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W. E. BORAH'S ORATION AT THE FUNERAL OF FRANK STEUNENBERG JANUARY 2, 1906

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"Idaho consecrates her soil today with all that is mortal of her first martyr. In contrition and anguish our young state lingers for a time beside his open grave, not alone that honor may be given to the dead, but that the citizenship and courage of the living may catch the parting inspiration of his steadfast soul. Those who count the cost when duty calls will never know his worth. But those who in this world of self-interest and expediency hear amid it all duty's commanding voice and hasten at all hazards to obey, will realize that Idaho puts beneath the sod today her most illustrious son.

Frank Steunenberg was of the rarest type of manhood. Open, sincere, modest and unassuming--he was in his purposes and plans as inflexible as honor itself. Rugged in body, resolute in mind, almost massive in the strength of his convictions--he was of the granite hewn. In all my acquaintance I have never known one more unusually gifted in moral will power. In moments when he seemed to yield he had simply ceased to argue, that all his silent, invincible force might be gathered for the final effort. By these splendid qualities he endeared himself to his adopted state and spread her fame and standing abroad. There is no place in Idaho today where affection protects the home, where love and thrift shields life and property but they will recount his strong and many virtues, his fearless and incorruptible manhood, his singularly brave and upright heart.

But there was another side to his nature--the one which makes our grief so unspeakable now. How full and rich, how unselfish and complete his friendship which he gave of so generously to all. This man of unbending will, of iron determination, was in the quiet of his friends as faithful and considerate as a woman. His countless acts of friendship, his devotion to the richest passion which sheds its perfume in the human heart, are testified to by the grief and tears of those gathered from every part of the state. His was that genuine affection, that kindness of heart which like an angel on an errand of love touches the suffering soul with the saving balm, and is gone--fled before are seen the tears of coming joy--waiting not for reward, lingering not for praise. The world at large, the state, has lost a splendid manly man, a patriot, a civic soldier without a stain upon his armor. But there are those who feel that they have also lost a friend, perhaps never to be replaced.

But in the midst of this awful tragedy, let us strive to be just. This crime when fastened upon its author will place him or them beyond the pale of human forgiveness or pity. Therefore let us not place it unjustly or upon suspicion. Let us not believe that it is the crime of any class

or

any portion of our citizens or that it finds sympathy with anyone other than the actual perpetrator. Let us hope that when the mystery yields up its secret it will be found that it is some one irresponsible toward all others, actuated by that strange fanaticism and fiendishness which the law-breaker bears toward the brave and upright and loyal, who has alone committed the awful deed. Oh, if men high and low, rich and poor, would only learn obedience to the law, if they would only measure the worth and value of this, the rarest jewel in the crown of liberty.

But let it not be forgotten in a day or a year that the demands of the law must be satisfied--violated with impunity never. Wherever the offense is surely located, whoever it may affect and be fastened upon, there will be neither compromise nor cowardice. Idaho will not permit this humiliation to be ameliorated by time or wiped out by influence. The citizen who from this hour does not become the untiring searcher for the author of this crime carries already in his heart the germs of treason. He is not a part of us--the commonwealth disowns him. Idaho today offers to the nation the inspiring character of her great governor, and from this hour will claim recognition whenever fame gathers to the scroll the names of those who sacrifice all for the civic integrity of our constitutions. But in the months or years to come we will give to our sister states the proof that his example was not in vain--justice will bring to bar the cowardly assassin, and Idaho will in part pay to the memory of her dead her immeasurable debt of gratitude. No man wending his way to his home and loved ones, peering through darkness and storm into the lighted windows where cheer and welcome awaits his coming, will dare to forget that Idaho's standing and manhood's safety is yet in question and will be until the law shall have written the merciless sentences for those who bring us to this unspeakable sorrow. Neither suspicion nor rumor nor passion shall have away, but justice nevertheless will be done. The manhood of Idaho is behind it.

And now to those who would expect a detailed statement of the life and public services of the dead, I must disappoint you. The burden is too great to place so soon upon one who felt so often the graciousness and friendship of his noble nature. Perhaps at some other time and place this may be done. But in the simplicity of truth it may be said now that his career is a splendid portion of the history of our state. The example of his life is indelibly impressed upon the character of our commonwealth. Beyond the confines of the state and among the accredited great he won unstinted praise and the profoundest admiration. The great Elihu Root once said to the speaker, "There is one of the great men of our country." And so all bear witness today, for about his bier are gathered the humblest and the highest, to pay their last respect, while everywhere where he was known men speak in words of commendation and praise.

Born in humble station, by the force of his energy and ability, through self-reliance and integrity he twice won the highest honor in the gift of his state. He leaves for the state he so faithfully served the proudest trophy a public servant can give--and I doubt not that last Saturday night paid the highest debt one can pay for his country. I candidly believe that had he known years before the debt which would be demanded, still he would have paid: recreancy to duty was a stranger to his nature. Not unmindful at the time of the awful task before him and the sacrifice possibly entailed, unflinchingly he pursued his high purpose to the end. Rather than to see law and order trampled beneath the feet of crime, and the name of his state a byword and a jest, he assumed all, and never in his life thereafter wavered. Idaho perhaps has no conception today of

what she owes him.

I know how inadequately I have spoken, but could the unreplied dead but speak again his modest soul would say, it is enough. At each going of a loved and loving friend the last word must be said. So, fondly trusting that somewhere and in some way we will know our noble friend again--farewell."