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Would Revise City Charter

Council Thinks It Should Be Modified

Maj. Venable's Views

Steps Toward a Sewerage System Resumed

To Consolidate Offices

Ordinance to Make All Collections in Gas Department Resurrected

With the decks cleared by the defeat of the Mayor in the levy contest, the Council last night launched its long considered and carefully prepared scheme for attacking the city charter in the courts and the State Legislature.

In the First Branch Mr. Morgan offered a resolution calling for a prompt report from the Board of Public Improvements upon the various repaving and school building ordinances held up during the levy squabble.

In the Second Branch Major Venable offered a resolution authorizing the Committee on City government to submit proposed amendments to the charter.

In addition, the Second Branch called upon the Special Committee on Sewerage to resume its suspended labors and push them to a conclusion, and without adverse comments, heard Major Venable detail a plan for the consolidation of the work of the Collector of Water Rents and Licenses and the City Collector.

To Rescue Ordinances

Mr. Morgan's resolution is designed to bring forward the problem as to the expenditure of the \$371,000 appropriated in the ordinance of estimates for repaving and new schools. The amendments to the ordinance made by the Council call this sum an "amount to be appropriated by the City Council" and leave blank the names of the specific streets to be repaved and the specific schoolhouses to be built. This opens the way for numerous ordinances, and it is some of these—already offered—that will be rescued from the table of the Board of Public Improvements. They were allowed to rest peacefully during the recent fight because there was much likelihood of the Mayor's victory. Now they will be dragged to light, and in all probability will form the basis of an exciting contest in the courts.

To Amend the Charter

In offering the resolution looking toward a revision of the charter, Major Venable stated that, on the whole, he thought that instrument an admirable one.

“We have had two years of it,” he said, “and for my part I am very much pleased with its workings. The present administration has been freer of scandals than any before it, and, in the main, it has been economical. It would be a pity to lose either of these features by ill-advised legislation. But many important parts of the charter are infelicitously expressed, and I think that it can be much simplified.”

Sewerage Plans

President Wilmer, of the Second Branch, began the sewerage discussion. He called attention to the fact that the opposition of the Mayor had caused the Committee on Sewerage to abandon its work.

“Now that the administration’s views are changed,” he said, “it is well to begin again. A sudden public awakening to the great need of good drainage might inspire hasty and unwise legislation.”

Major Venable, a member of the committee, stated that only a simple enabling act and a minor amendment to the general corporation law would be needed to pave the way for letting contracts for the work. The selection of a plan, he said, was a far more difficult matter.

“It was a mistake,” he said, “to abandon the committee’s labors, and I take the blame for it. I do not think Congressional legislation will be needed.”

Consolidation Favored

For the Committee on City Government Major Venable reported that City Collector Gorter recently visited various cities for the purpose of investigating the practicability of combining his work with that of the Collector of Water Rents. His report will be received within a few days. The present method of bookkeeping, said Major Venable, would cause a combination to result in confusion. Mr. Gorter is expected to recommend changes.

Over the Mayor’s Veto

The Second Branch passed over the Mayor’s veto the ordinance establishing a new engine house at Chesapeake and Hudson streets. The Mayor disapproved the measure because funds for the purpose are provided in the ordinance of estimate. The Branch’s action was in accordance with the Council’s claim that no appropriations are valid unless specifically made by it. The First Branch will act upon the measure next week.

To Meet Next Tuesday

The Council adjourned, to meet again next Thursday.