



James H. Kyle

Dakota Images

James Henderson Kyle was born at Cedarville, Greene County, Ohio, on 24 February 1854. In 1871 he entered the University of Illinois, taking a course in civil engineering, and in 1873 he entered Oberlin College in Ohio, and was graduated from the classical course in 1878. He then studied law in preparation for admission to the bar. After pursuing his legal studies for some time, he attended the Western Theological Seminary and entered the ministry of the Congregational church in 1882.

On account of the ill health of his wife he moved to South Dakota in 1885 and was a pastor of a church at Ipswich until 1889 when he moved to Aberdeen. He was a pastor of the Plymouth Congregational Church when he was elected to the state senate as an Independent in 1890. During that term he was elected to the United States Senate to succeed Gideon C. Moody for the term beginning 4 March 1891. In Washington he acted with the Populists and Democrats as long as the reforms he sought for seemed most likely to be reached through those channels. However, when he believed that the Fusionist had become too radical and socialistic, he did not hesitate to turn to the Republican party for support in the election of 1896.

Kyle was particularly interested in the welfare of the laboring man and he attacked corporate wealth and monopolies. He emphasized his belief in higher education when he was chairman of the Committee on Education and Labor. He was also chairman of the Industrial Commission, which conducted an exhaustive investigation on the vital and complex questions of our industrial and labor problems. The reports of the commission constituted nineteen volumes. He was still a member of the Senate when he died suddenly on 1 July 1901.

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