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The Patriot & Union.

THURSDAY MORNING, FEB. 7, 1861.

THE SUNBURY AND ERIE RAILROAD, AND THE STATE LEGISLATURE.

The net earnings of the Pennsylvania railroad company for the last year amounted to \$2,281,727, being six per cent. interest on \$37,193,788.

The net earnings from the main stem of the Baltimore and Ohio for the same period were \$1,938,270; the interest at 6 per cent. of \$32,222,116. The net earnings of the New York Central for the same period were \$1,704,600, the interest at 6 per cent. of \$28,410,100.

The net earnings of the New York and Erie, the year after it was opened, amounted to \$1,666,599, being 6 per cent. interest on \$27,776,600, and, except in the year 1853, they have never fallen below that sum.

The extraordinary cost of operating that road, which has sometimes reached 70 per cent. of its gross earnings, and the extravagance and mismanagement that seem to have accompanied the administration of its affairs, until they were placed in the hands of the Receiver, fully explain the embarrassments that rendered the appointment of such an officer necessary.

There has been no diminution in the actual business of the road.

With such facts staring us in the face, on what grounds can we doubt, that if by judicious legislative action the only obstacle in the way of its completion be promptly removed, and no further losses of interest on the capital invested in the partially finished portions be sustained, the Sunbury and Erie railroad will be a most successful and remunerative enterprise, paying interest upon its debt, and dividends also upon its stock?

Let us proceed a little farther with our inquiry into the prospects of this great work.—The road being not alone in point of gradients and curvatures superior to the New York roads, but affording also a shorter route, it cannot fail attracting almost the entire trade of the western portion of the lakes, securing to Philadelphia her legitimate share of a growing commerce, and thereby increasing the importance, and the rapid increase of which is illustrated by the following reliable statistics:

In 1846 the whole commerce of the Lakes, according to the report of Col. Burt, of the U. S. Topographical Engineers, amounted to \$63,164,910.

And it is predicted with great confidence, an increase on this amount of seventeen per cent. amounting, according to his estimate, in ten years, that is, in 1857, to over 170,000,000.

The actual result, according to official tables, was, in 1848, two years thereafter, \$186,484,905.

And in 1857, in accordance with the Report published by order of Congress, \$326,509,328.

There is no reason to believe that this astonishing increase has diminished since.

A progressive increase of only ten per cent. per annum upon the latter amount would swell the aggregate for 1857, to \$380,000,000.

An amount probably far below the figures actually reached.

To estimate the present value of the Lake Trade at \$600,000,000 per annum, is certainly remaining within the bounds of moderation.

But this trade has by no means reached its maximum; it is bound to increase with the progress of population and civilization of the West, and the completion of the Sunbury and Erie road will give to it a new and powerful impulse, by affording the shortest, cheapest, and in all seasons the most reliable outlet to the Atlantic coast.

No other region in the United States ever advanced in population and wealth at so astonishingly rapid a rate as the great North-West, as the following statistics show. The estimate of its present population was formed upon the basis of the census of 1850, now so far completed as to admit of the closest approximation to the truth:

Table with 2 columns: State, 1850, 1860. Ohio: 2,500,000, 1,980,329. Indiana: 1,400,000, 988,416. Illinois: 1,600,000, 851,470. Wisconsin: 900,000, 306,391. Michigan: 750,000, 397,664. Iowa: 750,000, 132,214. Minnesota: 180,000, 6,077.

The population of these States constitutes, therefore, at present, more than one quarter of that of the United States. It is equal to that of all the fifteen Southern States, and nearly equal to that of the States of New York, Pennsylvania, and the New England States combined.

It nearly doubled within the last ten years, and if the increase continues in the same ratio, the North-West, whose lake port will be Erie, and Atlantic port Philadelphia, and whose completion of the Sunbury and Erie and its numerous branch roads, will number in 1870 some sixteen millions of inhabitants.

The powerful logic of this fact ought to be sufficient to urge the people and Legislature of Pennsylvania to strain every nerve to finish the road within the shortest time possible.

The Committee on Inland Navigation of the Philadelphia Board of Trade, in their report on the commerce of the lakes, presented in 1859, remark:

"When the navigation of Lake Erie shall be connected by the Sunbury and Erie railroad with the various roads branching off from it to our own great city, it shall have the whole grain and produce of Northern Ohio and Indiana, Southern Michigan, and that part of Western Canada bordering on this lake, laid at our doors by their nearest outlet to an eastern market. It will then be our own fact that Philadelphia does not share in the prosperity and wealth which have hitherto poured so overflowing into the coffers of our neighbors, building up their vast shipping interest, and thus providing the means for that great return commerce which seems always naturally to flow back in the channel of the export trade."

The completion of the Sunbury and Erie road, said the Hon. W. Bigler, in his report to the meeting of stockholders, in 1856, "Will give to Philadelphia the advantage over New York of a hundred miles in lineal distance, with a road of lower grades and less curvature. Left to her own power as a commercial city, with only equal opportunities of transportation, Philadelphia might fail to gain any considerable share of the lake trade; but when we add to her attractions as a great manufacturing and commercial city, the advantages of nearly one hundred and fifty miles of lineal and equated distance in transportation, and those of a longer season of lake navigation, who can doubt her success? By this route she can reach the lakes at the end of 426 miles, whilst New York, by the shortest of her lines, is at a distance of 510, and by the other, 635 miles; adding to this difference in lineal distance, the admitted advantages of the Pennsylvania route in grades and curvatures, the actual difference may be safely stated at 140 miles against the longest. Thus proving clearly what the New York press has recently and repeatedly alleged, that when the Sunbury and Erie road shall have been completed, the best route for travel and commerce, between New York and the cities of Cleveland and Erie, will be by the way of Philadelphia.

PENNA LEGISLATURE.

SENATE. WEDNESDAY, Feb. 6, 1861.

The Senate was called to order at 11 o'clock by the SPEAKER. Prayer by Rev. Dr. DeWitt.

The SPEAKER laid before the Senate a communication from the Auditor General, accompanied by a condensed report from manufacturers, mining companies, &c.

Also, a communication from the Secretary of the Commonwealth, transmitting the annual report of the Thomas iron company.

Also, a communication from the Philadelphia Board of Trade, accompanied by resolutions passed in relation to the Sunbury and Erie railroad.

All of which were ordered to be printed in the Record.

BILLS IN PLACE. Mr. SCHINDEL, an act to provide for the appointment of an additional notary public in the borough of Catawago, Lehigh county.

Mr. OLMER, an act relative to the imposition of taxes on the Delaware Division, North Branch, West Branch and Wyoming canal companies.

Mr. THOMPSON, an act to authorize the executors of Jacob M. Root to sell certain real estate.

Mr. IRISH, a supplement to the act establishing high and low water marks on the Allegheny, Monongahela and Ohio rivers in the vicinity of Pittsburgh.

Mr. PARKER, an act to incorporate the Navy Yard, Broad Street and Fairmount passage railway company.

Mr. GONNELL, a supplement to the act incorporating the Junction railway company.

Mr. SMITH, an act relative to the liability of promissory notes and bills of exchange.

Mr. KETCHAM, a supplement to the act authorizing a railroad connection between the North Branch canal and the Lehigh navigation.

Also, a supplement to the act in reference to the running of locomotives and cars on connecting railroads.

Also, an act to incorporate the Phoenix hotel company in Wilkesbarre.

Also, a supplement to the act consolidating the Lehigh and Western, and Cobb's Gap railroad companies.

Mr. LANDON, an act to confer additional powers on the commissioners of highways in Herick township, Bradford county.

Mr. MEREDITH, an act to refund certain moneys.

BILLS CONSIDERED. The supplement to the act erecting the county of Cameron, came up on the orders, and after some debate, passed finally.

A further supplement to the act incorporating the city of Philadelphia which contemplates the changing of the time of holding the municipal election, came up on second reading.

While the second section was pending, a letter from Mayor Henry was read, disapproving the bill.

Mr. SMITH charged Mayor Henry with being the author of the police bill sent here last year.

Mr. HIBSTAND. I don't think any Republican cares what Mayor Henry's views are.

The yeas and nays were called on the second section, and were as follows—yeas 23, nays 6.

The remaining sections of the bill were passed. On motion the rule was suspended, and the bill put upon its final passage, when the yeas and nays were called by Mr. WELSH, and were as follows—yeas 23, nays 6.

Mr. WELSH opposed the bill, and the vote above is a strict party vote.

On motion of Mr. PENNEY, the Senate resolved it into Executive Session in order to confirm the appointment by the Governor of trustees for the State Lunatic Asylum. On the confirmation of S. Miles Green, the vote was yeas 23, nays 0.

On the confirmation of A. J. Jones, the vote was yeas 23, nays 0.

On the confirmation of Dr. George Dock, the vote was as follows—yeas 23, nays 0.

Mr. IRISH called up House Bill No. 31, an act to incorporate the Masonic Hall association of East Liberty; which was passed finally.

Mr. BOUGHTER called up the act relating to the office and term of commissioners, directors of the poor and prison inspectors of Dauphin county; which passed its several readings.

Mr. CONNELL called up the bill, entitled "A further supplement to the act incorporating the city of Philadelphia," which passed finally.

Adjourning.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 6, 1861. The House met at 10 o'clock. The SPEAKER in the Chair. Prayer was offered by Rev. Mr. Johnson.

Mr. WILSON, from the committee to make arrangements for the celebration of the raising of the American flag on the State Capitol, made a report; which was read.

Communications were received from the Secretary of the Commonwealth, and from the board of trade of Philadelphia.

ORIGINAL RESOLUTIONS. Mr. BLISS offered a resolution authorizing the furnishing of one thousand copies of the proceedings of the State agricultural society.

Reports of standing committees were received. Among them was the act supplementing the act incorporating the Harrisburg female seminary; which was reported, as committed.

BILLS IN PLACE. Mr. BRODHEAD, an act supplementary to the act incorporating the Cream Hill turnpike road company.

Mr. MARSHALL, an act relative to the appointment of a liquor inspector for Allegheny county.

Also, an act relative to high and low water in Allegheny county.

Mr. ABBOTT, an act relative to commutation of the postage tax, as follows: AN ACT for the Commutation of Postage Tax.

Whereas, By a provision of the act to incorporate the Pennsylvania railroad company, approved the thirteenth of April, eighteen hundred and forty-six, and a supplement thereto, approved the twenty-seventh of March, eighteen hundred and forty-eight, a tax or duty was imposed on all tonnage loaded or received at Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and intermediate points, and carried or conveyed on the railroad of the said company more than twenty miles, which said tax was intended to compensate for any probable diminution in the receipts of the Main Line of the public works, (then owned by the State,) by reason of the construction and operation of the said railroad.

And whereas, It was provided in the third section of the act for the sale of the Main Line of the public works, approved the sixteenth day of May, eighteen hundred and fifty-seven, that if the Pennsylvania railroad company should become the purchaser of the said works, the said company, in addition to the sum of seven millions five hundred thousand dollars, (\$7,500,000,) the price limited by the said act, should pay the sum of one million five hundred thousand dollars, (\$1,500,000,) in five per cent. bonds of the company, and that thereupon the said company, and the Harrisburg, Portsmouth, Mount Joy, and Lancaster railroad company should, in consideration thereof, be discharged by the Commonwealth forever from the payment of all taxes upon tonnage or freight carried over said railroads, and the said Pennsylvania railroad company should be released from the payment of all other taxes or duties on its capital stock, bonds, dividends, or property.

And whereas, It was subsequently decided by the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth, that while the Legislature had full authority to repeal the provisions of the said act, by which the said tonnage tax was imposed, yet, inasmuch as part of the said last-mentioned section in the act for the sale of the Main Line placed all the property of the said company beyond the reach of the taxing power, it was therefore, to that extent, unconstitutional and void.

And whereas, It was the clear intention of the Legislature, by the said act for the sale of the Main Line, in case the said Pennsylvania railroad company should become the purchaser of the same, to exonerate and release the said company from further liability for the payment of the said tonnage tax, and for the additional consideration therein named, all other taxes; and as the said tonnage tax now falls indirectly on flour, grain, cattle, iron, minerals, and other domestic products, transported on one line of improvements, while similar products transported on other lines are exempt from the same; and as the reason for the imposition of the said tax was to protect the right of the State any longer to demand the payment of the said tax is denied, and said demand has led to litigation between the State and the company, and will probably involve the parties in litigation with citizens of other States, to the injury of our internal trade and commerce, which it is the duty of the government to encourage and protect, by all lawful means.

And whereas, The said company has proposed a compromise and final settlement of the question, by paying into the Treasury, in commutation of the said tonnage tax and in discharge thereof, such additional sum semi-annually, over and above the instalments of principal and interest on its debt to the State, as may be required to make said payments amount to four hundred and sixty thousand dollars (\$460,000) annually, until the year eighteen hundred and ninety, at which time interest shall be paid in full; and by paying, also, in addition to the said semi-annual instalments, all other taxes on their property to which they may hereafter be made liable under the general revenue laws of the State, and agree to make reductions for transportation of local trade, as hereinafter provided, and to aid, also, in the construction of certain lateral railroads, the completion of which is essential as a means of facilitating the settlement and improvement of valuable districts of the Commonwealth yet undeveloped.

And whereas, In the opinion of the Legislature, it is expedient to accept the said proposition, and to relieve all agricultural, mineral and industrial products, and other property passing over any railroad, canal or slackwater navigation in this Commonwealth, from the payment of tonnage tax or duty to the State; therefore,

Sec. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in General Assembly met, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, That if a majority of the directors of the Pennsylvania railroad company, who, for the purpose of this act are hereby vested with all needful authority, shall at a meeting called for that purpose, resolve to accept the provisions of this act, and shall authorize the execution of a written contract under its corporate seal with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to pay into the State Treasury on account of its indebtedness to the Commonwealth, by reason of the purchase of the Main Line of the public works, every year, until the thirty-first of July, eighteen hundred and ninety, inclusive, such sum, in addition to the interest on its bonds owned by the State, and in addition to its annual liability to the State on account of purchase money for said line of improvements, as will increase each semi-annual payment on account of said debt and interest to the sum of two hundred and thirty thousand dollars, (\$230,000,) and the aggregate of all such payments to the sum of thirteen millions five hundred and seventy thousand dollars, (\$13,570,000,) and shall agree to pay, on the said thirty-first day of July, eighteen hundred and ninety, into the treasury the balance then unpaid of the principal and interest of said bonds, and shall further agree to reduce its local charges for the transportation of grain, flour, cattle, iron, minerals and other property, as hereinafter provided; and if the said company shall in the manner aforesaid, on or before the first day of July next, make and enter into with the Commonwealth a written contract to that effect, and shall on or before said day deliver the same in the office of the Auditor General, then and in such case, and in consideration thereof, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania shall not at any time hereafter lay, impose, levy or collect any tax or duty upon, or in respect to freight or tonnage passing over the said Pennsylvania railroad, or the Harrisburg, Portsmouth, Mount Joy and Lancaster railroad, or any part of them, or either of them, unless a like tax shall at the same time be imposed, laid or levied upon the same Commonwealth; and all laws imposing taxes or duties upon freight or tonnage upon the railroads, canals or slackwater navigation companies, for the use of the Commonwealth, be and they are hereby repealed, and no further or other proceedings shall be had or taken on the part of the Commonwealth to enforce the collection of any tax or duty, or obligation given therefor, or judgment recovered, or obtained in pursuance of any existing laws on tonnage carried or

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