

Early Politics and Politicians of North Dakota

By

George B. Winship

North Dakota Territory existed from its formation on March 2, 1861 to November 2, 1889, when it became a state. Before 1861 it was part of Minnesota — first, part of Minnesota Territory from 1849 to 1858, when Minnesota became a state, then part of the state of Minnesota until March 2, 1861. It is not generally known that legislators in the Minnesota Legislative Assembly during its territorial period represented parts of North Dakota. In 1851, for example, Norman Kittson was elected to the Legislative Council and Joseph Rolette and Antoine Gingras were elected to the House of Representatives to represent Pembina County, Minnesota, also known as the Red River District. These men, especially Kittson and Rolette, played important roles in the pre-territorial politics of North Dakota. They are featured in George B. Winship's recollections "Early Politics and Politicians of North Dakota" published in the April 1923 issue of *The Quarterly Journal of the University of North Dakota*. It is posted here.

Related articles:

William E. Lass, "The First Attempt to Organize Dakota Territory" (MLHP, 2008) (published first, 1991).

Samuel J. Albright, "The First Organized Government of Dakota" (MLHP, 2011-2015)(published first, 1898).

Quinn Jones, F.R.

The Quarterly Journal

of the
University of North Dakota



APRIL, 1923
VOLUME 13 NUMBER 3

Early Politics and Politicians of North Dakota

GEORGE B. WINSHIP,
*San Diego, California, Formerly Editor of the
Grand Forks Herald*

The writer on the subject of "Early Politics and Politicians of North Dakota" has at least one distinctive advantage: he does not have to ransack the antiquities for a beginning. The genesis of the subject is wholly and within the memory of pioneers still living. Of course, I do not mean to say that previous to the beginning of modern settlement in North Dakota there were no politics worthy of record, for that would not be the fact. There were politics and civilization on these fertile prairies centuries ago, and well verified tradition avers that a stable government ruled and crime was rare. That, however, is another story. My topic has only to do with events wholly modern.

My personal observations of North Dakota politics and politicians began in 1867, when I first made my entry into the northern part of Dakota Territory. While at that time I was only twenty years of age, I was a qualified observer, being equipt with a practical printing office education, supplimented by two years' service in the army during the civil war, and a post-graduate course as teamster and mule-whacker. It was in the latter role that I made my entry into the Red River Valley; and these were my qualifications to observe, weigh, and judge the statesmen of the period.

* * * * *

During my school days, in the little one-room brick school building at La Crescent, Minnesota, I was a student of McGuffey's Third Reader and McNally's geography, and it was at that time that the initial impression was made on my mind of the North country. The geography contained a descriptive article on the Selkirk Settlement in British North America, accompanied by the portrait of a dog-train and its picturesque driver. That picture and its romantic perspective made a deep impression upon me. I had read several of Beadle's dime novels, which vividly portrayed life in the remote fur-bearing Northwest, and they threw upon it such a glamor of romance and adventure that my imagination was inflamed to the very limit of exaltation. Therefore, when I cruised into the country at the time indicated, I was ripe for observation and adventure.

I had not long been in the Red River country before I met one of my idealized characters in the person of Joseph Rolette, familiarly known as "Joe" from the Pembina border to Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, the place of his birth. While I was conversant with Mr. Rolette's public record previous to 1867, I did not meet him and form his acquaintance until 1868, and not intimately until 1870, when I took up my residence at Fort Pembina. Of him, therefore, and Colonel Enos Stutsman, another distinguished citizen of Pembina, will the personal reminiscent features of this article be largely devoted.

* * * * *

But before taking up the more personal side of my subject, let me outline briefly the pre-Territorial status of this section of the Northwest—before the name "Dakota" had evolved from its purely Indian origin and become the classical nomenclature of a Territory and two great States.

This early day, be it remembered, was only two years subsequent to the closing of the civil war, when the contending armies had been disbanded and the people, both North and South, were deep in thoughts of reconstruction, and endeavoring to the best of their ability to devise ways and means of rebuilding that which had been destroyed during the period of fratricidal strife. In many respects the paramount problems of the times, political, economic, and social, were as serious and complex as are the grave questions of the present day, growing out of the World War. Our nation was torn and dismembered, and sympathy from most of the European nations was withheld. Only two of the prominent European nations were even semi-friendly; the rest were utterly lacking in fraternal cordiality, apparently entertaining the hope, I venture to say, that the United States as a nation would fail to solve its domestic problems, and that government of, by, and for the people would prove a failure during the first century of its trial. But we disappointed our European critics; we settled our own affairs in due time, and the great majority of our people, North and South, went to work with a will and with the determination to forget and forgive. Simultaneously with this resolve came a solution of our financial problems. British, Dutch, and German investors then saw their opportunity and invested capital to build our railroads and develop our natural resources. In all history there is no record of constructive development that can parallel the work accomplished by our people during the four decades following the adjustment and settlement of questions growing out of the civil war. It was a period of mar-

velous expansion and tremendous accomplishment. While the present world situation is, of course, not strictly parallel, European nations might well profit by the example of what we did for ourselves after our great war.

* * * * *

Nationally, the big question of the period was the one pertaining to our finances. This was the paramount issue. There were sound money factions and cheap money factions. Then, as now, there were thoughtless agitators disposed to advocate visionary and ill-considered schemes, and the general trend of popular clamor was about as chaotic and demoralizing as it is these days.

In Territorial and local matters, however, conditions were different, more optimistic. Land was free, and there was plenty of it, and the movement of land hunters and home seekers which began in the border states of Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois did not materially subside until the middle '70's, when a temporary setback resulted from the grasshopper scourge. This awful pest destroyed the crops of the new settlers, and several years elapsed before it was eradicated. All the legislatures of the border states were absorbed in plans to extirpate the "hoppers," and the popular statesman of the period was he who could devise a plan to exterminate them. This great problem was the paramount one from 1872 to 1877.

* * * * *

While the grasshopper plague confined its ravages to frontier districts, there was, in addition, political and economic problems which sorely preplexed the people, and the one which most seriously retarded development was the money question. During the civil war coin money (gold and silver) disappeared from circulation, and in its place a paper currency, known as "greenbacks," became the circulating medium. Government printing presses were kept busy, about as they are now in European countries, and government promises to pay in other "promises" of doubtful intrinsic value, flooded the country, and the credit of the nation was consequently seriously impaired. At one time it took nearly three "greenback" dollars to equal one of gold or silver; and the result was that confidence was scattered to the four winds and business practically "shot to pieces." Twelve years elapsed after the close of the civil war before the statesmen at Washington solved the financial problem, and finally in 1877 the "resumption" act was passed, confidence restored, and prosperity set in with leaps and bounds. From that date began great business enterprises, and capital which previously had been locked up, found its way into the arteries of productive trade. North Dakota was

not on the map as a state, but its rich agricultural domain attracted the attention of home-seekers, and during the late '70's many thousands invaded its domain and became permanent residents. Naturally, the border states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa furnished the bulk of these settlers, and with them they brought their political aspirations and methods, good, bad, and indifferent. In this early invasion there was some good material with which to erect a great commonwealth, men of constructive minds and noble aspirations; and there, also, was a lot of worthless rubbish, men "out for the stuff," who do things only for what "there is in it" for themselves as individuals. All territories and young states have this pest to deal with and, like the grasshopper scourge, time must pass before they can be exterminated.

* * * * *

Previous to 1861 the western boundary of Minnesota extended to the Missouri river, and the only part of this vast area, known as North Dakota, that bore the semblance of a civilized country, was the Pembina and St. Joseph (Walhalla) districts. These communities contained voting units more or less elastic, and were considered of sufficient importance by the dominating politicians of the period to accord representation in the Minnesota legislature and political conventions.

* * * * *

The Territory of Dakota was organized in 1861, and included the present states of North and South Dakota, Montana, and parts of Idaho and Wyoming. The signing of the bill creating the new territory was one of the last official acts of President Buchanan, and the appointment of territorial officials became the duty of President Lincoln. Dr. Wm. Jayne, of Illinois, was the first Governor, and J. S. B. Todd became the first delegate to Congress. According to the census, taken under the direction of Governor Jayne, the population of the entire territory was 4,837. This included whites and Indians. In North Dakota there were 51 white males and 42 white females, and a total mixed and Indian population of 524. No counties were organized in North Dakota until 1867, when all of eastern North Dakota was organized as Pembina county. From this county all others in the Red River valley have been carved.

The first voting precincts established were at Pembina, St. Joseph, Park River, Dead Island (Cavalier county), Popular Creek (Nelson county), and Sheyenne, (Cass county).

* * * * *

Pembina county, Minnesota, or the Red River District as it

was generally known, was given its first representation in the Minnesota Territorial legislature, which convened in St. Paul, January 7, 1852, when Norman W. Kittson was elected to the Council and Joseph Rolette and Antoine Gingras to the House of Representatives. About sixty votes were polled in the county, out of a population composed largely of mixt-bloods. The white element did not poll more than a dozen votes.

Norman W. Kittson was an Indian trader, representing the American Fur Company. Mr. Kittson was the active trading factor of the locality for many years, but subsequently went to St. Paul where he became associated with James J. Hill in steamboat and railway enterprises. He was one of the progressive men of the times, and deserves a niche in the hall of fame as a man of constructive abilities and successful achievements. In all his endeavors he was eminently a builder. He had vision, energy, and intelligence, and his influence in the communities in which he lived was wholesome and uplifting. He died in St. Paul in 1888, universally honored and respected.

In the legislative session of 1856 Joseph Rolette was elected to the Council and R. C. Burdick and Charles Grant to the House. I knew these men quite well. Burdick was a native of Michigan and Grant was born in the Red River country. Both had spent their lives on the extreme frontier, spoke the French and Indian languages, and were typical traders of the period. Mr. Burdick was in business at Winnipeg in 1868, but left the country just previous to the first Riel rebellion in 1869. Mr. Grant, besides being a trader, was a successful farmer and stock breeder, and lived not far from the present site of Walhalla. He and Charles Bottineau, who also served a term in the Minnesota legislature, and Antoine Gingras, were the heaviest tax-payers in the county, and were popular and highly respected citizens.

* * * * *

Joseph Rolette was born at Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, in 1800. He came from virile stock, his father, Joseph Rolette, Sr., hailing from Canada, where during the late years of the eighteenth century he was an employee of the Northwest Fur Company, and one of the boldest and most aggressive of all the Indian traders. Later he was transferred to Wisconsin, where the career of Joe Jr. began. Young Joe acquired a very good education, and quite early in life took charge of his father's fur business, subsequently being employed by the American Fur Company at Pembina. About 1843, in conjunction with N. W. Kittson, he established a line of Red

River carts which connected St. Paul with the Northwest; and from that period he was at the front rank of the enterprising and aggressive traders of the great inland empire.

While Joseph Rolette was a shrewd and adventurous trader, he was at the same time a politician of more than ordinary caliber. In fact, I am disposed to believe that Mr. Rolette was the paternal ancestor of all the "practical" politicians that have made Pembina their home, and that he taught his first lessons in skillful manipulation from that place. He was active and inventive, kept his hand on the political pulse at St. Paul, and subsequently at Yankton, and when necessary he possessed the genius and the nerve to make adjustments that were satisfactory to the bosses of the period. Moses K. Armstrong, in his "Empire Builders," referring to an election at St. Joseph in November, 1867, says:

"Today I have attended one of the far-famed Red River elections. I came in last night to witness the show today. Here, you will remember, is the country where, in the early days of Joe Rolette and Minnesota Territory, the balance of power was weighed and never found wanting. Two hundred and fifty votes were polled today at St. Joe, mostly all in the morning before I reached the polls, and about thirty at Pembina.

"Our old friend, Enos Stutsman, is elected Representative without opposition and will be down to Yankton this winter to bring before the legislature the wants of Northern Dakota. Some of the memorials of this section will be for a district land office on Pembina river, a new county, and more representation; and probably a division of the Territory, forming a new and northern one by the name of Chippewa."

In the early territorial days, Pembina and St. Joe stood in about the same relationship to the finality of elections that the third ward of Grand Forks, Caledonia, in Traill, and Lakota, in Nelson counties, did in the election of 1888, when returns were held back until definite information was received as to the exact number of votes required to elect the "gang" candidates. At that election, it will be remembered, the returns from the three precincts mentioned were held back until early the following morning, when the "gang" candidate for the Territorial Council was counted in by 22 votes. The third ward had never previously cast more than 200 votes, but when the final count was made 402 were reported.

Pembina was a long ways from St. Paul, and a longer distance from Yankton, and frequently two or three weeks would elapse before the returns would show up giving the result of the "far-famed Red River elections," and as stated by Mr. Armstrong, the "balance of power was weighed and never found wanting."

In the seventh territorial legislature of Minnesota, which convened at St. Paul in January, 1857, Joe Rolette was a member of the Council from Pembina county, and was chairman of the committee on enrolled bills. During the latter part of the session a bill changing the seat of government from St. Paul to St. Peter was introduced, passed the lower house, and sent to the Council, where it fell into the hands of Mr. Rolette as Chairman of the Committee on Enrolled Bills. A fierce fight was on and excitement ran high. The sponsors of the bill were eager to have it reported and finally disposed of while their combination held together. Rolette was urged daily to report the bill, but he procrastinated and subsequently disappeared. Finally, the Council, by resolution, demanded that the bill be immediately reported, and the Sergeant-at-Arms was instructed to comb the city for Chairman Rolette. A call of the Council was ordered, and that body remained in session without recess for one hundred and twenty-three hours. The members ate and slept in the Chamber until they were nearly worn out, but Rolette could not be found. On the last legislative day, at 12 o'clock at night, the President resumed the chair, and announced that the time limited by law for the continuation of the session had expired, and he therefore declared the Council adjourned without day.

Thus, by this audacious trick of Rolette's, was the capital of Minnesota saved for St. Paul. The antis had the votes to remove it to St. Peter, but they did not count on the remarkable strategy of the practical politician from Pembina, and failed in the eleventh hour. Joe Rolette never outlived the notoriety achieved by this bold expedient; it stood out conspicuously as the crowning event of his career.

Mr. Rolette was a genial and companionable fellow, and aside from his political methods, was considered trustworthy. While he was bright and active he was not acquisitive, and failed to provide for the proverbial rainy day. He was a frequent visitor at the Post-trader's store where I was employed and I got well acquainted with him. One of his favorite hours for a drop-in call was when I was "subbing" for the beer dispenser at meal times. He evidently thought I was more considerate than the other fellow—when his funds were low.

Quite frequently he was accompanied by Uncle "Billy" Camp, one of the genial and bibulous habitues of Stiles' "hooch joint," and the suggestive maneuvers and eloquent appeals of the twain seldom failed to move me to yield to their wishes. Sympathy for those in distress is one of my weak characteristics.

Joseph Rolette made Pembina his home until his death, which occurred in 1871. The county of Rolette was named in his honor.

* * * * *

Colonel Enos Stutsman, who lived at Pembina from 1867 to 1875, was the big man of the period in Dakota Territory. He entered into the activities of the territorial government from the very birth of the Territory, being Governor Jaynes' private secretary and a member and president of the first council which convened in 1862. For five terms he served as councilman from the Yankton district, meantime practising his profession as lawyer. In 1866 he accepted the appointment of U. S. treasury agent at Pembina, where he lived until his death. His first trip to the North was one of inspection only; he had no thought of staying permanently. He seems to have been captivated by the country, its invigorating climate and fertile acres, and more than all by its wide-awake and congenial people. And he in return was taken into their confidence, for in the fall of 1867 he was elected to the House of Representatives, and when that body convened he was chosen speaker. He was again elected to the House in 1868, and in 1872 was elected to the Council.

Colonel Stutsman was a unique character, possessing versatile talents and broad culture. He was a lawyer, orator, statesman, and politician. He was gifted intellectually, but physically was deficient in that he was practically legless. Two short feeble limbs, not exceeding ten or twelve inches in length, were all that nature had provided him with, and it was said that this deformity impelled him to make his home in remote frontier towns, where the scrutiny and inquisitiveness of people were reduced to the minimum. His head, shoulders and body were massive, and if accompanied by limbs of ordinary size, he would have exceeded the average man in height. What he lacked in physique, however, was more than offset by his superior mental equipment. He was an accomplished lawyer, an orator of the spell-binding class, and no politician in the territory could out-manuever him in political generalship. He was very successful as an attorney, and all the legal business of the Red River Valley country centered in his modest little office in Pembina. His business at Fort Garry for clients opposed to the Hudson Bay Company, was the largest part of his practise. At every session of Judge Black's court at Fort Garry Colonel Stutsman was the conspicuous figure; and while he was popular with the people, he was feared and detested by the court and Hudson Bay officials. He was a scientific "roaster," a master of refined invective, and nothing pleased

him more than to give the lion's tail an oratorical twist, as personified in his honor the court.

One of my most enjoyable diversions when living at Winnipeg, in 1868, was to attend sessions of Judge Black's court when Colonel Stutsman had an important case. This tribunal was the property and instrument of the Hudson Bay Company, and Stutsman never mist an opportunity to tell the people of the iniquities of the system under which they lived, and which eventually brought about the first Riel rebellion.

* * * * *

The first man to represent the northern part of the Territory in the first legislature which convened at Yankton in March, 1862, was Captain H. S. Donaldson, a resident of Pembina. Captain Donaldson served in the army during the Indian outbreak, and combined military with legislative duties. He also served in the legislative session of 1863, and was associated with J. Y. Buckman in the House, and James McFeteridge in the Council. McFeteridge was a customs official at Pembina, and was one of the brightest and most efficient men in the Territory. He died in 1869. Buckman was a clerk in a St. Joe store, and something of an adventurer. After serving his term, he sought other fields and his constituents knew him no more.

Captain Donaldson was a quiet, business-like man when himself, but when inspired by over-stimulation, he was a boisterous sort of fellow, and everybody knew that he was "arearing." In 1868 he located at Winnipeg, opening a small stationery store in the McDermott building under the Nor'wester office, where I was employed as printer. During the belicose period at Winnipeg, just prior to the Riel outbreak in 1869, there were many public meetings held to consider the situation. At these meetings the Captain would invariably bring his Dakota legislative experience into play by addressing the chair as "Mr. Speaker." He was very proud of his Dakota experience, and was a staunch defender of institutions on this side of the line. The Captain spent his life in Winnipeg, where he died about twenty years ago.

From 1865 to 1968 the North country was not represented in legislative sessions at Yankton. The long distance to the capital, the hostile Indians, and the depressing conditions following the civil war tended to discourage embryo statesmen, and the honor was thrust aside. In 1867, however, when Enos Stutsman came upon the scene, new life was injected into the body politic, and Stutsman

was elected to the House for two successive terms, and later to the Council.

In 1870 John Hancock got the votes some way that made him a member of the House. I was in Pembina at the time, and did not know anything about the election until after the election of Hancock was announst. It was one of the quietest and most mysterious elections I ever heard of. Colonel Hancock was a brother of General Winifield Scott Hancock, the noted civil war general. He came to Pembina in June from the City of Brotherly Love, and left in November immediately after election; and like Buckman, he never returned to the bosom of his admiring constituents. The Colonel and I were quite intimate; he was a frequenter of Stiles' store at the Fort, and a genial, companionable fellow. He was fond of riding my pony, and the diversion grew upon him so strongly that he felt it necessary to ride the animal up the valley to Fort Abercrombie on his way to his legislative duties at Yankton. In due time the pony was returned by the mail carrier, but the compensation that I expected never arrived. Hancock was connected with distinguished families besides his own. His daughter married ex-Governor W. R. Merriam, of Minnesota, and was a noted beauty of the period, winning recognition in the "400" circles of Washington and New York. After banging about the country for a few years, Colonel Hancock secured a government job at Washington, which he was clinging to the last I heard of him.

* * * * *

The first active politics, in the way of a spirited clashing of interests, occurred in 1872, when old Pembina and youthful Fargo lockt horns, as it were, in a contest for supremacy. A term of the United States court was held at Pembina in June, presided over by Judge French, and in order to secure the necessary jurymen almost the entire northern part of the territory was thoroly combed. After exhausting the Pembina and St. Joe settlements, drafts were made at Grand Forks, Goose River, Elm River, Fargo, and Richville. Every available man was utilized for the grand and petit panels, and the work of subpoenaing them was no small task. Jud LaMoure was deputy United States Marshal, and upon him devolved the selection and notification of the jurors. During this process, when LaMoure visited every settlement in the northern section, it developept that the deputy marshal had something else on his program besides the business of subpoenaing jurors. The first to scent the alleged "darkey in the wood pile" was the coterie of live-wires at Fargo, led by S. G. Roberts, G. I. Keeney, John Haggart, Captain

Egbert, and others. The issue, as I recall it, was not of much importance, but every political movement was unduly magnified, and as Fargo was active in efforts to induce the Northern Pacific Railway to cross the Red River at that place, every political movement that could in any way be construed as antagonistic to that project, was looked upon with suspicion. The selection of jurymen, whose political orthodoxy could not be questioned, was apparently the chief concern of the deputy marshal. His zeal in his work stirred the suspicions of the "Crossing" (Fargo) politicians; and especially were they interested when they learned that an important convention would be held at Pembina during the session of the United States court, and that the jurymen would be asked to serve as delegates from their respective sections.

Fargo saw a menace in this judicial-political coup d'etat, and forthwith the entire populace at the "Crossing" began to organize a party of resistance. The active workers were: S. G. Roberts, John Haggart, H. S. Back, G. I. Keeney, George Dickson, G. H. Stone, Captain Egbert, and A. C. Hawley. They interested W. M. Rich and C. B. Falley in the Wahpeton district, A. H. Moore in the Wild Rice section, the Morgan Brothers and Asa Sargent at Goose River, and succeeded in effecting an organization that thoroughly represented sentiment in the south end of big Pembina county.

When the advance on Pembina was made early in June, most of the men just named were among the party. I recall, quite vividly, their appearance when they camped at Turtle River; how they impressed us, and how encouraged we were to see so many newcomers who were active in developing the young territory. The party gave Mr. Budge and me the impression that they were jurymen, and interested only in court proceedings.

In due time following their arrival at Pembina, the first county convention was held, N. E. Nelson was chairman, and George F. Potter, secretary. The northern faction, under the leadership of LaMoure and Potter, undertook to carry out their program, but were stoutly resisted by the southern cabal, under the leadership of Roberts and Egbert. An all day talkfest followed, and when night came it was declared a drawn battle. No nominations were made at that time, but a few weeks later Colonel Stutsman was nominated for Councilman and Judson LaMoure for the House, by the Pembina junta; and G. H. Stone, of Fargo, and A. C. Moore, of Wild Rice, by the Southenders.

The election was held, the Southenders out-voted the North, and on the face of the returns both Stone and Moore were elected.

The jubilation of the victors, however, was of short duration, for the skill and finesse of Colonel Stutsman was brought into play, and thru him the entire vote of the South end was thrown out, and he and LaMoure were given seats in the legislature. At that time the Fargo district was in Indian territory, the Indian title not having been extinguished, and it was, therefore, an easy matter to adjudicate when brought before the official canvassing board.

At this election General U. S. Grant and Horace Greeley were contestants for President, and my first presidential and legislative vote was cast for Greeley, Stutsman, and LaMoure. And this reminds me of an incident which took place in Ted Turner's "third emporium" in Grand Forks a few days before election: LaMoure, myself, and two others formed a quartet whose respective feet were ensconced under the same circular table. "Seven-up" was the game. LaMoure and his partner won out; and my partner and I began to "saw-off." I was getting the worst of it, and seemed to be doomed. In the height of my struggle, I felt a touch on my knees under the table, and covertly looking down I discovered some cards. I deftly exchanged my punk hand for the mysterious bunch, and boldly "stood my hand." I had four points to make; my antagonist only one. "High, low, jack, and the game" was the net results of my surreptitious hand; and my antagonist gasped with surprise. We kept him guessing for some time, but finally disclosed the secret of my success—after the "wooden-face" at my left had chuckled to his heart's content.

Pardon this digression; it was a typical incident of early elections. Colonel Stutsman and Judson LaMoure were elected, but Greeley "went west to grow up with the country." During the legislative session of 1873 Stutsman did splendid work at Yankton. Many new counties in the north were carved off of Pembina, and there was a revival of business that encouraged settlers very much. But it proved ephemeral; the time for real prosperity had not come. The financial panic, depreciated money, and grasshopper scourge stopt all progress. With the close of the '73 session Colonel Stutsman's legislative duties ended. His health, impaired for several years, broke down, and on the 24th of January, 1874, he closed his earthly career.

Colonel Stutsman's mind and nature were constructive. He was a builder, and a worker along progressive lines. His great talents, his transparent honesty, his lofty idealism, and his sincere democracy, made him the man of the hour in Dakota Territory.

When he "passed on" the Territory lost its first citizen and the world a shining light.

* * * * *

Following the exit of Stutsman came a score or more of Territorial statesmen, too modern and near at hand to be put in the archaic class, and whose careers are more or less familiar to most old residents of the state. Judson LaMoure's career began at this epoch, and he and B. A. Williams, of Bismarck, were colleagues at Yankton for several years. In 1875 A. McHench, of Fargo, and Hector Bruce, of Grand Forks, did the legislative stunt. To Mr. Bruce belongs the honor of being Grand Forks' first solon, and he was a most efficient one. He was a civil engineer, and a clean-cut, intelligent fellow. He platted the original townsite of Grand Forks, and Bruce avenue was named in his honor. The lure of Black Hills gold attracted him in the late seventies, and Grand Forks lost a good citizen.

Then came on the scene H. S. Back, of Fargo, and Asa Sargent, of Caledonia, who were followed in 1879 by George H. Walsh, of Grand Forks, S. G. Roberts, of Fargo, and Robert McNider, of Bismarck. After this date there was no limit in North Dakota to politics and politicians, and decidedly no improvement, either in quality or quantity. At this epoch entered Nehemiah G. Ordway, of New Hampshire; Harrison Allen, of Pennsylvania, and various other distinguished graduates from eastern schools of "practical politics," to say nothing of the large class of "home-made" manipulators which sprang into action under the leadership of Alexander McKenzie. This talented and enterprising cabal were in the saddle when the Territory was divided and admitted into the Union as dual states, and the program of legislation they formulated, which included sale of the new state to the Louisiana Lottery Company, was one of the most audacious ever attempted to be perpetrated by modern legislators. The lottery conspiracy, and the boldness and nerve of its originators, was the great publicity event of the period, involving as it did, not only our young state, but the whole Union; and it resulted, ultimately, in the enactment of federal laws making lotteries forever illegal. The lottery contest at Bismarck during the first session of the legislature in 1890, was a spirited struggle, and was finally won by the antis after an overwhelming public sentiment had filed an emphatic protest.

It is to be regretted that in the early days of statehood there were so few really constructive minds to tackle the problems of rudimentary state government. There was politics enough, and men

enough to do the plain political work, but there were comparatively few who possess the elements of creative statesmanship and had vision enough to build constructively and progressively. Too many went into politics for sport or gain. It was an exciting game, a gamble, and the great work of laying the foundation and building the superstructure of a great commonwealth appeared to be of secondary consideration.

