

TAFT'S TOUR OF NEBRASKA A SUCCESSION OF TRIUMPHS

Some Incidents of the Two Days' of Active Campaigning in Nebraska by the Republican Candidate for President and a View of the Impression He Created Among the Citizens

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, republican nominee for president of the United States, has traversed Nebraska from north to south and from east to west, and has been sent on his way rejoicing.

He was proclaimed throughout the state as "Our Next President," and the splendid welcome given him in every town and city through which he traveled was in keeping with the reception due the chief executive of a great nation.

Mr. Taft came to Nebraska not as a stranger to the people, though few here knew him personally. They knew him as the judge on the bench, whose decisions are among the most able and learned of any ever written; they knew him as the man who, probably more than any other man, established a stable government in the Philippines; they knew him as the man who, when the little Cuban republic was crumbling, went to the front and upon whose broad shoulders was placed the responsibility of establishing order and restoring peace; they knew him as the man who straightened out affairs on the Panama canal and left the people there at work; they knew him as the man who, in times of direst needs, went to Japan and established cordial relations with a nation with which war seemed assured; they knew him officially as secretary of war, but in reality "secretary of peace;" they knew him as the chief adviser and right-hand-man of President Theodore Roosevelt.

Nebraskans expected to see in the republican candidate for president a statesman; they expected to hear from him words of a statesman. They were not disappointed. In addition they found in Mr. Taft a most genial person, pleasant and interesting in conversation; a man with a natural dignity, broad-minded, whose heart beats in unison with the hearts of the people; a man who realizes the grave responsibilities which rest upon the shoulders of the chief executive of the nation; a man who believes there is no "royal road to virtue."

Who said: "Reforms can only be accomplished by hard-working, constant attention; progress, little by little, step by step, because we are dealing with the fallibilities of human nature and we cannot overcome them by a single decree, for there is no royal road to virtue, and it is only obtained by constant application, self-control and self-restraint."

The presidential candidate was just as well pleased with Nebraska as Nebraska was with him.

The special train furnished Mr. Taft by the republican national committee was made up of Mr. Taft's private car, three Pullman coaches, a diner and a baggage car. This train made its first stop in Nebraska at Emerson, coming from Sioux City, where Mr. Taft



JUDGE TAFT AND GOVERNOR SHELDON ON THE STEPS OF THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION AT LINCOLN.



JUDGE TAFT SHAKING HANDS IN NEBRASKA.

spoke the night of September 29. Through eastern newspapers Mr. Taft had been assured that Nebraska was for its home candidate and that his reception in this state would be not only tinged with Bryanism, but actually frosty. The little town of Emerson set Nebraska right with Mr. Taft at the start. From the train it seemed the entire population had come down to the station to pay respect to the republican candidate. It was an expectant crowd, too, that gathered around the rear end of the Taft car. Here Mr. Taft gave the advice which he hoped to impress upon every one in the state:

"When you go to vote, use your good, hard, common, everyday sense."

The warmth of the reception given Mr. Taft at this little station in an instant wiped out the thoughts of what eastern papers had been saying about Nebraska and put him in the best of humor.

Then came the journey through the finest agricultural country in the world, made on such a day as Nebraskans are used to, but which outsiders so seldom encounter. The air was just crisp enough to be bracing, and the sun was just bright enough and just warm enough to contribute to ideal conditions. Whether the farming country through which the presidential candidate traveled had been put in shape for the occasion or whether the farms were simply dressed in their everyday Nebraska clothes only the frequent visitor and the resident know, but not a weed could be seen from the train, even the railroad right-of-way had been cut and burned; not a fence was down, not a barn out of repair; every horse and every head of cattle, and Mr. Taft could see thousands from his car window, looked freshly curried and groomed.

"Beautiful," "splendid," "magnificent," "prosperous," were some of the expressions of the presidential candidate as his train swept

over the prairie. When the presidential candidate was informed that only a very few years ago the country through which he was traveling could have been bought for almost a song, in some instances for less than \$5 an acre, his surprise was expressed in superlatives. It was through such a country Mr. Taft traveled for two days in Nebraska. And every mile he traveled warmed the heart of the candidate to this magnificent state and at every town he stopped the hearts of the people warmed to the candidate.

Members of the Taft party, including a number of eastern newspaper men, were equally as profuse in their praise of the Nebraska farmer. These men had come out of the east, some for the first time, where panics create hard times, and their surprise at the prosperous condition of the Nebraska farmer was no less genuine, though expressed in "yellow journal" language. The fact that hundreds of farmers came to town in their automobiles to see the republican candidate—farmers from the "Great American Desert"—was so unusual that each called the attention of the other to the sight. Those men had heard of the prosperity of Nebraska farmers, but not one of them realized to what extent this state had been blessed during the last twelve years of republican administration of governmental affairs. The journey of Mr. Taft through Nebraska proved to the candidate what the people of Nebraska already knew—that the farmers are for the republican ticket. Here is just one of many illustrations that shows this.

Mr. Taft was speaking at Falls City. He had rounded out a paragraph by asking the people if they desired to return to conditions as they were at the close of the last democratic administration:

"Do you want to return to those conditions, when—" "Ten-cent corn, 2 1/2-cent hogs, 3-cent cattle—" interrupted some one in the crowd, and it was taken up by a score or more. In many instances when Mr. Taft had started a sentence referring to those conditions he did not get to finish it. There were always some in the crowd who had passed through those trying days and who had felt the clutches of the money lender; whose corn had been taken away for 10 cents and their other products in proportion. They could tell Mr. Taft more about those hard times than he knew, and the information was volunteered when the speaker got on that thread of talk. The volume of "Nos" which answered the Taft query was sufficiently emphatic to show where the Nebraska farmer places his dependence and has his confidence.

While Mr. Taft spoke to many democrats in the numerous thousands of people who were lined up at the various stations there was

one stop made, where, apparently, the crowd was unanimously republican. This was Burchard. The town was not on the schedule as a stopping place, but an urgent telegram from some one there asking that Mr. Taft at least appear on the platform and let the people see him, brought forth a stop and a short speech. There were several hundred people lined up at the station and every man, woman and child in the crowd wore a blue ribbon, printed upon which were the words, "Taft and Sherman."

"You will carry that town unanimously," remarked a newspaper man to Mr. Taft as the train pulled out.

"It certainly looks like it is a republican community," answered the well pleased candidate.

In one town Mr. Taft, after discussing the democratic promises, said:

"Are you going to turn over your affairs to an agency on promises?"

"No, no," chorused the crowd. "Not since we have heard you."

"You wouldn't do it anyhow," replied the candidate. "Whether I come here or not, you wouldn't do it."

"You are right," yelled back an enthusiast.

Until the visit of Mr. Taft there had been very little talk about politics out in the country. This apparent apathy was taken by the republicans to mean that the farmers were satisfied with their \$6 cattle and their 80-cent corn and wheat, and therefore were not bothering about politics. The democrats said it meant a landslide. Varied were the opinions expressed in advance about the reception which Mr. Taft would receive. Some held that inasmuch as Nebraskans were familiar with one presidential candidate and were used to having him drop in on them any time to tell them of the calamities ahead if republican principles were carried out, Mr. Taft would create very little interest and would be received by small crowds everywhere.

Under these conditions no man on the Taft train was prepared for the intense interest shown by the people along the route of the special train through the state. It is no exaggeration to say that no president or candidate for a high office ever received a more cordial welcome. And it is also within the truth to say that no man ever made a better impression on Nebraska people by a single appearance than did Mr. Taft.

Many features of the interest shown could be elaborated upon in a story of that trip through Nebraska. The train passed scores of school buildings which were in view of the Taft car. In front of

many of these the pupils were lined up on the prairie and each waved an American flag as the train sped on its way. Every school house noted by the presidential candidate flew the stars and stripes, which he loves so well. This was true in the country. In the towns where stops were made school teachers had dismissed their pupils and in a body they had marched to the station, where they had been provided with a position of advantage so that all might have the opportunity of seeing and hearing the man about whom even the youngest of them had heard as being one of the nation's important personages.

The presence of so many little folks impressed the presidential candidate and he frequently had a pleasant word or two to say especially to them. Upon their shoulders there shortly will fall the burdens of government and the action of the school boards and teachers in bringing them in personal contact with affairs of government had the approval, often expressed, of the candidate.

Some of the older members of the Taft party, and those who had passed their manhood away from the country town, were reminded of days gone by and the passing of time by the Taft and Sherman caps worn by hundreds of little Nebraskans. It had been years since many on the train had seen the old and always popular campaign cap, with its band across the front showing the party affiliation of the little wearer.

The Taft special passed a number of threshing outfits at work in the fields and in every instance the threshing engine tooted a glad hand to the next president and the crew in return received shouts and waves from the train. Where the little folks had their good time when the Taft train struck a town was in grabbing for Taft and Sherman buttons, which were handed out by the hundreds. In some of the crowds there undoubtedly were future politicians of a very prevalent type. A little fellow was asked whether he was for Bryan or Taft.

"I'm for Bryan," he answered.

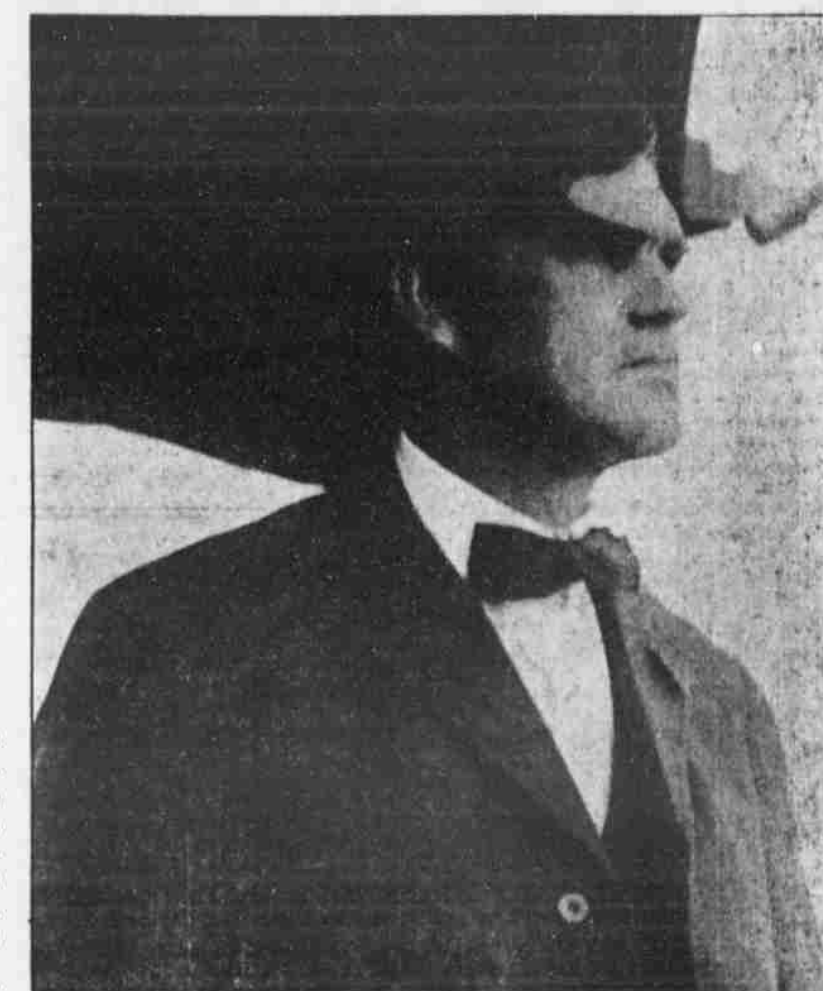
"These buttons are for Taft boys," answered the joker.

"Mister, no I ain't for Bryan. I just said that. I'm for Taft."

He got the buttons, all right.

In the baggage car was kept the literature which was distributed along the route. At every station bundles of reading matter were dumped out and in every instance the men and women were eager to get a portion of it, and not one bit of it became waste paper to blow around the stations.

A feature of the crowds which greeted Mr. Taft was the close attention paid to his speeches. The candidate's throat was in a very



GOVERNOR SHELDON READY TO INTRODUCE JUDGE TAFT.

bad condition and it meant physical pain to him to talk. He was hoarse and he could not be heard except by those who were able to get close to the front ranks of the crowd. Notwithstanding that, those in the rear kept perfectly quiet in the hope that they could hear. As the train pulled into a station a mighty cheer arose, then each person in the crowd began to motion his neighbor to keep quiet. As the speaker progressed he was encouraged by nods of approval from the people. As the train left he was given another parting cheer. His most frequent interruptions were of this order: "You are right;" "That's right;" "We are for you;" "We don't want any change."

At Nebraska City, previous to the arrival of the Taft train, the crowds had been requested to keep quiet so that no time of the speaker would be taken up. Everyone wanted him to use every minute of the time the train remained. Notwithstanding this precaution, it is a wonder that Nebraska City was as hoarse as Taft after the train left.

Except for his night meetings at Lincoln and Omaha, Mr. Taft left his car only in a very few instances. At Beatrice the people of the city had erected a gaily decorated platform opposite the station and from this Mr. Taft addressed several thousand people. At Wymore the platform had been erected fully a block from the station. The residents roped off a road to the stand and between the ropes Mr. Taft and his party walked to the platform, cheered by thousands. The only other place the train was abandoned was at Nebraska City. Here Mr. Taft reached a platform which had been built at the end of the station just as Grant Martin, deputy attorney general, ceased to speak. Or, to be more correct, Mr. Martin ceased

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AT THE DEPOT AT NEBRASKA CITY.



FALLS CITY WAS OUT IN FORCE.



WAAHOO GAVE HIM A CROWD.