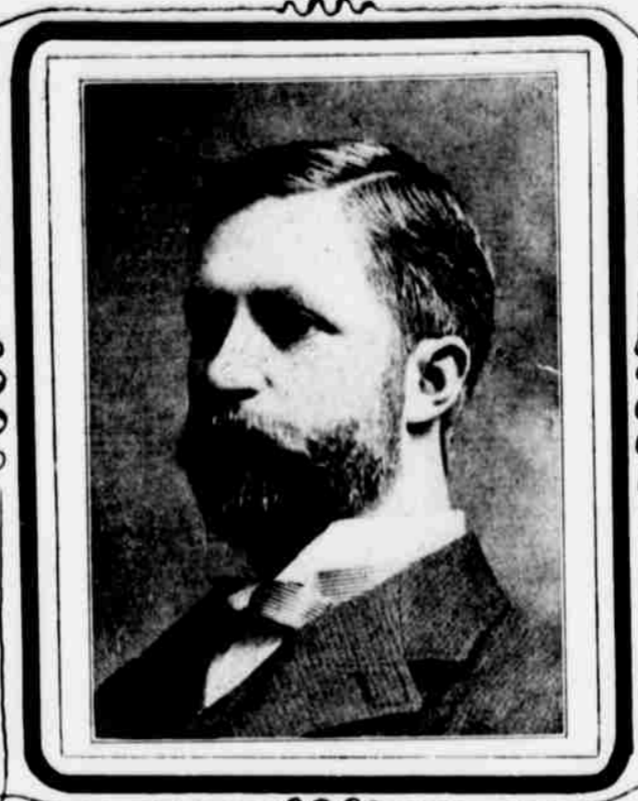


SPEAKER OF THE



PAUL F. CLARK.

NEBRASKA HOUSE

IN NEBRASKA the speaker of the house of representatives is usually a novice. Very few representatives are elected for more than two terms and the speakership ordinarily goes to a second-term man. At the end of his term as speaker he retires, either on his own motion or that of the people. While most of those who have presided over the house since the adoption of the present constitution are living in the state, but one has served more than one term as speaker. Hon. J. N. Gaffin, one of the two speakers furnished by the populist party, presided over the deliberations of the house during the sessions of 1892 and 1897. He was first elected, as a second-term member, in 1893, and, being a member of the majority party, in 1897 was again elected speaker. It would be a good thing if his experience were more often repeated, for it is certain that an experienced member of the legislature can do more good than an inexperienced one; it is just as certain that an experienced presiding officer can be more efficient than one not acquainted with the duties. For his own sake, a man should hesitate to take the position of speaker without previous experience in the legislature; for the sake of good work, a good presiding officer should be kept as long as he is a member and willing to serve. Mr. Gaffin is an illustration of this, for whatever may be said of his first term (and I have heard no criticism of it) it is certain that in his second term he made one of the ablest and fairest presiding officers the state has ever had. It would be a good thing for the state if we followed the plan of congress and elected and re-elected the same speaker as long as his party stays in power, and then we might develop, in a small way, such men as Blaine and Randall and Crisp and Reed.

The hardest work that a speaker has to do is to be elected—this is true of most offices as well. But after he has been elected and inducted into office he has one or two hard tasks. First and foremost among these is the selection and appointment of employees. Usually, after a few of the most important offices have been filled by election, a resolution is passed empowering the speaker to appoint all necessary employees. Most people think that this leaves the matter entirely in his hands. His friends think it and all those who have friends anxious for jobs are glad to believe it. But it is far from the truth. While the actual appointments are made by the speaker, practically they are made by the members belonging to his political party. The speaker cannot and does not fail to appoint the persons named by the members as long as there are positions to be filled. The most that he can do is to consult the different members and find out which position their different applicants are best fitted

for, and then formally make the appointments. No member of the majority really has less to say about who shall be employed than has the speaker. A speaker who should arrogate to himself the right to say who should be employed of the house, even after he has been given the power by the house itself, would at once find himself at variance with his party members and entirely without that support which he must have to succeed.

This question of employees is the most trying that the speaker has, and it does not end until the entire session is over. Every speaker has a laudable desire to keep down the number on the pay roll as low as possible and still get effective work done. He very soon finds that this is an almost hopeless task. Each member of the majority is trying to get some constituent of his a place (he has probably promised it) and the minority has no interest in the matter and therefore gives the speaker no help. When the places are all filled and the speaker has determined that there shall be no more some one moves that a clerk be given to some committee, and, if the resolution carries, a new name is added to the list. Or sometimes, usually late in the session, some member introduces a resolution with a long preamble, setting out that John Doe has been doing work for the house and that he has received no pay and that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," etc., and that the bookkeeper put him on the pay roll. The motion is usually adopted, and thus the list grows.

Offers and Illustrations.

To illustrate: Prior to the session of 1899 the secretary of state appointed a carpenter to fix up the desks of the members and such work was needed around the house. He worked some after the session commenced. On the drawing of the first vouchers for employees he was paid with the others, but as there did not seem to be any need of a carpenter he was told that he would receive no further pay. No house carpenter was appointed. On the next pay day he presented a claim for payment as house carpenter. The speaker refused to approve his voucher and thought that was the end of it. But it was not. He was on hand each day. Whenever a member had any trouble with his desk keys (which was not infrequent with the miserable desks used) he would fix it for them and in many ways he made himself solid with the members. Just before the session closed a resolution was introduced, with the usual "whereas," setting out that he had done the work, that "the laborer is worthy of his hire," etc.,

etc., and directing the speaker to approve a voucher for his salary. The resolution passed and he got the money.

Another Hard Problem.

Another hard problem that the speaker has to face is the standing committees. It is to the interest of the presiding officer to have well selected committees to look after the bills that are referred to them, and the task of selecting the different men of the majority and minority to act on these is herculean. It is usually the aim of the speaker to put each member of the majority on a certain number of committees and each member of the minority

great mistake. In congress it is true that a person must ordinarily be on the committee to be heard either for or against a measure. But in our legislature this is not so; any one can be heard on any bill, and there is no power to prevent. A member who is not on the important committees has as much chance to do good work and make a reputation as those on the committee, and, because his time is not so fully taken up by committee work, frequently more. But the new members do not know this, and most of the members are new.

In the last session there were forty-four standing committees, with a total of 357 members. To arrange these satisfactorily to the members, to say nothing of others, was no small job. The speaker usually has from Thursday afternoon to the following Monday to do this work in, and it is not to be wondered at that he frequently makes mistakes.

After he thinks that he has the work of arranging the committees all done he frequently has to make many changes. Some member wants to be put on some other committee or he left off one that he is slated for. If possible, the speaker desires to accommodate him and this involves many changes. Unless there is some one on the committee to which the member aspires that can be changed with him, shifting has to be made on perhaps a dozen before a proper arrangement is made.

At the last session, after the committees had all been arranged ready for announcement, a request was made by a game protective association to have a certain member put on the committee on fish culture and game. This is a committee that few care to be on, and, of course, the speaker was willing to make the change. To do it required changes on nine different committees. This was only one of many changes that it seemed necessary to make after the work was supposed to be finished.

Work of the Speaker Easy.

With the above exceptions the position of speaker is not a difficult one to fill. The members usually strive to help rather than to hinder him in the discharge of his duties. Once established a belief that he intends to be fair and there will be little disagreement between him and the members. This is as true of the minority as of the majority. It is possible for a member to cause the speaker a good deal of annoyance, it is true, but this rarely occurs, unless he himself is arbitrary, arrogant or unfair. Frequently attempts are made to get him into a tangle on parliamentary practice, but these are usually good-natured and for the purpose of testing

the speaker's capacity, rather than real hostility. The members usually rally to the support of the presiding officer in a contest of this kind, regardless of party, unless, indeed, it be a political question, when he receives only the support of his own party and cares for no other.

Ordinarily the powers of the speaker are limited. He is governed by well settled parliamentary rules, as well as by the rules of the house, and still more by that general desire for fairness that any representative body of Americans insist upon. Let the speaker persistently ignore parliamentary rules or establish a reputation for unfair treatment and he speedily loses his influence and his power is taken away by the house itself.

There are times, however, when the presiding officer has to take a strong hold on the reins of power and control regardless of rules and sometimes regardless of the house itself. These are rare occasions, however, and the ability to grasp them when they come marks the capacity of the speaker. Uniformly the speaker is upheld by the house as soon as it realizes the importance of the position taken by him. This of course assumes that this arbitrary ruling is exceptional and in a great emergency.

In the session of 1899 a time had been agreed on by both houses at which to adjourn sine die. When that time arrived the work was not completed. The two houses disagreed on some items in the general appropriation bill. Several conference committees had been appointed without any result. There was no other work to do. A large number of the members were temporarily absent. At this point an enthusiastic populist member obtained the recognition of the chair and the floor. He moved that inasmuch as the time fixed for adjournment had arrived the house adjourn without day. The motion was regular and in order, and, in the condition the house was in, was liable to carry. This would have left the state without any general appropriation bill, which would have necessitated an extra session of the legislature at great expense. In this crisis the speaker refused to put the motion, refused to entertain an appeal from his ruling, recognized another member while the former one had the floor and proceeded with the business of the house. This proceeding on the part of the speaker was arbitrary, but it was justified by the exigencies of the occasion and was sustained by the house.

A session of the legislature is short and intense. The speaker is always busy and must be alert. But the work is easy and the responsibility is not great. With a desire and a determination to treat every member and every measure fairly he has nothing that need perplex or bother him.

PAUL F. CLARK.

Speaker of the House of Representatives 1899.

List of Nebraska Speakers

GEORGE W. COLLINS.....	1871
M. SESSIONS.....	1873
EDWARD S. TOWLE.....	1875
ALBINUS NANCE.....	1877
C. P. MATHEWSON.....	1879
H. H. SHEDD.....	1881
GEORGE M. HUMPHREY.....	1883
ALLEN W. FIELD.....	1885
N. V. HARLAN.....	1887
JOHN C. WATSON.....	1889
S. M. ELDER.....	1891
J. N. GAFFIN.....	1893
C. L. RICHARDS.....	1895
J. N. GAFFIN.....	1897
PAUL F. CLARK.....	1899

on a certain (usually less) number. Of course, some of the committees are more important than others, and on these most of the members want to serve. Most people think that to make a reputation in their legislative work they must be on the important committees. This is a

An Interview With the Great Evolutionist

(Copyright, 1900, by R. S. Baker.)

Prof. Ernst Haeckel of the University of Jena, in Germany, is perhaps the most distinguished living evolutionist. An associate and co-worker with Darwin, Huxley and Spencer, he has lived to see the theory of evolution become a generally accepted scientific law the world over. He has done in continental Europe, in building up the great fabric of concrete proof for Darwin's theory, what Huxley did in England. His published works now reach the proportions of a small library, his "Natural History of Creation" having been translated into no fewer than twelve languages.

In a recent interview with Prof. Haeckel at his home in Jena I questioned him regarding the future development of the human race, physical and intellectual; the tendency of the race, whether progressive or retrogressive; the chief influences working upon modern life, and the probable trend of progress in scientific research. The appended notes of the interview have been carefully reviewed and revised by him, and therefore may stand as an authoritative expression of his views. First as to the next stages in the development of mankind:

"It will be mostly mental, the evolution of a better and finer brain," said Prof. Haeckel. "When man's brain began to develop rapidly there was no further need for great changes in his body. And yet some physical changes are still going on. Man will probably lose some of his teeth, there being not the use for them that there was, and there are signs that the little toes will also disappear, leaving man a four-toed animal. But these changes are of

small significance compared with our mental development."

Field for Future Thinkers.

There are, however, as Prof. Haeckel points out, tremendous influences at work in developing mankind—a vast and fascinating field of study. Man being a product of natural evolution and development his institutions must necessarily be a like product and the application of the theory to political and social economy, statecraft and education are most hopeful fields of work for future thinkers.

"Life was never more complex than it is today," said Prof. Haeckel, "and there is no prophesying the exact lines of future development. Man at present seems to be developing or retrograding in masses—by nations, and yet under very different influences. Here in Germany the tendency is all toward the centralization of power in the government, the removal of individual responsibility and the working together of large masses of men as one man. In America the tendency has been different; there the individual is developed; he has great powers and responsibilities—the man is the unit. Who shall say how these great influences will work out?"

At another time Prof. Haeckel spoke of the beautiful and accurate pictures of animals and plants now obtainable, where thirty years ago there were almost none, as an instance of one of the lesser and yet important influences of modern life. Pictures convey ideas swiftly and accurately, therefore they serve as a new and powerful factor in education, scientific education in particular. A man may become comparatively familiar with the animal forms

of the world in a short time, through the perfect pictures now obtainable, whereas a few years ago it would have taken a lifetime.

Other Influences at Work.

Then there are other influences to which Prof. Haeckel has often called attention. In Europe there is the influence of what he calls military selection, all the young men being taken at a certain age, removed from productive labor or study and put through exactly similar training for one or two years. In America there is no such influence. How such training or lack of it will develop the race is a question to which the future must furnish the solution. Haeckel also speaks of medical selection as one of the powerful modern influences. Medical science has made great strides in the past few years; it saves many lives that otherwise would have been lost, and frequently it keeps people with dangerous diseases alive for years. This must not only tend to breed a sickly race, but it necessarily swells the population largely, the crowding bringing with it new and difficult problems.

The earth is now almost wholly inhabited; there are no longer any new places for immigration and the development of virgin land. This means the elimination of that potent influence which has had so great a share in the progress of the world during the last few hundred years. The contest must now change. Instead of discovering and settling new continents and fighting savages civilized man must set himself to a terrible new struggle for existence between the older nations; for instance, in commerce and trade, tariffs, spheres of in-

fluence and so on; and the strongest, most easily adaptable, most resourceful, most favored nations will win. Prof. Haeckel spoke of the remarkable retrogression of the Latin races during the last few decades as a striking instance of this new struggle—especially the retrogression of once powerful Spain. He also called attention to the sudden upward progress of Japan. It is, as ever, the struggle between the species for existence, and the sharper the struggle within certain limits the greater the development of the strong.

I asked Prof. Haeckel what in his opinion were the next great avenues of development in scientific research.

Golden Era of Science.

"I believe," he said, "that the nineteenth century has been the golden era of science—that there will never again be so many discoveries of profound importance." Indeed, he is of the opinion that there are no more great universal generalizations to be made, like the law of the conservation of energy, the attraction of gravitation and the theory of natural evolution. He thinks the work of future scientists will deal largely with the application of the great principles and generalizations already well known. By this he does not mean that wonderful new scientific discoveries will not be made, but that they will not have the profound importance of these fundamental laws.

"I look for the greatest future development in the science of chemistry," he said. He spoke of the attempts now being made to show that the seventy or more so-called elementary substances may in reality be only the forms of a few more elementary

substances, mentioning the speculation that science would one day find that there was really only one substance at the basis of all things—one element of which the so-called seventy odd elements are merely forms of different composition of atoms.

The conversation as to the outlook in chemistry drifted naturally to that subject which has so often presented itself to the imaginative scientist, that of the ability of men to produce a living substance by artificial processes, in other words to make life. Haeckel believes firmly that some day this will be done, that it is not at all beyond the range of science, strange and improbable as it may seem. We had been sitting at the open windows of Haeckel's study. The professor pointed outside to the beautiful green foliage of the garden.

"It is only what those plants are doing all the time," he said, "taking so many parts of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen and so on and combining them into the albuminous substance which we call protoplasm, the living substance. Science can combine these elements just as nature does, the proportions being exactly known, but not yet to produce life. The albumen molecule is very complicated. Science does not know yet just how the various atoms of carbon, oxygen and so on which compose it are united and all attempts to solve the problem of the albumen molecule, what it really is and how the elements are joined with it, have been so far without avail. But I believe firmly that this great question will some day be solved. If it is, then the artificial production of life will be a possibility."