

## THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS.

### CONFERENCE NOTICE.

The Sixty-fifth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will convene in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, at 10 o'clock, on Friday morning, [April 5th, 1895.

The officers and members of the Church generally are cordially invited to attend the meetings of the Conference.

WILFORD WOODRUFF,  
GEORGE Q. CANNON,  
JOSEPH F. SMITH.

### Special Conference Appointments.

Sunday, 7th—Sunday School Union, Tabernacle, 7 p.m.

### A. O. SMOOT.

In the death of Abraham Owen Smoot, both church and state in this part of America have occasion to mourn; not only the city of Provo, where he lived, and the county and Stake in which his home was situated, but also the whole Territory of Utah, and the entire Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. A staunch, patriotic citizen, he was also a firm, consistent member of the Church; and in both lines of life and activity, he has been prominent and useful since the early days of Utah's settlement. As a civilian he has been called to the very highest offices in the gift of the people among whom he dwelt; as an ecclesiast he has presided for more than a score of years over the second in importance of all the Stakes of Zion.

President Smoot was not made of pliant, vacillating stuff; his was a temper cast in stern and rugged mold. In what he believed to be right he was as immovable as the hills. As far above the blandishments of flattery as he was impervious to the insidious advances of persuasion, he was nevertheless eminently just in his conclusions, and the possessor of rare and ripened judgment. If convinced that he had erred, none was more ready than he to make restitution; and though he was one of a thousand for mental strength and force of character, he had none of the elements of the oppressor, and was as quick to resent as he was slow to resort to undue dictation. He was courageous in his own independence, yet gentle in his rule; a wise counselor, an unwavering friend, an honest man. In the best sense of the term he was a stalwart among the leaders of latter-day Israel—this applying both to his mentality and his physique; and though he had already long since covered the allotted span of human life and in his mortal career was as a shock of corn fully ripe, he will still be

profoundly missed by thousands who have looked to him as a father, loved him as a brother, and respected him as a man.

### THE WATER PROPOSITION.

The irrigation commission has submitted to the Constitutional Convention a proposed article in relation to irrigation and water rights, for insertion in the State Constitution. A prolonged discussion of the provisions of the suggested article perhaps is unnecessary, as the indications are that it will meet with the combined opposition of those delegates who have had practical experience with irrigation matters. The first section is confiscation, pure and simple, and as such would, if placed in the Constitution, be resisted by the people, who have a vital interest in vested water rights as they now exist. The erroneous nature of this clause is not in any way relieved by the application of section three. The second and fifth sections are incompatible; in the matter of an attempt to secure a non-partisan board of control, one section operates adversely to the other. As for the fourth section, it is wholly inapplicable to Utah, as no three divisions which could be arbitrarily made would fit the situation existing here.

It is given out that in connection with its work the commission has sent for and received copies of all the bills appertaining to this subject now pending in eight of the neighboring state legislatures, and also copies of the constitutional forms already adopted by the recently created states; that these have been carefully studied, and the proposed article, based on the fundamental law of Wyoming, formulated. Here is precisely where the mistake has been made. The commission has been studying the wrong text book; it has taken the experimental formulae and untried theories of comparatively new and inexperienced localities, and has passed by the practical demonstration which has placed Utah as the foremost of the irrigators on states, both in experience and success, and made her the one to look to before all others.

In this matter of irrigation and water rights Utah is the head, not the hindmost. Any provision in the Constitution should be based upon that system which has prevailed here from the early years of settlement. An article on the subject in the fundamental law of the State should be as concise as possible; if, indeed, anything more than a brief statement of general character is necessary. State control, except for the mere purpose of harmony, would be cumbersome, expensive and unsatisfactory. The idea of the division suggested should not be entertained, because impracticable. There might be a system of division and control by counties with a provision for these to unite as they may deem advisable, and a state board for harmonizing interests; but no larger division of areas should be thought of. This whole matter, however, might be safely left to the

Legislature, that no mistake or inadvertence therein should become an incubus on the State charter.

The idea of distinct systems of irrigation, in which land owners are also owners of water, has shown itself to be well adapted here. Whatever control is exercised is with a view to these rights and the public welfare. It would be as consistent, in our circumstances, for the State to declare all the land to be State property, and to direct its use and cultivation, as it would to treat appropriated water in that fashion. The inauguration of such a revolution in the prevailing system as the proposed article suggests would be an exceedingly dangerous experiment, and one against which the misfortunes and failures in other states are a solemn warning. This view of the case probably did not occur to the irrigation commission in its eagerness to get something to the Constitution which would give definite form to irrigation methods and prove beneficial to the people, this being the whole purpose of the suggestion.

### IDAHO HAS DONE WELL.

Without any personal interest whatever in the respective candidates for the U. S. senatorship from Idaho, and with no interest of any kind save such as grows out of a desire to see each state in the Union well represented in the national upper house, the NEWS feels sincerely to congratulate the legislature of our neighboring state on the termination of the deadlock which has existed for several weeks, and on the re-election of Senator George L. Shoup. To repeated solicitations that this paper express its preference for one or the other of the two leading candidates in the struggle, and use its influence to bring about his election, we have ever turned a deaf ear. The NEWS has not been and is not "in politics;" and in the case in point we have especially felt that the chosen representatives of the people of Idaho knew far better the feelings of their constituents and the needs of their state than any newspaper adviser at this distance from the scene. Such references as have been made to the matter, therefore, have been of an impersonal and general character; and they have chiefly dwelt upon the fact that partisan stories as to "church influence" from this city for or against either candidate were malicious and untrue.

We are now pleased, however, to chronicle the fact that a selection has been made and that the tedious and stubborn contest is ended. We applaud the patriotism of those members—be they whom they may—who at last recognized the duty of electing a senator, even if they had to abandon their own favorite candidate. We believe their courage in thus rising to the duty of the occasion will be generally commended, for we presume no fault has been or will be found with the fitness and capacity of the man whose election they have made possible. Whatever their own preferences or pledges may have been, we think they have given all the evidence of fidelity and steadfastness that any reasonable person could have demanded; to have at-