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OF THE

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OF THE

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE

CONVENED JANUARY 10, 1905, AND ADJOURNED APRIL 15, 1905.



ELECTION OF SPEAKER.

General Davidson then stated that the roll call showing a quorum present, the next business in order was the election of a speaker.

The following were appointed to act as tellers:

To collect the ballots—Messrs. Al-

derdice, Holmes, Blanton and Blalock of Wood.

To count the ballots—Messrs. Von Rosenberg, Timon, Gafford and Crisp.

Nominations for speaker being in order, Hon. H. P. Brelsford of Eastland county nominated Hon. F. W. Seabury of Starr county, and in making the nomination said:

Mr. Attorney General and Members—elect of the Twenty-ninth Legislature:

It is undoubtedly fortunate for the gentleman whose name I am to suggest to you today for Speaker of this body, that in advance of this convocation the unanimous voice of the membership of this Legislature has selected him for the place without opposition from others, as well as without solicitation from himself.

Relying upon the apparent unanimity with which the members of this Legislature have decided upon their Speaker, his friends, have thought it safe to entrust to me the privilege of giving formal expression to your unanimous and predetermined choice.

Were it otherwise than a perfunctory office I doubt that the honor would have been given to me, because experience has shown that I have been remarkably successful in preaching, unwittingly, funeral orations over the political aspirations of my friends.

I realize, then, that it is through no special fitness of mine that this honor is accorded to me, but rather was it to demonstrate for the benefit of my children and children's children that I am able to nominate a candidate for an office without inevitably achieving his defeat—at least, when that candidate has no opposition.

Gentlemen of the Legislature, the circumstances that surround this nomination are remarkable and unique, at least in recent legislative history. For the first time in many years the Speaker of this House will have been chosen without the heat and clamor and confusion of a contest. To accomplish this result no patronage has been promised, no pledges made, no places bartered for support, and I am sure that the citizens of Texas are hopeful that the harmony, unanimity and conservatism that marks this first legislative act of ours, will be an augury of this body's future course.

To make the laws of this great commonwealth is a trust of grave responsibility.

It is well for us to realize that upon the proper discharge of this trust depends to the farthest extent the weal or woe of Texas.

The happiness and prosperity and contentment of nearly four millions of people depend upon the good laws that

this Legislature enacts, as well upon the firmness and sound judgment with which it refuses to experiment with ill-considered innovations; too eagerly grasping for the thereby release its hold upon the and tried and safe in legislation.

Present conditions do not demand will not permit, legislative convulsion.

The great cattle industry of North and West and Southwest Texas, sturdily stemming the current of depressed values; the planters and farmers of the black and red and sandy lands whose good sense at last triumphed over the wide spread of the cotton field with truck patches and alfalfa and corn; the great railroad interests of Texas, with a total mileage now greater than any other State; the banks and trust companies whose vaults are teeming with dollars borrowed from the North and East but the savings of a prosperous people; all of these great factors in the prosperity of Grand New Texas, send to us a message set to the new music of whirling looms and spindles, ringing hammers, and the clank of machinery of new factories—and the message is "Let us have peace."

A prosperous people is a conservative people, and when Texas struck her balance sheet at the end of the year just gone her people found reason for exultation.

No one who has lived in Texas long enough to become acclimated has doubted the almost illimitable wealth of her resources or has failed to note the steady and resistless trend toward her destiny as queen regent in the imperial sisterhood of states.

It is only recently, however, that our cousins of the old states have begun to appreciate the truth of this.

In late years the good people of the north and east have begun to realize that the "norther" is not typical Texas weather, but only a vagrant cold wind escaped from its native heath in the Dakotas and Nebraska, soon tamed by the warmth of a Texas sun and mollified by the soft breezes from the gulf; begun to know that spurs as hard as bucket lids were not worn in the boudoirs of the capital city, and that bowie knives and sixshooters were not distinguishing characteristics of the Texas gentleman's costume.

But a few weeks since at St. Louis there closed perhaps the greatest pageant of history. From every nook and cranny of the earth had been gathered there the highest types of industry and art and the wealth of orchard, field and factory.

The old world sent richly freighted argosies to the new with the accumulated treasuries of a thousand years of art and the achievements of a thousand

years of science and of culture. The opulent states of the north and east went deep into their vaults and spent hundreds of thousands of dollars of tax money in rearing architectural palaces, lavishly equipped and unstintedly furnished.

Texas, too, was there.

Not housed in a building built from the tithes wrung by the strong hand of the tax gatherer from the poor. Texas at St. Louis never spent a dollar grudgingly bestowed.

From the farm, from the factory, from the counting house, the store, the railroad offices, there came gladly and ungrudgingly bestowed the means that made possible the exhibit of Texas there. And beneath the great dome of the Texas building the fair women of Texas, out of their own private means, dispensed with grace and tact and courtesy a hospitality that revived the cherished traditions of the old south. And when at last the awards were given Texas astounded the world and stood among the first in agriculture, horticulture, truck growing and stock raising.

And at last the truth was known.

It is as the agents of such a people that we are gathered here today to conserve the conditions that have made possible past accomplishments and to give, if possible, to progress greater impetus.

But conservatism does not mean stagnation. The highest conservatism is evinced by a readiness to avail ourselves of improved agencies and to appreciate and meet the demands of new conditions.

Conservatism may sometimes be called upon to apply drastic remedies. But this is not a time or place for academic discussion or abstract theorizing.

As the first act of its constitutional organization this body must choose a speaker. So potent and far reaching is the authority, so grave the responsibility of that office, that to a degree the character of the Legislature and the trend of its future legislation may be forecast by the personality of the presiding officer that it chooses. Concededly the election of the speaker of the last house was a happy harbinger of the course of that body, which was admittedly honest, creditable and safe.

The conditions that surround us at the opening of this session and of which I have already briefly spoken have rendered the selection of a radical man impracticable and improbable.

Momentous questions are knocking at the door this session demanding solution.

Appropriations sufficient to maintain

the state government must be made. The educational and eleemosynary institutions must be liberally provided for and existing deficit must be met and adequate revenue provided; and all this must be done "without taking from the mouth of labor the bread it has earned," and without permitting any just object of taxation to escape its burden. A thorough and fundamental revision must be made of our revenue and taxation laws. Additional sources of revenue for county funds must be provided, and, specially, the depleted jury funds of our counties must be rehabilitated. Modern and more efficient systems of bookkeeping and accounting in the various state departments and state institutions must be put into effect in justice alike to the responsible heads of those institutions and departments and to the taxpayers of the state. The election law must be re-enacted, retaining its many admirable features, divested of its many incongruities and perfected in the light of experience in its operation.

The mandate of the people of the state expressed in the adoption of the three constitutional amendments must be observed; more liberal pensions paid to the ex-Confederate soldiers; a careful code of laws effectuating and safeguarding irrigation and internal improvements must be constructed, and statutes passed for the incorporation of state banks of discount and deposit, of savings banks, of trust companies and other institutions with banking and discounting powers and privileges, and providing for their rigid visitation and inspection. And that all of this may be well done and speedily, and that legislative business may be more orderly and more quickly dispatched, the rules of procedure of this body must be revised and reformed, eliminating the archaic and obsolete and adding thereto such other rules as the experience of this and other kindred bodies has shown to be desirable.

Truly the tasks that confront us, gentlemen, are of appalling magnitude and of weighty responsibility, and invoke for their successful accomplishment patient labor, competent ability and highest patriotism.

If our responsibility is grave, that of the presiding officer whom we choose today is greater an hundred fold.

To guide, direct and assist us in the discharge of these arduous duties, you have already chosen a speaker, and it but remains to formally pronounce and ratify the choice already made.

It is a high honor to be chosen in

this great State, the Speaker of this House.

It is a high honor when the goal is reached after a long and bitter and doubtful contest.

It is a supreme honor to have received this prize from an electorate like this, without the sting or strife or scars of contest, freely tendered as a tribute of pre-eminent competency and worth.

You are about to choose a man who has achieved this high honor, this notable success, not from reasons of political expediency, not through fortuitous circumstances or happy chance, not because of superficial accomplishments or showy parts; but because long years of plodding and progressive toil, long years of profitable experience, a life record of rectitude, illuminated by the genius of common sense; because all of these have culminated and rounded out into the character of an honest, clear-headed and conservative business man, an able constitutional lawyer, and broad-minded legislator, the man to whom today in large measure we shall confide the interests of ourselves and of our state.

Texas today, through her chosen representatives, lays the tribute of this election at the feet of her adopted son, coming from her remotest borders.

It remains for me, gentlemen, but to speak the name that is on your lips. I speak it then.

It is the not unworthy son of old Virginia, the mother of presidents, the glorious old state that gave to this nation its federal constitution. In behalf of the members of former legislatures who have learned to appreciate and respect him in the close contact of legislative association; in behalf of all the people of the state whose territory is an empire, whose history is a glorious epic, whose future is a dazzling promise, I give to you the name of one of you, already chosen by yourselves, I nominate for Speaker of this House Hon. F. W. Seabury of Starr county.

Hon. Ferg Kyle of Hays county seconded the nomination of Mr. Seabury, and in seconding the nomination, said:

Mr. Attorney General and Members of the House:

A good presiding officer is to a deliberative body what a great general is to an army—half the battle. Quick, correct ruling averts friction. Time is saved, business dispatched and expense curtailed. We present for Speaker a man of ability, a splendid parliamentarian, impartial, courteous. This, sir, is the Hon. F. W. Seabury of Starr. Sir, I pride in Texas; I pride

in her great north, I pride in her great east. The marvelous development those sections have made them numerically strong, but selfishness stands not in their way when it comes to recognizing merit. On this occasion they come as one man to lay their honor here at the feet of a favorite son of the weaker southwest sections. We pride in their material greatness. They can pride in our historic soil. A gun fired at Gonzales spoke the birth of the Republic of Texas. Goliad, the Alamo, San Jacinto, hallowed spots. A gun fired at Concord spoke the birth of this great republic, but, sir, it was guns fired at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma that advanced its bounds to the Pacific. Texas, my prayer is that you are to remain united forever. Texas my prayer is that your lawmakers will be wise in counsel. If so in the near future your name will be entwined with empire. Sir, I now second the nomination of Mr. Seabury for Speaker. His election, I am sure, will accomplish much in securing a business session such as Texas needs.

Hon. F. F. Hill of Denton county seconded the nomination of Mr. Seabury.

There were no other nominations.

The ballot resulted as follows:

Hon. F. W. Seabury received 12 votes.

Mr. Seabury having received all the votes cast, he was declared duly legally and constitutionally elected Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-Ninth Legislature.

The chair appointed the following members to notify Mr. Seabury of his election and to escort him to the Speaker's stand:

Messrs. Brelsford, Love of Dallas and Nelms.

The committee approached the Speaker's stand with the Speaker-elect, who was presented by Mr. Brelsford to General Davidson.

General Davidson then administered the oath of office to the Speaker-elect and presented him to the House as the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature, at the same time handing him the gavel.

Speaker Seabury then in a few appropriate words thanked the members for the honor conferred and declared the House ready for business.