

## MEMORIAL—NO. 3.

## RAIL ROAD.

MEMORIAL to congress for a donation of land to aid in the construction of a rail road from Dubuque to Keokuk in the state of Iowa.

*To the Hon. Senate and House of Representatives of the United States:*

Your memorialists, the general assembly of the state of Iowa, desirous of encouraging agriculture and facilitating commerce with our sister states, and through them with foreign states, respectfully represent, that the obstructions to the navigation of the Mississippi river, at what is called the upper and lower rapids, are a great barrier to the trade and commerce of Iowa, as well as Illinois and Wisconsin, that we can not remain indifferent to the improvement of this important national highway, which washes the eastern border of our state for three hundred miles, but viewing this as a national work, in the early accomplishment of which the western states, nay, all the states of the union, are more or less interested, Iowa can only express her earnest wish [101] as one of those states, that the congress of the United States will see proper in its wisdom, to make ample appropriation for the improvement of the navigation of this important artery of commerce—this great arm of the ocean, upon which the surplus produce of the western farmer finds its way to feed the starving population of the old world, at the earliest practicable period, whilst we entertain and cannot withhold the expression of these views in regard to the improvement of the rapids in the Mississippi, we beg leave to invite the attention of congress to an object demanded alike by the interests of our state and of the general government: we allude to the necessity of the construction of a railroad from Dubuque through the counties of Dubuque, Jones, Linn, Johnson, Washington, Henry and Lee, to Keokuk, a work called for by the growing importance of the agricultural products of Iowa, and the importance of connecting the rich mineral regions of the northern part of the state, with the lower Mississippi, at a point that is navigable at all seasons of the year, except a few weeks during the winter season, by which means the hardy and enterprising miner will find constant employment and increased pay for his labor, while the farmer through the enterprise of the merchant, will be enabled to realize the benefits of the earliest and best markets for the products of his annual toil, and the interest and prosperity of other classes of our citizens would be equally promoted.

Your memorialists would remind your honorable body that the great mass of our community thus to be benefited by an enterprise of this kind, is composed of individuals who are eager to appropriate all the surplus funds which they may realize from their industry, to the purchase of government lands, and who only want the benefit of the market which this work will bring to their doors, to enable them to become profitable customers of the general government in the purchase of her vacant prairie lands, which otherwise would remain unsold for years to come.

Your memorialists therefore, respectfully ask an appropriation of lands for the construction of a rail road from Dubuque to Keokuk, through the interior of the state, equal to five sections for each mile of said road, to be located in alternate sections five miles on each side of said road or lands adjacent thereto, as the same may be conveniently obtained.

In looking back upon the rapid and powerful growth of the west, in population, industry and wealth, we are glad to acknowledge that that growth has been greatly promoted by the liberality of the general government, in the appropriations of lands for objects of internal improvements in the nine states

where the public lands are situated. In [102] every instance, it is believed, that the improvements made in whole or in part by grants of public lands, have resulted in corresponding benefits to the general government, in the increased sale of those lands, so we confidently believe it would be in regard to the project under consideration; it is a narrow view of the subject to say that the government can ever be the loser by extending aid to objects of this kind in a border state, increased emigration, the sale and cultivation of immense bodies of lands, which otherwise would remain unsold and uncultivated for years, the impetus given to the agriculture, commerce, and general prosperity of the state, the accession thereby offered to the aggregate wealth of the nation, all forbid it.

By the accomplishment of this enterprise, the large prairies on the line of its route could be supplied with timber for fencing, and building purposes from the pine regions of the upper Mississippi and upper Cedar rivers, which would bring into market large tracts of fertile lands, now too remote from timber to be subject to cultivation, without some such facility as would be afforded by the proposed railroad; but acting on the belief that the state and nation will both be benefited by the grant we ask for, we commend the subject to the early consideration of congress, and trust that our prayers may be granted, under such conditions in regard to the transportation of the mails, troops and munitions of war as the general government may deem fit.

Resolved, That the secretary of state be requested to furnish one copy of this memorial to the senate of the United States, and one copy to each of our representatives in congress.

Approved, January 22, 1848.