

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT

*Good morning, Mr. President! We hope you will
Excuse us for what may appear familiarity,
If in excess of spirits we should call you Bill---
For out west here that's our peculiarity.
For "William" sounds too stilted and the "Mr. President"
Kind o' grates upon our feelings as a lack of sentiment.
So we aim to hit an average, hoping you won't take it ill,
If we all rise up and greet you with a heartfelt "Howdy, Bill!"
A welcome to Nebraska, Bill! The flowers o' May
Are not a bit more welcome than your corporosity;
And we'll forget a lot of things, at least for one whole day,
Including vetoed free list bills---and reciprocity.*

*Good morning, Bill! We'll make your welcome hearty,
For that's our real style---the utmost sociability.
At times like this we have neither creed nor party,
But evidence in every way utmost compatibility.
So we balk on saying "William," and with only good intent
We lay aside your title, which is "Mr. President,"
And we give you kindly greeting with a hearty, free good will
When we meet you at our borders with a jolly "Howdy, Bill!"
Welcome to our city, Bill! And may your stay
Result, at least, in some small measure of enlightenment.
You'll like us when you know us well, and we may
Get wise to curves you put across to us with right intent.*

*Good morning, Bill! You will observe these wild hurrahs
Are but little due to your individuality.
We welcome you as with one voice but that's because
You are the chief head of this great principality.
As democrats, republicans or populists? Not so!
A time like this and politics we really do not know.
We've laid aside all bias and our lungs we haste to fill
So we can greet you kindly with a hearty "Howdy, Bill!"
A welcome to Nebraska! And Lincoln! Here's our hand
To clasp your hand in friendship far from animosity;
Amidst the hearty cheers and brazen blare of bands
It's up to you, friend Bill, to make it reciprocity.*

WELCOME TO THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to our beautiful State, Mr. President! And to our beautiful Capital City! We are truly glad to have you among us, even for so short a time. Would that you could remain with us longer, for there are many things that we would like to whisper into your ear; things that you really ought to know. And they are things that you are not going to hear from the reception committees and the grand marshals of the parades, or from the active and enthusiastic payroll brigade, or from those who rise at table to respond to toasts. No, sir, William! If you hear them it will be

from some of us you probably will never meet because we are not counted among those present on such occasions as receptions to the chief executive of the nation.

We are going to do our utmost, Mr. President, to do honor to you as you pass along. But don't make the fool mistake of thinking that all the loud huzzas and blaring of bands are for William Howard Taft, or for his administration. They will be for the president of the United States. It's the office not the man, we are honoring. On more than one occasion in the past

we've turned out bigger crowds than those that will greet you in Nebraska, but they were to honor men, not high office.

You are coming among friends when you come to Nebraska. There is not a Nebraskan worthy of the name who does not wish you well; who is not hoping from the bottom of his heart that your administration will redound to the glory and the prosperity of the republic. A lot of us, to be sure, are hoping against hope, but just the same we're hoping. We are thinking vastly more of the republic's good than we are of mere party success. There may be those in your entourage who cannot understand how this can be so, but you well know the mental limitations of some people.

There are a great many things about you, Mr. President, that we of the west admire. We admire your goodnature. We admire your honesty of purpose and goodness of intent. We admire you for what you have done for universal peace. But, Mr. President, when it comes to the question of policies we'll have to admit that some of us are not so favorably impressed. But that is neither here nor there just now. For the short time you are in Nebraska we are going to forget reciprocity, and vetoes, and tariff commissions, and refusal to let the people rule, and tommyrot about "impeaching judges," and just show the president of the United States how much we esteem the high office and the man who happens for the time being to be filling it. This is not your first visit to Nebraska, Mr. President. You were here a few months ago in the heat and turmoil of a presidential campaign, and of course you couldn't see us at our best under such circumstances. No community is at its best when it is roiled up over politics. We are going to pretend that there is no politics in your present visit. We use the word "pretend" advisedly. Of course we well know that your trip is purely for political purposes, but we are going to be polite enough as your host for the time being to exhibit dense ignorance of the fact. We expect you to tell us what a great state we have, and what a glorious future lies ahead of it. We expect you to say some nice things about the Capital City and her many institutions of learning. So, too, we expect you to rid yourself of the usual "bird seed" about our splendid manhood and beautiful womanhood, and all that sort of thing. And in return we'll throw our hats into the air and cheer till our throats are sore as you pass along. Of