

We were divorsed from Westchester County. Now New York County is not good enough for us. And it seems to me no disadvantage in having cases tried satisfactorily and taking witnesses downtown etc., and even if we did have a county government established here, the people at the north end of the Borough would still have the same so-called disadvantages that we experience now. I do not, for the life of me, see why we should try to sever our connections from the greatest county in the United States. Being known as part of the great county of New York, we shall always be considered among the elite.

Mr. Hildreth said:-"Mr. President, I served an apprenticeship downtown thirty-five years before I saw fit to take an office in the Bronx. I was not afraid I would not get a living when I came up here. Mr. clients asked me to come for their convenience. There is great stress laid on the timidity of contracting loans on our capital. That timidity is not only misunderstood or exaggerated, but it doesn't exist in a great many instances and it would not exist at all if the gentlemen who oppose that would use their experience and their ability to conduct capital or those representing capital in Manhattan Borough according to the true condition of things here, as some of us have tried to do.

One thing more, Mr. President, and I have finished. The gentlemen who proposed this measure are industrious in getting loans from men in Manhattan,--they are gentlemen whose families got their start in the Bronx, and who are now living on the money they made in the Bronx."

Mr. Wells:- "I do not want to quarrel. I had no quarrel with these gentlemen whatever. I respect them as my friends, and respect their views on this subject; but I do protest against the

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method in which they fight for their stand and the way in which they assert their views. We have been accused of not having been true to the Bronx. I think I was something of an advertiser during my life, and as I recall the figures now, in the thirty years I was in the real estate business \$500,000. were spent in advertising Bronx Property, and in inducing Manhattan people to come up here. Yet, I learn now that I have not been true to the cause of the Bronx."

Mr. Van Doren:-" It seems, from the argument which has been addressed to us to-night, that those in favor of defending this measure must necessarily be the people who have studied the law. Far be it from me or from any of us to have in view a personal advantage. That was not our intention; it could not be the intention of any honest man. We believe it to be for the welfare of the Bronx. Mr. President, I have the right to address you on this subject for I believe that in this Board there is no man that has lived longer in the Borough of the Bronx than I. I have lived in it forty years. I have seen it grow from a village to its present size and importance.

I have not heard but one argument to-night in opposition to this measure that appealed to reason. One speaker proclaimed in various forms his willingness to be convinced; but his manner put me in mind of the Scotchman who said he was ready to be convinced but he would like to see the man who could convince him. They proclaim their willingness to be convinced, but, Mr. President, no appeal to fact and reason will ever convince them. They are either living in the past or disconcerted with what has been done, or they do not understand this question, no matter what their business calling may be. "If we were made a county", they say,

"the value of real estate would be greatly decreased". This is not an argument if it depends for its force upon the fact that a Mr. Kelsey of the Title Guarantee and Trust Company is of that opinion. That is no proof, to my mind, that county government here will lessen the value of the northeast corner of 149th Street and Third Avenue. Does a man in this room believe that the existence of courts in this Borough would take \$100. off the value of the corner of 148th Street and Willis Avenue? If anyone here believes it, he may state the reasons for his belief and not ask us to believe it because of what has been said by outsiders. It has not been settled Mr. President, and, like other great questions it will never be settled until it is properly dealt with. Our project for creating a county here is not without sanction of the people of the Borough.

Mr. Wells:- "Mr. Van Doren and others have proved to this Board our incompetency, and owing to the fact that they are lawyers and should know, and make the further assertion that we are not opposed to this bill, have closed our ears and are willing to be convinced. I have closed my mind on no subject in relation to the Bronx Borough. I am perfectly willing to cast aside all the statements that I have made here to-night in regard to this matter, to throw aside all the investigations I have made, to free my mind as far as it is possible for any man to do so of the results of those investigations and of the definite conclusion to which I have come. Then if Mr. Van Doren is so anxious to convince me (and I am willing to be convinced, if I am wrong) I will meet him at any time after the 15th of November, and will give him all the time he wants to present arguments in favor of this becoming a separate community. I will define his opinion of the opposition. I will

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read all there is to be read, I will take his arguments and go over them carefully and thoroughly, and then come to the conclusion as to what I think of them. I am not going to close my mind on any Bronx question. I repeat that if I can be convinced that this is a good thing, I will further it more than he will -- more effectively than he will; but if my judgment tells me it is not for the benefit of the Bronx, I feel it just to exercise that opinion. This has not the character of the discussions that have taken place in the Board before. We have not gone to work and pestered people who differed from us, and said they were enemies. Let the Bronx stand together on this matter, but convince us not by slurs, not by criticism, not by telling us we are incompetent and that we are enemies, but by giving us plain cold facts where we all can come in and be benefited. I am not dwelling in the past. My ideas are centered upon the future. I have had something to do with making the present Bronx. I realize what the future of the Bronx is perhaps more fully than Mr. Van Doren. I know what is <sup>being</sup> done here. I know the great developments that are going to be made here. The progress that the Bronx has made during the past ten years will be insignificant to the progress that is going to come hereafter, if we remain true and a part of the greatest county and city of the world. I am engaged now in some matters relative to the development of the Bronx -- larger matters than have taken place in the Bronx. Sneer at the remarks of Mr. Davis; laugh at them as you will, the fact remains that instead of the lawyers being the powers of progress, it has been the real estate men who, from the time that this Borough has first been brought into the county of New York, have been the means of developing it. Then why should we be called incompetent; called enemies, because we differ? why

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not <sup>discuss</sup> adopt these things fairly and squarely with us? Let us get down to business in this matter.

Mr. Hottenroth:- "I want to ask if any argument has been advanced on either side. A number of letters which Mr. Van Doren read to support his assertion seem to have been taken up without any reason; without any facts; without, I might say, thought; and read as a argument upon which this Board is to act. Does it not require an emergency to call a special meeting? When this proposition first came up before the Board, it was previously advertised that the county question was up for discussion. There was one argument, or one assertion rather, in one of the letters that was read, which might be worth an answer. I think Mr. Morrison claimed that there would be difficulty in examining titles because of the change in government. I do not think that Mr. Morrison is very serious in that, partly in view of the fact that one of the rivals of the Title Guarantee Company would be willing to undertake the difficulty for the sake of the remuneration for their trouble. As far as Title companies are concerned, I have the answer to this question: they do not like trouble, but if they have to do it, they will do it with the best possible grace; and they certainly consider Bronx worth their attention.

Mr. Lawrence:- "I have tried to listen carefully. Has there been any cause, or any great public demands, or any great complaint realised because the Departments of the County government of New York have not treated this section of our great city properly? Lawyers find difficulty in getting their deeds registered because they are from this section of the city? Can a county clerk refuse to perform the duties of his office, or judges of the

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Supreme Court discriminate against the Bronx cases? I guess not. I do not think that this section of the city has suffered because it is a separate county. If it has, it has not been brought out in the discussion to-night. This Board has done its utmost to bring the lower end of the city closer to this end of the city. I think we are being well taken care of under the present regime, and I think that instead of divorcing ourselves we should everything in our power to be joined closer, and settle it to-night that we intend to remain a part of New York County.

(Mr. Davis said he would like to ask Mr. Hildreth if he knew of any large city which is divided into large counties.)

Mr. Hildreth: "I simply wish to say that Chicago has twenty-seven.

Mr. Davis: "I was always under the impression that Chicago County embraced the whole of the city of Chicago.

Mr. Davis:- "Mr. President, I think that if you will look into the case, you will find that the great majority of practicing lawyers who have their offices in the lower part of the city are in favor of this being a separate county. We have to consider, it seems to me, that they are not lawyers of the Bronx who live here simply, but whose offices are down town. The Borough of the Bronx has not yet reached the stage where it can be absolutely independent, and it must remain part of New York County until it has reached that stage. In making it a separate county, we would be driving away capital, we would be making it weak. As they are greater than we, the time has not yet come when we can afford to separate ourselves from New York.

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Mr. Steurer:- "I presume this will be called the summing up of the case, and I would like to ask Mr. Davis one or two questions. In talking about the loan of money, he said that a mortgage of \$45,000,000 was lent by them. I understand that the Title Guarantee Company lent something like \$4,000,000. Why the Borough of Brooklyn, in 1900, borrowed \$53,000,000. on mortgage-- in 1901, it borrowed \$57,000,000.--1902--\$59,000,000.---1903--\$65,000,000. The Bronx borrowed in 1901--\$19,000,000.--1902--17,000,000. 1903--\$15,000,000. Now is it a fact that only because of our being in New York County this money was lent? Now I have had a little experience. I remember some years ago going downtown to a savings bank, and asking for a loan on a piece of property in the Bronx. If it was along Third Avenue, they would lend me money; if, at the upper end of the city, it was of no importance, and they would not touch it. I secured a loan at 4%, and was told if the land was down further, interest would be 5%. If I could believe as Mr. Davis does, that this land would be in any way effected by the change in government, I would certainly be on the side of the arguments, but I cannot believe that these loans would be in any way effected whatever. Brooklyn, as I have shown you, borrowed four times as much as the Bronx. It seems to me that this bugbear of furnishing capital is simply in the imagination and once out of the way we can easily be convinced to the contrary.

Mr. Davis:-"On one side, those in favor of establishing a county government here are the lawyers. I will simply read you a list of the names of men advocating this matter, and with two exceptions, they are all lawyers; on the other side are the large business interests.

large business interests and the large real estate men.

Mr. Knox:- "It may be of interest to some of the gentlemen here to-night to hear the impression they have made on a mind entirely unbiased. I came here with my mind vacant, so far as this question was concerned, I have been entirely convinced by the arguments in favor of the establishment in the Bronx of a separate county government that it would be entirely for the welfare of the Bronx to have such government.

Mr. Hawkins:- "In the majority of instances, those opposed to this bill are either men who come from Manhattan or have their interests in Manhattan. If you want to get a list of people opposed to this proposition you could not go to better people than the Title Guarantee Company, etc. Naturally it is to their advantage to protect their interest as much as possible. So far as the value of real estate is concerned, change of government will not effect it in the least. The Bronx did not always have the same value as it has now. Twenty years ago, you could buy lots for  $1/4$  and  $1/2$  of what they are now worth, and the increase or decrease in the worth of the property will only change for the same reasons that have previously changed this, regardless of the kind of government here."

Resolution in favor of the Bronx read by Secretary.

Ten (10) in favor.

Seventeen (17) opposed.

Vote being taken, there were ten in favor and seventeen opposed to resolution.

It declared lost .

Meeting adjourned 12:10 o'clock.



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FOR.

- ✓ G. O. Van Doren
- ✓ H. A. Knox
- ✓ F. W. Hottenroth
- ✓ J. A. Hawkins
- ✓ C. D. Steurer
- ✓ W. S. Smith
- ✓ S. D. Close. *M.C.*
- ✓ C. Kiesling
- ✓ J. H. Hildreth
- ✓ H. E. McLaughlin

AGAINST.

- G. E. Stonebridge
- A. E. Davis
- M. Anderson
- J. L. Wells
- A. B. Hall
- N. Goodsell
- M. Saulspaugh
- J. McDowell
- W. H. Harden
- W. J. Williamson
- R. Davis
- W. H. Trimmer
- M. E. Oppenheimer
- G. Price
- R. Lawrence
- J. C. Davies
- G. W. Bird

Respectfully submitted,

Read and approved:-

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Secretary.