

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

JOHN H. GEAR,

GOVERNOR OF IOWA,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TWO HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

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## INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

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SENATORS, REPRESENTATIVES, AND FELLOW-CITIZENS:

TIME has again brought around the appointed season for the legally elected executive and members of the legislature to assemble and take upon themselves the powers delegated to each for the proper discharge of their important duties.

In entering upon the responsible position of chief magistrate of the state a second time, I recognize with thanks the high honor conferred upon me, feeling that it is not altogether personal to myself, but a declaration of the abiding faith of the people in the political principles and purposes that have controlled the State for the past twenty-five years.

The opinion has been often expressed, and is entertained by many, that all the objects contemplated by the great popular movement which began in 1854, and which gave rise to an entirely new political organization, were fully accomplished in the liberating of the enslaved, and the constitutional provision permitting them to enjoy with us the full rights of citizenship. On the other hand, there are many, very many, in fact the majority of the people, who feel that, although equal rights and privileges are thus recognized and provided for all, yet organization is still necessary in order that these rights be maintained in fact as well as in statute. To sustain and perpetuate these inviolable rights as set forth in the declaration of independence, is no less indispensable to-day than was the work of the men who engrafted

these principles on our bill of rights and made them a part of the organic law of the nation.

The policy and measures necessary for this purpose presented questions which had to pass through the same ordeal that has ever obtained in the administration of governmental power: a difference of opinion as to the means to the desired end. The anxious consideration of these questions by the great body of the people, together with the earnest efforts of the executive department, have evinced such a desire for the maintenance of those principles and practices that bring peace, prosperity, and honor to our nation, that the legal voice of the majority of the people has from time to time re-delegated the administration of the government to the same political element by which they were first inaugurated. On these questions, the voice of Iowa, catching the sounds which, emanating from the people whose homes are within the golden portals of the West, were echoed in trenchant cadences by the dwellers among the pine-trees of the far East, and reverberated over mountain, valley, and prairie, until they became the shout of mighty majorities, has been heard in trumpet-tones proclaiming, through the medium of the ballot-box, not only the confidence of her people in the principles of political equality and national unity as fully adapted to insure civil and political liberty to all in the land, but also their firm determination to stand by those principles until every citizen throughout all the land shall enjoy without let or hindrance, in such manner as, his conscience and judgment shall dictate, the rights guaranteed to him by the organic law.

A republican form of government is an empty mockery if every individual voter's right to one vote, and to have that vote honestly counted, is in any manner impaired, whether by brute force or by the slyer work of a faithless returning officer. Eternal vigilance is truly the price of liberty; and the present is no time for slackening that vigilance, when the startling spectacle is presented to us of legal voters, by the thousand in some of the states, being de-

prived, either by intimidation or fraudulent ballots, of the privilege to exercise the right of suffrage and to carry on the governments they are taxed to maintain; and in another state of a daring and almost successful attempt to prevent the legally chosen legislators from taking their seats and to give their places to men not chosen thereto, partly on technical quibbles, and partly in confessed defiance of law; the treasonable conspiracy to all appearances originating before the election. That such an attempt is seriously made, and, in addition, finds any portion of the people so partisan as to indorse an act of such a character, should warn us that the work of securing and enforcing equal rights to all is not yet done. Some may carp at this seeming digression regarding the political affairs existing in some of our sister states, but the maintenance of the purity of the ballot is a vital requisite in our form of government, and any attempt on the part of unscrupulous partisans to debar a citizen from the free exercise of his political rights, or to defeat the will of the people as expressed through the medium of the ballot-box, should be rebuked by every American citizen regardless of his political opinions or affiliations.

Supineness on this question among the people is calculated to invite renewed disregard of the sanctity of the ballot, and to accustom them to irregular and fraudulent modes of carrying elections, and is therefore fraught with grave danger to popular liberty.

On the dominant political element in Iowa has devolved the administration of the State's affairs for the past quarter of a century. The people, assured of the honest administration of those affairs heretofore, have again shown their confidence therein by once more intrusting their interests to that element. They, therefore, justly expect with confidence that the majority in this General Assembly shall give to the State such legislation as will be in the interest of economy and good government. If the majority disappoint this expectation it will properly be held responsible by the people for its shortcomings.



To a state whose products are, in the main, agricultural, as are those of Iowa, anything which enhances the cost of railways, thereby, even incidentally in the least degree, increasing the expense of the transportation of her products to the seaboard, which is her great market, is a question of great interest to all. In view of their greater strength and durability, which lessen the cost of replacement, all the great trunk railway lines of the country are adopting Bessemer steel rails. The manufacture of this class of rails in the United States is controlled by a combination of not exceeding—I think—ten firms in number. This combination is protected by a high and specific tariff, which prevents the importation of foreign rails to any extent, thereby increasing the costs of the railways of the country. Without discussing the tariff question in all its bearings, it may well be considered whether it is wise legislation, by a tariff exceptional in its character, to put immense profits into the pockets of a monopoly composed of but few persons at the expense, indirectly, not only of Iowa farmers but of the whole West. It would, therefore, be well to instruct our Senators and request our Representatives in Congress to examine into this subject with a view to removing, by congressional legislation, any discrimination which may be found to exist in the tariff on steel rails against the interests of Iowa producers.

The year just closed has been a memorable one in the agricultural history of the state, from the fact that at no time for many years have our farmers been better rewarded for their labor by the unusually large and fully matured crops. This bountiful harvest is most timely, coincident as it is with an unusual shortage of crops in Europe; insuring to our producers highly remunerative prices for their products thereby bringing general prosperity to all the people.

The year 1879 also marks a memorable epoch in the financial history of the nation. During the years of the rebellion and under the pressing exigencies of the government for means with which to carry on the war, it was deemed necessary to resort to an issue of irredeemable pa-

per money which by law was made a legal tender among the people. As to the wisdom of this policy there was much discussion at the time, both in and out of Congress, and though conceded by many to be a dangerous policy to inaugurate, yet it was accepted as a temporary necessity, the evils of which were to be remedied by a return at the earliest possible date to the normal condition of the world's currency, which the organic law of our nation alone recognizes as lawful money, to-wit: "gold and silver."

The faith of the government was pledged, by the political party in power at the time, that the promises of the nation, made in her hour of trial, should be redeemed at the earliest possible date. In 1875, this same political party in Congress which authorized the issue of the legal tenders declared by statute that on January 1, 1879, the government would resume specie payment on its liabilities. The incoming of that year, therefore, will always be a landmark in our nation's history. The result accomplished has brought us to a long and devoutly wished-for consummation, closing, as it does, an era of financial vagaries, with all their attendant evils, and inaugurating an epoch of general prosperity, the full fruition of which is now assured beyond a peradventure. This fact cannot fail to impress the world with grander conception than ever of the immensity of our resources and the matchless energy and vitality of our people, evidencing, as it does, the benign influence of principles and institutions which result in such unparalleled developments of the nation, as well as the welfare of her people. It has been extremely gratifying to the early friends and adherents of this great measure that it has been carried into effect without any of the convulsions and calamities which its adversaries so freely predicted, and with so much certainty expected to follow. The results gained have proven this class to have been but "false prophets." The step by which our national solvency was reasserted was almost unnoticed except as a subject of congratulation. It came as the dew of the night, gently and generously refreshing and

reviving the languishing industrial and commercial interests of the country, and so powerful and instantaneous has been the effect that as yet we are hardly prepared to do full justice to its magnitude. The results may be summed up in brief. The country has currency ample in its volume for the legitimate wants and demands of the people.

It has a system elastic in its workings by the fact that the currency can, under the wise provisions of the national banking act, be increased as rapidly as is demanded by the necessities of the commerce of the country. The exchanges of the country are made at a less cost to the people than at any previous time in its history, and the paper money, both legal tender and national bank notes are at par, with and exchangeable at the pleasure of the holder thereof into coin, and the dollar of the workingman and producer is as good as the dollar of the bondholder.

But to the future historian of the exciting years of the war and the financial crises incident and attendant thereon—of which the resumption of specie payments is one of the closing scenes—must be left to tell the story in all its interesting details. Let us not, however, in our pride over the results achieved, forget the costly experiences of the past, but rather treasure them up as a warning for ourselves and future generations.

There are still important questions to be settled connected with the currency of the country. These questions are entitled to mature and searching consideration. It is believed by many that the interests of the people would be best subserved by a postponement, for the present at least, of their practical solution. On this question the dominant political party of the State has proclaimed in its platform, "Let us have peace;" and the people after a full discussion of the same, have pronounced their belief in that policy emphatically, by an immense majority, declaring that time should work out the desired result, and in that opinion I do most heartily concur.

A word in regard to our own loved State. Situated as Iowa is in the heart of the continent between two of the great rivers of the world; with her temperate climate, rich soil, and freedom from malarial influences, she offers unequaled attractions, not only to the agriculturist, but to all seeking new homes. Her intelligent yeomanry are generous rivals from many states and nationalities, and their conquests in all departments of rural industry have already earned for themselves and the state a world-wide reputation.

It is a matter of just pride to the state, that, when brought into competition, in the exhibition of the products of the farm and dairy, not only with American farmers at our national fairs, but also at the world's fair in Paris, in 1878, to our Iowa farmers has been awarded, not only the greatest number, but the first prizes. This fact not only attests the superiority of their products, but should stimulate them to still greater excellence, in order, not only to maintain their conceded supremacy, but that they may receive thereby more remunerative prices as the reward of their labor and enterprise.

It may be confidently expected that the Federal census of 1880 will place Iowa as the sixth state in the Union in population, the first in the production of corn and pork, and not lower than second in the growth of wheat. Her exports of these products are constantly increasing in amount, and are purchased by every country in Europe, and aggregate many millions of dollars annually.

It has been said by a distinguished statesman that "all Europe is dying in armor." The fact that the nations of that continent are, by their jealousies, compelled to maintain millions of men in arms, all of whom are taken from the agricultural and industrial pursuits, thus placing the burden of production on the old and young who are the least able, fully attests the truth of the statement. This state of affairs is stimulating the demand for American manufactures, and also equally so for our agricultural products. It is therefore evident that farming in



the Great West, and particularly in Iowa, must be highly remunerative until there is a radical change in the policy of the European powers, an event not likely soon to occur. It is therefore sound policy on the part of the state to do all in its power to attract population within her borders, and by liberal legislation to aid in developing her industrial and agricultural resources, which are but yet in their infancy and the ultimate capacity of which is so little apprehended.

Although it is but just thirty-three years since Iowa cast off her territorial swaddling-clothes, and assumed the dignity of statehood, yet during this brief period her political and material development has been wonderful. She has, in the race for empire, far outstripped many of her sister states whose existence antedates her own by many years; her free educational system, although dating but from 1858, is not only the pride of the people, but is unsurpassed in any state in the Union; her eleemosynary institutions are in harmony with the philanthropy of the age, and are maintained with a generosity which is always the attribute of a moral, intelligent, and progressive people; her material resources of coal and other valuable minerals are inexhaustible, and are being rapidly developed.

Her railway system has been augmented during the past two years by the completion of an additional trunk line across the state and many branch lines—only three counties of the ninety-nine being to-day without railway facilities; and in mileage of railways she ranks as the fifth state of the nation.

Coming into the Union December 28, 1846, with a population of but ninety-six thousand, to-day she shelters beneath the aegis of her sovereignty a million and a half of free, virtuous, intelligent, and enterprising people. These grand results, already achieved in the development of the state, have been accomplished within the period of a generation. When it is taken into consideration that hardly one-half of her virgin soil has been touched by the plow, and that she has the ability to support an immense population, it is clearly evident that the

present results, although grand, are but the forerunner of her future greatness. There are many here present to-day, and throughout the State, who were residents in Iowa when she was admitted into the Union. To their wisdom and sagacity in the framing of her institutions and laws the State owes much of her present growth and future promise.

They laid the foundations of this "*imperium in imperio*" broad and deep, and it is the bounden duty of each and all of us to do our full part in the work they began so well. We should all, as good citizens, endeavor to carry the State forward to a higher plane of development, so that her people shall thereby attain the greatest possible degree of political and material prosperity.

#### SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES:

To each of us the people of this commonwealth have assigned special and responsible duties. To me, to "take care that the laws are faithfully executed." To you, who are fresh from the people, and have been chosen by them on account of your knowledge of their necessities, is delegated the enactment of their wishes into law. On whatever subject you may be called to legislate, your enactments should be broad and comprehensive, having in view not only the results for the present, but also the effect they may have on the development of the state in the future.

Permit me to say, in conclusion, that quantity is not so essential in legislation as quality.

JNO. H. GEAR.