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NEBRASKA AS IT SHOULD BE KNOWN

A Paper read before the Nebraska Press Association, Omaha, June 6, by Will M. Maupin.

We of Nebraska should know, and knowing tell all the world, what Nebraska is and is to be; what Nebraska offers to the homeseeker, the investment seeker and the health seeker; what hidden potentialities for human happiness lie dormant in her fertile soil, and what she is annually contributing to the sum total of the world's created wealth.

In the beginning of this necessarily brief paper I want to say, and say emphatically, that the last session of the Nebraska legislature, which performed many good deeds, neglected the ripest opportunity ever offered a legislature to confer a lasting benefit upon the state. I refer to its failure and neglect to make the initial appropriation for a Bureau of Publicity and Immigration. There was no reasonable ground for opposition to the measure; no reasonable objection in economy. In fact there was no opposition to the bill. But, unfortunately, it did not offer opportunities for log-rolling and trading. It had behind it the solid backing of every enterprising organization in the state, of every wide-awake man who is anxious to see Nebraska take her rightful place among the states of the republic. But because legislation today has become largely a matter of "You tickle me and I'll tickle you;" so largely a matter of trade and barter, this splendid measure calculated to give us a start in the great work of making the truth about Nebraska known to the world, was allowed to die of inanition, of mal-nutrition, of sheer neglect. And in doing so the legislature worked a grave injury to the commonwealth.

States, like corporations and partnership and firms must advertise in these

strenuous days or fall to the rear. Constant, persistent, insistent, intelligent advertising is the keynote of success in any business, and there is no greater or more important business than the building of a state.

But there is a condition precedent to intelligent advertising. The constructor of the advertising must know what he is advertising. No man engaged in advertisement building can hope ever to know too much about the business or the goods he is exploiting. It is all well enough for the newspaper men of Nebraska to claim that they are constantly advertising Nebraska, but the plain, unvarnished truth is that they are not doing it as it should be done, and for the very simple reason that they do not know all they should know about Nebraska. I have lived in this state for a quarter of a century—longer by several years than the average Nebraska editor. I have tried in my weak way to advertise Nebraska to the world, and I thought for years I knew Nebraska pretty thoroughly. Something like six years ago I began studying Nebraska from a different angle. Formerly I had studied it from a car window or in political conventions or by converse with friends in my office. Now, after studying Nebraska for six years as any merchant studies his stock—any successful merchant, I mean—I have just begun to realize that what I knew of Nebraska up until six years ago was as nothing, and that if I keep on acquiring knowledge for the next six or eight years as I have during the past six or eight, at the end of that time my knowledge of this great state may qualify me to emerge from the kindergarten class and enter the first primary. The

longest span of human life in this age would not suffice to enable one to graduate from the great school wherein knowledge of Nebraska is imparted.

Merely as a basis upon which to work intelligently while you study, I purpose giving you some concrete facts about our beloved state. I will not waste your time in detailing bald statistics. The average human mind can not think in millions. Statistical tables appeal only to statisticians. Columns of figures frighten and repel the average man. Because of this I undertook, while serving as chief of the statistical bureau of the state, to present the statistics about Nebraska in a more attractive form than the usual table of figures. I hope I may be pardoned if I lay claim to having achieved some measure of success in advertising Nebraska abroad. I am of the opinion that the crop statistics of Nebraska, and all other statistics, received a wider range of publicity under the plan I adopted than they had achieved before. One bulletin of comparative statistics reached a circulation of 70,000 with requests for upwards of 250,000 more. And such great journals as Collier's, Leslie's Weekly, Munsey's Magazine, The American Magazine and the Cosmopolitan, to say nothing of the great daily newspapers, gave free to Nebraska a measure of publicity that could not have been purchased with money.

Now, here are some facts about Nebraska, tersely told, that will serve as the basis for many a good advertisement of Nebraska:

Nebraska was admitted to the union in March, 1867, and is therefore forty-four years old—six years less than half a century. All this progress, all this