

schools and colleges furnishing means of education to all, its public institutions well established and conferring blessings on the objects of their care, its empire of territory traversed by rapidly increasing lines of railroad, its people peaceful and progressive, yourselves enjoying the generous and abounding confidence of that people, you enter upon your work of legislation. That this work may be abundantly blessed of Him who has heretofore been so bounteous in goodness toward our State and nation, I invoke the prayers of the good people of this commonwealth.

It will be my pleasure, as it is my duty, to co-operate with you in all measures to promote the public welfare, to increase the happiness of the people, and to enable them to continue and enlarge those works of humanity, charity, and benevolence which have thus far distinguished our State.

I would do injustice to my own feelings were I to close this message without expressing my gratitude to our State officers, and all connected with the State government, for the ability, integrity, and zeal they have displayed in behalf of the public interests, and for the kindness, courtesy, and generous confidence they have given me in the discharge of my official duties.

SAMUEL MERRILL.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

OF

SAMUEL MERRILL,

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF IOWA,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TWO HOUSES OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Senate and House of Representatives :

In the providence of God, and in accordance with the decision of the people of the State of Iowa, the solemn responsibility of administering the executive department of the State has been for a second time committed to my care. Permit me to return to you, and through you to the people, my grateful thanks for this renewed expression of the confidence of a generous people. I can only assure you, and them, that I shall strive to merit a continuance of that confidence by honest intention and earnest effort.

In again assuming this grave and solemn trust, custom devolves on me the duty of presenting such thoughts as seem to me pertinent to the occasion. The importance of the weighty interests intrusted to our keeping cannot be overestimated. Our beloved State is our home, and will be the home of our children, and their children for generations to come. The faithful discharge of our public duties must inevitably result in the present and future prosperity of the State. That devotion to the public welfare, which ignores self-interest, merits and is sure to receive at the hands of the people the highest and most enduring honors, while deserved obloquy as certainly follows the unfaithful public servant. It is no time for us to look either to personal ambition or to merely local interests; but we are to seek for a broad and liberal policy, which shall embrace the

interests of the whole commonwealth and the welfare of all the people, both for the present and for all future time.

The progress of our State in the past, and the grandeur of the work before us, can scarcely be realized. Within the memory of many of us, this vast domain, reaching from river to river, lay in its pristine beauty, untrodden save by the foot of the Indian and the trapper, who left scarce a trace of their footsteps, or a mark of their hands, upon it. Here it lay from the creation of the world till our time, its varied and mighty resources slumbering through countless ages, waiting for the stroke of the Saxon's arm to waken them into a bounteous life, prolific with blessings. It was reserved for us to see it, under the magic touch of the laborer's hand, yield its garnered wealth with a profusion which has beckoned capital and skill. We have seen commerce follow the plow, and the steamboat and the locomotive on the track of commerce; we have seen the thrifty homes of a million of people skirting our woodlands and dotting our prairies; we have seen towns and cities spring up in rapid succession; we have seen the school-house and sanctuary in all our new communities; we have seen colleges and seminaries of learning reach a degree of prosperity and breadth of influence, in a score of years, which more ancient and renowned institutions of learning had not attained till centuries had passed over them.

Within our memory this State has gathered a population equal to that of the State of New York after it had been settled two hundred years. Starting more than two hundred years later, Iowa has nearly overtaken Massachusetts. And yet our progress and development have but just commenced. The possibilities of our future are bewildering to contemplate. Only one acre in six has been put under cultivation. Our water-power for the most part still lies idle. Our coal-beds, among the broadest and deepest in the world, still hold

undisturbed their exhaustless wealth; and these magnificent resources are so situated that their rapid development is inevitable. Here they lie with a great river on either side, and with natural highways to the great lakes, which need only to be improved, to afford our productions easy and cheap transportation.

To the east of us lie States which become every year less and less grain-growing, and more and more grain-consuming. To the south of us lies a cotton-growing country of vast extent, which will find its natural supply of breadstuffs in this direction. To the west of us lie the great mineral districts of the Rocky mountains, with a prospective chain of populous States, from British America to Mexico, which may look this way for their supplies, opening a vast market for Western produce and manufactures. The first great arteries of this immense trade have already been opened across our State. Thus with our boundless stores of undeveloped wealth we hold a central position, with markets all around us.

Capital is quick to discover our advantages. Our enterprises seldom go begging in the money market; our railways are rapidly pushing westward, and already they begin to point to the south and southwest, to the north and northwest. Instinctively they reach for the markets of the East, for the lumber of the pineries, for the commerce of the South, and for the trade of the Southwest and Northwest. Our railroad system is destined to open up our interior, and our western borders, with a rapidity of growth seldom equaled and never surpassed.

The tread of coming population, which we now hear, will not cease for generations. It is astounding to think for a moment of the capacity of our State for population! With the density of Massachusetts she would have six and a half millions; with the density of France, eight and a half millions; with that of England sixteen and

a half millions; and with that of Belgium nearly nineteen millions; and who will say that the rich soil of Iowa is not capable of sustaining even a greater density of population than either of these?

Gentlemen: We have much to do with the future of this State, as the wisdom and fidelity of public servants who have gone before us have had much to do with its past growth and present condition. Legislation and administration of government may exert a genial and stimulating influence upon the public welfare, or they may chill its life and cramp its growth.

We are set in high places that we may see; in places of power that we may help. It is expected of us that we shall study and comprehend the wants of the State, and meet them with judicious measures. And surely no representatives of the people ever had more to arouse them and gird them for earnest, conscientious, and manly work than we. We stand in the midst of mighty and rapid events. Grand opportunities are open all around us. Momentous work crowds upon us. The onward rush of events will not wait. Progress is restless, and duty imperative.

The honor and glory of our State will largely depend upon the magnitude and grandeur of her public institutions. Her educational interests must be fostered and promoted, and her public school system placed in the van of progress. Our asylums for the unfortunate will need and should receive at our hands a liberal support. These institutions are the pride and glory of our commonwealth, speaking volumes for the spirit of humanity and liberality which has thus far controlled, and the Christian enlightenment which has directed the legislation of our State. Let us continue and expand the work we find begun; and let us not falter nor fear, but move firmly forward in the grand field spread out before us. Let us lay deeply and surely the foundations of a great and noble commonwealth.

From every section of our country come the glad tidings of peace and returning prosperity. Under the judicious management of our national administration the public debt is constantly diminishing. With an unwavering faithfulness to our commercial obligations, the mutterings of repudiation, save as the lingering echoes of conquered treason, are unheard. With the immigration coming upon us from the old world, bringing capital and skill, and peopling our broad and fertile lands, it will require but a few years of prosperity to wipe out the debt contracted by the war for the salvation of the country. That war, through its baptism of blood, made the nation purer and holier. Slavery, apparently too deeply imbedded in the foundation of the republic to be moved hence, except at the expense of the nation's destruction, perished beneath that nation's wrath. Rebellion had destroyed the government of certain States, and their reconstruction on principles of freedom and justice followed. Then came the solemn reaffirmation by the people of the ideas of union and liberty, which had given nerve and vigor to the war, by the election to the presidency of the great captain of the conflict. And now the nation proposes to give the emancipated slave the ballot, and to take its place on the broad platform of universal freedom and equal rights to all of God's people, wherever found. Let us repeat, in tones and language to be heard on every shore and in every land, our sympathy for nations, be they ever so humble, and for people, however obscure, struggling for liberty.

Nor should we forget those who patriotically offered themselves for the nation's life, nor those whom the noble dead left as a sacred charge to the State as well as to the nation.

Keeping constantly in mind the high character of the interests committed to our care, and imploring the continued blessing of Almighty God upon all our efforts, may the results of our labors redound to his glory and the benefit of the State.

SAMUEL MERRILL.