

Burkett For U. S. Senator.

(From the Washington Post.) Unless Nebraska tumbles over into the democratic column next November, the election of Representative Elmer J. Burkett of the first Nebraska district, to succeed Charles H. Dietrich in the United States senate is assured. He has been unanimously endorsed for senator by the Nebraska republicans in the state convention and there is no suggestion of opposition to his candidacy.

If Mr. Burkett comes to the senate, it will be under conditions as flattering as ever attended the election of any member of that body. Without having spoken a word or raised a hand in his own behalf, he has been made the unanimous and enthusiastic choice of the republicans of his state, the name of no other man having even been seriously considered as a successor to Senator Dietrich.

This would be a remarkable tribute to a man nearing the close of a long and distinguished public career. It is all the more remarkable in the case of Mr. Burkett, who has not yet attained his thirty-seventh year, and whose entire public service, as a member of the state legislature and representative in congress, does not cover a period of eight years. And that the honor is not regarded lightly in Nebraska is evident by the fact that Wm. Jennings Bryan, twice his party's nominee for president, is represented as anxious to be put forward as Mr. Burkett's democratic rival for senatorial honors.

It would be the happening of the unexpected should Nebraska fail to go republican, and Burkett thereby fail to secure a seat among the senators. It is true that in 1896 Bryan carried the state by 13,000, but four years later, despite the fact that Bryan of whom Nebraska had been mighty proud, was again a candidate for president, it swung around and gave McKinley a plurality of more than 7,000. Before the madness of free silver got into the blood of Nebraska farmers, the state had always been safely republican in presidential elections and even the most sanguine of democrats unless it be Mr. Bryan himself, does not expect that it will be otherwise this year. Mr. Burkett's endorsement for senator by Nebraska republicans, therefore, is pretty nearly equivalent to his election.

The triumph of Burkett is again the triumph of Iowa, for he was born on an Iowa farm, in Mills county, on December 1, 1867. Like every other American boy who was ever worth his salt, he

laid the foundations of his education in the public schools. And later he attended Tabor college at Tabor, Iowa, from which institution he was graduated in 1890. Following his graduation he was for two years principal of the public schools at Leigh, Nebraska. Then he entered the State University of Nebraska for a law course and received an LL. B. in 1893, and an LL. M. in 1895. Deciding that Nebraska offered as good a field as any for his talents, he hung up his shingle at Lincoln in 1893 and has practiced law there ever since when he was not engaged in the business of making laws, either for his state or for the nation.

It didn't take young Burkett long to get into politics. He had carried the germ in his blood from Iowa, and the Nebraska soil and air gave it vigorous growth. In 1896 he was elected a member of the state legislature. He served but a single term in the legislature, because his people were unwilling he should stay there. Instead, in 1898 they elected him a member of the Fifty-sixth congress and there was no thought of doing any other thing than re-electing him to the Fifty-seventh and Fifty-eighth congresses. Despite the fact that everybody in Nebraska knew he would be the choice of the state convention for senator, the convention of First Nebraska district republicans last spring renominated him for the Fifty-ninth congress. It is the wish of his constituents that he retain this nomination and allow them to vote for him in November for representative. Then should the Nebraska legislature be republican and choose him for the honor, it will be time enough to decide upon a successor in the Lower House.

Although Mr. Burkett is a born fighter, and loves to fight merely for the fight's sake, as everybody in the House of Representatives knows he hardly realizes what it means to have to fight for political preferment. It is true there was a spirited contest the first time he was nominated for congress, but since then things have been easy. If there is any secret in Burkett's success it possibly lies in the fact that by the time he had served out his first term in congress he came pretty near knowing every man in his district and in the cases of a great many of them he knew the number of their children and the children's names.

His secretary always has been one of the hardest-worked young men in Washington, for whenever a constituent writes Mr. Bur-

kett, the letter is acknowledged, not merely formally acknowledged, but acknowledged personally and at length.

This, however, explains only his popularity in his own district. The fact that Nebraska Republicans arose almost as one man and demanded that he be sent to the Senate must be attributed to his record as a public servant. The boom began last November, when the Fremont Tribune came out in a ringing editorial in Mr. Burkett's favor, and proposed that the next Republican State convention nominate him as the Republican candidate for Senator, although such a thing had never been done before in Nebraska. Other editors took up the demand and within three weeks more than a hundred Republican newspapers had endorsed him. This kept up until practically every Republican newspaper in the state was shouting for Burkett, and their readers must have liked it, because the editors kept it up. The State central committee met in February to set the date for the State convention, and so far heeded the popular demand as to put in the call of the convention the nomination of a United States Senator.

The county conventions enthusiastically endorsed the plan, and when the State convention met, most of the delegates were instructed for Burkett's nomination. Those not instructed for him were uninstructed, and none was opposed to him. The counties in the First Congressional district had instructed their delegates to the Congressional convention to nominate Burkett for Congress, and at the same time instructed their delegates to the State convention to nominate him for Senator.

In the Fifty-Sixth Congress Mr. Burkett served as a member of Elections Committee No. 1 and

the Committee on Public Lands. He attracted attention to himself by a speech in the Aldrich vs. Robbins contest case from Alabama, in which he reviewed extensively Southern election methods, and especially some of the new constitutional provisions as to voting. In the Fifty-seventh Congress he was made a member of the Committee on Appropriations, an unusual recognition for a member serving his second term. "Uncle Joe" Cannon, then chairman of Appropriations, assigned him to the sub-committee on the District of Columbia, and each year since he has been influential in the preparation of the District budget. He took an active part in the preparation of the personal tax law.

Always an aggressive fighter, he has fought against, as well as for, things wanted by the District authorities. Sometimes he has won, and sometimes he has lost, but he always has been ready for another fight. He sees things much in the same light as Mr. Cannon sees them, and the latter looks upon him as one of his strongest supports. When the District appropriation bill was under consideration at the last session of Congress, Mr. Burkett made a speech on "Our National Capital," in which he declared himself as favoring the beautification of Washington and committed himself to the program of making it the grandest capital in the world.

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