

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

CORRESPONDENCE OCCASIONED BY THE DINNER IN HONOR OF DR. FOLWELL

Many people who were unable to attend the dinner given by the Minnesota Historical Society on January 17, 1921, in honor of Dr. Folwell and in celebration of the completion of the first volume of his *History of Minnesota* wrote letters expressing their sentiments on the occasion. A selection from these letters is printed here. Mr. Ames, the writer of the first letter, had been scheduled to give one of the toasts at the dinner.

FROM MR. CHARLES W. AMES, ST. PAUL¹

It is a great disappointment to me that temporary disability will prevent my being present at your important annual meeting this evening. I have not been able for several years to take part in the deliberations and activities of the Historical Society, but I have not weakened in my appreciation of the importance of those activities to the State. I would like to share my testimony to the Governor and the representatives of the Legislature on that occasion as to the imperative importance of giving to the Historical Society the support called for by your pamphlet Budget of December, 1920. Under your wise and energetic administration the Historical Society has been so organized that Minnesota may hold her own among the States of the Union in preserving for posterity the records of her progress, economic, social and political, and the patriotic efforts and achievements of many good citizens in public office and out of it.

The Legislature will fail lamentably in its duty to itself and to the tax payers, if it does not provide the modest sum required to maintain and make effective the great Institution now housed so magnificently in the Historical Society building. I commend

¹ See *post*, p. 63.

most heartily the great movement for public economy as the chief means of "bringing us back to normalcy"; but it would be false economy to cripple the Historical Society by giving it substantially less than the \$50,000 covered by your budget of requirements. (I assume, of course, that you can substantiate your estimates to the satisfaction of the Appropriations Committee, and show that the amounts are really necessary and will be wisely administered.)

In a true perspective of our public expenditures, the Historical Society appropriations are, in proportion to their small amount, among the most meritorious. The founders of our State were foresighted in organizing our Society at the very dawn of our political history. Surely, it is for us to take full advantage of their prevision.

But, it is my chief disappointment that I shall be unable to do my part in paying respect in person to your distinguished guest at the dinner. There is no man living to whom I would more gladly pay honor than Dr. William Watts Folwell. If I called him the Nestor of Minnesota, I might seem to be twitting him with his years. Somehow his years have made so little impression on him that they are not much noticed by his friends. His mind is always alert and his interest in all that goes on about him is as keen as with any of us youngsters.

It is characteristic of Dr. Folwell that he should be devoting his leisure and his maturity to the monumental task of making a compendious history of Minnesota. Surely, no one is better qualified than he for that work, especially as the most important half century of that history has taken place under his personal observation.

Fortunate is the Society, fortunate is the State, that its annals are to be recorded and interpreted wisely and impartially by this trained historian, ripe scholar, brave soldier, and good citizen. We are all looking forward eagerly and expectantly to his completed work. Surely the funds will be provided for its publication whatever may happen to the rest of your budget.

Dr. Folwell also is to be congratulated on the opportunity of crowning a long life of service in this way. Pray give him assurance of my regard, admiration, esteem, and affection.

FROM DR. MARION L. BURTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN

How I wish I could be present and extend my greetings and congratulations in person to President Folwell, but since this is impossible and since I must decline your invitation, I do want to send a word of most emphatic and hearty congratulations.

I regard President Folwell as one of the rarest men that Minnesota has claimed as a citizen. I have been impressed repeatedly by the modernity of his mind and the almost prophetic vision which he had of the future of education in the State. Permit me, therefore, to share with you and many others in this happy celebration and recognition of one who has meant so much to the great commonwealth of Minnesota.

FROM JUDGE DANIEL L. FISH, MINNEAPOLIS

I regret very much that it will be impossible for me to attend the dinner in honor of Dr. Folwell to be given on the 17th, for if any man is entitled the honor and the affection of his fellows he is that man. We are to be on our way to California on the date named but the occasion will not be forgotten. Will you kindly extend to the guest of the evening our felicitations and warmest regards. And when we return in the spring I shall hope to assure him in person that, in spite of the date-lines, I regard him as the most promising of all my youthful friends.

FROM DR. ALBERT BUSHNELL HART, PROFESSOR OF GOVERNMENT
IN HARVARD UNIVERSITY

It is unfortunate that such a trifle as 1,500 miles of distance should separate me from the dinner to Dr. Folwell. It would give me great pleasure to be present and join in paying honor to that nestor of Northwestern educators, the friend and inciter of three generations.

FROM DR. HARRY PRATT JUDSON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF CHICAGO

I greatly regret that it will be impracticable for me to be present at the dinner for Dr. Folwell. Few things would give me

more pleasure than to have even a small hand in anything that would do him honor. It was my privilege to be for several years one of his colleagues in the Faculty of the University of Minnesota and I learned something of the very wide range of his scholarly attainments and something also of his great devotion to public service. In my opinion Minnesota owes much to him as one of its most eminent and useful citizens.

FROM MR. WILLIAM B. MITCHELL, ST. CLOUD, MINNESOTA

It is with deep regret that I find myself unable to accept your invitation to attend the complimentary dinner to be given Dr. William Watts Folwell on the evening of January 17. It would give me great pleasure to testify in this way my appreciation of Dr. Folwell from the personal point of view after an acquaintance extending over many years, as well as to the valuable services he has rendered the state as a scholar, a teacher, and a historian. His high character as a citizen has exerted a most wholesome influence, affecting not only his immediate vicinity, but being recognized and appreciated by the entire intelligent body of our citizenship.

It is my sincere hope that Dr. Folwell may be spared to us for many years yet, that he may be able, among other things, to complete the valuable historical work upon which he is now engaged.

FROM THE HONORABLE KNUTE NELSON, UNITED STATES SENATOR
FROM MINNESOTA

I exceedingly regret that, on account of my engagements here, I shall be unable to attend the dinner for Dr. Folwell.

I am very glad that your Society is thus honoring him, for he is, and has been, one of the great pioneers in the historical and cultural field of Minnesota.

The State is under great obligations to him for his work and services, and I hope he will be recognized, on some future occasion, in a more formal and emphatic manner.

My earnest hope is that he will continue with us for many years to come.

FROM DR. ALBERT SHAW, EDITOR OF THE AMERICAN REVIEW OF
REVIEWS

If it were physically possible for me to attend the dinner in honor of Dr. Folwell on the 17th, I should gladly make the journey. I happen to be in the Post-Graduate Hospital recovering from an illness and an operation, and therefore will not be able to travel for some weeks.

My acquaintance with Dr. Folwell began in the summer of 1883, almost thirty-eight years ago. It was simultaneous with my first visit to Minneapolis. Dr. Folwell at that time, in his characteristic way, performed an act of kindness to me which was one of the turning points in my life. It led to my becoming a resident of Minneapolis in a capacity which occupied me for a number of years. During those years I had the privilege of knowing Dr. Folwell and Mrs. Folwell intimately and of being a constant visitor in their house. Among all the men whom I have known in America and Europe, I have always placed Dr. Folwell with the very foremost in all that inspires respect, admiration and affection. His knowledge was vast in range and solid in foundation. His judgment was always to be relied upon. His public spirit was great, and his service to the State and the city could not well be over-estimated. But above all things to me as a young man was my esteem for Dr. Folwell in his private and personal capacity as the perfect American gentleman. I should be very eager to read his history of Minnesota, and I am profoundly thankful that his health and strength have been preserved so that he could go on with this noteworthy undertaking. Please convey to him my congratulations and my sense of deep gratitude and abiding affection.

FROM THE REVEREND MARION D. SHUTTER, MINNEAPOLIS

I greatly regret that I shall not be able to attend the dinner in honor of Dr. Folwell, as I shall be out of the city on that occasion. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to be present and help to do him honor. I have known him ever since coming to the city over thirty years ago and hold him as a man, a citizen, and a scholar in the highest esteem. I am glad that he has completed the first volume of his History of Minnesota, and hope that his life and usefulness may be prolonged to finish the work.



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