

INAUGURAL ADDRESS
OF
BUREN R. SHERMAN,
GOVERNOR OF IOWA,
DELIVERED
AT HIS SECOND INAUGURATION,

JANUARY 17, 1884.

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS.

FELLOW CITIZENS—The noblest ambition of man is citizenship. To have authority as a constituent part of the government,—to be consulted in respect to its administration, and allowed to dictate the general policies of the country,—while the highest of privileges is yet enwrapped with gravest responsibilities. No man is fit to be entrusted with such power except he studies to acquaint himself with the policies of the country, and thereby is schooled in that statesmanship necessary in a government where every citizen is a sovereign, and wherein the expressed will of the people is the law of the land.

Our fathers builded wisely and well, in that giving into the hands of the people the control of the public affairs, they yet made provision for the perpetuity of free government in the development of the people in matters political as physical, through their equality and accountability—thus laying foundations deep and strong, against which the storms of a century have beaten in vain, and our cherished republic stands forth in bold relief, the most free and stable of any political system ever devised by man.

While our population has increased in marvelous degree, reaching one-tenth the inhabitants of the world, our progress in matters educational and political has been no less marked, and we may well congratulate ourselves that nowhere the sun shines does its rays illumine a people who can vie with us these grand accomplishments. We

are to-day the first in national acquirements, and our people the proudest among the nations of earth.

To our eternal credit be it said, it matters not our station or condition in life, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, distinguished or unknown, neither does place of birth disturb, nor shade of color regard—all these are swept away, and the people stand forth in their sovereignty, confessing obligations which can only be discharged through true faith and allegiance to that government, which existing by and of the people, is at once their voice and preservation. To this end, the securement of equal rights to every citizen, is government instituted among men; and it becomes us who are responsible in special degree for the present conduct thereof, to see to it that these great principles do not fail through our indifference or neglect.

The most powerful weapon in the hands of a free people, with which to protect themselves and secure that administration of public affairs nearest in consonance with their views, is the ballot, the independence of which must be maintained at all hazards, if we would preserve free government in all its pristine strength and purity.

Laws can not be too strict or far reaching in the direction of assisting to the honest expression of the will of the voter. The fact is indisputable that many a vote is polled which does not so evidence, because through ballots fraudulently prepared the citizen is imposed upon, and casts his vote for persons who are not his choice, and who do not exemplify the real political bias of the voter. As tending in the direction of thorough knowledge to all the people, I suggest whether or not the law should be amended, requiring the names of candidate to each office as the same have been designated by the different political parties, to be posted up in a conspicuous position at each place where the election is held; and further, when the canvass thereof is made, no ballot be counted upon which alteration is made, unless the same be plainly discernible in writing. With

such amendment to the law, would it not end the practice of the professional peddler, whose services are for sale to any purchaser, and whose only employment is to deceive the unsuspecting voter through so base prostitution of the ballot?

On the general subject of the civil rights of the people, a few words will suffice. If it be true that the several acts of Congress respecting this all important matter, are not upheld by the Constitution, and that because State action in denial of the application of the principle to all its citizens is first necessary to authorize the National Government to affirmatively interfere, then I am in favor of such legislation in our own State, as will secure these rights to every class of our citizens, and determine their status beyond all question of doubt. We have been justly proud of our achievements hitherto, our happy and progressive people, our rapid development in physical respects, and the future so promisingly flattering, all which has given us enviable reputation it now devolves upon us to maintain this high position by wise and wholesome administration. I have no doubt the public expectation will be realized.

In the message just submitted, I have called attention to various matters which I think should engage the attention of our law-makers. It is not necessary that any further statement be made in respect thereto. Happily for us, but little legislation is necessary, and that in most part to correct some slight incongruities manifest in existing laws. The citizens of the State, with unusual and gratifying unanimity, are favorable to any system of internal improvements which will advantage the material interests of the State. The same is also true of them when national improvements are considered; especially so in improvement the water ways of the nation. The General Assembly has several times expressed itself favorably to expenditure for such purpose, and no doubt remains to that opinion. Prominent among the objects sought is the permanent improvement of the Father

of Waters, and its navigable tributaries, which naturally engages the favorable attention of our people; and connected therewith the construction of proper canals, with which to connect the river and the great lakes, an improvement which would inure to the advantage of the whole of the Northwest. I am earnestly favorable to these proposed improvements, and trust that Congress will not longer hesitate in appropriations thereto. One of the most important of these is the project of the "Hennepin Canal" which if constructed, can not fail to be a valuable help in securing low through rates for our products. As I view the situation, every dollar saved in transportation adds to the value of our farms and manufactures, and thus both directly and indirectly, to the wealth and progress of the State. I should hail with real enthusiasm any measure which will contribute to this end, so much desired by every material interest of the State.

This policy of protection to home interests, like that of providing a safe and sound national currency, is one of gravest national importance. We cannot expect to thrive, if our entire attention be given to the productive or agricultural interests of the nation. The best market is that of the home, and to my mind, the diversified interests of the State are at once its profit and protection. Could we induce the establishing of large manufacturing interests among us, and therewith accomplish the home consumption of the surplus of our farms, we have reached a degree of independence which places us far in advance of those governments which make barter of their labor, and reduce it to servitude and competition of countries whose entire interest is subservient and wholly subordinate to the domination of a few industries. What we need is the upbuilding the entire business of the whole nation, the development of the American system of protection of ourselves, when brought in competition with the pauper labor of other lands, which, if allowed "free course" would inevitably result in the deterioration of our own personal as well as national in-

terests. The late political contest in the several States partook largely of this nature, and the result is conclusive proof of the fealty of the people to the American doctrine, so called because its distinguishing feature is home intrenchment and the protection of home interests. Neither the influx of foreign gold nor the labors of hired agents can disturb the people in their enthusiastic devotion to the correct and distinguishing American policy which has prevailed for over half a century, and under which we have advanced to the front in National rank, and to follow which will yet further advance the material interests of the whole people.

During all these years we have progressed more rapidly and solidly than ever before, and I take it for granted the policy of the country is so well settled in this regard that no change can result, and following the well beaten and experienced paths which have led to permanent prosperity, they will continue the highways of the nation, until both national independence is secured and the business interests of all the people solidly planted. It is not too much to say, the Nation is the pride of its every citizen and stands forth the prominence of the political world.

In assuming, for the second time, the office of Chief Magistrate of the State, I fully realize my grateful obligations to the people of Iowa, through whose generous confidence I am here. I am aware the duties and grave responsibilities of this exalted position, and as well what is expected of me therein. As in the past I have given my undivided time and serious attention thereto, so in the future I promise the most earnest devotion, and untiring effort, in the faithful performance of my official requirements. I have seen the State grow from infancy to mature manhood, and each year one of substantial betterment its previous position.

With more railroads than any other State, save two,—with a school interest, the grandest and strongest, which commands the support and

confidence of all the people, and a population, which in its entirety, is superior to any other in the sisterhood,—it is not strange the pride which attaches to our people. When we remember that the results of our efforts in the direction of good government have been crowned with such magnificent success, and to-day we have a State in most perfect physical and financial condition, no wonder our hearts swell in honest pride, as we contemplate the past, and so confidently hope the future. What we may become, depends our own efforts, and to that future I look with earnest and abiding confidence.

Fellow citizens, the past has disappeared from view, the future only is ours. It remains to us that improvement be our solace and congratulations, and if that future be responsive as has been the past, then at its conclusion, we may have the satisfaction of feeling that

“We have not labored in vain,
Nor spent our strength for naught.”

BUREN R. SHERMAN.