

Iowa's Senior Senator and Foremost Citizen

IN THE annals of American politics there are few records like that of Senator William Boyd Allison of Iowa. Commencing political life as one of the assistant secretaries of the convention which first nominated Abraham Lincoln for president, serving eight years in the house of representatives during a trying time in the nation's history and receiving at the hands of the people of Iowa five full terms in the United States senate, Mr. Allison is rightly considered the foremost man of Iowa. If the Iowa people had had their way he would long ago have had placed upon him the more arduous duties of chief magistrate of the nation.

William B. Allison was a farmer's boy, the son of an Ohio farmer, of Perry township, Wayne county, and was born March 2, 1826, during the presidential term of John Quincy Adams. His schooling was of the log cabin variety, followed by a course at a private school in Wooster, O., after which he became a teacher. He entered Allegheny college, at Meadville, but changed to Western Reserve college, and later studied law and was admitted to the bar at Ashland. His first public office was as deputy clerk of the county. He practiced law alone for awhile, then formed a partnership and continued in Ashland for a few years. It was here that he got his first lessons in politics. John Sherman came to Ashland to make a ratification speech when Scott was nominated and Allison joined in the campaign. Later he was a delegate to the convention which nominated Salmon P. Chase for governor and he was a supporter of Fremont.

Activity in Iowa.

In April, 1857, Allison started west, stopping first at Chicago, but going on to Dubuque, where he formed a partnership in

law. In 1859 he attended his first convention in Iowa as a delegate and helped nominate Samuel J. Kirkwood for governor. In 1860 he was one of the Iowa delegates to the Chicago convention and as assistant secretary called the roll of states when the republicans nominated Lincoln for president.

When Iowa was asked to furnish men to meet the rebellion Allison was urgently requested by Governor Kirkwood to become a member of his staff and assist in the organization of the Iowa regiments. He superintended the enlistment of volunteers and was given unlimited authority in the purchase of supplies and equipment.

When Iowa got six members of congress in place of two Allison was induced to enter congress March 4, 1862. Among other new members in the Thirty-eighth, or "war congress" were James A. Garfield and James G. Blaine, and the three became fast friends, which friendship continued until ended by death. For eighteen years they served together in the house or senate and both Blaine and Garfield have left testimonials of their great regard for the Iowa man. Mr. Allison's first congressional effort was in the direction of securing improvement of the Mississippi river. He secured the adoption of an amendment to the Pacific railroad bill providing that no bonds should be issued or money paid on account of the railroad until it should be completed from Omaha to the one hundredth meridian of longitude. His first speech was in favor of a bill securing to persons in the military and naval service homesteads on confiscated or forfeited estates in insurrectionary districts.

Began Study of Finance.

Mr. Allison served four terms in the house and in his second term went on the committee on ways and means and took up the study of national finances, in which he

has ever since been conspicuous. While the Johnson impeachment trial was in progress Allison was busy as a member of a subcommittee of the house ways and means committee preparing the general revenue bill, which is still the basis of all our internal revenue work. After serving in four congresses as a representative Mr. Allison declined a re-nomination and was out of public life for a short time. His friends urged him for appointment to the senate on the death of Senator Grimes, but he was not appointed. In 1872 he became a candidate to succeed Senator Harlan and he was successful and took his seat March 4, 1873, in the senate, where he has ever since continued. He has been given five full terms, or thirty years, and the legislature which will be elected this year is already pledged to give him another term if he desires it.

Services in the Senate.

In his twenty-eight years in the senate Mr. Allison has had a great deal to do with the real work of legislation. He has served on the committee on appropriations, pensions, Indian affairs, government of the District of Columbia and finance. He was of the special committee which prepared the bill for the resumption of specie payments in 1875. He was the author of the important amendments to the Bland bill in 1878 which were accepted and which had a great influence on the coinage question. He served on a committee to revise the customs laws. He was a member of the subcommittee which prepared the senate amendments to the McKinley tariff bill in 1890. He introduced the amendment to the civil service bill which made the commission independent of all departments of the government. In all of his congressional work Mr. Allison has been painstaking and studious. His name is not attached to any one famous measure, but his work is in-

jected into many measures for which others have received the credit. He has been an ideal committee worker. He has sought to finish and perfect legislation, rather than to originate novelties or indulge in unusual efforts. He has offered more amendments than bills, and such has been his reputation and standing, especially in the senate in his later years, that his amendments are generally considered thoughtfully by the senate, and more often become incorporated in the pending bills than those offered by any other member.

Secret of His Success.

Mr. Allison has depended largely on industry and hard study for his success in public life. He is not an eloquent man. In the sense of fine speaking and personal magnetism, but he is able to present a clear-cut argument with force and directness. He is a good political campaigner for those who want to learn and are willing to follow him carefully, for he is possessed of abundant information and he talks plainly. Mr. Allison is a conservative in politics. He has been called a compromiser but his compromises have all been in the direction of making smooth the legislation which is needed. He has devoted himself largely to the study of finance and the great financial problems of the nation. In this he has no superior. But his counsel has been sought by eminent legislators and administrators on all leading questions. He has enjoyed the friendship and confidence of men of all parties.

Twice has Senator Allison had the opportunity to leave the senate for an administrative position. He was invited into the Garfield cabinet to be secretary of the treasury and General Harrison tendered him the same position. He declined both. He seldom stepped aside from the strict duties of his legislative position. He did accept the chairmanship of the commission to go to the Black Hills and negotiate with

the Sioux Indians for the opening of that country in 1876.

Senator Allison was twice married, his first wife being the daughter of Daniel Carter of Ashland, O., and his second being Mary E. Neally, the adopted daughter of Senator Grimes. He has a pleasant home in Dubuque.

Sixth Term Optional.

Whether or not Senator Allison accepts a sixth term in the senate depends entirely on his own inclination and desire and his health. He has always been modest as to his own abilities and position. When he was elected to a third term in the senate by the Iowa legislature he had strong opposition, which centered around Governor Larrabee, but his popularity swept away all obstacles. Within a few minutes after his election and his speech of thanks to the legislature, the senator stated to the writer that he would never again ask re-election to the senate, as he considered the people of Iowa had done for him all to which he was entitled. He has not again asked anything, but he has been re-elected without an effort on his part. He will be re-elected next winter without opposition.

Iowa has twice sought to make him a president, and already the leading men of Iowa have declared a willingness to go to the next national convention and ask his nomination to succeed McKinley. He has pleaded that he is too old, but, in fact, he is in vigorous health and his intellect is as keen as ever. He is a remarkably well preserved man, physically and mentally, a handsome man at 70 years, with light step and steady nerve; a man so well informed on public questions that he is fitted to direct, and, unless he positively declines to be a candidate for president when entering upon his sixth term in the senate, he will be the choice of Iowa people.

ORA WILLIAMS

Practical Irrigation in Nebraska

Written for The Bee by
Adna Dobson, State Engineer

ALTHOUGH irrigation in Nebraska is still in its infancy, your question, "What has irrigation done for Nebraska?" can scarcely be answered in so short an article as your space allows.

The benefits already derived from irrigation in the state are so far-reaching that it is difficult for anyone to measure them. The records of the State Board of Irrigation show that water has been appropriated for about 1,500,000 acres of land and the investment in irrigation works amounts to about \$5,000,000.

Assuming that the increase in the value of land by reason of its being under ditch is only \$12 per acre, the increase in the value of the lands under the ditches for which appropriations have been made would amount to \$18,000,000.

But this is only a portion of the benefits derived from irrigation. The land irrigated along the streams in the western part of the state is generally surrounded by grazing lands, upon which thousands of head of cattle may be ranged through the greater part of the year, and feed may be raised upon the irrigated land to carry them over the winter months, when the loss among cattle depending upon the range alone is greatest. This raises the value of every acre of the range land so situated and in the aggregate it is an enormous amount and is difficult to estimate.

Where It is Applied.

In the North Platte valley water has been appropriated for nearly 500,000 acres of land. The last report of the state engineer shows that in Scotts Bluff county alone 50,000 to 60,000 acres have been irrigated, and this is one of the new counties of the state. Following along down the North Platte and Platte rivers a large portion of the valley is under irrigation, in some places reaching a width of twelve or fifteen miles and extending through Deuel, Keith, Lincoln, Dawson and Buffalo counties, a distance of about 300 miles. Especially in Lincoln and Dawson counties has the irrigation development been greatest, and many thousands of acres of land have been brought under the influence of irrigation.

The records of the gauging station at North Platte show that the mean discharge of the North Platte river at that

point for the year 1899 was about 6,000 cubic feet per second. This vast volume of water would cover more than 4,000,000 acres to the depth of one foot during the year, so that it will be readily seen that a large part of the water flowing in the stream is still unused. The discharge is greater in the months of June and July, the mean for June, 1899, being 13,844 cubic feet per second.

This discharge being the greatest during the irrigating season makes the North Platte valley an ideal section for the practice of irrigation and there has been very little complaint arising from scarcity of water in this section. In most of the valley the physical difficulties to be overcome in the construction of canals are slight. One ditch in the valley about thirty miles in length and watering 10,000 or 12,000 acres of land uses no timber in its construction, except at the headgates, there being only one short flume, which is of masonry.

In the southwestern portion of the state the Frenchman and Republican rivers are utilized to advantage and a large territory is irrigated from them.

One of the Biggest Canals.

A great many canals have been taken out of the Loup rivers. The Great Eastern canal taken from the Loup a short distance above Genoa has about seventy miles of canal and last year irrigated about 2,500 acres successfully. This canal has demonstrated that it pays to irrigate even in the eastern part of Nebraska. The company owning the canal has expended about \$225,000 on the property and the present managers consider it a good investment and the reports of the irrigators who have been using the water show that the money paid for water is well spent.

In the northwestern part of the state in the valleys of Hat creek, White river and Niobrara river much irrigating has been done, largely on a small scale, many of the appropriations being for a fraction of a cubic foot per second and irrigating only a few acres each. These small ditches are of great value, however, as even a small meadow which is irrigated will furnish hay for a large number of stock, and the ranchman is enabled to raise a variety of farm

and garden products which would be impossible with out the water.

Some of the small streams, such as the Lodge Pole, Frenchman and others which are fed by springs along their beds, irrigate an area very much in excess of what would be expected from the amount of water flowing in them. The Lodge Pole, flowing less than ten cubic feet per second at any one point, irrigates over 5,000 acres of land. This is accounted for by the fact that the whole stream may be diverted from its bed at one point and yet, perhaps, within a mile further down its bed, the amount of water flowing will be as great as it was before any was diverted.

Farmers Help Themselves.

Among the most successful irrigation enterprises in Nebraska are those built by the farmers themselves to water their own land, either by mutual irrigation companies or by irrigation districts under the district irrigation laws of the state. Many districts have been formed under the district

irrigation law which have proven very successful. In some of these the bonds issued to pay for the construction of the canal are largely held by the farmers owning of land in Scotts Bluff county, which formerly would have pastured but a few head of the lands under it, so that the actual debt to outside parties is small. On the other hand, unless a district is managed by careful and competent directors, there is danger of the district being bonded for an amount in excess of what the works would have cost had they been built by a private company.

Few people living in a country where there is sufficient rainfall to raise crops successfully can realize the value of water for irrigation in the arid or semi-arid regions. It is the life of the community and the salvation of the farmer and stock raiser, and land which is practically valueless becomes the most valuable as soon as water is applied to it. As an illustration of this I will mention a case which came to my notice recently. An eighty-acre tract was sown in alfalfa and irrigated. During the season of 1909 three cuttings were made from this land, producing 400 tons of hay, which was sold on the ground for \$3.50 per ton, or \$1,400 for the crop.

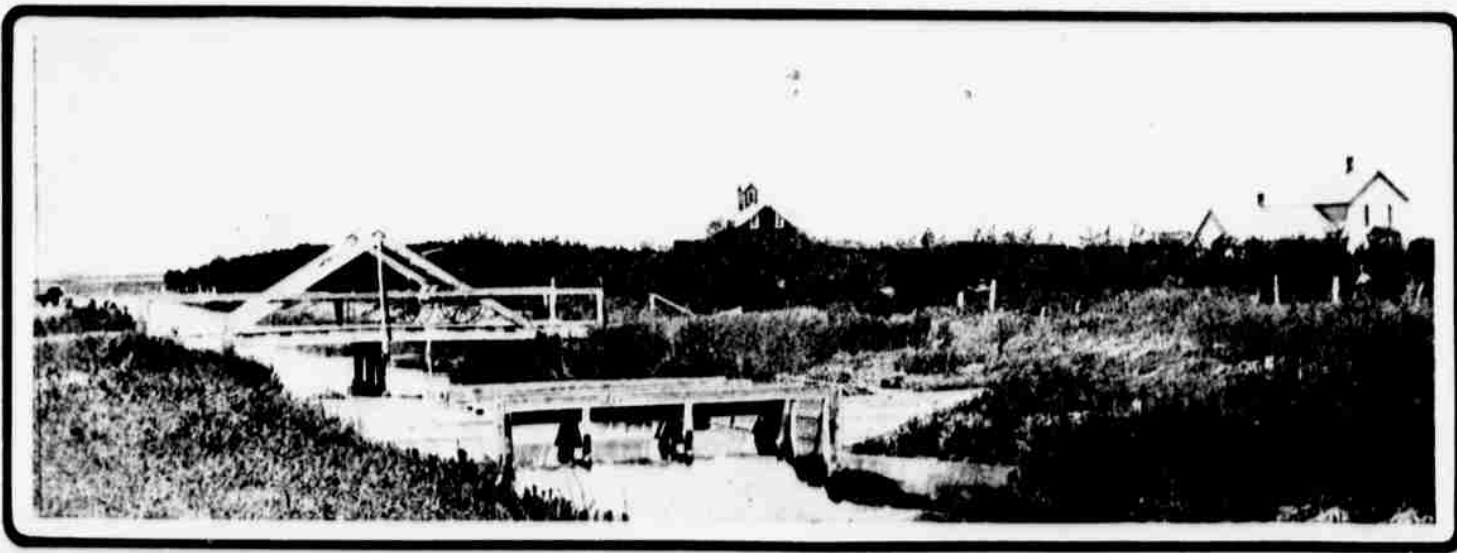
In order to utilize the vast amount of water now flowing to waste in the state large reservoirs should be built to store the water in times of flood and the people educated to use the water when it is plentiful and not wait until crops are suffering and water scarce.

An erroneous impression prevails in the state that recent decisions of the supreme court have thrown discredit upon the irrigation laws of the state and the administration of said laws. This idea has tended to discourage the development of irrigation works and complicated the work of administering the law, and the sooner these matters are settled and made clear the better it will be for all interested.

ADNA DOBSON,
State Engineer.



CUTTING A FIELD OF IRRIGATED CORN WITH A CORN HARVESTING MACHINE.



NEBRASKA FARM SCENE, SHOWING BRIDGE, CANAL AND DROPGATE FOR LATERAL.

Pointed Paragraphs

Chicago News: The spider has no wings, yet he often takes a fly.

Some juries lose a lot of time in trying to find a verdict.

The honest blacksmith is seldom inclined to give up his vise.

The men who succeed are those who arrive promptly on time.

The tree that bears the most fruit to market is said to be the axle-tree.

It's an easy matter for a married man to get next to the latest word in use.

Some men resemble pyramids broad at the foundation, but narrow at the top.

Ambition has prevented many a man from making a success of small things.

Young women and prodigious notes should be settled when they arrive at maturity.

A man should not be judged by an occasional exertion, but by his every day actions.

Unless a man has an exceptionally good memory he should not set himself up as a liar.

Pleasure is often but a change of pain. A man who has had the goat feels first-rate when he gets down to ordinary rheumatism.

The use of the mosquito net to show us that troubles are not always in proportion to their size.

Some men in performing a duty look as if they were hired to do it and were doubtful of being paid.

If one man tells a woman she is beautiful all the rest of the world can't convince her that she is homely.

A man may not object to being called a bull or a bear, but call him a calf or a cub and he is apt to declare war.

A girl's best friend will tell you more to the girl's disadvantage in a minute than you can learn from her avowed enemy in a week.

Men are born with two eyes and only one tongue in order that they should see twice as much as they speak. Of course, this does not apply to women.