

CHIMBORAZO MAY GET WEATHER BUREAU SITE

Government Expert Visits City on the "Sly" and Writes Letter Favoring East End.

HIS DECISION IS FINAL

Council Must Take Matter from Committee's Hands and Vote Promptly, or Lose Station.

Conferences held Saturday and yesterday between Congressman John Lamb and President Peters, of the Common Council, in regard to the location of the United States Weather Bureau Observatory led to a reopening of the whole subject and to a statement from Mr. Willis L. Moore, chief of the United States Weather Bureau at Washington, that a location on Chimborazo Park, instead of on Gamble's Hill, will be acceptable to the government. The matter will come up for disposition before the Common Council to-night.

The Council Committee on Grounds and Buildings, after hearing representatives of various business organizations, fearful of losing the station to Richmond, who urged the South Third Street location, and a number of property owners about the park front in opposition, finally recommended to the Council for adoption the grant to the government of a plot of ground to the west of Third Street, in Gamble's Hill Park.

Other Citizens Protested.

Since this action the protest of neighboring property owners has increased, citizens of other sections of the city indicating their opposition to giving up any part of this small park for the purposes of the Weather Bureau.

A number of other cities having offered sites and used every possible influence to have the weather station located elsewhere than Richmond, the committee felt that it could but accede to the request of the officials for the use of the Gamble's Hill site, although opposition to the committee recommendation was anticipated on the floor of the Council, and the fate of the project hung more or less in doubt.

Seeing the necessity of immediate action, President Peters took the matter up with Congressman John Lamb, who conferred with the chief of the government weather service, Mr. Willis L. Moore, who took occasion to run down to Richmond during the holidays to look over the ground for himself.

Chief Moore's Letter.

Yesterday Captain John Lamb received by special delivery from Mr. Moore the following letter:

United States Department of Agriculture, Weather Bureau, Washington, D. C., Jan. 2, 1909.
Hon. John Lamb, Member of Congress, Richmond, Va.:

"My Dear Captain,—After going over the ground with you at Richmond and looking at the various locations suggested for the Weather Bureau building, I have concluded that a very satisfactory exposure for meteorological instruments can be secured at Chimborazo Park, and I would select the little knoll about 200 feet southeast of the

watchman's pagoda as the site for the building. We will require a space about 150 feet square. The structure that the Weather Bureau intends to erect will be an ornament to the park, and will not obstruct the view of any one. It is requested that you put the matter before the City Council and secure early action, so that we may begin the erection of the building at an early date.

"We have been offered eligible sites in a number of cities for the erection of the Weather Bureau observatories, and unless definite action is taken by the Richmond authorities, we will have to place the building somewhere else. Because of your personal wishes I have delayed action in the matter, in the hope that satisfactory arrangements might be made for giving the building to Richmond. Yours truly,

(Signed) "WILLIS L. MOORE,

"Chief of Weather Bureau."

Must Act at Once.

Immediately on receipt of this letter yesterday, Congressman Lamb laid the matter before President Peters, of the Common Council, and, together with Alderman Satterfield, of the Committee on Grounds and Buildings, from Marshall Ward, and Councilmen Centry and Mills, made an inspection of the proposed site in Chimborazo Park, finding it ideal for the purposes intended, the space there being ample and the proposed building will no doubt prove an attraction rather than a detriment to the park.

The matter comes up to-night on the recommendation of the committee, fixing Gamble's Hill Park as the location. In view of the letter from the head of the department, and the opposition of some of the property-owners on South Third Street, it is believed by members of the Council seen last night that there will be no opposition to the substitution of Chimborazo for Gamble's Hill, and the immediate passage of the resolution.

As pointed out by Mr. Moore, it is essential that the matter be settled at once, as other cities are trying to secure one of the seven proposed observatories, and if not contracted for in a fixed time the appropriation lapses.

In giving out the letter for publication last night President Peters said he wished to give every member an opportunity to read it and make up his mind, so that there may be no further delay or attempt to side-track the matter by referring it back to the committee.

Section Director **Edward A. Evans**, of the local Weather Bureau, who has been an active advocate of the Gamble's Hill site, said last night that he had no intimation from the department in regard to its attitude to the Chimborazo site, all of his correspondence so far having related to the location on Gamble's Hill.

Captain Tom Cunningham, commodore of the city navy, and commander-in-chief of the city tug, is an enthusiastic advocate of the Chimborazo site. When seen last night he said:

"It would be the greatest aid to shipping to have the weather station in plain view from the harbor. Ship captains could read the flags on a building on Chimborazo Park at a glance. Having the bureau convenient to the wharves and in plain view of the shipping would be of the greatest help to the river traffic."