

RAILROAD FROM YANKTON TO THE NATIONAL PARK.

MEMORIAL

OF

THE LEGISLATURE OF DAKOTA,

ASKING FOR

A grant of land to aid in the construction of a railroad from Yankton, in Dakota, to the National Park.

JANUARY 11, 1875.—Referred to the Committee on the Public Lands and ordered to be printed.

To the honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled :

Your memorialists, the people of the Territory of Dakota, through its general assembly, respectfully represent to your honorable body that while the lands in the eastern part of said Territory are rich in soil, they are, with few exceptions, destitute of timber of any kind, and the distance from timber of most of the land will, in the opinion of your memorialists, prevent their settlement unless means of transportation shall be devised to connect such lands with the timber-region beyond. This timber-region is too far distant to be reached without a railroad, and never can be of any benefit to most of the Territory unless cheap means of transportation shall be created to bring the timber to the vast prairies lying east of it. That while there are on White River and in and around the Black Hills immense forests of pine and other timber, and vast deposits of coal, they are worthless so long as they are inaccessible.

The cost of providing the only proper means of bringing these staples to the prairie country, and thereby make the lands valuable, is a railroad, and this cannot be built without the aid of the Government, which your memorialists ask for in such form as it seems to them can be given with profit both to the people of the Territory and the Government of the United States.

The long residence in the Territory of most of your memorialists has convinced them that the Territory has the elements to make it one of the greatest States in the Union if its growth is encouraged and promoted by the Government with the same liberal spirit that has built up all the States east of here; and your memorialists feel that they have a just claim upon the Government for its protection and aid in equal measure to that which has been given to Nebraska, Iowa, and Minnesota.

The land in the Territory west of the Missouri River is an Indian reservation, and yet a part of this reservation is the richest portion of Dakota Territory, because of the great forests of pine and other timber and immense deposits of coal and minerals of various kinds. These lands, with their promised stores of wealth to the Territory and nation, should at once be made free to every citizen of the republic, and by means of railroad communication be made accessible, so as to bring out the timber and coal so much needed east of the Missouri River.

Your memorialists, therefore, do earnestly appeal to your honorable body for the right to be granted to them and all citizens of the Union to occupy so much of the Territory of Dakota west of the Missouri River as lies between latitude 43° and 46° north; and that the one-half of the proceeds of the sale of thirty sections of land to the mile be granted to assist in the building of a railroad from Yankton, Dak., to the Great National Park, by way of the Black Hills.

In making this request, your memorialists feel that they ask nothing more than what is due to them and what should be freely granted.

The lands would, if a railroad is built, sell for \$2.50 per acre, whereas, without the road, they will not sell at all; therefore, what is asked for can be given without any cost to the Government or the people, and will result in great good to your memorialists and the nation's citizens.

G. C. MOODY,
Speaker of the House.

Attest:

C. F. MALLAHAN,
Chief Clerk of the House.

JOHN L. JOLLY,
President of the Council.

Attest:

ARTHUR LINN,
Chief Clerk of the Council.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a memorial now on file in my office, entitled "A memorial to the Congress of the United States, asking for a grant of land to aid in the construction of a railroad from Yankton, in Dakota, to the National Park."

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the great seal of the Territory this 4th day of January, A. D. 1875.

[SEAL.]

GEORGE H. HAND,
Secretary of Dakota Territory.