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## The Frontier

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### THE REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE FOR GOVERNOR

State Journal: On a day in the late eighties a tall young fellow dropped into Omaha between trains enroute from Michigan to the healthful highlands of the west. The clerk at the hotel where he took shelter proved to be an old acquaintance. "Why go farther?" said he. "Nebraska air is as good as the best. We'll get you a job here." They did. That is the beginning of how the name of one of Nebraska's candidates for governor is Robert Beecher Howell of Omaha.

Thus a cough and threatened consumption gave Omaha municipal water, Nebraska its irrigation laws,

and this campaign its republican candidate for governor. Robert Beecher Howell would probably have been an admiral by this time but for that cough. Howell is known in Omaha as a fighter. Well, from his boyhood Howell wanted to be a fighting man. He wanted to go to West Point. His father, a strapping, big peaceful lawyer of peaceful Adrian, Mich., frowned upon the ambition. His mother, under a hundred pounds in weight, the finder of homes for upwards of five hundred waifs, landed him in Annapolis, the next best place. Young Howell graduated from Annapolis and reached voting age together in 1885. He was not at the head of his class, but he graduated while 60 per cent of his class were flunking out.

Talk about fate and destiny. The boat on which the young Michigander was sent to sea was the United States ship Omaha! It was while serving on this ship that the cough and hemorrhages came. Lieutenant Howell returned to his Michigan home on sick leave. He grew better and settled down in Michigan. Then he grew worse, and headed for Colorado like other lungers before him. How he was intercepted at Omaha and never got any further we have already seen. The man of magnificent physique who has just landed a hotly contested gubernatorial nomination by a whirlwind campaign is the invalid who dropped

into Omaha twenty-five years ago. It is a Nebraska preserved pair of lungs that is to carry the Howell issues into all the hamlets and court house towns of the state in the course of the next eight weeks. Howell is a living advertisement of Nebraska as a health resort.

An Annapolis graduate is a civil engineer. The job Howell found in Omaha was, strangely enough, with the Omaha Water Company, then owned by the American Waterworks Company. A little of this, and he entered an engineering firm to follow his profession on his own account. His first operations had to do with irrigation in western Nebraska. This interested him in irrigation and irrigation laws, especially as he soon became the owner of a ranch fifty miles west of North Platte which he proposed to irrigate. Nebraska had no irrigation law at that time. The result of this situation was a first hand study of irrigation in Wyoming and Colorado and the preparation of an irrigation code for Nebraska. Howell offered this to the legislature of 1891. That legislature was too busy with other things.

The bill did not get through the committee. In 1893 he urged Senator Darner of Dawson to introduce his bill. "Young man," said the wary senator, "you are from Omaha. Why are you interested in irrigation?" Even that far ago the back counties wondered whether any good could come out of Omaha. Darner, his suspicions allayed, introduced the bill, but it made no progress. By 1905, drouth times had made irrigation popular in Nebraska. At the session of the legislature of that winter Howell's irrigation code was adopted without serious opposition. For his part in this performance Governor Holcomb appointed him Nebraska's first state engineer.

In the fall of that year Captain W. J. Broatch was elected mayor of Omaha. Here begins the water fight which was to play so large a part in Mr. Howell's later career. Broatch picked Howell to be city engineer and would not take no for answer. And with a decision of the city engineer in the fall of 1896 the water fight, with Howell at its center, began.

The Omaha Water Company had twelve years of franchise left. It requested the council, however, to grant an extension with automatic renewals amounting virtually to a permanent franchise. In return the city was to have some additional fire hydrants. The accommodating council obeyed the request, and the ordinance went to Mayor Broatch for his approval. The mayor called upon the city engineer for an opinion. Mr. Howell gave it and the mayor vetoed the ordinance. Thereupon a mass meeting was called by the council and Howell was publicly grilled for lending himself to efforts to harass the water company. That day the movement of municipal water began. It was sixteen years from the franchise fight of 1896 to the taking over of the water plant by the city of Omaha, under the management of the man who had started the movement, R. B. Howell.

Meanwhile Howell had given his country the benefit of his Annapolis training in the Spanish war. He served on the Prairie, the battleship which a few months ago covered with its guns the landing of United States troops at Vera Cruz. He entered the war a lieutenant and came out second in command of the ship. The war over, he took a year to fight off the southern fever, contracted in Porto Rico, and transferred his fighting energies from the Spaniards to the enemies of municipal water in Omaha. Beaten in Omaha, the friends of the water company always appealed to the legislature. The wide acquaintance in the state which has made him so strong a candidate this year must have come from the necessity he was under of spending every second winter in Lincoln blocking legislative schemes of Omaha members bent on defeating municipal water for Omaha. To the glory of Nebraska legislature's be it said that they never fell into the trap. An act of the legislature of 1897, which Governor Holcomb was pulled out of bed to sign a few minutes before midnight, was indeed the salvation of the municipal ownership people. It forbade extensions of municipal franchises without a vote of the people. Another day and the water company's franchise extension might have gone through the Omaha council. With that law in effect, municipal ownership was only a question of time.

That water fight was too long to recount here. Waged by a small group of men with Howell at the head, it called for more courage and persistency than any mere blood-letting war. Suffice it here that it finally succeeded, though appraisers fastened a price on the old plant which Howell believes was a million and a quarter dollars too high.

During the last ten years of the water war Mr. Howell has carried on a real estate business with such success that he felt able to retire from money making. Here comes his advent into state politics. Came 1912, a

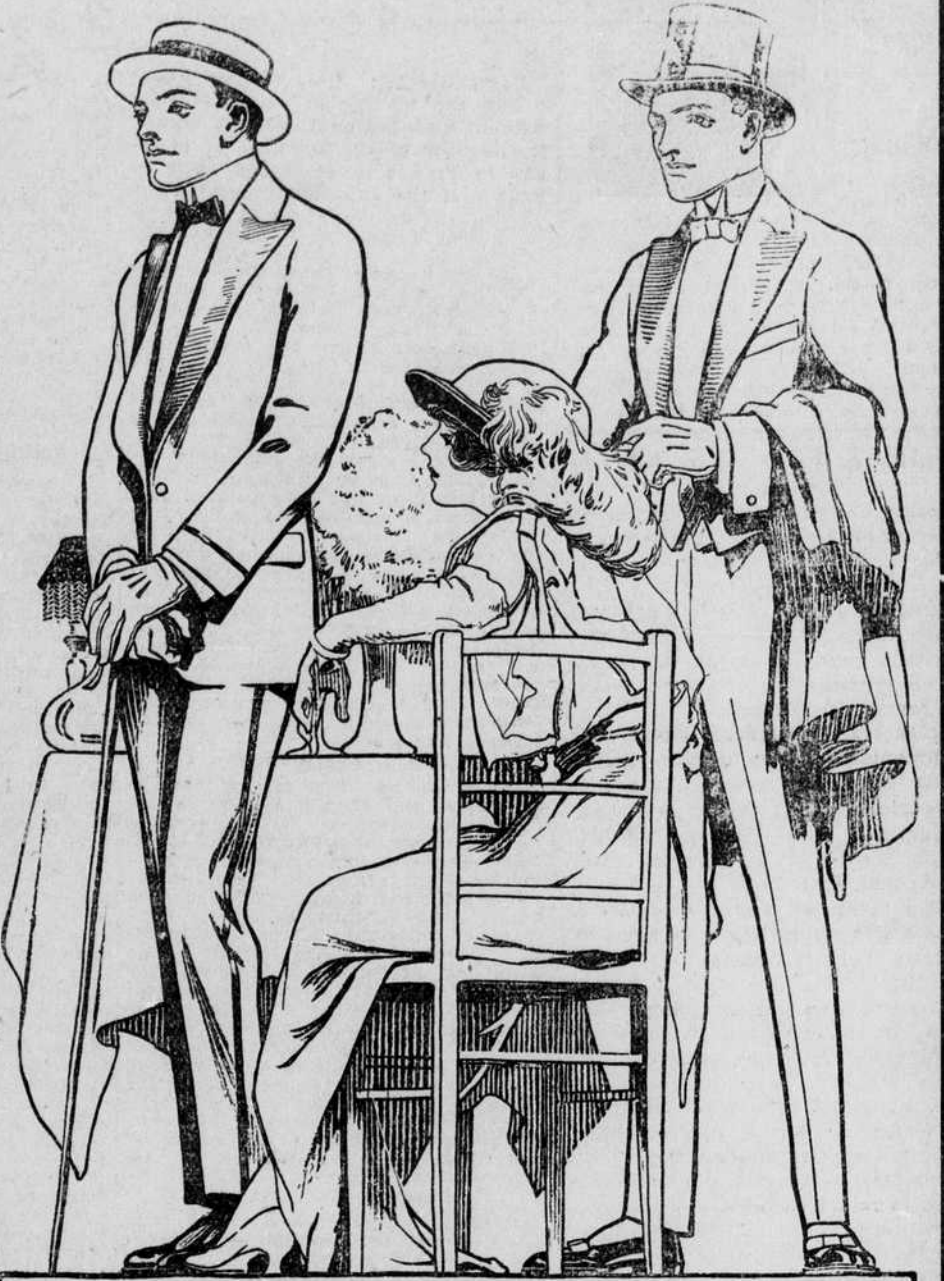
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You'll like any number of the fall models that are ready for you now. No time-wasting delays; just step in and wear your new suit away if you want to.

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have made clothes-making a perfect science; they have carefully classified the human figure and have produced models to meet every demand.

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an artistic as well as practical standpoint. For \$18.00, \$20.00, \$25.00 and more you'll get clothes a custom tailor would charge double the money for.

## Remember the Style Show

On Monday afternoon and evening, September 28, at the Royal Theatre, I will give a complete show of the latest styles produced by the Chicago Style Show. Three hundred beautiful scenes showing all the latest ideas of dress. Don't miss it. Next Monday night. Admission 25c

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We invite you to Deposit your funds in this bank for the reason that all depositors are protected by the Depositors' Guarantee Fund of the State of Nebraska.

That the Deposits are amply protected in State Banks was exemplified in the failure of the State Savings Bank of Superior, Nebraska, a few months ago. Shortly after the bank closed the depositors were paid in full, together with interest up to the time the bank suspended payment.

At the same time the First National Bank of Superior failed and up to this time the depositors have not received a cent, and prospects of ever receiving a substantial portion of their deposits are not very bright.

The harvest of the farmers and stockmen is now at hand and they will soon be disposing of their products and will want to deposit their surplus funds.

Kindly keep this bank in mind, as this is the only bank in O'Neill operating under the Guarantee Law of the State of Nebraska.

**Nebraska State Bank**

presidential year and a direct election of national committeemen. Howell, a progressive republican, had been for sixteen years in opposition to Victor Rosewater on the water issue. Now he contested Rosewater's place on the national committee. He was elected, and at the one meeting of the committee since that campaign was marked as a leader of the progressives of the committee.

In 1914, with the Omaha municipal water system going merry as a marriage bell and Omaha drinking clear water for the first time in its life, Howell appears again on the statewide scene. He wants to clean up the Omaha police force, which he believes is dominated by Tom Dennison, king of the Omaha underworld. He has plans for making the South Omaha stock yards more serviceable to the state. He proposed extensions of municipal ownership in Omaha. While in engineering work he became impressed by the possibilities of putting cheap electric light and power on most of the farms and in most of the towns of the state by legislation encouraging the people to co-operate in developing their water powers. With an engineer's love of efficiency, he sees ways to make the machinery of state simpler, light running and more efficient. These things can be promoted best from the state house, and to the state house next January Mr. Howell proposes to move his office. The winning of the nomination takes him half way. Howell never stops with halfway measures. He is no compromiser. The whole population of Nebraska is going to hear from him while he races the other half of the way from now till election day.

What R. B. Howell is like personally, everybody will have a chance to see for himself in the course of the coming campaign. His robust frame, full six feet tall and well proportioned, gives no hint of the health-seeker of twenty-five years ago. Whatever he might have been as an officer of the navy, his work in Nebraska has made him democratic to the core. "I never

got anything in Omaha," he said once, "but by appealing straight to the people for it." That is the only politics he knows. It must be he fights fair, for after fifteen years' war in Omaha, during which he made bitter enemies, no unmanly or dishonorable act is so much as charged against him. It is said of him that while he has made some enemies, he has never lost a friend. The little group of Omaha men who were with him from the beginning of the political struggle in Omaha are with him yet. Most people think there is something devious and secret about a political campaign. Howell's political methods are open to the sun. They are nothing but that appeal "straight to the people." His campaign will be nothing but that—his own speeches and a poster or two to think over after he is gone.

A tall, handsome, forceful appearing woman occupies a seat in the Howell automobile as it skimmed the state before the primaries. She will doubtless be there when the car appears in the second heat of the race. That is Mrs. Howell, Mr. Howell's most confidential adviser, the only "boss" who will have a word to say if Howell is governor. The young man who drives the car will also be seen about the executive mansion if present plans carry out. He is Sidney, the third member of the family.

### Lincoln Letter.

Lincoln, Sept. 21.—The state campaign is under way. The republican candidates are on the road for a town to town tour of the entire state. The republican committee is rounding up the state organization into an aggressive attitude. Among the republican candidates and campaign workers there is harmony, with a keen relish for the work on hand. The republican voters, except very few of the more stubborn standpatters and the other few who are with the new party, the progressives, are gathering with enthusiasm around Howell and the entire state ticket.

The remembrance of the last re-

publican legislature, that of 1907, and what it gave the state, the two-cent passenger rate law, the anti-pass law, the direct primary law, the pure food law, the fifteen per cent reduction in freight rates on live stock, lumber and coal, the law providing for municipal taxation of railway terminals, the employers' liability law, the law compelling a twenty-five per cent reduction in express rates, the law establishing the railway commission and law giving that commission the power to prohibit rebates and special rates for corporations, all this record of the last republican legislature, the best legislature the state ever had, coming back now into remembrance of the republican voters, in contrast with what has happened in the state since under democratic rule, giving zest and instinct of victory to the republican cause.

Practically all of what was the republican party before the split at Chicago is regathering into an army of determined men bent on the recapturing of the state government, including the legislature, and the commencing of its work where the republicans left off six years ago.

There is harmony, enthusiasm and a general expectation of victory among the republicans.

A truthful statement of the democratic situation as seen from this view point must necessarily picture that party in an exceedingly embarrassed situation. The old feud between the Bryan and the anti-Bryan factions has grown in intensity during these last four or five years. Since Bryan's bold denunciation of the liquor traffic after his last defeat as a presidential candidate and the brutal discipline administered for that to him at the famous Grand Island convention, the steadily increasing and more determined purpose of his enemies to bear him down and to put him and his co-workers out of the party control in the state has been achieved to such an extent that the Bryans and their friend have but little to say now as

(Continued on page five.)