

WHAT NEBRASKA REALLY NEEDS

Will M. Maupin in *The Omaha World-Herald*

Lincoln, Neb., Dec. 1.—To the Editor of the World-Herald: Your editorial in the issue of November 29, under the caption, "Advertise Nebraska," is so to the point that I can not resist the temptation to congratulate you upon it, and also to add a few comments of my own.

The census shows that Nebraska has gained bare 11 per cent during the past decade. The increase is, in fact, much greater than that, but because of silly census padding in 1900, the percentage of gain during the past decade appears less than it really is. But it is interesting to note that the increase is confined largely to the cities, while the rural districts show a falling off, save in a few localities. The Sixth congressional district is about the only district that shows a rural gain, and this is due to the fact that there are no large cities in that district; and increases, therefore, being rural. There is no well founded reason why Nebraska's rural gain should not have been much greater; the reason that it was not is found in the fact that Nebraska has failed, dismally, in advertising her resources and opportunities to the world. During the last two years it has been my good fortune—good or ill, according to the point of view—to have been in an official position that has afforded me ample opportunities to learn what Nebraska has to offer, and at the same time realize to the full Nebraska's shameful neglect to let all the world know. Any real estate investment company will tell you that it is far easier to sell land in Colorado or Texas or Washington, than it is to sell land in Nebraska. The reason is that the states named are constantly advertising their resources and advantages, while Nebraskans are content to let the world wag along under the old ideas that with the exception of a narrow strip of country along the Missouri river, Nebraska is a desert waste, subject to drouth, unproductive and thinly settled by a ne'er-do-well lot of people. It is little short of a crime to allow this condition to exist. Nebraska has more to offer home seekers and home makers than any other state in the west. Let me cite a few figures:

The average yield per acre of wheat in the United States is 14 bushels; the Nebraska ten-year average is 19. The average yield per acre of corn for the United States is 14 bushels; the Nebraska average is 27 bushels, for the ten-year period. Nebraska is the fourth largest wheat producer, and the youngest of the four; the fourth largest corn producer, and the youngest of the four. Soil experts will tell you that Nebraska soil is peculiar in that it will stand more moisture and more drouth than any other similar area of country in the United States, and that its recuperative ability far exceeds that of any other state.

Yet, while practically only one-third of the wheat and corn land is under cultivation, people pass Nebraska by for other sections, lured there by extensive advertising and wholly ignorant of the fact that in Nebraska better land may be had for less money, with better market facilities, better school facilities and better social surroundings.

I make bold to say that fruit raisers can do as well, or better, in Southeastern Nebraska as they can in the far-famed apple regions of the northwest if the same care and attention is given to orcharding. A quarter of a century from now will find the southern and southeastern slopes of the Missouri river bluffs the greatest vineyards in the country. The finest corn land in the world is in Nebraska, and the corn belt is limited. This Nebraska corn land is selling cheaper than far poorer but better advertised land in the northwest, where wheat is the principal grain crop. And land that will raise good corn will raise anything that grows in the temperate zone.

An eighty-acre farm in the corn lands of Nebraska is a potential fortune; it will make its owner rich if he will cultivate it properly, the most successful farmer in America lives in Pawnee county, and he has grown moderately wealthy on forty acres of land that twenty years ago was considered mighty poor land. And while he has prospered through intelligent effort, others have barely held their own because they did not believe in "book farming" or diversified agriculture.

Nebraska can support a farming population of a million and a half, or two million. Yet three-fourths of the American people hold to the opinion that Nebraska is still the great American desert. Last August I was in Buffalo, and while dining in a cafe I fell into conversation with a business man of that city. When he learned that I was from Nebraska he said: "I presume cattle raising is your principal industry." When I finished telling him what Nebraska is really doing along productive lines he said: "Is that so?" And the look on his face clearly indicated that he was positive he had been listening to a modern Baron Munchausen. Yet I had not told him half the truth, knowing full well that to tell the whole truth about Nebraska would be to brand myself as the prize fictionist of the day.

With one-third of her tillable land under cultivation Nebraska this year produced 200,000,000 bushels of corn, 50,000,000 bushels of wheat, 71,000,000 bushels of oats, 5,000,000 tons of alfalfa, 7,000,000 bushels of potatoes, 6,000,000 tons of wild and tame hay, 105,000 tons

of sugar beets, and other crops in proportion. Her production of agricultural products will total upwards of \$200,000,000 in value; poultry, butter and eggs will total upwards of \$60,000,000; live stock will total \$120,000,000, and her manufactured products will exceed \$200,000,000. In this good year of 1910 Nebraska will have added fully \$650,000,000 to the wealth of the world. Pretty good for state less than 45 years old and still considered by millions to be a barren waste of desert lands;

Yet this splendid story of material progress and wealth is practically unknown where knowledge thereof would be most advantageous to the state. Not only are we failing to make these facts known, but we are actually allowing other and less favored states to draw from us our young men by alluring advertising. That reminds me of a story:

A man decided to sell his home and put the matter in the hands of a real estate man. The real estate man wrote a description of the property and published the same. The owner read it and hastened to the agent, "Look here," he said; "I didn't know I owned such a nice place. I withdraw it from the market."

The moral of this story is in the application of it.

I am hopeful that the legislature about to convene will see the wisdom and the good financial sense of making adequate provision for the proper advertising of Nebraska's resources and possibilities during the next two years. It is criminal to neglect this duty longer. If the world knew Nebraska as I have learned to know it during the last two years, the marvelous development of the state during the last thirty years would pale into insignificance. In soil, climate, in productivity, in all that goes to make a country for homes, Nebraska excels them all. The need of the hour is to make these facts known to the millions of land hungry people throughout the world.

SOME SHORT ARM JABS

Attach a Red Cross stamp to every Christmas package and letter.

The good things made in Nebraska should be purchased by the loyal people of Nebraska.

Here's your Christmas Wageworker. On the square, now; isn't it just a little bit ahead of its advance notices?

Why, may we ask, should Land Commissioner Cowles be ashamed of his name? It is a real nice name.

Postmaster General Hitchcock does not propose to have any of his railway mail clerks attacked by gout while out on their runs.

Mr. Man, cease your kicking about the outlandish shapes of feminine headgear. You don't have to wear it—you only have to pay for it.

You'll do your shopping any old time you please anyhow, but we can not resist the temptation to again urge you to do it as early as possible.

Chester H. Aldrich, however, is not the first governor-elect to pledge himself to enforce the liquor laws in Omaha. We shall see what we shall see.

After mature deliberation we have concluded that there is more money in a field of Nebraska alfalfa than there is in mahogany lumber in the West Indies.

Perhaps the people of Lincoln would not object so seriously to a five-cent fare if they were convinced that they would get a fair five-cent's worth of service therefor.

After reading the president's message we are confident that he is still in good standing with the steam shovelmen's union. A message like that couldn't have been written with a pen.

There are 100 members of the lower branch of the Nebraska legislature. Fifty-six of them are candidates for speaker. The democratic membership, by a strange coincidence, is just fifty-six.

President Taft is going to push the passage of the Moon bill. The Moon bill is one of the president's kindly thoughts towards organized labor. It will help the anti-unionists put the unions off watch.