

Iowa People and Events . . .

Justice Deemer's Views

When Iowa's United States Senator Lafayette Young abandoned his candidacy for re-election by the Thirty-fourth General Assembly in 1911 because of failure to secure sufficient votes of the members of the joint convention of the General Assembly, friends of former Chief Justice Horace E. Deemer of Red Oak proposed his candidacy and presented him in the joint convention as such.

Governor B. F. Carroll had appointed Young to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Senator Dolliver in 1910. The Republicans being voted for in the daily sessions of the joint legislative convention in opposition to Young were former Senators Funk and Garst, former Speaker of the House Byers, Judge William S. Kenyon, general solicitor of the Illinois Central railroad.

The Deemer group believed that he could unify the opposition to Young, besides securing a large portion of his adherents. In this they were disappointed. He did receive the support of some of those previously voting for Young following the latter's withdrawal, along with a scattering of votes of a few others.

About this time Guy E. Logan, adjutant general of Iowa, phoned Emory H. English, then state printer, asking him to come to his office for a conference. Upon arriving there English found Judge Deemer with General Logan. Judge Deemer sought Mr. English's assistance in ascertaining if the dead-lock existing in the daily voting could be broken by consolidation of the opposition to Judge Kenyon who was leading, by supporting the candidacy of Mr. Deemer.

He asserted that in no sense should he be considered the leader of the Young faction, for he was just as much a progressive Republican as Senator Cummins, which Logan corroborated and Deemer further said that he was even more liberal in some respects; also that

together they would make a strong team in the United States senate.

The situation was discussed at some length, English finally expressing a willingness to sound out those supporting Republican candidates other than Kenyon as to possibilities in the situation and report. This he did, in the meantime consulting Garst, Funk and Senator James A. Smith, reporting later to Deemer at General Logan's office the unanimous disinclination of the men interviewed to consider the suggestion.

The daily meetings of the joint convention continued with a dead-lock existing until the last day of the legislative session when a sufficient number of those previously voting for other candidates assisted in the election of Judge Kenyon.

In support of Judge Deemer's own statement as to his being a liberal, another political incident is to the point, and supports this view. Governor William L. Harding appointed Truman A. Stevens of Sidney, as a justice of the Iowa Supreme Court. Following his retirement he remained a resident of Des Moines until his death. Stevens, Funk and English were friends, seeing each other often, and English one day happened to relate the Deemer incident.

Although more conservative in his views, Stevens expressed great admiration for Judge Deemer and his abilities. He then related that at the time when Deemer was being urged upon President Taft for appointment to the supreme bench of the United States, he had gone to Washington to see what could be accomplished to forward Deemer's interests and secure for him the coveted appointment. He stated that he accompanied Congressman Walter I. Smith of the old Ninth Iowa district to see the president, and they were cordially received.

Both Smith and Stevens outlined in detail their knowledge of Deemer's qualifications and urged the fitness of his appointment upon the president. Taft listened with most evident interest, and when they paused, said that he had given careful consideration to Mr. Deemer's fitness for the position and had checked his long and highly

creditable record on the bench in Iowa. Also, he had taken the trouble to send for a number of the judge's opinions and read them, but had learned from them that Mr. Deemer was much too liberal in his views for him to be named as a justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Turning to Judge Smith he said with his usual amiability that he hoped at some time he could favor him with appointment to one of the appellate courts of the country. And this was just what did happen before Smith retired from congress.

Seedcorn Specialist Sought Governorship

The testing of seed corn was a usual procedure late every winter in Iowa several decades ago. John Cownie of South Amana was a leading advocate of this annual procedure preliminary to the corn planting season. Prior to field seeding, he had corn kernels planted in strawberry boxes on the window sills at his home and in his office on the board of control at Des Moines, determining which specimens germinated most satisfactorily. He counseled all farmers to do this in order that the best quality of seed be used.

Ultimately the Iowa State College board of trustees at Ames secured an expert upon farm seeding in the person of Professor Perry G. Holden who greatly expanded seed corn research and experiments. He traveled about the state attending farm meetings and those of kindred rural organizations popularizing methods of seed selection.

In 1912, Governor George W. Clarke became a candidate a second time for the Republican nomination for governor of Iowa. Opposition developing, headquarters were established in Des Moines with Senator Anthony M. McCall of Woodward again chairman of the Clarke committee. Emory H. English and Ed D. Chassell devoted much time to the organization work, and E. J. Kelly of Perry came down and became the receptionist.

The "Capitol extension" issue was urged against Clarke. Harvey Ingham of the *Register and Leader* and Harry

Wallace of *Wallace's Farmer* did not favor the Clarke candidacy and were looking around for a candidate with whom to oppose him. Whether it was either of these or Judge C. G. Lee of Ames who suggested the availability of Holden has never been revealed but his candidacy was launched, backed by these three along with Ed T. Meredith of *Successful Farming* who was interested with Holden in an Idaho irrigation development enterprise. The pre-primary canvass developed some vigor particularly as both candidates were from the Progressive Republican group.

At this juncture Governor Carroll encouraged the launching of a third candidacy, that of Senator Aaron V. Proudfoot of Indianola, believing that Clarke and Holden would divide the Progressive vote, thereby insuring the nomination of the "standpat" candidate, not figuring that John Rowley of Keosauqua, also a "standpatter", would gather any strength among voters. Judge Lee became manager of the Holden campaign, and it developed into one of the warmest ever waged in Iowa, reaching into legislative fights against members who had voted for the "Capitol extension" bill. Clarke went into every county defending them and the desirability of the legislation, taking upon himself the responsibility for recommending the passage of the act, urging Republicans to keep their tried and experienced men in the legislature.

Clarke became the party nominee again with 89,107 votes, or 49 per cent of the total number cast; Holden had 68,801, or 37 per cent, while Proudfoot received 23,311, or 14 per cent.

Seedcorn experimentation and popularization did not become an issue in this campaign although Professor Holden acquired his initial acquaintance over the state from that source.

Those Golden Words of Wisdom

On his first trip through the Iowa state capitol building a visitor sees emblazoned in gold letters upon the coping band, walls and in corridors numerous heroic

utterances of the patriots of the ages. These were placed there at the time of the redecoration of the entire building in the early 1900's. State Senator A. B. Funk headed the commission.

Above the grand stairway at the east end of the first floor corridor and facing the large Blashfield painting, "Westward," are these quotations: On the south side is one by Patrick Henry—"No free government or the blessings of Liberty can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to Justice, Moderation, Temperance, Frugality and Virtue, and by a frequent recurrence to fundamental principles."

On the north side is one by G. W. Curtis—"Courageous confidence in the intelligence of the community is the sure sign of leadership and success." Underneath it is one by Solon—"The ideal state: that in which an injury done to the least of its citizens is an injury done to all."

Around the rotunda on the frieze above the columns appears the famous quotation by Abraham Lincoln—"That government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Above the door of the state law library entrance on the second floor appears William Pitt's immortal statement—"Where law ends, tyranny begins."

These historic declarations were selected by Governor A. B. Cummins upon the request of the commission in charge of redecorating the building. The governor said on recommending his selections that he had chosen such as would live forever in the minds and hearts of freedom-loving people.

Free Rides on Railroads

One of the methods the operators of Iowa railroads used to obtain influence in public affairs fifty and more years ago was the distribution of trip and annual passes, and mileage books for transportation over their lines. And it was a more systematic procedure than it sounds.

There was the custom of indulging employees in this manner. Railroad doctors and attorneys were considered

such although giving very little of their time to the companies. Moreover, in some sections of the state possibly every physician and every lawyer in the county through which the rail line passed was so favored. These in the aggregate constituted quite an army of friendly folk who could be called upon to return favors on occasion. And when delegates were selected by political parties to state and district conventions, lists of these persons were obtained by the railroad solicitors and those named who were not already recipients of annual passes were favored with trip passes to the city where the convention was being held.

Honoring Veterans

A newly elected officer of an American Legion post in Des Moines delivered a stinging rebuke to business and commercial interests of the capital city for not ceasing their routine activities on Veterans day last November, the occasion being the ceremonial memorial program at the spacious new city auditorium. "Business as usual" was rebuked.

The day now designated Veterans day formerly known as Armistice day, as such was established as a legal holiday in memory of cessation of hostilities in Europe preceding the close of World War I. Memory of this unfortunately has been dimmed since by two later wars taking toll of lives of Iowans and other American youth. The change in name designating the day recognizes this, and two generations and more of young people have flowered in America in the meantime.

Iowa and Des Moines never have been shown amiss in honoring veterans, but the "show must go on." The vast number of Iowa veterans of all wars were represented by far less than one hundred at the meeting where the criticism found utterance. But the building in which they assembled, costing millions to erect and equip, was constructed from tax-voted funds paid by Des Moines citizens, evidencing their attitude.

On southern battlefields of a Civil war in this country,

Iowa erected and dedicated to the memory of Hawkeye soldiery engaged in that sanguinary conflict numerous monuments commemorating the bravery of Iowa regiments there engaged. Just as families lose loved ones and struggle on, as immediate duties of the day make insistent call upon their presence and energies.

Really, it is when individuals or occasions are subjected to deliberate discourtesies that voiced criticism perhaps is more justified. Such an instance unfortunately occurred on a formal dedicatory trip of Iowa officials and public men, accompanied by leaders of the G.A.R. state organization. The Thirty-first General Assembly had appropriated about \$150,000 for memorials and markers commemorating the death, suffering and valor of Iowa soldiers on the battlefields of Vicksburg, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, Shiloh and in the Confederate prison at Andersonville. Authorized commissions appointed by Gov. A. B. Cummins from ranks of veterans of engagements at these several places and the prison had secured and erected appropriate monuments at each, and same were solemnly dedicated and transferred to officials of the states wherein located by the commissions and state officials present.

On one of these occasions a member of the party, in later years highly honored by Iowa, so far forgot himself by over-indulgence in liquor to a degree that his performance became a spectacle and reproach. Deeply chagrined, a dignified member of one of the commissions appealed to a state official to take the "offender against all decency and propriety" from the party and see that he was promptly sent home to Iowa. The individual was quickly separated from the official party for the remainder of the day, but not publicly rebuked for his flagrant abuse of complimentary privileges accorded to him; but he must have many times afterward sincerely regretted his unworthy action as a member of a party of Iowa citizens engaged on a mission of love and veneration.

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