

"Local Matters - Important Railroad Meeting" Newspaper Article, February 24, 1854

Local Matters.

Important Railroad Meeting.

We attended a meeting of our citizens at Ogilvie House, yesterday afternoon, and found the people much interested in Railroad matters, notwithstanding the past inactivity of railroad-builders. The meeting was called for the purpose of consulting with the representatives of the Lyons Iowa Central R.R. company, consisting of Henry P. Adams, Gen. Brow, Col. Whiting, Messrs. Haun, Elliott, Shaw and Arnold, upon the subject of Railroads. Many of our leading citizens were present, and an excellent friendly feeling was exhibited by all. There seemed to be a determination to do something for the interests of Muscatine, and, we believe, a great and important step was then and there taken, which shall tell on the future of our city beyond the expectations of the most sanguine.

The object of the meeting was briefly stated by W. G. Woodward, Esq., who remarked that the people had met for the purpose of listening to and taking into consideration any proposition the Lyons Company might deem proper to make to them. W.G. Haun, esq., at the request of H. P. Adams, then made the following proposition: That if the people of Muscatine would raise \$125,000, they would construct a Railroad from this city to intersect with the Lyons Road at De Witt, or some other point upon said Road, for the purpose of giving Muscatine an Eastern connection, they (the Lyons Co.) would furnish the remainder, and pledge themselves to have the Road in running order in less than fifteen months. It was estimated that the entire cost of such a Road would be about \$600,000. He also stated that, upon consultation with Mr. Adams, he was authorized to say that the Company would take \$50,000 less than the amount required of the people of Muscatine and Johnson counties to construct the Road from this city to Iowa City; making the sum necessary to be raised for that project \$200,000; and they proposed to have both Roads--the De Witt and Iowa City--completed within 15 months.

Mr. Adams, being enquired of, gave a statement of the resources of the Lyons Company, showing, we suppose, to the satisfaction of all present that this Company was perfectly responsible, and would carry through anything they undertook. Says Mr. Adams, "even though we kept from you all knowledge of our responsibility, we should be considered ignoramuses to spend \$50,000 on one Road before asking for one dime from you, and also furnishing five dollars to your one upon a project requiring \$600,000, and then abandon the work at any stage of its progress. We want to build those two roads because they will pay, and not only pay us, but

they will pay you, and we wish to identify our interests with yours that we may move along in harmony. Even suppose you do not chose to raise anything towards these two projects, they will be undertaken and completed, but, perhaps, not in just the way you would like," nor in the time that would suit your interests.

"With such a connection east, a line of Road will be extended below the Rapids, on your river to Keokuk. This, I consider, must be the inevitable result, and that it must necessarily be built very soon."

Mr. Haun spoke of the unfavorable reports that had been circulated concerning the financial affairs of the Lyons company, and showed that the one or two instances of their bonds selling at moderate rates was occasioned by their enemies disposing of them at such prices merely for effect, and that Mr. Adams had bought them up for the benefit of the company. The larger part of their bonds had been negotiated for from 85 to 93 cents on the dollar.

It was then agreed by the company that they would take mortgages on real estate, and give in stock one half of the appraised value of the security. The mortgages to run from three to five years, bearing ten per cent interest, payable semi-annually. The citizens thought by thus doing they would be able to raise the necessary amount.

Mr. Adams then suggest the propriety of the gentlemen in the interests of the Lyons Company, leaving the room for a while and allowing the citizens to talk the matter over among themselves, which was accordingly done. T. M. Isett, Esq., being called to the chair, Mr. John A. Parvin offered a resolution that the citizens of Muscatine raise the required \$125,000 forthwith, which was unanimously agreed upon. The result of this meeting was then reported to the members of the Lyons Company, who then reassured our people that the thing should be pushed through with all possible dispatch, as soon as our proportion was raised. They furthermore agreed to put on a corps of engineers in a few days, and survey the route, at their own expense, between this city and De Witt.

We have seldom witnessed the unanimity of feeling that pervaded the whole meeting. Each person appeared pleased with the very liberal offers made there, and seemed determined to push the matter through with all possible speed.

We are right glad that such a meeting has taken place, and we feel confident that whatever opinion our people may have heretofore entertained of the Lyons Company, they can now view them only in a favorable light, for in the pithy language of Mr. Adams, "what fools they must be to make such propositions, and spend their money and abandon the work, merely for buncombe."

We trust the vote for the city loan of \$55,000 will be carried without a single dissenting voice, for we consider that loan the setting in motion of a ball which shall not lose its momentum until Muscatine takes her stand among the first cities of the west.