

MEMORIAL SERVICES

The President of the Senate recognized the Senator from Fillmore County, Mr. Larson, H. A., who offered the following tribute to the deceased members of the Senate in behalf of the Memorial Committee:

“Mr. President, Honored Guests, and Members of the Senate:

“We have responded to a call of the Senate to devote a short time in memory of one who died while a member of this body and of two others, who were former members, and who died during the interim since our last session. This is a fitting and proper ceremony. It is the final farewell to those with whom we have been closely associated and who have answered the last roll call to join the democracy of the dead, where the eloquent become silent, where the previous question has been moved and debate is closed. It remains for us to spread upon our records such brief extracts of their lives and achievements, which we desire to be preserved for future ages, and to that end your Committee on Memorials respectfully submits the following:

“Herman Schmechel was born in Pomern, Germany, April 11, 1857. He came to America and Renville County, Minnesota, in 1881. He worked on various farms for meager wages until 1884 when he acquired a small piece of land to which he added from time to time until his farms consisted of 745 acres, well improved with necessary buildings and equipment. It was the monument to a courageous, persevering, plain, hard working man, who acquired by his own labor and preserved it by frugality and thrift.

“He held many positions of responsibility and trust not only as a public officer but in business affairs. He never shirked. Every duty imposed on him was honestly, efficiently and faithfully performed.

“He was elected to the State Senate in 1918 and served twenty years, and it was as senator that we knew him. He did not have the advantages of schooling, which is supposed to trim, cut and polish. He was a diamond in the rough but nevertheless a jewel. He came from a foreign land at an age when it might have been difficult for one to transplant himself, but not so with him. He was quick to see the opportunities in his adopted country and promptly set to work to avail himself of them. He submerged himself in the melting pot of nationalities and emerged as an outstanding American citizen, a credit to himself, and honor to his adopted country, and set an example of loyalty, devotion and service well worthy of others to emulate.

“He was a man of rare judgment and firm convictions, never a rubber stamp. He won the favor and appreciation of his colleagues and enjoyed the confidence and esteem of all, and it was with genuine sadness and regret to learn that such ruggedness of mind and body had yielded to the inevitable ravages of age.

“He died June 1, 1942, and is survived by his widow, three sons and one daughter. Seven senators and former senators did him the honor to attend his funeral.”

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→ “Laforest E. Potter, representing the 14th Legislative District consisting of Brown and Redwood Counties, in the State Senate from 1915 to 1919, was born at Green Lake, Wisconsin, August 10, 1858.

He came with his family to Brown County in 1869 where they settled on a homestead near where the City of Springfield now stands. This was four years before the advent of the railroad. He experienced the privations and hardships of the early pioneers of Minnesota, which kindled and brought forth those sterling qualities of rugged individualism and perseverance exemplified by him throughout his whole life. After assisting his father for some years, he determined to become a farmer on his own and purchased forty acres to which he added in later years and improved them until they blossomed as the beautiful farmstead known as 'Shady Lane Stock Farms', a show place visited and admired by legions.

"He was elected to the State Senate in 1914 and served one term with unusual ability and distinction, recognized as a sound and dependable leader in solving the problems of agriculture, as far as legislation could solve them. Later, Governor Burnquist, recognizing his ability and standing as a farm leader, appointed him to the Board of Regents of the State University, where he was instrumental in promoting courses of study for the advancement and improvement of agriculture.

"He was a man who rose to prominence with very little schooling. He lived a busy life, occupied with varied activities throughout. He held high offices of trust and responsibility and acquitted himself in every instance with credit and honor.

"He married Ada May Redford, who survives him with one son, Reuben, and two daughters, Mrs. Olive Dahlberg and Mrs. L. Kerr. He died May 8, 1942."

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"George Harold Lommen was born in Caledonia, Minnesota, September 14, 1895. His grandfather was one of the first settlers in southeastern Minnesota, having come to Houston County in 1850. His father, John P. Lommen, was born there in 1852.

"He lost his mother at the age of seven years. He graduated from the Caledonia high school and was a member of the state championship high school debating team in 1913. He went out on his own at the age of seventeen. He completed his law course at the St. Paul College of Law in 1917, and first practiced his profession at Biwabik, Minnesota, where he served as mayor for two terms and then moved to Eveleth. He served one term in the Minnesota House of Representatives and was serving his fourth term in the Senate at the time of his death. When he knew that he was seriously ill he sought advice and relief at the Mayo Clinic, where he soon learned that his ailment would prove fatal, and he went back to the old home where he was born and which he had left at a tender age to see what the world had in store for him, and here, despite the loving and tender care given him by a sister, he died September 19, 1942. He was buried in the beautiful cemetery in his home town. Three of his colleagues were present at the funeral. He is survived by two brothers and three sisters."

HENRY A. LARSON,
Chairman.

H. M. CARR,
J. WILLIAM HUHATALA,
Special Committee on Memorials.