

PAST AND PRESENT OF WINNESHIEK COUNTY 431

Christian Keyser Preus was reared amid the influences of a cultured home in an environment conducive to the development of the highest qualities of manhood. He received his early education in the public schools and by private instruction and in 1865 came to Decorah and entered Luther College, but on account of illness had to discontinue his studies for about two and a half years. In 1866-67 he accompanied his father on a tour to Norway and in 1868 he was confirmed. In the fall of that year he again took up his studies at the Luther College, from which he was graduated with the class of 1873. The following three years he spent in the study of theology at Concordia Seminary at St. Louis, Missouri, from which he graduated in 1876 and was later in the same year ordained to the ministry. Thereupon he was called to be his father's assistant at the Spring Prairie charge. He was installed the eighth Sunday after Trinity, just twenty-five years after the installation of his father in the same charge. Before entering upon his duties at Spring Prairie, however, he had already served Our Savior's congregation in Chicago temporarily for two months, and after seventeen years he again served the same congregation, this time for about one and a half years.

President Preus has been a staunch friend and warm supporter of the synod and early was recognized as a man of ability and executive force. He has served on various standing committees and has three times been elected vice president namely in 1893, 1896 and 1911. On the two former occasions he declined the office, and had he accepted when first elected he would have become president, as his father, who was then president, died the following year.

Rev. Preus was married in 1877 to Miss Louise Augusta Hjort, a daughter of Rev. Ove Jacob Hjort, then minister at Paint Creek, Allamakee county, Iowa. Of this union eleven children were born, of whom two daughters and five sons are living. The daughters, Henrietta and Kathinka, are at home. Ove, the eldest son, is a minister in Los Angeles, California. Carl has charge of the Norwegian Lutheran church at Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Jacob is a commissioner of insurance of the state of Minnesota. Paul is employed as a bank clerk at Stanley, North Dakota. Ove, Carl, Jacob and Paul all are graduates of Luther College and Herman, the youngest son of the family, is a student there.

In 1897 President Preus was compelled, on account of ill health, to retire from the active ministry, whereupon he removed to Decorah in order to afford his children the best educational advantages possible. He became, in 1898, an instructor at Luther College and in 1902, upon the resignation of Dr. Laur Larsen, then president, was elected to that distinguished position. President Preus has spared no effort to promote the welfare of the institution. He has strengthened the faculty during his administration and it was principally due to him that the fine new dormitory, Laur Larsen Hall, was erected in 1906-07 at a cost of sixty-five thousand dollars. In accordance with a resolution passed by the synod President Preus was present as a representative of Luther College at the centennial anniversary exercises held in Christiania, Norway, in September, 1911, to commemorate the founding of the University of Norway. On this occasion a distinguished honor was conferred upon him by the sovereign, King Haakon VII, who made him a commander of the Royal Order of St. Olaf of the second class. That the work of Rev. Preus has been of inestimable value to Decorah and to the extension of his church is apparent without further comment, and that he has contributed toward raising the standard of citizenship is evident in itself. Mr. Preus