

Porter on Charter

Writer Urges Voters to Give Approval to Issue in Balloting on Tuesday

By PHILIP W. PORTER



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If you as a citizen do nothing else at next Tuesday's election, you should by all means vote YES on the county charter. It could be your most important contribution to civic responsibility in your lifetime.

Most people will vote on many other matters, of course—mayors, councils, school boards in their cities and villages; judges, the Mall hotel and numerous bond issues in Cleveland; state constitutional amendments and city charter amendments.

But none of them will have the community importance the charter does. If passed, it will bring Greater Cleveland (Cuyahoga County) out of the ox-cart era into the jet and space age. To vote for it will cost you nothing but a few minutes time. To vote against it, or just fail to vote, will cost you plenty in inefficiency, higher taxes, red tape, and just plain stumblebumism.

It's no exaggeration to say this community needs this charter to grow on, that it's the most important departure from fixed archaic ways of government in 50 years. Unfortunately, it's hard to interest most people in the details of government. They'll respond to appeals for charity, for emergency help for their neighbors, for their churches and schools. But it's hard to get them to see how to take the bugs out of their local government. This charter does it, believe me.

It's simple common sense, that's all. It gives the county the same sort of government we have in city, state and nation — a responsible, elected executive who would appoint cabinet officers; a legislative

body elected partly by districts and partly at large. Most important, it gives the county as a whole authority to deal with problems which jump over city and village boundaries and are shared by the whole area — sewers, water, transit, welfare, roads, health, airports, rubbish and garbage disposal.

Notes Matters Not Affected

It does NOT affect schools, police and fire, zoning, rubbish and garbage collection. Those are, and should be local matters. But those other problems, are not and should not be local.

The charter, after two years study by dozens of Metro working committees, was written by a fine group of public-spirited citizens, of both parties and all shades of opinion, toiling for months without pay. All were elected by you a year ago to do the job. If you don't accept their work and their recommendations, you've got less sense than I think you have.

The only opposition to the charter — and there has been much bunk but little truth in it, much heat but no light — has come entirely from public officials who have a selfish ax to grind. Almost without exception, they are city jobholders who fear the charter would take away their jobs or at least their prestige, minority groups who do not wish to lose voting power in the face of a real majority, neighborhood big frogs in small puddles.

The charter stops the necessity of running down to Columbus and pleading with an uninterested rural-dominated legislature for permission to run our own affairs.

The charter eliminates absurd conflicts of authority, such as on road maintenance or snow removal. Two villages and the county today have to operate independently to get snow removed on both sides of one

THE GIRLS



10-29

"Doctor, I can't tell you how that you've discovered there's with me

stretch of Brookpark Road. Six or seven villages have jurisdiction over Warrensville Center Road and Belvoir Boulevard.

Poor Relief Is Cited

The charter cuts out the necessity of getting four or five villages to agree on expensive community wide problems water service, flood control, sewer drainage, health. It puts the responsibility for poor relief where it belongs — on the whole community. It makes the whole community responsible, as it should be, for operating the airports, and pay the expenses or enjoy the profits; as the case may be.

For 30 years, we've fussed around here with county home rule charters. Once we got one passed and the courts threw it out because a majority of villages didn't approve it, though a majority of voters did. Another time, it was rejected because it was politically conceived and poorly drawn.

This time, it ought to carry. This time it's set up to do the job. This time it needs to carry only the city of Cleveland, as well as the whole of the county. With the endorsement of practically everyone except a few utterly selfish noisemakers, it should finally pass. But not unless you take the trouble to vote favorably.

Get Greater Cleveland out of the stone age and into the 20th Century. Vote YES on the charter. You'll never be sorry.

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