

## THE IRRIGATION CONGRESS.

That a gathering of such magnitude as the great Irrigation Congress now in session in this city could be called together with so few preliminaries and with such perfect response from all quarters tells plainly the importance and urgency of the subject that brings them together. So powerful a representation of brains and influence never before met west of the Missouri. Sixteen States and Territories have responded to the call and sent their best men to represent them in the assembly.

The idea of holding such a congress originated with the State Irrigation convention held at Lincoln, Nebraska, in February last. A committee was then appointed to consider the matter and at their instance the legislature of Colorado took the subject in hand with a purpose to have the congress assembled at Denver. But in the meantime the question was called to the attention of Governor Thomas by the Chamber of Commerce of this city, and he forthwith sent out a circular letter which at the time was published in all the Western papers, inviting the governors of the Western States and Territories to appoint delegates to meet with a congress here. The list of delegates given in another column attests the respect that was paid to the call.

The hotels last night showed the presence of a small number of delegates, the most conspicuous arrivals being the California representatives, who came in a body. There arrived also some of the head lights from Colorado, Wyoming and Kansas. Provo's members and others from southern Utah, who came in last night to attend the meeting of the Utah delegation, were taking things leisurely at the Cullen. They have come prepared for doing some vigorous work. The Provo board is to give its services to the Congress. They were accepted with a vote of thanks at the meeting of the delegation last night.

As published in the NEWS last week, the Utah county delegates were anxious to have the Utah delegation go into the Congress with their line of policy defined. This was opposed by the other members. Mr. King, of Provo, offered a resolution that the Utah members come together during the Congress and appoint a committee to prepare amendments to the irrigation laws for presentation at the next session of the Legislature.

The resolution was adopted with an amendment providing that the report be also presented to the Congress of the United States.

The delegation then elected Governor Thomas for chairman and Elias A. Smith secretary. C. C. Goodwin and W. H. King were chosen members of the committee on resolutions. J. W. Donnellan was selected for vice-president of the congress for Utah.

The Chamber of Commerce at 11 o'clock was about the deadest spot in the city. But the condition at the Exposition building explained the cause. There the decorators were just putting the finishing touches on their part of the work, while squads of foreign delegates were sauntering about the building discussing topics connected with the convention.

At fifteen minutes to 12 o'clock the bustle of genuine activity began. The Provo band in the balcony above the speaker's platform, were heard from in a splendidly executed piece of music. In the meantime the voice of the leader of the California delegation was heard calling his colleagues together.

At a few minutes to 12 the members began pouring into the hall, and in less than five minutes every seat that had been prepared was taken and benches were brought in to accommodate the overflow.

Several ladies adorned one side of the delegates' division. The western press was fairly represented on the platform at the opening of the session. There were present, for the Chicago *Inter Ocean*, Mr. Gilbert E. Bailey; for the San Francisco *Examiner*, Mr. W. F. Perkins; for the *Engineering News*, Mr. Geo. H. Frost; for the *Danvor Republican*, Mr. W. C. Edwards, of the *Times*, held a special commission; Mr. Ed. Ivins, of the *Herald* staff, represented the *Denver News*. Mr. T. M. Samuelson was looking after the interests of the *Provo Dispatch*, Mr. Thomas Tongue, of Denver, represented an English press syndicate, and Mr. W. M. Burmley was present in behalf of the *Ogden Commercial*.

## THE OPENING.

At precisely 12:30 o'clock Col. Donnellan arose and called the convention to order, whereupon Mr. Fred Simon read the circular letter by Governor Thomas inviting the western Governors to send delegates to the Congress.

Mr. Simon announced the States and Territories entitled to representation, and Col. Donnellan then introduced Gov. Thomas to the assembly. The Governor advanced to the platform amid applause and spoke as follows:

## GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS.

Gentlemen of the Irrigation Congress:

It is my pleasant duty on behalf of the people of the Territory of Utah to give you a cordial welcome and to express their thanks and appreciation of the patriotic sense of duty which brings you here to consider questions so closely related to their welfare and prosperity and also to the welfare and prosperity of the States and Territories in the arid region. I cannot, in the brief space of time allotted to an address of welcome, enter into a discussion of the important subject of the history and development of irrigation, nor of the vital questions which relate to the great irrigation field of the arid region. The various phases of the subject will be made the basis of special papers that have been prepared for your information. I can only refer briefly to the practical part of the question and to the subjects enumerated in the call.

When the question of calling an Irrigation Congress was first discussed it seemed to me there would be a special fitness in holding it in the Great Salt Lake valley, where, in 1847, the cultivation of the soil was commenced by Mormon settlers and where, upon success or failure, depended the life or death of the country, as a place of human habitation. The irrigation system which has been developed in Utah is a combination of the two systems which prevail in the Dakotas on the east and California on the west.

In California a great system of direct irrigation has been developed by diversion of the waters from her mountain streams. In the Dakotas an extensive system of irrigation has been developed by water from artesian wells. In Utah water is obtained for irrigation, both from mountain streams and artesian wells. It was fitting, therefore, in a business as well as historic sense, that the first great congress held by the western people to consider the important subject of irrigation, should assemble in the Salt Lake Valley, in Utah.

The Congress is called for the purpose of hastening the reclamation of the arable arid lands, so far as possible, and for the purpose of petitioning Congress to cede to the States and Territories the arid lands within their borders, for the purpose, first, of reclaiming the same; second, in aid of the public schools, and third, for such other public purpose as the legislative assemblies of the States and Territories may respectively determine.

The call has awakened national interest in the subject of irrigation. The reclamation in the large portion of the west is a subject of absorbing interest to the people. The call, seems to have struck a popular chord and the response has been most hearty; indeed, almost unanimous.

I believe this Congress will prove to be a great educator. But few people in the East have an adequate idea of the physical conditions of the western country, or of the amount of capital which is necessary to be expended; or of the difficulties to be overcome before water can be successfully diverted, from the rapidly flowing mountain streams for purposes of irrigation. These streams, some of which are not perennial have their source in the hearts of the great mountain ranges and are fed by the snow deposited on the mountain crests and in the deep recesses of the canyons in the winter time. Many of these streams out deep and enter the valleys far below the upper levels. In order to bring the water out on the higher lands it is necessary to commence the work of diversion far back in the canyon and make a way for it along the rocky mountain side. When the open valley is reached other serious difficulties are met. The valley which appeared to the eye to be so uniformly level, is found to be intersected by a network of furrows and ravines, made by the rainfall and the melting snows of spring time. When the ditch is completed, unless the work be of an extensive character, the amount of water furnished is only sufficient to irrigate a limited area, because in these arid regions, the supply is rapidly diminished by absorption and excessive evaporation. If a canal be constructed sufficient to reclaim a large area another formidable difficulty is met, the water supply cannot be depended upon. In the spring time the snow melts rapidly and the flow of water being beyond the demand the surplus water runs to waste. As the warm season advances the supply gradually decreased until, in the summer season, when the water is most needed, unless the stream is very large, which is not often the case, the supply fails altogether, or is so much reduced as to be practically valueless for purposes of irrigation. The building of large