

it is to me somewhat irrelevant to raise such a fine distinction.

Dr. Blegen quotes my statement that "immigration followed the projected survey of the Great Northern Railway which passed through Alexandria in 1878" and concludes from this that I am suffering from the delusion that there was no immigration to that region until 1878. He therefore devotes several pages to show that there were many settlers in western Minnesota in the sixties and early seventies. Perhaps I did not express myself explicitly enough. I did not mean to say that the immigration followed the *railway* but the *projected survey* of the same. This projected survey was discussed among prospective settlers for many years before the railway came and it was this that guided the bulk of the immigrants in making their selection of lands. But this does not preclude the fact that many years before the main stream of immigration rolled in there were many adventurous pioneers who settled there. I have never suppressed this fact. On the contrary, I have called more attention to this earliest settlement than anyone else. There have been published in various periodicals at least fifteen lengthy articles from my pen dealing with the early settlement of Douglas, Grant, Otter Tail, Clay, and Norman counties in which I have shown that hundreds of Norwegians settled in these counties in the sixties. These many detailed and published studies should be enough to show that I did not mean that immigration did not begin until the railroad reached Alexandria.

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#### A NOTE ON THE SELECTION OF THE FIRST GOVERNOR OF MINNESOTA TERRITORY

Dr. William W. Folwell in his *History of Minnesota*, I: 248, calls attention to the interesting fact that President Zachary Taylor in 1849 first submitted the name of Edward W. McGaughey of Indiana to the United States Senate for the

governorship of Minnesota Territory, but was overruled by a strict party vote in that body. President Taylor next presented the name of William S. Pennington of New Jersey, who, although his appointment was confirmed by the Senate, declined to accept. Alexander Ramsey of Pennsylvania received a recess appointment and was commissioned on April 2, 1849, but the appointment was not laid before the Senate until December 21 nor consented to until January 9, 1850, many months after Ramsey had begun his career of distinguished service in Minnesota.

A curious commentary on the circumstances attending the selection of a governor for the new territory is afforded in a volume of reminiscences entitled *Notes Taken in Sixty Years*, by Richard Smith Elliott, p. 257 (St. Louis, 1883), who in 1849 as a young lawyer of St. Louis recently back from the war with Mexico made a visit to the national capital. A passage of special interest is here reprinted.

T. C. B.

Early in 1849 I made a business visit to Washington, and was at the inauguration of Zachary Taylor as President, on the 5th of March. Mr. Polk's term had expired March 4th, and Senator David R. Atchison, of Missouri, as presiding officer of the Senate, was president of the United States from 12 o'clock Saturday night till Gen. Taylor was sworn in on Monday; but our Missouri Senator did not claim the chance dignity. Col. D. D. Mitchell, of St. Louis, was tendered the Governorship of Minnesota Territory, then just organized, but declined. He only wished to be reinstated as Superintendent of Indian Affairs at St. Louis. A Mr. Pennington, of New Jersey, also refused the Governor's place. Alexander Ramsey, then of Pennsylvania, was in Washington, and I suggested to him that he had better take the Minnesota Governorship, and "grow up with the country." I may have said "go west, young man," but think not. Mr. Ramsey took the place, and the entire west knows how ably he filled it.

Most men would rather confess to wickedness than weakness. The former seems more heroic; but I am only able to acknowledge the latter. While in Washington, at Taylor's

inauguration, Col. Mitchell said to me that he would propose my appointment as Governor of Minnesota, and was very sure that I would be chosen, as he was very intimate with the President. With absurd modesty I declined. I never even thought, then, that Col. Mitchell, under whom I had served as Indian agent, might be a better judge than I of my qualifications. I have never read the "Confessions" of Jean Jacques Rosseau [*sic*], but doubt if he ever owned to declining as big an office as the governorship of Minnesota. Fortunately for the Territory, Ramsey had faith in himself, and the Territory did not lose anything, but probably gained. It was all a matter of destiny. Some people are born to decline office.



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