

have offered their endorsement of this measure. There has been a large opposition to it, and there has been a large support, from certain sources, of the measure. But the great masses of the people of Jacksonville, the great mass of the voting population, have not indicated their approval of it; therefore, I deem it my duty as a conscientious representative of the people of Jacksonville and of Duval County, to offer this proposition, in order that those who may favor the bill can have the right to go and cast their ballots in favor of it, and in order that those who oppose the measure may have the right to go and cast their ballot against it.

Now I say that there is too much interest manifested on both sides of this question. I say that the provision contained in this charter that was suggested by me, giving the people the right, by petition to the City Council, to call an election and remove these people, has been provided in such a way that it would be almost impossible to accomplish that purpose. That amendment was suggested by me while in conference with my colleagues on this question. I didn't offer it for political buncombe, I offered it for the real purpose of giving the people the right to demand an election and remove the Commissioners if they saw fit. Under the proposition contained in that bill, it would be extremely difficult to call the election. Once this form of government is placed upon the people, it will be difficult to obtain signatures to any petition calling an election for the purpose of removing Commissioners named in the bill, because the Commissioners are vested absolutely with all the power and authority to control the forces of that city. When men are placed in authority vested with so much power, it is difficult to get the people to move for their removal, it matters not how obnoxious the form of government may be.

Possibly I ought to have taken this position before. It would have saved a great deal of time and a great deal of effort. But as I said, I was willing to swallow this proposition in the hope that I might accomplish what I had promised the people that I would ultimately accomplish for them in that city. I am the keeper of my own conscience, and in the discharge of my duty on this question, as in the discharge of my duty on every other question that will engage the attention of this body for the coming week, I propose to do my duty conscientiously, regardless of whether or not I ever hold another office as long as I live.

SPEECH OF REPRESENTATIVE CHASE ON JACKSONVILLE CHARTER BILL

Mr. Speaker, and gentlemen of this Legislature: I would say that I regret my inability as a speaker to reply to this extraordinary exhibition of gymnastics in a change of positions. I am not accustomed to public debate, but I believe every person here will agree with me that this is an unusual proceeding. Now I am going to try, in my humble way, to give the members of this House a little history of this charter business.

Mr. Farris has stated that for years and years and years he has labored to get a change of charter for Jacksonville, I will say that I was elected with no promise to a soul in Jacksonville but to come to this Legislature and do my duty as I saw it.

I will say for your information that when we started to get up this charter Mr. Farris attended a large number of the meetings held by this committee who were drafting it. We also got together in conference with public men who were interested in it, and we came to Tallahassee with the assumed desire to stand together for the interests of the city and to get a change in the city government.

Mr. Farris attended a great many meetings with Mr. Buckman and myself, and to my certain knowledge there was never very much of a difference of opinion on this matter. There was a slight difference of opinion between himself and myself as to the manner in which these new Commissioners were to be elected. I took the position that it was necessary for any government to start off with good men, and in fact my belief is that the office-holders are the main thing in government of our country. If we have fair, honest office-holders we are pretty apt to have a very good government.

I rather leaned to the position that these Commissioners should be elected by the City Council, the Council coming fresh from the people. Mr. Farris took the position that these Commissioners should be elected directly by the people. After several conferences together we finally arrived

at a compromise which was entirely satisfactory to each one of the Duval delegation.

I must be perfectly frank with Mr. Farris. I don't desire to in any way hurt him in your esteem; but, gentlemen, that such extraordinary methods have been pursued up here in the fighting of this charter that I am frank to say it might have the effect of changing almost anybody's opinion.

There have been all kinds of methods used by the gentlemen opposed to this charter.

They have tried to bring the race track matter into it,--- they have told me that if I would take this charter out of the way they would see that the race-track bill was defeated.

You know that little Sunday baseball trouble we had. They told me that if I would take this charter out of the way they would see that we got Sunday baseball.

I hold in my hand a letter written by Mr. Barrs to Mr. Bob Simms, who has a business in Jacksonville, a large whisky house, saying that if he didn't get Farris and Chase to withdraw that charter bill he and his friends would come up here and see that the Legislature passed all sorts of whisky legislation.

Every effort has been made and every method used to defeat this bill.

I wrote to Mr. Simms that Chase had stood up and fought for local option, had in a sense discredited himself with the members of this House by taking such a strong stand on this floor on that question, but as far as this charter was concerned I owed a duty to the citizens of Jacksonville, and I would carry it out if every drop of whisky was run out of the whole town.

Now, gentlemen, I am going to close, because too much time has been wasted. This matter is not so much to me; my little business can run along with no charter.

I hope you will vote against that amendment, because if that amendment is adopted it means the defeat of this charter. I would just as soon you voted against the charter as to vote for the amendment. I say, gentlemen, that 80 per cent of the people of our city are demanding that this bill be passed, and I hope you will vote with me for it.

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