

POLITICAL TRENDS IN IOWA HISTORY

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The political history of Iowa may be divided, rather roughly, into three periods. The first period, that of the Territorial and early Statehood times, was one of domination by the Democratic party. The second, from the middle of the fifties to the end of the nineteenth century, was one of almost uninterrupted Republican supremacy, accompanied by numerous third party movements. The third, from 1902 to the present time, might be designated as one of insurgency, progressivism, and so-called radicalism, coming largely from within the ranks of the Republican party. In this paper an attempt is made to consider briefly each of these periods.

Early Iowa like early Indiana and Illinois was in a measure a child of the South. It was originally colonized to a considerable extent by people from the southern States and of southern extraction who found their way up the Mississippi and thence up the various tributary streams where they settled in the timber areas.¹ Thus populated and organized as a Territory under the influence of Jacksonian democracy, Iowa throughout her Territorial and early Statehood periods was under the domination of the Democratic party.² The first of her Territorial Governors was

¹ Herriott's *Whence Came the Pioneers of Iowa?* in the *Annals of Iowa* (Third Series), Vol. VII, pp. 367-379, 446-465; Quick's *One Man's Life*, pp. 67, 68.

² Pelzer's *The Early Democratic Party in Iowa* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. VI, p. 179.

Robert Lucas, Democrat, a native of Virginia, a former Governor of Ohio, and a Van Buren appointment. The second was John Chambers, a Kentucky Whig, appointed by Harrison, but the Democrats continued in control of the Territorial legislature. The third, James Clarke, was a Democrat, appointed by Polk. In the convention which framed the Constitution of 1846 there were twenty-two Democrats and ten Whigs. This document with its anti-incorporation, anti-bank provisions met with opposition at the hands of the Whigs, who had no desire to see Iowa admitted into the Union under any such Jacksonian instrument.³ In the presidential elections of 1848 and 1852 the electoral vote of Iowa was given to the Democratic candidates for president, Lewis Cass and Franklin Pierce, respectively. The Free Soil vote was negligible.

The first two Governors of the State were Democrats, likewise were her first two senators, Augustus C. Dodge, a native of Missouri, and George W. Jones, whose birthplace was Vincennes, Indiana. The former boastfully declared "Iowa is the only free State which never for a moment gave way to the Wilmot-proviso. My colleague voted for every one of the compromise measures in all their phases, stages, and conditions including the fugitive slave law, the late Senator Sturgeon of Pennsylvania and ourselves being the only three Senators from the entire non-slave holding section of the Union who voted for it."⁴

Southern leanings though he might have, Senator Dodge's chief interest was in the West and its future development. Thus he became an ardent champion in the early fifties of the homestead idea and of a railway to the Pacific. The former he favored because as he declared he was familiar with the dangers, hardships, and difficulties, incident to the

³ Shambaugh's *History of the Constitutions of Iowa*, pp. 292, 303.

⁴ *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, p. 382.

settlement of the public domain.⁵ The latter he advocated because of the need of binding the Pacific coast to the East, "lest we must in the lapse of time see the God Terminus driven back from his present ocean boundary, and seated upon those mountains beyond which it was once thought he ought not have been removed."⁶

It will be recalled that it was this same senator, who as chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, introduced in December, 1853, the bill for the organization of the Nebraska country, and readily accepted the substitute bill introduced by Douglas the following month. In common with Douglas it was the belief of Dodge that neither Kansas nor Nebraska would become slave under the operation of popular sovereignty. Few slave owners would go there. Those that did would after a few years free their slaves.⁷ It was the voice of the West, impatient over delay, speaking when Dodge proclaimed, "Would you bring Tecumseh and Pontiac with their followers to the banks of the Wabash or Detroit Rivers? Would you recall Black Hawk and Keokuk, with their once powerful and confederated tribes to Iowa? No, sir, no you would not do any of these things and yet to stay the car of progress there are those who would fain clog its wheels with somber and imaginary histories of Indian wrongs and Indian sufferings."⁸

Both Iowa senators voted for the Kansas-Nebraska bill. This marked the beginning of the end of Democratic rule in Iowa. A great wave of immigration from the States of the North, and to a lesser degree from Europe, changed Iowa in the course of the decade, 1850-1860, from a southern State into a northern State. These new settlers came by the

⁵ *Congressional Globe*, 32nd Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix, p. 202.

⁶ *Congressional Globe*, 32nd Congress, 2nd Session, Appendix, p. 235.

⁷ *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, p. 381.

⁸ *Congressional Globe*, 33rd Congress, 1st Session, Appendix, p. 382.

thousands, attracted by the fertility of the wonderful Iowa prairies, that "Land of Nevermore". Three railroads, the Rock Island, the Northwestern, and the Burlington reached the Mississippi from the East in 1854, 1855, and 1856 respectively. The ferries at McGregor, Dubuque, Davenport, Burlington, and Keokuk found it difficult to take care of the endless stream of immigrants that desired to cross the Mississippi into Iowa during these years. Already the slow advance of the railway across the State had started. The gain in population for the decade was over two hundred and fifty per cent which was the largest percentage of any State east of the Rocky Mountains save Minnesota.⁹ The actual gain was 482,699, nearly three times that of Minnesota with a gain of 165,946. Among those who joined the great procession to Iowa in the fifties were many who were destined to play a prominent part in State and national politics during the next half century. William B. Allison came from Ohio, William Larrabee from Connecticut, the Clarksons from Brookville, Indiana, and James B. Wilson and David B. Henderson from Scotland. In this period, too, came the Quaker ancestors of Herbert Hoover from Ohio, grandfather and father, to Cedar County in search of cheaper land.¹⁰ Here Herbert Hoover was born some twenty years later. The parents of Herbert Quick came to Grundy County in 1857 driving an ox team from Wisconsin.¹¹

In 1854 the Whigs of Iowa nominated James W. Grimes, a native of New Hampshire and a graduate of Dartmouth, for Governor. Grimes waged a vigorous campaign declaring that he would "war continually against the abandonment to slavery of a foot of soil now consecrated to

⁹ *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860, p. 156.

¹⁰ Lane's *The Making of Herbert Hoover*, pp. 9-15.

¹¹ Quick's *One Man's Life*, Ch. V.

freedom."¹² But he did not rest his case solely on the doctrine of slavery restriction. A program calling for banks, internal improvements, homestead legislation, and the establishment of a real system of public schools was announced. Such a program was one which would make a special appeal to a young and growing western State. Grimes was elected by a majority of about 2500 votes.

The election of Grimes attracted much attention outside of Iowa. Chase congratulated him for having the credit of fighting the best battle for freedom yet fought and later wrote, "Your election was the morning star."¹³ In his inaugural address the new Governor recommended a great extension of the powers of the government in various fields. Turning from State to national issues he declared in the following oft quoted words, "It becomes the state of Iowa, the only free child of the Missouri Compromise, to let the world know that she values the blessings that Compromise has secured to her, and that she will never consent to become a party to the nationalization of slavery."¹⁴

Governor Grimes's administration was a notable one. A new constitution was adopted in 1857, repealing the anti-incorporation and anti-bank provisions of the Constitution of 1846. The capital of the State was removed from Iowa City to Des Moines the same year. A State bank was established and educational reforms were begun. The construction of railroads across the Iowa prairies was encouraged. The long sought land grants for railroads were obtained from Congress and immediately accepted by the State. Although the railroads were not completed to the

¹² Cole's *A History of the People of Iowa*, p. 270.

¹³ Rhodes's *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850*, Vol. II, p. 15.

¹⁴ Shambaugh's *Messages and Proclamations of the Governors of Iowa*, Vol. II, pp. 5-14.

western border for ten years or more, Grimes won the title "The great Missouri River opener."¹⁵

The change in political affairs was further shown in 1855 by the election of James Harlan, a native of Indiana and a graduate of Asbury College, now De Pauw University, to succeed Senator Dodge. Though chosen as a Whig, Harlan is known as the first Republican senator from Iowa.¹⁶ Save for a brief interval, when he held the office of Secretary of Interior under Lincoln and Johnson, he remained in the Senate until he was defeated by William B. Allison in 1873 in one of the most bitter personal campaigns in the history of Iowa.¹⁷ The victories of Grimes in 1854 and Harlan in 1855 were the preludes to the birth of the Republican party in Iowa. The movement toward the definite organization of a new party proceeded more slowly here than in Michigan and Wisconsin where the New England and Free Soil influences were more pronounced. A call, attributed to Governor Grimes, was issued early in January, 1856, "to the citizens of Iowa" to meet in convention at Iowa City on the 22nd day of February, 1856, for the purpose of organizing a Republican party. At this convention the Republican party in Iowa was launched. Here, as elsewhere, the new party was a coalition including Whigs, Democrats, and Free Soilers. Prominent among those present at the Iowa City convention was Samuel J. Kirkwood, a miller from nearby and a former Ohio Democrat, who was to become Iowa's war Governor and later Secretary of Interior under Garfield. The part taken by Grimes in the movement gave him the title of "the Father of Republicanism" in Iowa.¹⁸

¹⁵ Cole's *A History of the People of Iowa*, Ch. XLVI.

¹⁶ Clark's *Senatorial Elections in Iowa*, Ch. III.

¹⁷ Clark's *Senatorial Elections in Iowa*, Ch. X.

¹⁸ Pelzer's *The Origin and Organization of the Republican Party in Iowa* in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. IV, p. 500.

In the presidential election of 1856 the State which had been accused, but a few years before, of being as pro-slavery in sentiment as Alabama and Mississippi, ranged herself alongside the New England States, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio. Frémont's majority over Buchanan was almost 8000. The Buchanan vote was heaviest in the counties along the southern border, and in certain of the counties along the Mississippi River. It was lightest in the prairie counties of the interior which were nearly all carried by Frémont. For example, Grundy County gave Buchanan but two votes.¹⁹ "All thanks, all honor to Iowa", wrote Lincoln.²⁰ Two years later, Grimes was elected to the United States Senate to succeed Senator Jones where he remained long enough to cast one of the seven Republican votes in favor of the acquittal of President Johnson of the impeachment charges in 1868.

The State of Iowa thus passed under Republican control which was destined to continue almost unbroken to the present time. The affiliation of the newcomers with the new party during the period of Iowa's greatest growth in the fifties established the habit of voting the Republican ticket. The Civil War gave to the party a still firmer hold on the people of the State. The tradition was transmitted from father to son and persisted through the following years.²¹ Twice only since the Civil War have the Democrats elected their candidate for Governor, in 1889 and 1891, when Horace Boies, a former Republican, who had broken with the party over the prohibition and the tariff issues, was chosen. Once only has the electoral vote of the State been given to the Democratic candidate for presi-

¹⁹ *Tribune Almanac*, 1857, p. 62.

²⁰ Cole's *A History of the People of Iowa*, p. 312.

²¹ McMurry's *The Soldier Vote in Iowa in the Election of 1888* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XVIII, p. 336.

dent. This was in 1912 when Woodrow Wilson received a plurality of popular votes.

Were this all, the record would indeed be "as a tale that is told". But this is far from the truth. The Republicanism of Iowa has not always been the same as the rock-ribbed Republicanism of some of her eastern sisters. Various third party movements, often exerting an influence far beyond their voting strength, have enlivened much of the period since.

Before the decade 1860-1870 had ended, the seeds of unrest and discontent had been sown. The period of the sixties and early seventies was one of great agricultural expansion. Four railroads, the Chicago and Northwestern, the Rock Island, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy, and the Illinois Central, had been completed across the State to the Missouri River by the close of the year 1870.²² The increase in population for the decade, 1860-1870, was seventy-six and nine-tenths per cent. "Iowa", declares Hamlin Garland, "was now the place of the rainbow and the pot of gold."²³ The increase from 1870 to 1880 was thirty-six and one-tenth per cent. Among the newcomers of the sixties were two future Governors, Horace Boies, a native of New York, and Leslie M. Shaw, a Vermonter. The Garlands came from Wisconsin in 1869. The Lowdens, father and son, the former a blacksmith and pioneer farmer, came to Hardin County from Minnesota in 1868 in a prairie schooner. An interesting coincidence was the arrival of two young men in 1878, Albert B. Cummins, a native of Pennsylvania, and Jonathan P. Dolliver, a native of Virginia, now West Virginia. Both had lived for a time in Illinois. The former came to Des Moines to practice law, the latter to Fort Dodge.

²² Riegel's *The Story of Western Railroads*, pp. 101-106.

²³ Garland's *A Son of the Middle Border*, p. 43.

The number of farms was almost doubled in the sixties. The production of wheat was more than trebled, that of corn nearly doubled.²⁴ Wheat was Iowa's first great staple. Eye witnesses speak of the landscape changing within a short time from a sea of waving prairie grass and golden sunflowers to a sea of waving wheat.²⁵ Iowa ranked second among the States in wheat production in 1870. Wheat farming gradually gave way to corn and hogs. While the production of wheat increased but slightly in the seventies, the production of corn quadrupled in the same period. There was an increase of almost sixty per cent in the number of farms during the decade.²⁶ Naturally, this enormous expansion in agriculture was accompanied by a decline in prices. The father of Herbert Quick soon discovered that after hauling a load of corn for fourteen miles to market it would about pay for a load of coal to haul home. Like many another farmer he decided to burn the corn for fuel and save the long haul.²⁷ Nor was this all. The prairie farmers of Iowa were almost entirely dependent on the railroads to transport their grain to the eastern market. The decline in prices made the farmers feel the burden of the freight rates. The result was a radical change from the earlier favorable attitude toward the railroads.²⁸ The ravages of grasshoppers in the so-called grasshopper years of 1873, 1874, and 1876 added to the farmer's burdens.²⁹ Nor should the toil, the hardships, and the loneliness of the frontier life as it was experienced

²⁴ *Abstract of the Eleventh Census of the United States*, p. 87.

²⁵ Quick's *One Man's Life*, pp. 191-193.

²⁶ *Tenth Census of the United States (Agriculture)*, 1880, p. ix.

²⁷ Quick's *One Man's Life*, p. 214.

²⁸ Cole's *A History of the People of Iowa*, pp. 405, 406.

²⁹ Briggs's *Grasshopper Plagues in Iowa* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. XIII, pp. 349-391.

by many an Iowa pioneer of this period be overlooked by the student of this question.

The rapid growth of the Grange in the State between 1868 and 1874, and the organization of the Anti-Monopoly party at Des Moines in 1873 were the first manifestations of this unrest and discontent. With the aid of Democratic votes the former Republican majorities were reduced about one-half in 1873, 1874, and 1876. One of the principal planks in the platform of the Anti-Monopoly party was railway regulation. The Republican platform of 1873 contained a like demand. It was by a Republican legislature under Granger influence and upon the recommendation of a Republican Governor, Cyrus C. Carpenter, a member of the Grange, that the well known maximum rate law of 1874 was enacted. This law has been referred to as one of the greatest legislative achievements in the State's history.³⁰ It was destined, however, to be of short life. The story of its repeal, as related by Charles Aldrich, and the substitution of the advisory commission law of 1878 for it is a familiar one.³¹ The principle of railway regulation was established by the Granger legislation in Iowa and other States, and was sustained by Supreme Court decisions.

The Greenback party in Iowa, organized at Des Moines in 1876, was an outgrowth of the same conditions outlined above. Chief among the demands of this party were the repeal of the Resumption Act, the issue of legal tender paper money by the government, and the remonetization of the silver dollar. One of the leaders of the movement was James B. Weaver, a native of Ohio, a veteran of the Civil War, and a former Republican. "In General Weaver", says Professor Fred E. Haynes, "the radical progressive

³⁰ Larrabee's *The Railway Question*, p. 333.

³¹ Aldrich's *The Repeal of the Granger Law in Iowa* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. III, pp. 256-270.

sentiment found its first real leader. His place in the movement for economic and industrial reform looms larger as we are able to understand it better and to see it in its proper perspective."³²

Weaver maintained that he quit the Republican party because the Republicanism of 1877 was not the Republicanism of 1860. He felt that it was no longer the friend of the poor, the lowly, and the downtrodden. His political opponents claimed that Weaver left the party because of his defeat for the Republican nomination for Governor in 1875.³³ Whatever the cause may have been, one can not but admire his ability and courage in advocating in Congress and out many measures which were unpopular at the time. He was ahead of his time in advocating a more adequate currency, the control of the volume of money by the government, a graduated income tax, the regulation of railroads by the national government, and in his opposition to monopoly in any form. He anticipated the insurgent movement by twenty years in his opposition to high tariffs which protect trusts which "pour a golden stream into the pockets of the manufacturers but never return to bless and enrich the children of toil."³⁴

In 1878, General Weaver and E. H. Gillette were elected to Congress by Greenback and Democratic votes.³⁵ In one of his early speeches in the House of Representatives the former delivered a scathing attack on the financial policy of the government, a subject that was to occupy his thought for many years to come. "I say it is the climax of iniquity in legislation that a great government like ours of forty seven million people soon to have a hundred million should

³² Haynes's *Third Party Movements Since the Civil War*, p. 143.

³³ *Congressional Record*, 50th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 6145-6147.

³⁴ *Congressional Record*, 50th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 4240-4261.

³⁵ Haynes's *Third Party Movements Since the Civil War*, p. 167.

say that for all time we will never issue another dollar of legal tender paper nor remonetize silver, that the national banks for all time to come shall have the absolute control of the volume of currency of this country and hence over the destiny of our people. I call on the people everywhere to arise and in their might and strength shake off this incubus."³⁶ While not exactly in the form advocated by Weaver the government finally adopted reforms providing for a more elastic currency. Dr. James A. Woodburn is right when he says, "He was the prophet and the pioneer, the clear voice in advance. He planted and sowed what others came to reap."³⁷

In 1880, Weaver, as the Greenback candidate for president, received 32,701 votes in Iowa, a number exceeded by but two other States. This was nearly 13,000 less than the Greenback vote for Governor the preceding year and represented about ten per cent of the total votes. In seven counties, all west of the Des Moines River, the vote for Weaver was larger than the Democratic vote.³⁸ Thereafter, the Greenback movement rapidly declined. By fusing with the Democrats the party elected L. H. Weller to Congress in 1882, and General Weaver again in 1884 and 1886. By the end of the decade the party had practically ceased to exist. Other movements were taking its place, notably the Farmers' Alliance and Populism.

The People's party failed to attain the strength in Iowa that it attained in certain other western States. Frontier conditions were passing in the State in the eighties. Iowa has been classed as a border State between the old and new West in this period. The increase in population between

³⁶ *Congressional Globe*, 46th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 1197-1202.

³⁷ Woodburn's *Western Radicalism in American Politics in The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. XIII, p. 159.

³⁸ *Tribune Almanac*, 1881, p. 49.

1880 and 1890 was only seventeen and seven-tenths per cent. About one-fourth of the counties, all eastern, with two or three exceptions, showed an actual decline. In fact the State was becoming an important colonizer of other areas. Nearly four hundred thousand natives of Iowa were living in other States in 1890. Almost two hundred thousand of these were living in Kansas, Nebraska, and the two Dakotas, a number exceeded by that of only one other State, Illinois.³⁹ The wheat belt was moving on westward and northwestward, and many followed it who would have swelled the tide of discontent had they remained at home. "Dakota was now the magic word", says Garland. "The Jim River Valley was now the land of delight where herds of deer and buffalo furnished the cheer."⁴⁰

Furthermore, Iowa was less dependent upon one or two crops than in former years. The amount of wheat grown in 1890 was but little more than one-fourth of that grown in 1880. The production of corn was still increasing. Iowa ranked first in the production of this cereal in 1890.⁴¹ Quite as marked was the development of stock raising and dairying. In the production of swine Iowa ranked first in 1890. In the total number of cattle she ranked second. In the number of dairy cattle she led all of the other States, with nearly one and a half million, a gain of six hundred thousand for the decade.⁴² The State was gradually learning the lesson of diversification which her neighbor, Wisconsin, had learned earlier.

After a long hard struggle the railroads of Iowa had at last been subjected to a fair degree of regulation through the agency of the Republican party. The Greenback party

³⁹ *Eleventh Census of the United States (Population)*, 1890, p. 561.

⁴⁰ Garland's *A Son of the Middle Border*, pp. 229, 234.

⁴¹ *Abstract of the Eleventh Census of the United States*, p. 87.

⁴² *Eleventh Census of the United States (Agriculture)*, p. 274.

had denounced the weak law of 1878, and demanded its repeal as early as 1879. The platforms of both the old parties favored more adequate control in 1887. Chief credit for the law of 1888, by which the power of the railway commission was greatly strengthened, belongs to the able and progressive Governor Larrabee, who served during the closing years of the eighties. In his book on the railway question Larrabee points out that over four million acres of public lands, and subsidies amounting to fifty million dollars more had been granted to railroads in Iowa. One of the conditions of the grant of land, received from Congress and regranted by the General Assembly to the railroads, was the acceptance by the latter of the principle of legislative control.⁴³ The law of 1888 was the most effective application of the principle up to that time. The failure of Senator Allison to obtain the Republican nomination for president that year has been attributed to this legislation. According to the statements of Senator Hoar and the late Chauncey Depew, the latter refused to approve of the nomination of anyone who came from a State holding such radical views on railway regulation.⁴⁴

It must not be thought that the economic background of populism was entirely lacking in Iowa. Professor Frederick J. Turner has pointed out that between 1880 and 1900 an agricultural area was added to the United States equal to the combined European area of France, Germany, England, and Wales.⁴⁵ In common with the rest of the West, Iowa was experiencing the low prices resulting largely from this agricultural expansion. There had been a great increase in the mortgages in the State in the decade of the

⁴³ Larrabee's *The Railway Question*, pp. 329, 330.

⁴⁴ Depew's *My Memories of Eighty Years*, pp. 130-132; Hoar's *Autobiography of Seventy Years*, pp. 411-413.

⁴⁵ Turner's *The Frontier in American History*, p. 312.

eighties. Nearly one-half of all the taxable land in 1890 was mortgaged. Even then, the total amount of the mortgages was much less than in Kansas. The greater portion of the mortgages had, it is true, been incurred in the purchase of real estate and represented investments.⁴⁶

The People's party in Iowa was organized at a convention held at Des Moines in June, 1891. In its leadership, and its demand for free silver, an increase in the circulating medium, and railway control, the party proved its relationship with the third party movements already mentioned. The former Greenbacker, General Weaver, was the outstanding leader of the People's party in Iowa and in the nation. In the election of 1892, Weaver received but 20,595 votes for president in his own State. This was 12,000 less than he had received in Iowa as the Greenback candidate in 1880, and represented less than five per cent of the total vote. It was about one-fourth of the Populist vote in Nebraska and one-eighth of that in Kansas. A plurality vote was obtained in but one county, Monona, on the western border.⁴⁷ The Republicans carried the State in 1892 by a smaller margin than usual, after losing the Governorship in 1889 and 1891 and a majority of representatives in 1890. Four years later, in 1896, Iowa went with the conservative East despite the fact that the State Republican platform had heretofore favored silver. McKinley's majority over Bryan was 65,000, the largest majority ever given a candidate for the presidency up to that time, save Garfield. Eighty-two of the ninety-nine counties were carried by McKinley. The campaigning of George E. Roberts and the lawyer-banker, Leslie M. Shaw, proved especially effec-

⁴⁶ Nixon's *The Economic Basis of the Populist Movement in Iowa* in THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS, Vol. XXI, p. 391.

⁴⁷ *Tribune Almanac*, 1893, p. 276.

tive.⁴⁸ "The Gibraltar of Republicanism" had weathered two storms, that of 1892 and 1896.

Prices of farm products gradually rose after 1896. "I am glad to testify", wrote James Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture, in 1897, "that the spirit of improvement and progress is more general among American farmers than ever before." The revival of prosperity was accompanied by a rapid decline of Populism in Iowa as well as elsewhere. At the beginning of the present century the Republican party was apparently never more strongly entrenched in the State. Her leaders were especially prominent in national affairs. In 1902, the veteran William B. Allison of Dubuque, kindly, conciliatory, conservative, and nearly always regular, still held his seat in the United States Senate, which, throughout the recurring waves of popular discontent, he had retained for nearly thirty years. He was chairman of the Committee on Appropriations, of which he had been a member since 1873. His colleague and able lieutenant was Jonathan P. Dolliver of Fort Dodge, appointed in 1900 to succeed John H. Gear. David B. Henderson was Speaker of the House, with a record of twenty years continuous service in that body. James Wilson, an Iowa farmer and a popular professor of agriculture at Iowa State College at Ames, was Secretary of Agriculture, a position he had filled since 1897, and was to continue to hold until 1913. Leslie M. Shaw, a former Governor of the State, was Secretary of the Treasury.⁴⁹

The first decade of the twentieth century, however, was not to be an era of good feeling in Iowa politics. Already signs of a revolt within the ranks of the dominant party were in evidence. There was a growing dissatisfaction with prevailing political methods and ideals. Railroad interests

⁴⁸ Cole's *A History of the People of Iowa*, pp. 491, 492.

⁴⁹ Cole's *A History of the People of Iowa*, p. 521.

had again become powerful. The defeat of Albert B. Cummins for a seat in the United States Senate in 1894 was attributed in part to these interests.⁵⁰ Cummins had won prominence as a Des Moines lawyer in the eighties fighting the legal battles of the Farmers' Alliance against the trust seeking to monopolize the manufacture of barbed wire. In 1901 he was elected Governor in spite of the opposition of certain corporate interests. The platform upon which Governor Cummins was elected contained a declaration which attracted widespread attention at the time. "We favor", so ran the statement, "any modifications of the tariff schedules that may be required to prevent their affording a shelter to monopoly". This declaration in favor of a more liberal tariff policy came to be known as "the Iowa idea". It is difficult to see why the declaration aroused so much interest. George E. Roberts, its author, points out very clearly that there was nothing new or original about it.⁵¹

In his inaugural address of January, 1902, the new Governor announced a reform program which included the prevention of stock watering by corporations and a more adequate taxation of railroads. "Property", he declared, "must have its protection, but men and women are worth more than property". Turning to national issues Governor Cummins reaffirmed the tariff declaration in the State Republican platform of 1901. "I cannot resist the conclusion", he declared, "that some changes might well be made, not through the medium of reciprocal treaties, but directly. . . . Protection was made for man, and not man for protection."⁵²

⁵⁰ Clark's *History of Senatorial Elections in Iowa*, Ch. XVII.

⁵¹ Roberts's *The Origin and History of the Iowa Idea* in *THE IOWA JOURNAL OF HISTORY AND POLITICS*, Vol. II, pp. 70, 71.

⁵² *Inaugural Address of Albert B. Cummins*, 1902, p. 10.

It is not without significance that David B. Henderson of Dubuque, who had always been in strict accord with the traditional attitude of his party on the tariff question, announced in the summer of 1902 that he would not be a candidate for reëlection.⁵³

Cummins was Governor of Iowa from 1902 until 1908, three consecutive terms. His administration was a constant challenge to the "stand pat" doctrine. "There is no such thing as rest in the economy of the universe", declared the energetic Governor, "and no such thing as 'stand pat' in the order of the living world." The achievements of these years included a railway taxation measure, an anti-pass law, an act prohibiting stock watering, insurance reforms, educational reforms, and a direct primary law.⁵⁴

The death of Senator Allison in August, 1908, two months after his victory in the first senatorial direct primary in Iowa, ended the career of one whose service in the United States Senate covered a period of thirty-five years and five months, the longest on record. His service in the House and Senate together amounted to forty-three years and five months. Governor Cummins was chosen to succeed Senator Allison and took his seat in December, 1908, on the eve of the great tariff struggle.⁵⁵

In the battle royal of 1909 Iowa's two senators played prominent parts as members of that little group of insurgents who opposed the Paine-Aldrich schedules. Neither was a recent convert to the idea of more moderate duties. Cummins had advocated this as early as 1901 as noted above. Dolliver had declared on the occasion of his election to the Senate in 1902 that many of the tariff rates of 1897 had already become unnecessary and in some cases ab-

⁵³ *Appletons' Annual Cyclopaedia*, 1902, p. 726.

⁵⁴ *Congressional Record*, 69th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 4961.

⁵⁵ Clark's *History of Senatorial Elections in Iowa*, pp. 257, 258.

surd.⁵⁶ The latter had, however, refrained from breaking with the old leadership until after the death of Senator Allison.⁵⁷ The story of this struggle, which probably hastened Dolliver's own death the following year, is one of the best known chapters in the recent history of the United States. Not only Iowa's two senators but seven of her eleven representatives, six of them Republicans, voted against the act.⁵⁸ In the next presidential election, that of 1912, Iowa gave Roosevelt 42,000 more votes than Taft. Wilson received a plurality vote. For the first time since 1852 the electoral vote of the State was given to the Democratic candidate for president.

The recent so-called radical movement in Iowa politics, like the earlier third party movements, is an outgrowth of agricultural unrest and discontent. In fact, history has been repeating itself in Iowa in the last ten years. Like the decade of the sixties, the second decade of the twentieth century, especially the latter half of it, was a period of prosperity for agriculture. The value of farm property, land and buildings, more than doubled between 1910 and 1920. Iowa stood at the head of all the States of the Union in the latter year in the value of farm property. Encouraged by high prices, many farmers purchased land at exorbitant prices. The mortgaged debt in Iowa more than doubled between 1910 and 1920. The total amount of mortgages at the end of the decade on owner operated farms was far in excess of any other State.⁵⁹ This period of expansion was followed by a sudden decline in prices beginning in the latter part of the year 1920, similar to the decline in the seventies. Between January 1, 1920, and January 1,

⁵⁶ *Congressional Record*, 61st Congress, 1st Session, p. 1706.

⁵⁷ La Follette's *Autobiography*, pp. 430-444.

⁵⁸ *Congressional Record*, 61st Congress, 1st Session, p. 4755.

⁵⁹ *Fourteenth Census of the United States (Agriculture)*, 1920, Pt. 1, p. 47.

1921, wheat fell from two dollars and fifteen cents per bushel to one dollar and eleven cents, corn from one dollar and thirty-eight cents per bushel to fifty-seven cents, and hogs from fourteen dollars and ninety cents per hundred pounds to nine dollars and forty-one cents.⁶⁰ An enormous crop was produced in 1920. Iowa's corn crop for that year was the largest in her history up to that time. It was produced at a great cost. The fall in prices resulted in many cases in selling at less than the cost of production.

The student of western history is not surprised by the fact that Iowa gave La Follette, as candidate for president in 1924, two hundred thousand more votes than the Democratic candidate and nearly two-thirds as many votes as were given to the Republican candidate. In seventy-nine out of the ninety-nine counties La Follette ran ahead of Davis. Three other States, only, gave La Follette more votes, Wisconsin, Illinois, and California.⁶¹

Iowa's interests in the past have been preëminently agricultural. In 1920, sixty-three and six-tenths per cent of her population was rural. According to the latest estimates, but one city in the State has a population of over one hundred thousand. While it is impossible to attribute everything that has transpired in Iowa political history to these factors, none will deny that they have exerted a very marked influence on political trends in the State. The tendency toward party regularity and conservatism of a farming population, when contented, the recurring waves of radicalism, so-called, when agriculture is seriously depressed, upon the part of those most directly affected; the return to old moorings with the removal of the causes of discontent; these are the outstanding characteristics of the political history of Iowa. Manufacturing has been devel-

⁶⁰ *Yearbook of Agriculture* (United States), 1925, pp. 1128-1366.

⁶¹ *The World Almanac*, 1925, p. 864.

oping rapidly in the State in the last few years. It seems reasonable to predict that if this tendency continues agricultural conditions will exert less and less influence on politics and that Iowa will become more and more like the East politically. There are many who will lament this drift toward industrialism. Senator Cummins doubtless struck a responsive chord in countless Hawkeye hearts when he declared, some years before his death, "I would not exchange the fertile fields of Iowa for all the manufacturing enterprises that could be crowded within our borders."⁶²

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⁶² *Inaugural Address of Albert B. Cummins*, 1904, p. 4.