

"Davenport and Council Bluffs Railroad," December 20, 1849

"Davenport And Council Bluffs Railroad."

The committee appointed by the Railroad Convention, recently held at Iowa City, to address the citizens of Iowa in relation to the above Railroad, have discharged their duty in a very satisfactory manner. After alluding to the unanimity pervading the St. Louis and Memphis Convention, and subsequently the Illinois Legislature in favor of a great Central National Railroad, the address continues as follows:--

Public opinion, as far as it has been expressed unites in recommending to the General Government the establishment of a great central national railroad from the Pacific Ocean to the western borders of the States, agrees that the same should be located as best calculated to accommodate the general interest of the nation, with branches on the west over to San Francisco, in California; and the other to the mouth of the Columbia river, or Puget's Sound, in Oregon, and on the east, one branch southward to Memphis, one central, to St. Louis, and one northward to Lake Michigan, at Chicago. In viewing the subject at this time, we will call the attention of the people of Iowa in an especial manner to the northern branch, so far as it may go through the State of Iowa, and believing that the most direct route, and the one that is best calculated to accommodate the greatest public interest, will be ultimately adopted, we briefly invite their attention to the route from the Council Bluffs, on the Missouri river, by Ft. Des Moines, and Iowa City, to Davenport on the Mississippi river, at Rock Island.

The first General Assembly of Iowa, at their extra session passed a resolution dated the 24th day of January, 1848, instructing our Senators, and requesting our Representatives to procure from the government of the United States a grant of lands to aid in the construction of a railroad from Davenport, by way of Iowa City, Raccoon Forks to some point near the Council Bluffs, on the Missouri river, and a bill was supported in the House of Representatives of the United States, making the grant prayed for, but failed on its passage. The present General Assembly at their regular session took up the subject and passed a resolution, dated the 29th December, 1848, giving similar instructions to our Senators and Representatives. Thus it will be perceived, that both General Assemblies, elected under the Constitution of the State by their official acts approved this route. The Council Bluffs, on the Missouri, and Rock Island, at Davenport, on the Mississippi are generally admitted to be the most suitable and convenient points for crossing these rivers with a railroad, and being on the most direct route for the northern branch of the great central national railroad in its progress to the east, which from necessity must pass south

of the southern end of Lake Michigan, the Maumee and Sandusky Bays, and won the southern shore of Lake Erie, to connect with the Buffalo railroad, extending by Albany to Boston.

By reference to the most approved map it will be found that the Council Bluffs, and Davenport, at Rock Island, are about the same parallel of latitudes, and that Fort Des Moines and Iowa city are situated within a few miles of a direct line between these two points, and that in extending the route eastward, the south bend of Lake Michigan, the Maumee and Sandusky Bays will be within a few minutes of the same parallel of latitude.

The road from Davenport to Council Bluffs is three hundred and twenty-five miles, thence, (according to Mr. Loughborough's estimate) to the South Pass, eight hundred miles, making the distance from the Mississippi to the south Pass eleven hundred and twenty-five miles. From St. Louis to the mouth of the Kansas river 275 miles, thence to the South Pass 1175 miles--fifty miles greater than the distance from Davenport to the South Pass; thus it will be perceived, that Rock Island, by the way of Council Bluffs, is the nearest point at which the Mississippi river can be reached, and on the most direct route to Chicago, and the south bend of Lake Michigan.--The road, in its progress eastward, from the Council Bluffs, will intersect the Des Moines improvement at Fort Des Moines; will cross the Iowa river, and intersect the Dubuque and Keokuk railroad at Iowa City, and on its approach to Davenport, it will connect with the railroad now being made from Rock Island to Peru, in Illinois, at the junction of the Chicago canal with the Illinois river. In its progress eastward to Chicago, it will intersect the Chicago and Galena railroad, and the railroad in contemplation from Chicago to Cairo, and in its passage around the south bend of Lake Michigan, it will intersect the Detroit railroad at New Buffalo, and at Toledo the main trunk of the Wabash and Lake Erie canal, a branch of which extends to Cincinnati; as it passes the Sandusky Bay it will intersect the Sandusky and Cincinnati railroad at Cleveland and the Ohio canal, a branch of which extends up the Mahoning to Pittsburg, and the Cleveland, Columbus and Cincinnati railroad; thence down the southern shore of Lake Erie, intersecting the New York and Erie railroad at Dunkirk, and at Buffalo the Albany and Boston railroad, and from which point communication can be made with the Willand canal in Canada and with the improvements on the St. Lawrence river.

With these views of the subject, we are clearly of the opinion that the line from Council Bluffs to Davenport presents greater advantages than any other route, and confidently believe that it will eventually be adopted as a portion of the great Atlantic and Pacific railroad, and with these impressions, we recommend to the citizens of Iowa to solicit of the general government an appropriation of land, sufficient to enable the State to accomplish the work. We have been thus particular in presenting facts connected with the railroad, with the view of attracting the attention of our eastern friends.

In reading the proceedings of a public meeting of the friends of a railroad to California, held at the United States' Hotel, in Boston, April 19, 1849, we perceive, that our northern friends were unacquainted with the localities on the Upper Mississippi, although they manifested much zeal in favor of accomplishing a communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans by a railroad, and presenting to the public many valuable statistics and forcible arguments in favor of its speedy construction; in all of these proceedings they appeared to consider St. Louis as the

only terminus on the Mississippi. Without any desire to interfere with the claims of St. Louis to the location of the central branch of the great Pacific railroad, we have considered it due to the citizens of Iowa, and our eastern friends in general, to present the foregoing facts to their calm and dispassionate consideration, most heartily concurring with the St. Louis Convention, in declaring the subject to be of too much importance in a national point of view, to be influenced by individual, local, sectional or party views, but consider it one in which every citizen of the United States, should feel a deep interest, and call upon our fellow citizens, one and all, to unite their energies in concentrating and strengthening public opinion in favor of the speedy accomplishment of the work, and enforcing upon the consideration of Congress the weight of that opinion.

Robert Lucas, Ch'm.

December 1, 1849.