

Survivors And the Fittest

Some of the friends of Gordon and Welda Allott gathered recently to wish them well on their return to Colorado, which Gordon Allott represented in the Senate for 18 years.

It was a cheerful affair, not only because Washington is fun to leave these days, or because Colorado is a nice place to go at any time. The Allotts are just too sensible to allow a lost election to dampen their spirits.

It was my privilege to serve on Senator Allot's staff from January, 1970, when I first came to Washington, until January, 1973, when he left the Senate, having lost his bid to become Colorado's first four-term senator.

A number of factors contributed to his defeat a year ago this week. We made a number of campaign mistakes. But the most important factor was that Colorado has changed a lot since 1954,

The writer is Washington Editor of National Review and a frequent contributor to these pages.

and Gordon Allott is not the sort of malleable man who finds it easy to pour himself into new molds.

He came of age in the Depression, living in the unglamorous parts of Colorado, around the smoking steel mills of Pueblo, and the barren wheat growing flatlands around Lamar in eastern Colorado.

As senator he worked hard to promote the economic growth of Colorado, his attachment to the traditional Western growth ethic reinforced by his Depression experience. His constituents approved.

But he did his job so well that he changed his constituency, and brought about his defeat. He helped bring Colorado light, technological industry that does not use Colorado's most precious resource, water. And this brought a large influx of new voters, young, educated, affluent, mobile, and quite unresponsive to the stolid Westernness of Allott's policies and personality.

The new Coloradoans are environmentalists of the sort who want to slam the door behind them when they cross the Kansas border into Colorado. They—and the industry that employs them, and the expensive ski facilities that accommodate them—have made Colorado more like Connecticut or New Jersey than any state contiguous to it.

And now Colorado has senators who grew up in Connecticut and New Jersey.

In spite of the changes in the state, Allott only lost by approximately one-half of one percentage point. And he might not have lost at all if the White House had granted his urgent request for an end-of-campaign visit by the President to Colorado.

Allott made the request about 10 days before the election, when a poll showed him below 50 per cent and a substantial number of voters undecided. The political experts in the White House assured us that they had

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secret information that we would win by 15 percentage points. Besides, they said, snow on the ground might hold down the size of a crowd for a presidential visit, and that might hurt his image.

But the plain truth is this.

For 20 years Allott had been a supporter of Nixon. For four years he had been an especially loyal supporter of even President Nixon's dumbest causes—the SST, Judge Carswell.

But when it came time for Nixon to do Allott a favor, all Allott got was an evasive, dishonest and, in the end, contemptuous refusal.

The day before the election, Nixon flew across country to vote in California. He made several stops, but none in Colorado.

In the days after the election the White House, flushed with victory, made clear its lack of sympathy for Allott. According to the hardboiled Darwinism in vogue at the White House in November and December, 1972, those politicians who need the help of friends in order to survive deserve neither friends nor survival.

A year ago the reigning philosophy was survival of the fittest, and Mr. Nixon and his agents were feeling remarkably fit. Today Mr. Nixon has all the friends he has earned and deserves.

Now Mr. Nixon may not survive. He certainly won't be saved by Allott's vote in the Senate. But Allott has more important things to worry about, like what the trout are hitting up at Electra Lake, north of Durango.
