

Mickelson and 2-Term Limit

Watertown Public Opinion

A lot of political guessers have been speculating upon what further political ambitions, if any, Gov. George Mickelson may entertain at the conclusion of his second term in 1950.

The governor, himself, has remained silent as to any future intentions and the probability seems to be that he has not reached any definite decision. He has more than a year in which to do it.

But the idea persists, among many who like to discuss such things, that Mickelson is likely to be an opponent to Sen. Chan Gurney for the Republican nomination for senator in the 1950 primaries. And this does not appear to be illogical reasoning in view of the fact that the governorship, in South Dakota, has so often been used as a sort of "stepping stone" to a United States senatorship.

The Sioux Falls Argus-Leader, however, thinks the "logical answer" to the question about the governor's plans for 1950, is that "he should serve a third term as governor." But the Sioux Falls editor also notes South Dakota's present law limiting a governor's service in this state to two terms.

To clear the way for a third term for Gov. Mickelson, The Argus-Leader wants the 1949 legislature to repeal the term limitation law, which it describes as a "product of political expediency instead of sound thinking."

We are in agreement with The Argus-Leader editor on this point.

It will be recalled that the two-term limitation was imposed for governors in South Dakota, even though by vote of a Republican legislature and in a Republican state administration, largely as a direct result, it then appeared, of the anti-Roosevelt demand for two-term limitation upon the service of a president of the United States. It grew, evidently, out of a desire to appear consistent.

While arguing against a two-term limitation for governor in South Dakota, the Sioux Falls newspaper has, at the same time, been an ardent advocate of a two-term limitation for presidents of the United States.

It still, apparently, upholds the principle of a two-term limit for president, but believes that South Dakota should permit a governor, "at the will of the people" to serve four terms, which would be the equivalent of two terms in the White House, arguing that although a too powerful political machine might be created in eight years, it could not be in four or six.

But two, three or four term limitation, in either the White House or the governor's mansion at Pierre, still remains an arbitrary limit, based entirely upon what one may conclude is a "safe" length of service against the dangers of creation of a too powerful political machine.

The principle that a "good" executive should be allowed more than two terms, or even more than three or four, provided it is always "at the will of the people," still sound like good logic in a democracy.