

## An Editor Speaks

Just one hundred years ago the question as to adoption of the Iowa constitution of 1844 was being debated by Iowa newspapers. This constitution, unfortunately, had a Siamese twin — the Federal act creating the States of Iowa and Florida and giving Iowa a western boundary far short of the requested Missouri River. There was an acrimonious debate in Iowa as to whether the twins could be separated. Would it be possible to change the boundaries laid down in the act if Iowa adopted the constitution? Would Iowa be left out of the Union if the voters insisted on the Lucas boundaries? There were many opinions.

On October 22, 1845, the Iowa City *Capital Reporter*, a Democratic paper opposed to the adoption of the 1844 constitution, debated the question of a large versus a small State with the Dubuque *Miners' Express*, another Democratic paper which was giving the constitution grudging support. The *Express* had expressed approval of the argument that more small States would be an advantage to the West. "And how", the Dubuque editor wrote, "is this increased representation to be more effectually accomplished, than by adopt-

ing the policy of having none but small western states admitted into the Union?"

This attempt to sugar coat the bitter pill of the Nicollet boundaries aroused the ire of one of the editors of the *Capital Reporter* who declared: "the public may rest assured that we speak the sentiments of ninety-nine out of every hundred of our citizens, when we say that they will *never* consent to be dwarfed down to about one fourth the dimensions of our neighbors, Missouri and Illinois.

"No curtailment of our dimensions below the amount comprised in the boundaries prescribed by the hand of nature, is in any view, necessary to preserve the equipose of the Union. There is an abundance of territory on our north, west and southwest, to secure this object, without making a sacrifice of poor Iowa. . . . Then what does all this senseless jargon amount to, respecting the necessity of carving Iowa up into potatoe patches, as it were, to secure an equilibrium of representation in the U. S. Senate? . . .

"What, may we ask, is the heinous offence whereby the people of Iowa can have merited such shameful treatment? Is it, that, leaving their homes in the states, sacrificing the comforts of life, exposing themselves to the dangers, the toils, and privations incidental to a frontier life, they have reclaimed and subdued these western wilds, mak-

ing the desert to blossom as a rose — caused the stars and stripes to wave over a land, which but recently, burned with council fires and rang with the savage war-hoop — substituted the busy and cheerful hum of civilization, for the wild orgies of predatory aboriginal tribes and reared a new pillar of support to the glorious fabric of our American confederacy? Methinks that the intuitive self-sacrificing propensity and indomitable spirit of enterprize by which these results have been accomplished, should meet with a very different return. . . .

“There are surely too many liberal, high minded friends of equal rights in the new Congress, to stand by and see us drawn and quartered and cut up into small slices, to appease the morbid appetite of this comorant western power. We do not couple the North with the West, because, from our identity of interest in many respects with the South, the former would be greatly the loser by the policy under consideration, rather than the gainer. — That this monster requires *such* food to subsist on, is quite a recent discovery. — Those whose interests are identified are generally said to be mutual friends; but if the western states, while persisting in such a course, are to be regarded as our friends, may God save us from our enemies.”