

THE SCOTTISH CHIEF

Times Change and Men Change with Them, but Principles Never.

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NO 10

Liberty and LaFayette Counties Not Granted by Present General Assembly

Of the Seventeen or Eighteen Members of the House Committee Present Eight Voted for Division

Thus the New Counties Failed by Only One Vote

Large Delegation of Leading Men of Proposed New Counties Present at the Hearing

The Opposition was Almost Entirely From Lumberton. No Senator or Representative can be Elected in the Future who will not Favor the Division, if the Propo- nents Hold Together—and They Will Stick in Spite of Lawyers and Politicians.

Any thoughtful person present last Friday afternoon in Wake County Court House, Raleigh, when the Conference of advocates of creating the proposed Counties of Liberty and LaFayette, was held, and saw that delegation which filled the court room and listened to the statements of those representative men from every part of the territory asked to be taken from Robeson, would have concluded that their case had been won and only the necessity of time could delay the creation of these counties. The matter of convenience of the people, the necessity of better roads and the evident fact that these cannot be made and maintained in so large a county, filled with so many streams as is Robeson, without great extravagance. The fault does not lay with the officers at the head of road work. This was made plain by intelligent and well informed men. That the size of the county and the nature of the land, renders the work gigantic, was made plain.

The fact of a lack of homogeneity of the people living in the lower part of Robeson from those of West and North Robeson is overlooked by the opponents of division. The Scotch and the Saxon are different in thought and character and separate as oil and water. As was said in that Conference by a former Representative of the county: "The line already exists and it is only necessary to have it legalized."

Thus it is that nature has made the division and the history of the effort of the west side of Robeson to get away from the East side dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the late Esquire Murphy C. MacNair, father of our neighbors Messrs. H. C. and A. M. MacNair, went to Raleigh in obedience to the call for separation (in 1851 or 1853) and through the aid of Judge Bynum, then a prominent legislator, came home with an enactment forming the county of Hooper. Covering the territory now practically embraced in the proposed county of Liberty and that now of Scotland County. But a provision submitting the question to both Robeson and Richmond counties defeated its

consumation. In 1874, Judge T. A. McNeill, then of Shoe Heel (Maxton) now of Lumberton introduced a bill for creating the county of "Jura" out of the same territory in Robeson and Richmond counties. This movement failed because of political conditions of the day.

In 1879 the editor of The Scottish Chief—together with the late Daniel S. Morrison, chairman of the Board of Robeson county commissioners, which made it possible to amend the state Constitution and unshackle the white people of Eastern North Carolina, in 1875—drew the first bill providing for the creation of the county of Scotland, within the lines above named for the county of Hooper and Jura.

We took the bill to the General Assembly and through the wise guidance of the late Senator D. P. McEachern it was passed by the Senate at a time when a large number of the leading citizens of what are now Durham and Vance counties, working like beavers, could not get a favorable report from committees of either branch of the General Assembly. This, of course, shows that the necessity for division was greatest in Robeson and Richmond over the Durham and Vance propositions, which were later pushed to success and have made good—thereby showing the wisdom of establishing smaller counties.

The condition of roads in Robeson, which has become proverbial; the lack of homogeneity population, the history of the desire of the west to separate reaching back nearly three-fourth of a century, as expressed by the people at the above times; the success, financially, and in other lines of development, especially the good roads resulting and the convenience to the people in attending to the public as well as private business within the county, shown by the counties of Scotland, Durham, Hoke, Leet and other small counties, was discussed by the conference held in Wake Court house and it was clear that those gathered there were determined that even if the present General Assembly refused to grant division, the movement would not cease but the people of the territory asking for these counties of Liberty and LaFayette, will continue knocking at the door of the General Assembly until this matter of justice is granted. And too, The Scottish Chief feels justified by the feeling that fund expression in that splendid body of Robesonians, to give notice that no man who is not favorable to this division need aspire to represent Robeson county in either branch of the General Assembly until these counties are created. Having fully determined to have the right of self-determination, now to be granted every competent self governing people of the world—warning is here given that these folks will stick; and that royal bunch of court House politicians—of whom we are all fond—shall not in the future pick and pledge in advance of election members and Senators to

defeat this proposition. So much for the proponents of the bill.

The opposition was largely represented by the lawyers and politicians of the county seat. Court was adjourned by taking a mistrial and that bunch of friends and foes, together with their client hurried to the Capitol to oppose this wise measure of relief proposed for the people of the two counties proposed and also for those left in the old county of Robeson.

This they did by discrediting their own land and resources with the swampiest map ever drawn—one could almost see the clouds of mosquitoes rising as he gazed upon the miasmatic map produced by Mr. Lawrence as a support to his eloquent plea that the West and North be not permitted to leave the old mother county, which in fact is a childless old maid fit to nurse wild cats in Mr. Lawrence's swamps. By the way, what do the people of Fairmont, Proctorville, Marrietta and surrounding territory who have grown rich farming and are drawing toward the multi-millionaire class in mind as they peer into the future resources of Lawrence's discredited swamps, think of what the Lumberton crowd think of their splendid section?

Those swampy crocodile tears shed by the county seat folks no doubt had their effect upon prospective investors in lowers Robeson—but if one of these should chance to see this statement of fact and fancy, we urge them not to abandon their intention without a personal inspection of that discredited part of our really splendid county. These tears were shed for another purpose as was the argument made that if the new counties were created, the old county would be given over to the Republican party.

This in spite of the facts that the Republican vote last Fall was only 1,190 out of a total county vote of 4,364; and the majority in Lumberton township was about if not quite enough to cover the entire Republican vote of the territory proposed to be left in Robeson.

There is error in the report that only three members of the House committee voted for a favorable report—we have been assured that nine out of the members present voted for a favorable report and we were given their names, lacking only one of a tie, in which case our information is that the Chairman would have cast a favorable vote. Therefore in spite of the limited time given to present the case, and the fact that Representative Oliver was placed upon the committee—and his vote probably turned the tide against the new counties—the defeat was almost a victory. If Mr. Patterson could have had even a half hour to close, the end would doubtless have been different.

There really was no comparison between the presentation of the proponents and the special pleading of the opponents.

The above by way of preface to the following report of the proceedings before the House Committee on Counties, Cities and Towns, sent his paper by Editor J. A. Sharpe, of The Robesonian, which is probably as fair as a denizen of the county seat could under the circumstances, looking through the selfish Pharaoh

—like glasses, who "will not let my people go" could have evolved, therefore to save labor, we adopt it for the further information of Scottish Chief readers.

Raleigh, Feb. 28.—No Liberty and LaFayette counties to be carved out of Robeson this trip, thank you.

That was the verdict rendered by the House committee on counties, cities and towns after a 2-hours hearing held here this afternoon in the hall of the House of Representatives. Nobody knows for certain, just how the vote stood. Some say only three members of the committee voted in favor of the proposed major operation upon this dear Robeson; some say five; but all are agreed that the committee voted by a majority sufficient to be decisive against reporting favorably the proposition to create two new counties out of Robeson. An aye and no vote decided, which is why there are different versions as to the size of the verdict against. The News and Observer report says that only 3 of the 20 members of the committee voted for favorable report.

Robesonians There in Force

Robeson county was very much in evidence here today. Hyperbolically and superlatively speaking, almost would it be easier to attempt to call the roll of those who remained home than to mention those who journeyed here to show the committee that they were interested in this proposition to make of the grand old "State of Robeson" three counties. Really, though, taking the estimate of an honorable and fair-minded advocate of division, there were 150 to 200 advocates of division here. Bedecked they were, too, with badges bearing the legend "Liberty and LaFayette Counties," while the quarter of a hundred, say, opponents of division who trekked to this capital city to see the thing through were no outward sign of the hope that was in them. In which connection it is fair to say that opponents of the proposed carving operation upon Robeson had very little time in which to gather their crowd, so suddenly and unexpectedly did this proposition for division fall.

Orderly to begin at the beginning, the committee hearing to decide this momentous question began at 3 p. m., this afternoon. The S. R. O. sign appropriately might have been hung out before that hour, for every seat in the hall was taken. For the nonce, the battle front of the fight upon the result of which the fate of Robeson hung was in this city of Raleigh. Each side was given one hour in which to present its case. Before the argument began it was announced that Representative J. S. Oliver had been added to the committee, of which Major G. B. Sellers already was a member, thus sweeping away any advantage to one side in case Major Sellers might decide to enter a plea for division; for it was known that Mr. Oliver stood like a stone wall against any and all propositions to take from the glory and the grandeur that is Robeson.

Map Showing Proposed Divisions

Hon. G. B. Patterson of Maxton, ex-Congressman and shrewd leader of clans, was floor leader for advocates of two new counties. A large map of Robeson, showing the boundaries of the proposed new counties, adorned the wall back of the speaker's stand. This map Mr. Patterson explained to the committee, tracing the proposed boundaries. Then he presented Recorder J. S. Butler of St. Pauls.

Claim Smaller Counties Most Progressive.

Mr. Butler spoke the committee for. No county so large as Robeson, he said, could administer its laws successfully. He cited the

road law as an example. Hoke and Scotland, small counties, he said, have good roads, while Robeson county not only has not good roads but the road commissioners are in debt. He claimed that the proposed division would be best for all concerned. They were advocating new counties for no selfish purpose, he said.

Next spoke Mr. W. H. Weatherspoon of Scotland county, a former member of the House of the Legislature. Mr. Weatherspoon said that Scotland and Hoke counties are examples of the wisdom of creating small counties out of large counties. He aroused the first applause of the hearing when he declared that there is not on record a single instance of a small county carved out of a large one being a failure. He pulled statistics. Robeson county has he said, 553,000 acres. The proposed new counties would have, approximately, Liberty, 110,000 acres. LaFayette, 194,000 leaving in old Robeson 249,000 acres. Counties containing around the same number of acres, he said, as the proposed new counties are the most progressive. He compared Bladen and Scotland. Bladen, he said, has 404,000 acres, with a valuation of around \$5,000,000, while Scotland has 2,600 polls, 191,000 acres, and a valuation of some \$8,000,000. Richmond county, from which Scotland was created some 20 years ago, has grown from a property valuation of a million and a quarter to more than \$10,000,000, and Richmond says that Scotland going away has improved the mother county. He marshalled other figures to the same purpose taking Lee and Hoke counties to prove his contention that small counties have grown and flourished as the green bay tree.

Mr. Weatherspoon admitted that Robeson is a great county, and many opponents of the division he was advocating are inclined to return thanks to Mr. Weatherspoon for what he had to admit when he struck this giant. Since 1911, he said, when a portion of Robeson was taken to form the now much-lauded county of Hoke, Robeson has increased its property valuation from around \$11,000,000 to \$21,000,000—which seemed to have a tendency to prove that this big county had done pretty well. There are 37 counties, he said, with not more than 232,000 acres; 23 counties that have smaller acreage than the proposed county of Liberty; 20 counties that have smaller acreage than proposed LaFayette; 28 counties smaller than Robeson would be with Liberty and LaFayette cut off, more polls would the old county have than 58 other counties, while its tax valuation would be greater than that of 73 other counties.

In calling for Rev. C. L. Byrd to say a piece, Mr. Patterson said that Mr. Byrd from the western portion of proposed LaFayette, broke two autos on Robeson county roads in his zeal to get to Raleigh for this great occasion. Mr. Byrd came forward with his head bound up, bearing visible evidence of the truth of his statement that through great tribulation he had come. He said he believed in small counties and, as Gen. Pershing exclaimed at the tomb of LaFayette, "we are here."

With 16 minutes of their time in reserve, Mr. Patterson stated that proponents of division would rest a while, whereupon Mr. R. C. Lawrence, floor leader for the antis, came to the bat, so to speak.

Another Map

Mr. Lawrence did not like the map displayed by the divisionists. It was a good map, as far as it went, he said, but it failed to show the character of the territory that would be left in Robeson. Over the portion of the first map showing Robeson as

it would be left if violently bereft, as proposed, of so much garden-spot territory, he pinned a map which he represented as being painfully truthful and frank. This map, he pointed out, showed that old Robeson, as they were pleased to designate the part of the county that would be left was the most swampy section of the county. This was a revelation to the committee. Swamps, rivers, marshes and ponds dotted that map so numerous that one could but wonder if the inhabitants all lived on little islands and visited in canoes. But no questions was raised as to the accuracy of the map: it was drawn true to a United States soil survey. Both maps were made by Mr. W. Lennon of Lumberton, but the swamps were not shown in the tricolored map exhibited by advocates of Liberty and LaFayette counties. Mr. Lawrence pointed out, too, that old Robeson would be stripped of nearly all railroad mileage.

5 Propositions to Divide.

Mr. Lawrence declared that there were now five propositions to take territory from Robeson—to form Liberty, to form LaFayette, to take Red Springs and tack it on to Hoke (Senator Johnson of Hoke introduced a bill to that effect Wednesday), to give Parkton to Cumberland, and Fairmont was there with a proposition to make Fairmont a county seat taking in part of the proposed territory of LaFayette, if the committee should report favorably this bill. Mr. George McNeill of Cumberland interrupted Mr. Lawrence to deny any move on his part to annex Parkton to Cumberland.

Unexpected Move

In 1911, Mr. Lawrence recalled, Mr. Patterson, then fighting against a proposition to divide Robeson, said in that very hall that he went to bed in Robeson but never knew what county he would wake in. Mr. Lawrence reviewed some history. Since 1911, he said, a portion of Robeson was cut off to form Hoke, division has been dead. In no campaign has it been urged, not a word was said about it in the last campaign, and yet suddenly and unexpectedly this proposition was sprung some two weeks ago. He and others thought that nothing would be attempted in the Legislature at this late day, but the first of the week, while nearly every lawyer in Lumberton was tied up in an important case, the bill was introduced, and Judge Stacy ordered a mistrial Thursday in order that they might present their side of the case. There was no time, he said, to have badges printed, to get up a large delegation, but he had in his pocket signed petitions containing about a thousand names, and others were on the way.

Mr. Lawrence read some telegrams. One was from Hon. A. W. McLean, a member of the War Finance board and a member of the Democratic national committee, who was expected to come to Raleigh for the hearing but was detained in Washington. Mr. McLean urged that the proposed division was objectionable from every standpoint and that it might have serious political consequences. A telegram, signed by Messrs. J. B. Humphrey, A. C. McLeod, and other stated that Burnt Swamp was solid to remain in Robeson.

Touching upon the convention about roads, Mr. Lawrence pointed out that 4 of the 5 members of the road board live in the territory of the proposed new counties, also the road superintendent; and he said he understood the road superintendent had been promised the office of sheriff of LaFayette. He said the road law was all right, that the trouble is the plain mandates of the law have not been carried out; and he strongly suspected that the members of the board would have to answer for this (Continued on last page.)