

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE NATIONAL
SHIP-CANAL CONVENTION, HELD
AT THE CITY OF CHICAGO, JUNE
2 AND 3, 1863**

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PROCEEDINGS.

CALL FOR A NATIONAL SHIP-CANAL CONVENTION.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 2, 1868.

Regarding the enlargement of the Canals between the Valley of the Mississippi and the Atlantic as of great National, Commercial and Military importance, and as tending to promote the Development, Prosperity and Unity of our WHOLE COUNTRY, we invite a meeting of all those interested in the subject, in Chicago, on the first Tuesday in June next. We especially ask the co-operation and aid of the Boards of Trade, Chambers of Commerce, Agricultural Societies, and Business Associations of the country.

Edward Bates, Attorney General U. S.

Members of the House.

- Isaac N. Arnold, Illinois.
- A. G. Riddle, Ohio.
- E. B. Washburne, Illinois.
- H. L. Dawes, Massachusetts.
- A. B. Olin, New York.
- Justin S. Morrill, Vermont.
- E. G. Spaulding, New York.
- S. Hooper, Massachusetts.
- Portus Baxter, Vermont.
- Schuyler Colfax, Indiana.
- George P. Fisher, Delaware.
- Augustus Frank, New York.
- Cyrus Aldrich, Minnesota.
- R. E. Trowbridge, Michigan.
- Samuel L. Casey, Kentucky.
- Jos. Segar, Virginia.
- W. D. McClodoe, Wisconsin.
- F. C. Beaman, Michigan.
- W. P. Sheffield, Rhode Island.
- Alfred Ely, New York.
- J. M. Ashley, Ohio.
- Gilman Mareton, New Hampshire.
- F. F. Low, California.
- Samuel T. Worcester, Ohio.
- John W. Wallace, Pennsylvania.
- Benjamin F. Thomas, Massachusetts.
- T. C. Phelps, California.
- Thomas D. Eliot, Massachusetts.
- William J. Allen, Illinois.
- A. A. Sargent, California.
- W. E. Lansing, New York.
- Jesse O. Norton, Illinois.

- P. B. Fouke, Illinois.
- George W. Julian, Indiana.
- W. R. Morrison, Illinois.
- Wm. Morris Davis, Pennsylvania.
- William Kellogg, Illinois.
- J. M. Goodwin, Maine.
- Stephen Baker, New York.
- James S. Rollins, Missouri.
- C. W. Dunlap, Kentucky.
- Thomas L. Price, Missouri.
- J. C. Robinson, Illinois.
- Horace Maynard, Tennessee.
- Charles Delano, Massachusetts.
- F. W. Kellogg, Michigan.
- A. J. Clements, Tennessee.
- John H. Rice, Maine.
- S. N. Sherman, New York.
- A. W. Clarke, New York.
- Theodore M. Pomeroy, New York.
- R. E. Fenton, New York.
- A. S. Diven, New York.
- Burt Van Horn, New York.
- R. B. Van Valkenburg, New York.
- M. F. Conway, Kansas.
- Wm. Windom, Minnesota.
- Dwight Loomis, Connecticut.
- R. Franchot, New York.
- C. H. Van Wyck, New York.
- Elijah Ward, New York.
- John F. Potter, Wisconsin.
- James B. McKean, New York.
- Wm. Vandever, Iowa.
- Owen Lovejoy, Illinois.

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E. P. Walton, Vermont.
 John Hutchins, Ohio.
 W. H. Wallace, Washington Territory.
 Edward Haight, New York.
 A. L. Knapp, Illinois.
 George C. Woodruff, Connecticut.
 Amasa Walker, Massachusetts.
 B. F. Granger, Michigan.
 Edward H. Smith, New York.
 John B. Alley, Massachusetts.
 A. S. White, Indiana.
 Samuel C. Fessenden, Maine.
 S. Edgerton, Ohio.
 James H. Campbell, Pennsylvania.
 H. P. Bennett, Colorado.

Members of the Senate.

J. R. Doolittle, Wisconsin.
 James Harlan, Iowa.
 James Dixon, Connecticut.
 H. M. Rice, Minnesota.
 James A. McDougall, California.
 J. B. Henderson, Missouri.
 J. H. Lane, Kansas.
 R. Wilson, Missouri.
 S. C. Pomeroy, Kansas.
 L. Trumbull, Illinois.
 W. A. Richardson, Illinois.
 Charles Sumner, Massachusetts.
 Henry Wilson, Massachusetts.
 J. M. Howard, Michigan.

PURSUANT to the above call, delegates from nearly all the loyal States assembled at Chicago, on June 2, 1863, to the number of about five thousand. The day was propitious; and a spacious tent was erected for the accommodation of the delegates, on Lake Park, between Eldridge and Harmon Courts, and overlooking the blue waters of Lake Michigan.

MORNING SESSION.

The Convention was called to order at eleven o'clock A.M., by Dr. D. BRAINARD, of Chicago, who nominated the Hon. CHAUNCEY FILLEY, Mayor of St. Louis, for temporary Chairman.

The nomination was agreed to, and, upon his introduction to the Convention by Dr. BRAINARD, the CHAIRMAN said:

Gentlemen of the National Convention:—I thank you for the honor you confer upon the State of Missouri, and the city of St. Louis. I have been sent here by the people of that great commercial metropolis, to represent her interests in this meeting. I can give to you the objects and views of the City Council of St. Louis, with reference to the business before us, by reading the preamble and resolutions which they have passed on the subject, better, perhaps, than I could do in any other way. They are to the following effect:

WHEREAS, A National Convention is about to assemble at the city of Chicago, to deliberate in reference to the proposed enlargement of the Illinois and Michigan, and New York and Erie canals; therefore,

Be it Resolved, By the Common Council of the city of St. Louis, that, as the representatives of this great commercial metropolis, we look with much interest and anxiety to the accomplishment of the project proposed for the consideration of the Convention.

And be it further Resolved, That the President of this Council be, and he is hereby, instructed to appoint five members thereof, to represent the city in her corporate

capacity in the said Convention; and that his Honor, the Mayor, be requested to act in conjunction with the delegates so appointed; and that the Mayor be authorized to appoint five delegates outside of said Council, to represent the city in said Convention.

Dr. BRAINARD. Mr. Chairman, I would nominate for Corresponding Secretaries, Hon. MOSES M. STRONG, of Wisconsin; A. M. CLAPP, Esq., of Buffalo; and W. H. MCHENRY, Esq., of St. Louis.

The nominations were confirmed.

The CHAIRMAN introduced the Rev. BISHOP SIMPSON of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who, amid reverential silence, came forward, and invoked the Divine blessing as follows:

PRAYER.

Almighty and everlasting God, our Heavenly Father; Thou art the Creator of all Worlds, the Sovereign of all Nations; All wisdom is from thee; Thou rulest in the armies of Heaven, and on the Earth beneath. Assembled as we are this day from various States, Districts and Cities,—in commencing our deliberations on matters which may be of vast importance to our Country, and of untold interest to millions of our Posterity, we desire to invoke thy presence, and thy blessing; for we know, that without thy aid, no good can be accomplished, and that the hearts of the children of men are in thy hands. We adore thee for all thou hast done for us; for the goodly land which thou hast given us; for its mountains and its plains; for its lakes and its rivers; for its genial climate and its fertile soil. We bless thee for those rays of Science, and those movements in Art, which thou hast sent abroad upon the Earth, and which have developed in part the resources which thou hast given us. We bless thee that our mountains have been pierced, so that our lands might be girt by bands of iron. We praise thee for the diffusion of Intelligence, and for the blessing of a high order of Christian Civilization; and we pray that these blessings may continue to abound among us, until all parts of the Country shall be united indissolubly together; that Art and Science shall bless the Land; until all the resources of this vast country shall be developed under thy smile; and that the light of thy countenance shall be and remain upon this people.

And, O Lord; we pray that thou mayest be with these Delegations; may no sickness come upon them; may no accident befall them; may they be returned to their families in safety; and may there be cordial greetings, without one pang of woe. May thy blessing so rest upon them in all their deliberations, that, in the final issue, they may be found to have consulted together wisely and harmoniously; and may they see the issue happily consummated, and the whole Country and People more closely united than ever before.

Hear us for our Country! God of our Fathers; Look upon our Nation in love. Bless thy servant, the President of the United

States; may the Spirit of Wisdom be upon him, and all who are associated with him in Cabinet council. Bless the Governors of States, and the Members of Congress; may they devise such laws and measures, as shall be for the Interest, Peace, and Prosperity of our Land. Guide all our officers, civil and military, to such measures as shall be for the benefit of our great and wide-spread Nation. We pray thee, O Lord, to let this terrible conflict very speedily come to a close. If it be thy will, Lord, may Peace take the place of War; and, on the principles of Equity and Righteousness, may our Nation be united and happy;—a prosperous Nation, whose God is the Lord. May the Voice of War be heard amongst us no more, and the Spirit of Peace and Consolation be spread over the Earth, until the family of Nations shall dwell together as one vast and universal Brotherhood.

Hear us, O Lord, while we further pray, in the language which thou hast taught us:

Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy Name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, forever and ever. Amen.

THE CHAIRMAN. DR. BRAINARD will now welcome the delegates on the part of the city of Chicago.

DR. BRAINARD then addressed the Convention as follows:

Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen of the Convention:—I appear before you in behalf of the Board of Trade of Chicago, the Mercantile Association, and the citizens in general, to bid you welcome to this City, and the West. Chicago, although not possessing the historical associations or venerable institutions which give interest to the cities of older States, presents an example of what may be done by unaided industry, and exhibits the spectacle of an intelligent and free people establishing by themselves the foundations of society. She already embraces within her limits the largest granaries of the world, and numerous important manufactures; but, more than all, she has a population unsurpassed in enterprise and patriotism, who unite, one and all, in offering you a heart-felt welcome.

Your presence here fills us with joy. To see so many bearing honorable names; so many representatives of other States and large cities here assembled; fills us with gratitude which no words can express.

The occasion which has called you together is one of no ordinary character. It is not the call of a famishing people, nor of cities threatened by hostile armies; it is the voice of men shut out from the markets of the world, oppressed by the excessive productions of their own toil, which remain wasting and worthless upon their hands, depriving labor of half its rewards, discouraging industry,

and paralyzing enterprise. In their distress they called upon the National Legislature—that government to which they owe allegiance, and to the support of which their lives and property are devoted—and failed to obtain that relief which they had a right to expect. Now they appeal to the people themselves—to the wise, the enlightened, the patriotic, and the powerful—in a word, they appeal to you, gentlemen, and ask you to speak in their behalf that word of power which, in a good cause and in a free government, will not be spoken in vain.

Need I tell you of the history of this region in whose behalf your sympathies are asked? This city, Illinois, and her sister States of the North-West, are but of yesterday. Many of you have witnessed their birth and their growth; with their present population and its increase, their extent and fertility, their commerce and productions, and their capacities for boundless expansion in the future,—all must be familiar; and to dwell upon them would be to repeat a tale already many times told.

To others more capable has, moreover, been committed the task of supplying those facts, by which a certain judgment may be formed, and on which intelligent action may be based.

The sons of the West have demonstrated their loyalty, their patriotism, and their courage, on every battle-field. The pages of history on which their actions are written, are not dimmed by a single blot. Their names are inscribed on the "roll of honor," along with those which time shall not efface, but gild with brighter lustre through coming centuries. Even now the southern sky is lit up by the glory of their deeds, and the nation looks to their action for its preservation, with a hope that will never be disappointed. Such are the men for whom your efforts are invoked.

Our fertile prairies lay for centuries untouched by the hand of agriculture; not because they were unknown, but because they were inaccessible. Their prosperity dates from the opening of the Erie canal, thirty-eight years ago. The increase of the West, and its productiveness, have all been the direct result and consequence of the construction of that and other channels of trade and travel. To the genius of DE WITT CLINTON, these States owe their existence, and the Nation its present strength and greatness. Every city here is a monument to his honor. From every domestic altar, where morning orisons, or evening thanksgivings are offered to the Giver of all Good for unknown blessings, do benedictions upon his name ascend. The policy which he established has stood the test of time, and received the seal of success; but its results have so far exceeded his expectations that the channels he projected—enlarged and multiplied as they have been—are all filled to their utmost capacity. The increase of the West may be stopped, her fertile fields deserted for the mines of Oregon, California, and Colorado; her bright future be darkened, and her people discouraged, by the refusal of the Government to open those means of communication, upon which her growth and prosperity depend. Her commerce begins to feel the chain which fetters it; her people already com-

plain that the fruits of their labor are gathered up by others; and, while carriers are enriched, consumers and producers suffer alike, and are impoverished. Under these circumstances, she asks of Congress to construct from the Mississippi river to the Atlantic a channel, adequate to the carrying of her staples, and supplying her wants, without unnecessary delay or exorbitant charges.

For our own part of the work, from lake Michigan to the Mississippi river, there will be transmitted to you surveys, plans and estimates, showing its cost, practicability and usefulness, to which we invite the rigid scrutiny of engineers and business men. For the Eastern division, without presuming to designate the route, what we would ask is, that it should be broad and deep; and, if practicable, that there should be more than one; and the history of the past justifies us in the promise, that, however capacious they may be, wherever situated, by whom constructed, they will all be speedily filled to overflowing.

The commerce of the West has enriched the country through which it has passed. It has raised New York to a degree of wealth and credit, which rivals that of the most powerful kingdoms. It has preserved and increased the exports and the revenues of the nation in a period of war, when other sources were cut off. It is yet in its infancy. Who shall dare to arrest its progress? Who shall stand between the West and the hungry nations of the Old World? Whoever he may be, it is safe to predict that he will be swept away, consigned to infamy, or buried in oblivion.

And what objection can be urged against a project so feasible and so necessary? Is it that it is commercial and not military in its character? Look at these shores—at this lake covered with rich cargoes;—not a gun, not a ship for their defense. Yet they are accessible for armed vessels from Plymouth and Portsmouth; and the hands of our Government are tied by treaty so that no navy can be built upon these shores, or launched upon these waters. Nowhere in the world is commerce so valuable, so left without protection. It is essential to our national existence, and so long as it remains without means of defense, England will be able to exact her own terms in all disputes with our Government, by an exhibition of force which it has no means of resisting.

It is necessary to provide for a naval contest on these Lakes, and in no way can this be done so readily and effectually as by connecting them with the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico, by ship and steamboat canals. These, even if they were never to be used for the passage of armed vessels, would still be of the greatest service in case of war. By augmenting the national wealth, by attracting population, by facilitating transportation of food and stores, they would do more for our military power than the raising of armies, or the building of navies. But the spirit of unity and nationality, which the mere commencement of this work would engender, is above all other considerations. By blending into one the two great systems of inland navigation of the continent, it will cause the life-blood of commerce to move in a single current