

MEMORIAL No. 1.

DESMOINES RIVER GRANT.

MEMORIAL to congress for their construction of the act appropriating lands for the improvement of the Desmoines river, and to grant additional lands.

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

Your memorialists, the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, would respectfully represent: That by your act past in August, A. D. 1846, every alternate section of land not otherwise appropriated within five miles of the Desmoines river was donated to the state (then Ter.) of Iowa, for the improvement of said river from its mouth to the forks. Said lands to be selected within said Territory of Iowa.

In accordance with, and for the purpose of carrying out the spirit and design of said act of appropriation, We the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, proceed to enact laws providing for the election and organization of a Board of Public Works whose duty it was made to dispose of said lands and apply the proceeds in the construction of the improvement of said Desmoines river in accordance with the grant.

After the organization of the Board there arose some doubts as to the limits of the grant, to-wit: Whether it extends to the boundary of the Territory of Iowa as it existed at the time of the passage of the act of appropriation, or was confined within the limits of the State, the line of which crosses said river many miles below the point where the Territorial line crossed.

It was therefore deemed proper to get the construction of the proper department at Washington upon that subject—application being made through the Hon. Wm. Thompson to his Honor Richard M. Young, Commissioner of the General Land Office for his opinion and construction, it was given by letter to the Board bearing date Feb. 23, [198] 1848, in which he confines the appropriation within the limits of the present State boundaries.

The Board of Public Works presuming that construction to be decisive and unalterable, proceeded accordingly—by putting under contract a large amount of said improvement, to wit: near one hundred miles which is now in active and successful progress of construction. The cost of which will not exceed the amount of the appropriation under the construction of his Honor Mr. Young. But lo! a short time since we find that a large portion of the lands embraced in that construction and said grant, has been ordered to be, and sold at the Land Office of the United States, in the district of Iowa City contrary to the spirit and language of said act of appropriation, and the decision of the Commissioner of the General Land Office, which if not rectified, will defeat the design of said act of appropriation—and leave insufficient available means to complete that portion of said improvement now under contract, and hereby render useless a large expenditure already made. Therefore,
Resolved,

That our Senators and Representatives in the Congress of the United States be instructed to use their best exertion to procure the passage of an act giving to the said act of appropriation such construction as the language therein contained warrants—and as has been given it by the Commissioner of the General Land Office, and also authority to the Board of Public Works of the

State of Iowa to cause to be selected other public lands within said State in lieu of such portions of odd sections within five miles of said river as has been disposed of by the United States, prior and since the passage of said act of appropriation.

Resolved,

That the Secretary of State be instructed to forward to each of our Senators and members of the House of Representatives in the Congress of the United States, a copy of this Memorial and Resolution.

Approved, Dec. 16, 1848.

MEMORIAL No. 2.

IOWA RIVER.

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

Your memorialists, the General Assembly of the State of Iowa, beg [199] leave to ask the attention of Congress to the improvement of the navigation of the Iowa river, and to represent that, in their opinion, the appropriation of a portion of the vacant public lands in the valley of the river, to the construction of a canal from the seat of government of the State to the mouth of the Iowa, would be incalculable benefit to the State as well as to the general government. The construction of such a work would bring to a speedy sale the entire public domain along the route, and secure to the interior of the State what its exigencies most seriously require, facilities for transporting to market its annually increasing surplus produce. The length of the proposed route is fifty-five miles, and it is believed that a similiar appropriation to that made a year or two since for the improvement of the navigation of the Des Moines river, would be nearly, if not quite, sufficient to construct it.

Your memorialists therefore respectfully ask an appropriation of lands to aid in the construction of a canal from Iowa City to the mouth of the Iowa river, equal to five sections for each mile of said river, to be located in alternate sections five miles an [on] each side of said river, or land adjacent thereto as the same may be conveniently obtained.

Resolved,

That the Secretary of State be requested to forward one copy of this memorial to each of our Senators and Representatives in Congress.

Approved, December 16, 1848.