Capital, and of those who have, nearly all have availed themselves of the mails, which afford the cheapest and most satisfactory method of conducting such business in almost every instance. The average number of people who visit the Capital on business with the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Departments will not exceed three hundred per annum, consisting very largely of members and officers of the Legislature, and those seeking positions or promoting measures therein. These facts prove conclusively what an insignificant item the matter of accessibility is.

In order that a small number of persons, who are interested in cases before the Supreme Court, may be benefited by saving a few dollars, a few of the citizens of the State have decided that the Capital must be removed and a million dollar building must be built by the tax-payers of a State with less than ninety-four millions of taxable property of all kinds.

Beware of Bogus Capital Donations

It is stated that one city proposes to offer \$150,000.00 towards the erection of a new Capitol building; but that should not be considered seriously, as any cross-roads hamlet

could make the same offer upon the same conditions, and it would be equally as binding. The State Constitution does not allow a city or county to issue bonds for such purpose. One of the cities entering the race for the location of the Capital has come out fairly and squarely on its merits without attempting to influence votes by the prospect of financial aid, which would never become available. Suppose two amendments to the State Constitution were passed by the Legislature, one for the removal of the Capital and the other authorizing the particular county or city where the Capital had been removed, to issue bonds for funds to be contributed towards the erection of a new Capitol building, both would be voted upon by the people at the same time, and, under a decision of the Supreme Court, both would, if adopted, become effective on the same day, hence the location of the Capital would be changed before the question of bonds or no bonds would be submitted to the people of such county or city. This question would have to be submitted to the electors of the county or city before the bonds could be issued. Is it reasonable to suppose that, after the location of the Capital has been permanently made, the people of the county or city wherein the Capital had been located, would vote to bond themselves to assist in putting up a building which would belong to the entire State and which should be paid for by all the people? The conclusion is irresistible that they would not.

A Few Pertinent Suggestions.

To remove the Capital means the issue of at least one million dollars in bonds, and this will necessitate the payment of at least another million dollars in interest on the bonds before they can be retired.

Every tax-payer should consult his own financial interest and, unless it is in his interest to increase taxation, he should vote against Capital removal. Each vote will count for or against the main proposition to remove the Capital.

This is not a local question involving simply a contest between one locality and another, but an important State issue which appeals directly to each individual tax-payer. It is not Tallahassee against the field, but it is the tax-payers and conservative citizens against the extravagant expenditure of their hard-earned money for that which is absolutely unnecessary.

The present Capitol, which is one of the most substantial buildings in the State, and practically fire proof, belongs to all the people of the State, and not to Tallahassee. Then why abandon your own property, when there is no good reason for doing so?

Do you want to be taxed to pay a million dollars, with interest, to erect another Capitol, when the present building is sufficient for all the actual requirements? If not, then vote against Capital removal.

Do you want to double the State debt and pay increased taxes accordingly? If not, vote against Capital removal.

In 1894 the assessed valuation of the property in this State was \$104,260,629.91, and in 1899 it was \$93,527,353.79, a reduction of nearly eleven million dollars; and yet, notwithstanding this reduction in the value of the property, from which taxes are derived, we are suddenly confronted with the proposition to remove the Capital and to construct an entirely unnecessary new State House, requiring an outlay of at least a million dollars. Do you, as a tax-payer, approve that proposition? Is it consistent with good business methods? If not, then vote against Capital removal.

Remember that a vote for Tallahassee is a vote against Capital removal and against unjust and unnecessary taxation.

A Romantic Wedding.

There was a somewhat romantic wedding in this city Saturday. Mr. Marcus B. Cohen, of Pensacola, came here on Friday to meet his fiancée, who was expected to arrive on the afternoon train from the East. She did not come, however, until Saturday afternoon, when Mr. Marcus B. Cohen and Miss Ellen E. Gardner, of Jacksonville, were married at the Leon Hotel by County Judge R. A. Whitfield. The newly wedded couple left on the Sunday morning train for Apalachicola.

The young bridegroom is a prominent business man in this State. Just why they came here to be married we have been unable to learn, but the presumption is that it was on account of objection from some source.

CALL FOR PRIMARY

Plan Submitted the State Executive Committee

COST OF CAPITAL REMOVAL

Primary to be Paid by the Candidate for the Office

Headquarters Democratic State Committee, Jacksonville, Fla., July 13, 1900.—Whereas, the Democratic State Convention held in Jacksonville, beginning on the 19th day of June, A. D. 1900, in its platform, unanimously adopted, did declare and provide for the nomination of all candidates for office, both State and county, and of United States Senators, by a majority vote, in white Democratic primary elections, held under the provisions of law, which shall provide all possible protection against fraud, bribery, intimidation and other vicious influences, said primaries to be uniform and held throughout the State on the same day, and did pledge the Democracy to the passage of all laws to that end, and did instruct the Democratic State Committee to provide for and superintend the holding of and declare and certify the results of such primary elections wherever it shall become necessary, by end of term, death, resignation or otherwise, to elect or appoint any such officer; and

Whereas, said convention did likewise order and provide that the question of the removal of the seat of State government and the question as to the holding of a Constitutional Convention should be settled by the white Democratic electors of the State at a primary election to be held at the time of holding the State election, November 6, 1900, to be participated in only by white Democrats, who, in said general election, shall have voted for the candidates of said Democratic State Convention, and that the Democratic State Committee shall provide for the holding, returning, canvassing and certifying of returns of such primary election; and

Whereas, said Democratic State Convention did further order and provide that at said primary election shall be nominated, by majority vote, such appointive county officers as it may appear will be necessary to be appointed during the next two years, and have not therefore been nominated; Provided, That if no candidate receives a majority vote for any such office the two highest candidates shall be voted for at a subsequent primary.

Now, therefore, The Democratic State Committee of the State of Florida hereby call a primary election to be held in each county of the State, at the polling place in each election district, to settle the question of the removal of the seat of State government and also the question as to the holding of a State Constitutional Convention by the white Democratic electors of the State, and to nominate by majority vote to the governor candidates for all appointive State offices wherein vacancies will by law occur during the next two years, and also candidates for all such appointive offices as it may appear will be necessary to be filled during the next two years, nominations to fill which have not theretofore been made; provided, that if no candidate receives a majority vote for any such office, the two highest candidates shall be voted for at a subsequent primary to be held on the 4th day of December, A. D., 1900.

In said primary election held November 6, 1900, all and only the white Democratic electors, who, in said general election, shall have voted for the candidates of said Democratic State Convention shall be permitted to participate, each such elector being permitted to vote in the primary in the election district in which he shall have voted in the general election that day, and any elector whose right to vote is challenged may be required by the inspectors to swear or affirm to the necessary qualification.

Each such elector in the State shall have the right to vote for one of the cities, candidates for the location of the State Capital; each such elector in the State shall have the right to vote for or against the calling of a State Constitutional Convention; and each such elector shall have the right to vote for one candidate for adjutant general and for one candidate for State Chemist.

Each such elector in the Second,