

RAILROAD—HUMBOLDT RIVER TO PORTLAND.

JOINT MEMORIAL
OF
THE LEGISLATURE OF OREGON,
ASKING

*Aid in the construction of a railroad from the north bend of Humboldt river,
in the State of Nevada, to Portland, Oregon.*

FEBRUARY 8, 1869.—Referred to the Committee on the Pacific Railroad and ordered to be printed.

STATE OF OREGON, DEPARTMENT OF STATE.

To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting:

I certify that annexed is a true copy of house joint memorial No. 2, asking aid for a branch railroad commencing near the north bend of Humboldt river; thence to cross the spurs of the Siskiyou mountains in the vicinity of Klamath to Rogue river valley; thence northeasterly, through Rogue river, Umpqua, and Willamette valleys, to the Columbia river.

Adopted October 21, 1868, as taken from the original rolls on file in this office.

In testimony whereof I, Samuel E. May, Secretary of State of the State of Oregon, have hereunto subscribed my name and affixed the seal of the State. Done at Salem this 20th day of November, A. D. 1868.

[SEAL.]

SAMUEL E. MAY,
Secretary of State.

House joint memorial No. 2.

Your memorialists, the legislature of the State of Oregon, would respectfully, but earnestly, beg leave to call your attention to the fact, that while generous but liberal endowments are granted by Congress in aid of the Pacific railroad and its different branches, at its eastern terminus; of this we do not complain, but simply to set forth the facts and appeal to your sense of justice for an equal share in the benefits of a common government.

Placed as we are upon the verge of civilization, instead of envy, we congratulate our brethren on the Atlantic slope in the enjoyment of a system of railroads built by the munificence of a generous government, of which the world finds no parallel; and while our exhaustless mines, now more fully developing with each succeeding year, furnish to the

government the means to carry on those gigantic improvements, yet we cannot but feel a painful conviction that, instead of sharing, like our more favored brethren of the east, the benefits of our common government, our distance from the national capital enables us to share only a few rays of its beneficence, which always diverge as they radiate from a common centre.

In proof of these positions we would respectfully remind Congress of the circumstances of our settlement here. From the first advent of American emigrants up to the present time our citizens are continually beset by hostile savages, our property destroyed, and our people murdered. Almost every weekly newspaper, for years, announces that the dreaded savage is again at his murderous work. To such an extent were these atrocities carried, that, in 1852, whole trains of emigrants coming to our State, when in the vicinity of Klamath lake, were brutally murdered; and in 1853, and again in 1855-'56, all the families of southern and eastern Oregon were compelled to leave their property to be destroyed by our common enemy, and congregate in forts for the protection of their lives. This state of things continued for nearly one year, and at that fearful time it seemed doubtful whether the Indians or whites would be driven from our valleys. At one point north of Rogue river, for a distance of 50 miles along the highway every house was burned, and many of our women and children killed or carried away captives; and these same gloomy tragedies are continually rehearsed from week to week and year to year.

Could our lot have been cast east of the Rocky mountains, we feel that the protecting ægis of our government would have been more powerfully felt. The feeling of insecurity caused by these savage raids prevents the settlement of our borders, and seriously embarrasses the settlers on our frontiers. It is believed that, could a railroad be built from Portland to the southern part of our State, and from thence through the Klamath lake country, to intersect the Central Pacific railroad at some convenient point on the Humboldt river, in the State of Nevada, many of these evils might be mitigated. Troops could then be transported to places where their presence is required, in an easy and economical manner; and less than one-half their present number would be required, on account of the increasing facility for the concentration of troops; besides, provisions and supplies to such military posts as might be required could be conveyed for comparatively nothing, in contrast with its present cost. In addition to this, government pays about \$200,000 annually for carrying the mail from Portland to Sacramento City, in California; the railroad would reduce its cost to a mere nominal sum; and what would be of more vital importance to our Atlantic brethren, our trade would be direct with the Atlantic States, and our gold would be exchanged for the productions of the older States. Finish the road, and mining for the precious ore would receive an impetus undreamed of before, and gold and silver, which lies hidden within our mountains, would be developed, and its vivifying influence would be felt from centre to circumference of our republic. We might add that the boundless resources of Oregon, as a grain-growing region, is not excelled within the limits of our Union, and at the present time grain in Oregon is cheaper than in any other place in the United States. As an example, we might state that the average price of wheat is only 50 cents per bushel, and the article of flour \$2 per hundred, and oats 25 cents per bushel; bacon 10 cents per pound; and we believe it is easy of demonstration that, with a railroad, Oregon could supply the numerous military posts on the plains with bacon, flour, and beef, at less than

one-half the cost that is paid for the same provisions in the Atlantic States. And the same may be said of clothing for the troops, and woollen fabrics as annuities for the Indians. Wool here has an average price of only 20 cents per pound. Our vast herds of sheep require of feed during winter, and consequently can be multiplied to an unlimited extent; and the same may be said of cattle and horses, and that fabric wool can be manufactured and furnished at less cost than at any other place within our borders; and without disparaging any of the manufactories of the Atlantic States, we assert from observation and experience that our woollen fabrics exceed theirs 25 per cent. in durability.

Compare these prices with those now paid for similar articles in the older States, and it is apparent that millions of dollars would be saved by the construction of the road. Your memorialist is of the opinion that, should Congress grant us the same aid that is now granted to the Pacific railroad and its branches, within five years from its completion government will save the entire amount of its loan in cutting down its present expenses in the matter of supplies alone. If such is the case in time of peace, how much greater the contrast in time of war. And we are not unmindful of the fact that grave questions are now pending with England which may culminate in war. Should that contingency arise, it requires no strategist to mark the point of attack. Certainly not upon the Atlantic coast, where every harbor is protected by the most numerous and approved engines of destruction known to civilization and supported by hundreds of thousands of men fully inured to war. But our isolated position would rather invite an attack than otherwise; and with the British possessions immediately upon our border, with harbors of easy access to their powerful fleets, and within one day's sail of our principal city, and from thence to the rich and fertile Willamette valley, with her already numerous towns and cities, they might inflict upon us an injury which government could not repair. But with an iron track connecting us with the Atlantic States, thousands of veteran soldiers could be poured into our State, and the tide of invasion rolled back to the ocean. A nation's military strength consists in its ability to throw a sufficiently powerful body of troops at any desirable point in the shortest space of time; and the iron track has now become as necessary to a perfect military system as gunpowder and artillery. Nor would the construction of this road be costly or difficult. Our numerous forests, supplied with an endless amount of durable timber, would be furnished at less cost than in the Atlantic States; and the face of the country is not unfavorable to its construction. The Cascade range of mountains—the only apparent obstacle—can be overcome, and in no place one-half the altitude be attained which was required on the Central Pacific railroad.

With these facts, then, we must earnestly memorialize Congress for the same aid that has been granted to the Central Pacific, for our branch upon the western end of said road, commencing at or near the north bend of the Humboldt river; thence to cross the spurs of the Siskiyou mountains, in the vicinity of the Klamath lake, to Rogue River valley, at or near the town of Ashland, in Jackson county, Oregon; thence north-easterly through Rogue River, Umpqua and Willamette valleys, by Portland to the Columbia river.

Your memorialists further recommend that the grant of land in this memorial asked for, so far as it may relate to that part of the route between Portland and Eugene City, may be applied to that side of the Willamette river having had no grants for a railroad. And if it shall be

RAILROAD IN OREGON.

found that any part of said road conflicts with any prior grant for any other road, then this grant shall have no effect to the extent of such conflict.

Adopted by the house October 9, 1868.

JOHN WHITEAKER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Adopted by the senate October 21, 1868.

B. F. BURCH,
President of the Senate.