

Transcribed Excerpts from C.C. Andrews' Letter XVI about his Trip to Minnesota and Dakota Territory, 1857

Letter XIV

... St. Cloud, October 1856

... Rapid growth of the North-West — Projected railroads — Territorial system of the United States — Inquiry into the cause of Western progress — Influence of just laws and institutions — Lord Bacon's remark.

St. Paul, October 1856

The progress which has characterized the settlement of the territory of Minnesota, presents to the notice of the student of history and political economy some important facts. The growth of a frontier community, so orderly, so rapid, and having so much of the conservative element in it, has rarely been instanced in the annals of the world. In less time than it takes the government to build a custom house we see an unsettled territory grown to the size of a respectable state, in wealth, in population in power ...

When we contemplate the headlong progress of Western growth in its innumerable evidences of energy, we admit the truth of what the Roman poet said — *nil mortalibus arduum est*- that there is nothing too difficult for man. In the narrative of his exploration to the Mississippi in 1820 ... Mr. Schoolcraft tells us how Chicago then appeared. "We found," says he, "four or five families living here." Four or five families was the extent of the population of Chicago in 1820! In 1836 it had 4853 inhabitants. In 1855 its population was 85,000. This history of many western towns that have sprung up within ten years is characterized by much the same sort of thrift. Unless some terrible scourge shall come to desolate the land ... a few more years will present the magnificent spectacle of the entire domain stretching from this frontier to the Pacific coast, transformed into a region of culture ...

At present there are not railroads in operation in Minnesota; but those which are already projected indicate, as well as any statistics, the progress which is taking place. The Chicago, St. Paul, and Fond-du-Lac Railroad was commenced some two years ago at Chicago and over 100 miles of it are completed ... A road has been surveyed from the head of Lake Superior via St. Paul to the southern line of the territory, and will soon be worked ... Another road is being built up the valley of the Red Cedar River in Iowa to Minneapolis. The Keokuk road is in operation over fifty miles, and will soon be under contract to St. Paul. This road is to run via the valley of the Des Moines River, through the rich coal fields of Iowa, and will supply the upper Mississippi and Lake Superior region with coal ... A railroad through this part of the country to the Pacific is among the probable events of the present generation.