

GREETINGS FROM THE FIRST PRESIDENCY

WE hail with pleasure the advent of another Christmas day, celebrated throughout Christendom as the anniversary of the birth into this life of the world's Redeemer. We regard and venerate Him as the Christ, the veritable Son of the Eternal Father. To the Latter-day Saints we extend cordial greeting at this festive season, and congratulate them on the condition of the Church and its pleasing prospects. In temporal things our people in these valleys of the mountains have been greatly blessed. Bountiful harvests have been reaped on field and farm, in orchard and garden and vineyard. The flocks and herds upon the hills and the ranges have been multiplied; most of the industries that have been established have flourished; comfortable homes greet the eye in every direction, and want and penury are little known among the Saints. For these favors of divine Providence we ought to be truly grateful, but in addition to these good things, which are material, there has been an increase of spiritual life and unity, resulting from increased faith in God and confidence in His servants. It is delightful to behold the peace and joy and contentment to be found throughout Zion, and the determination exhibited to hold fast to the truths which our Heavenly Father has revealed in the latter days and to the spiritual kingdom which He has set up to "be thrown down no more for ever." In all the quorums of the Holy Priesthood and in the auxiliary organizations there is a marked increase of interest, in-



THE FIRST PRESIDENCY OF THE "MORMON" CHURCH.

telligent inquiry and intense satisfaction. The efficiency displayed by the presiding officers among them is evident to all observers. The influence of education is also apparent; the Church academies, college and universities show marked improvement, being aided far more liberally than ever before from Church funds; musical culture is progressing; order is maintained in public gatherings, and advancement is seen on both intellectual and spiritual lines. One striking evidence of the faith of the Saints is their fidel-

ity in the payment of tithes, and the offerings for the poor, in the erection of substantial and elegant houses of worship, in the maintenance of missions and the support given generally to all measures for the spread of the work of the Lord. Our people are gradually following the advice given to "get out of debt." It is confidently hoped that the Church itself will, before long, be free from the bonded indebtedness which has been a burden upon it for some time. It will be glad tidings to us all, if by the next Christmas day we

can declare, truthfully that "we owe no man anything, but to love one another." The Church abroad is strengthening its hold upon the thinking portion of mankind. Prejudice is being removed from the minds of good people. Substantial meetinghouses have been erected at several points, and the way is opening up for the promulgation of the Gospel in many lands, some of which have hitherto been barred against our Elders. There are openings for our missionaries, too numerous to fill at present. The cry is re-

peated, as of old, "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few." The unveiling of the monument to the Prophet Joseph Smith at Sharon, Windsor County, Vermont, on December 23, the one hundredth anniversary of his birth, is a cause of great congratulation to all who believe in his divine mission. Slander, false witness and the shafts of malice are arrayed against the Church and its authorities, as may be expected until Satan is bound and falsehood is conquered by divine truth. It is our duty to bear such

things with patience, and not permit ourselves to be aroused to anger or retaliation. We should stand up for the right, and as far as possible ignore the wrong-doers. The knowledge that God is with us and that His work will prevail, should buoy us up under every difficulty and every trial, having the conviction that the Lord will cause even "the wrath of man to praise Him." The very efforts of the enemies of His Church to hedge up its way will be overruled by Him to accelerate its advancement. We advise the Saints

to enjoy as far as is possible and consistent, the pleasures of Christmas time, with that temperance and regard for others which should be observed at this sacred anniversary. Bless the children; provide for the poor; comfort the distressed; visit the widow and the fatherless; forgive those who may be regarded as enemies; be filled with the spirit of blessing; have charity for all; promote peace and good will, and spread abroad the light and intelligence which flow down from heaven in the Gospel of the Son of God; recognize His divine hand in all that is good and useful and that promotes the welfare of humanity. All truth, from whatever source it seems to emanate, in science, in art, in philosophy, in theology, in discovery or invention, which promotes happiness and elevates mankind, is from the Father of lights, who sent His Son, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, into the world to uplift His sons and daughters and bring them out of darkness, ignorance and sin into communion with Him and obedience to His laws. Glory and praise be unto Him for this great and crowning mercy! Let all nations join in the glad refrain which was sung by the angels at the Savior's birth! We extend greeting and blessing and earnest desire for the favor of heaven to rest upon all the human family, with the fervent hope that the time is not far distant when they will bow the knee to King Immanuel and sing with united voice, Glory to God and the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen.

JOSEPH F. SMITH,
JOHN R. WINDER,
ANTHON H. LUND,
First Presidency

Mark Twain's Description of Nevada's First Legislature.

MARK TWAIN, the inimitable American humorist, in his intensely interesting book, "Roughing It," portrays the first legislature of Nevada, and tells of its trials in language so simple and graphic; so entrancing and good-natured that his description is herewith reproduced:

"Originally, Nevada was a part of Utah and was called Carson county; and a pretty large county it was too. Certain of its valleys produced no end of hay, and this attracted small colonies of 'Mormon' stock-raisers and farmers to them.

"Gov. Roop was the first and only chief magistrate of it. In due course of time Congress passed a bill to organize 'Nevada Territory,' and President Lincoln sent out Gov. Nye to supplant Roop.

"At this time the population of the territory was about 12,000 or 15,000, and rapidly increasing. Silver mines were being vigorously developed and silver mills erected. Business of all kinds was active and prosperous and growing more so day by day.

"Objected to Immigrants.

"The people were glad to have a legitimately constituted government, but did not particularly enjoy having strangers from distant states put in authority over them—a sentiment that was natural enough. They thought the officials should have been chosen from among themselves—from among prominent citizens who had earned a right to such promotion, and who would be in sympathy with the populace and likewise thoroughly acquainted with the needs of the territory. They were right in viewing the matter thus, without doubt. The new officers were 'immigrants,' and that was no title to anybody's affection or admiration either.

"Frigid Reception.

"The new government was received with considerable coolness. It was not only a foreign intruder, but a poor one. It was not even worth plucking—except by the smallest of small fry office-seekers and such. Everybody knew that Congress had appropriated only \$20,000 a year in greenbacks for its support—about money enough to run a quart mule a month. And everybody knew, also, that the first year's money was still in Washington, and that the getting hold of it would be a tedious and difficult process. Carson City was too wary and too wise to open up a credit account with the imported bantling with anything like indecent haste.

"The Birth Struggle.

"There is something solemnly funny about the struggle of a new-born Territorial government to get a start in this world. Ours had a trying time of it. The Organic Act and the 'instructions' from the state department commanded that a legislature should be elected at such-and-such a date. It was easy to get legislators, even at

three dollars a day, although board was four dollars and fifty cents, for distinction has its charm in Nevada as well as elsewhere, and there were plenty of patriotic souls out of employment, but to get a legislative hall for them to meet in was another matter altogether. Carson blantly declined to give a room rent-free or let one to the government on credit.

"Curry's Patriotism.

"But when Curry heard of the difficulty, he came forward, solitary and alone, and shouldered the ship of state over the bar and got her afloat again. I refer to 'Curry—old Curry—old Abe Curry.' But for him the legislature would have been obliged to sit in the desert. He offered his large stone building just outside the capital limits, rent-free, and it was gladly accepted. Then he built a horse railroad from town to the capitol, and carried the legislators gratis. He also furnished pine benches and chairs for the legislature, and covered the floors with clean saw-dust by way of carpet and spittoon combined. But for Curry the government would have died in its tender infancy. A canvass partition to separate the senate from the house of representatives was put up by the secretary, at a cost of \$3.40, but the United States declined to pay for it. Upon being reminded that the 'instructions' permitted the payment of a liberal rent for a legislative hall, and that that money was saved to the country by Mr. Curry's generosity, the United States said that did not alter the matter, and the \$3.40 would be subtracted from the secretary's \$1,500 salary—and it was!

"Printing Problem.

"The matter of printing was from the beginning an interesting feature of the new government's difficulties. The secretary was sworn to obey his volume of written 'instructions,' and these commanded him to do two certain things without fail, viz:

"1. Get the house and senate journals printed; and

"2. For this work, pay \$1.50 per 'thousand' for composition, and \$1.50 per 'token' for presswork in greenbacks.

"Economic Uncle Samuel.

"It was easy to swear to do these two things, but it was entirely impossible to do more than one of them. When greenbacks had gone down to 40 cents on the dollar, the prices regularly charged everybody by printing establishments were \$1.50 per 'thousand' and \$1.50 per 'token,' in gold. The 'instructions' commanded that the secretary regard a paper dollar issued by the government as equal to any other dollar issued by the government. Hence the printing of the journals was discontinued. Then the United States sternly rebuked the secretary for disregarding the 'instructions,' and warned him to correct his ways.



MARK TWAIN'S CABIN AT AURORA, NEVADA. It was in this humble habitation where the celebrated humorist wrote the most of his manuscript for "Roughing It."

wherefore he got some printing done, and forwarded the bill to Washington with full exhibits of the high prices of things in the territory, and called attention to a printed market report wherein it was observed that even hay was \$250 a ton. The United States responded by subtracting the printing bill from the secretary's suffering salary—and moreover remarked with dense gravity that he would find nothing in his 'instructions' requiring him to purchase hay!

"Sluggish Gray Matter.

"Nothing in this world is paid in such impenetrable obscurity as a U. S. treasury controller's understanding. The very first of the hereafter would get up nothing more than a faint glimmer in it. In the days I made to comprehend why it was that \$20,000 would not go as far in Nevada, where all commodities ranged at an enormous figure, as it would in the other territories, where, extending cheapness was the rule. He was an officer who looked out for the little expenses all the time. The secretary of the territory kept his office in his bed-chamber, as I before remarked; and he charged the United States no rent, although his 'instructions' provided for that item, and he could have justly taken advantage of it as a thing which I would have done with more than lightning promptness if I had been secretary myself. But the United States never applauded this devotion. Indeed, I think my country was ashamed to have so improvident a person in its employ.

"Mental Gymnastics.

"Those 'instructions' (we used to read a chapter from them every morn-

ing as intellectual gymnastics and a couple of chapters in Sunday school every Sabbath, for they treated of all subjects under the sun and had much valuable religious matter in them along with the other stuff) those 'instructions' commanded that pen-knives, envelopes, pens, and writing paper be furnished the members of the legislature. So the secretary made the purchase and the distribution. The knives cost \$1 apiece. There was one too many, and the secretary gave it to the clerk of the house of representatives. The United States said the clerk of the house was not a 'member' of the legislature, and took that \$1 out of the secretary's salary, as usual.

"About 'Sawing Wood.'

"White men charged \$3 or \$4 a 'load' for sawing up stove wood. The secretary was sufficiently enough to know that sawing up stove wood was not such a high price as that; so he got an Indian to saw up a load of office wood at \$1.50. He made out the usual voucher, but signed no name to it—simply appended a note explaining that an Indian had done the work, and had done it in a very capable and satisfactory way, but could not sign the voucher owing to lack of ability in the necessary direction. The secretary had to pay that \$1.50. He thought the United States would admire both his economy and his honesty in getting the work done at half price and not putting a pretended Indian's signature to the voucher, but the United States did not see it that light. The United States was too much accustomed to employing \$1.50 thieves in all manner of official capacities to regard his explanation of the voucher as having any foundation in fact.

"The Red Man's Mark.

"But the next time the Indian sawed wood for us I taught him to make

a cross at the bottom of the voucher—he looked like a cross that had been drunk a year—and then I witnessed it and it went through all right. The United States never said a word. I was sorry I had not made the voucher for 1,000 loads of wood instead of one. The government of my country smokes honest simplicity, but finds artistic shilling, and I think I might have developed into a very capable phlegm-pot if I had remained in the public service a year or two.

"Singular Statesmanship.

"That was a fine collection of sovereigns, that first Nevada legislature. They levied taxes to the amount of \$50,000 or \$60,000 and ordered expenditures to the extent of about \$1,000. Yet they had their little periodical explosions of economy like all other bodies of the kind. A member proposed to save \$1 a day to the nation by dispensing with the chaplain. And yet that short-sighted man needed the chaplain more than any other member, for he generally sat by his desk, eating raw turnips during the morning prayer.

"Franchises 'Hung Over.'

"The legislature sat 60 days, and passed private toll-road franchises all the time. What they adjourned it was estimated that every citizen owned about three franchises, and it was believed that unless Congress gave the territory another degree of longitude there would not be room enough to accommodate toll-roads. The ends of them were hanging over the boundary line everywhere like a fringe.

"The fact is, the freighting business had grown to such important proportions that there was nearly as much excitement over suddenly acquired toll-road fortunes as over the wonderful silver mines."

Senator Newland's Plan to Cure the Railroad Rate Evils

ON the day when Utah was young the transportation problem was much more serious than the one which confronts Congress and the country today. It was not then a question of rates or discriminations, but a question of how to get across the plains and mountains to the new land on any terms. The people who travel from Chicago to Salt Lake in two days and nights are considerably better off than those who journeyed in ox teams over the same ground 50 years ago. From a Utah standpoint, the railroad system of today, as compared with the hardships of transportation in an earlier time, is an unmitigated blessing and, indeed, the very type and symbol of civilization. In this view of the matter, it is easy to understand why there are many people, not only among the railroad managers, but among shippers and lawmakers, who refuse to see any serious evils in the present situation, and think it would be wise to let well enough alone.

Not the Real Lesson.

But this is not the real lesson to be learned from a study of the facts. While we have a great and efficient system of transportation, which has made it possible to develop the western country on a grand scale, it is nevertheless true that grave and genuine evils have grown out of the private control of this public utility. The lesson is not that we should do nothing, or be satisfied with what we have, but that in going forward to better things we should proceed carefully, soberly, conservatively, and with justice to all the interests involved.

I believe in national control of railroads, just as I believe in national control of irrigation, and for the same reason. Both are public utilities and both must now be conducted upon a scale which makes the states quite powerless to control them for the best advantage of the whole people. I do not mean that we should get immediately to national ownership of railroads, as we have already gone to national construction of irrigation works, because in one case private capital is doing and is ready to do what private capital could not or would not do in the other case. It is none the less essential that railroad monopoly, like water monopoly in the arid region, should be controlled and made to serve the highest public interest.

National Incorporation Law.

As the first step to this end, I favor a national incorporation law. Utah and Nevada, for instance, can assert to effective control over corporations chartered in Kentucky, New Jersey or other states. Such corporations are alien to the vast majority of the public they serve in connection with interstate commerce. Your senators and representatives can have no influence in shaping the courses under which they do business and nothing which has been attempted in the way of control by state or national authority has given much satisfaction to anybody. Corporations which serve all the people as do the great consolidated transportation systems of today, should get their charters from the government, which represents all the people, and be operated in accordance with laws made by such government.

Is Urging the Railroads.

I am urging a measure which would bring the railroads gradually under a national incorporation law. I believe the consolidation of competing lines is not only natural and inevitable, but that

it can be permitted under methods which will benefit the public materially. This can be accomplished by rigid supervision over the amount of dividends to be issued at the time of incorporation or when new lines are acquired or constructed. Securities should not be issued in excess of actual cash received, or, in the case of new construction, in excess of actual cost, whilst dividends should be strictly limited to a reasonable return on capital employed in the investment. Moreover, the present diverse and complex system of collecting railroad taxes should be reformed. It needs to be unified and simplified. I think this end must be done by having the nation collect the taxes in the form of a tax on gross receipts and then divide the proceeds upon some equitable basis among the several states.

What the Rates Would Be.

With this plan in operation, rates would be as low as is consistent with the payment of a reasonable return upon an honest valuation. All incentive for excessive rates and all temptation because the dividend could not be higher than the normal return fixed by law. With legalized consolidation, all temptation to give discriminations in favor of great shippers would be removed, because competition among lines operating in the same territory would be a thing of the past. The way to abolish an evil is to remove the incentive for that evil. When excessive rates and unfair discriminations between shippers and communities no longer increase railroad business and earnings, such rates and discriminations will die a natural death.

Under a national incorporation law we should see a gradual removal of the entire transportation system. The new conditions will be more satisfactory to investors than the conditions of today because they will enjoy assured dividends in value and investment. But it is the public which will be the chief gainer. All profits in excess of the normal return, together with the vast increase in value and earnings of the growth of the country, will be translated into public benefits in the form of better service, higher wages, and constantly lowering railroad rates, and we do justice alike to labor and capital, to producer and consumer.

About Corporate Control.

If I were asked to name the worst evil resulting from railroad monopoly I should say it is corporate control of policy, which finds excuse, if not actual justification, in the chaotic conditions resulting from state and local control of railroad rates and railroad taxes. The plan of national incorporation, with limited dividends and fixed taxes on gross receipts, will take the railroads out of politics. And not until the railroads go out of politics can we count on real progress in the improvement of our institutions.

Agrees With Roosevelt Plan.

The plan I am advocating is by no means inconsistent with the president's plan of rate regulation by the interstate commerce commission, but would confine the exercise of that great power within certain limitations designed to protect the public on one hand, and the railroad owners, on the other.

National Incorporation, under these conditions, would give us most of the advantages of government ownership without its dangers. If in the future it is desired to take the more radical step, the transition from private to public ownership could be made without a jolt.

I hope the people of Utah—always progressive, yet always conservative—will stand for some scientific and lasting solution of the railroad question, such as I believe we can surely reach through national incorporation.

FRANCIS G. NEWLANDS.