

# Democratic Banner.

BY MOORE & THOMPSON.

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## Extracts from the Speech of Col. Bigler.

**IN SENATE.**—On the Bill granting the right of way to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company, to extend said road to Pittsburg.

**MR. SPEAKER.**—A considerable portion of the remarks which I am about to make, would have been quite as appropriate, if they had been delivered pending the passage of the Bill to incorporate the Pennsylvania Railroad Company; but that subject, and the one now before the Senate are so closely connected, that I concluded to reserve all the remarks which I had to make in reference to both, for the present occasion.

I have not the vanity to believe that anything that I can say will influence the vote of any member of this body; and I should not now ask the indulgence of the Senate, if it were not that I desire to make my position, feelings and opinions known to my constituents. Much time has already been occupied in the discussion of this question. It has been extensively and ably handled by its decided friends, and I shall not pretend to examine it in all its bearings, but confine my remarks to my own peculiar opinions in reference to it.

I have, heretofore, Mr. Speaker, declared a liberal doctrine on this subject. I have said that if it were not for the interest which the State has in her main line of improvements, and the necessity which exists for the revenues which she derives from that quarter, to meet the urgent demands of her creditors, I would grant almost any application of this nature. I would extend to them a choice of markets, and the greatest possible facilities for reaching our commercial cities—leaving those cities to present their own inducements for the attraction of trade and commerce. Nor would I adopt a contracted and selfish policy in reference to surrounding States. We are in fact, the same people, actuated by the same motives, and having the same object in view, separated by mere imaginary lines—and I would always most gladly promote the prosperity of the citizens of an adjoining State, if I could do so without injury to those of our own. It seems but natural and right, however, that in legislating upon subjects of this kind, we should exercise a reasonable and proper discrimination in favor of the marts of trade within our own limits, and so direct our action as to foster, enrich and build up our own commercial cities, in preference to those of another State. But even this cannot always be done by the exercise of an illiberal and contracted policy. The laws of trade cannot be seriously infringed without being followed by the most injurious consequences. To stop the courses of the blood in the human system, is to produce debilitation and death. So in reference to trade and commerce. All efforts to force trade through unnatural channels and into markets having no attraction for it, only tends to weaken and destroy it. It is a true saying, "that business will regulate itself," and it is true, that trade unrestrained will find its proper market, as that water will find its level if left to its natural tendency.

In the question now before the Senate, both our principal cities are said to be deeply interested; and what is most unfortunate, those interests, according to the conceived notions of the people of both, are adverse. What the Pittsburgers say is necessary for their future welfare and happiness, the Philadelphians allege will work out for them and the State generally, ruin and disaster. I confess Mr. Speaker that while I regard the question as a very important one, I cannot look upon it as involving such mighty consequences. Whatever disposition may be made of it, both our Eastern and Western Metropolis will continue to prosper. The Mechanical and Manufacturing operations of Pittsburg will continue to progress—the noise of the hammer will be heard in her machine-shops, and the general bustle of business will be witnessed in her streets. The commerce of Philadelphia will not perish; and if the great city will but act—if she will but improve the advantages which nature has given her, she need not be alarmed at the enterprise of any of her commercial competitors. Let her and her sister city of the West, but unite with the balance of the State in improving the natural advantages, which we possess over adjoining States, and it will matter to her but little, what her rival cities, either on the North or South, may do. We have within our own State, Mr. Speaker, the elements of prosperity and greatness; and it is only necessary for us to use the means, to place both our principal cities out of the reach of injury, and above successful rivalry. The subject, though important, is greatly magnified by the excitement which exists in reference to it.

The Philadelphians after remaining silent on the subject until danger in their opinion, was at their very doors, now step forward and ask the people of Pittsburg

to cease their efforts to form commercial alliances with their rivals, and they will construct an improvement that will subserve the interests of both cities; and for one, Sir, I believe them to be honest and sincere in this matter, and desire to give them a fair opportunity to do so. If the people of Philadelphia will construct a continuous Railroad from Harrisburg to Pittsburg or Erie, or to both, they will not only be allowed to do so, but they ought to be encouraged and aided in so grand & laudible an enterprise. This improvement would extend over the entire length of the State, and would connect Pittsburg with the Atlantic cities, by the shortest possible link. Why, then, I would ask, Mr. Speaker, should it not be preferred? Why is it not satisfactory to both parties? Why will it not answer the purposes of Pittsburg and Philadelphia both? The answer to all this, by the Pittsburg people, is, that they have no confidence in these Philadelphia declarations, that the idea of a continuous road was gotten up as a mere ruse to defeat a grant of the right of way to the Baltimore and Ohio road—that a continuous road will not even be commenced; and that in the meantime, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company will adopt some other terminus, and the opportunity of drawing that improvement to Pittsburg will be lost forever—and thus the business and enterprise of their city would be prostrated. The Philadelphians, on the other hand, most solemnly declare that they are able and willing to construct a road to Pittsburg, and that they will commence to do so forthwith, if the Legislature will give them an act of incorporation, and the right of way be not granted. It is our business Sir, to settle this dispute according to the dictates of our judgment.

I am, Mr. Speaker, in favor of a continuous railroad through our own State; and my object has been, and shall be, to give it a preference. I desire to test the sincerity of these Philadelphia declarations, to see whether they are the result of calm, business calculation, or whether they proceed from mere excitement and alarm. I believe, Sir, that this can be done without hazarding the interests of Pittsburg as connected with the right of way—and God knows, that if ever I hazard the interests of that city, such action will be the result of error, and not of design. No man here, Sir—not even the Senator from Allegheny himself, feels more attached to the interests and people of that enterprising and flourishing city, than I do. It was with the view Sir, of testing the disposition of the Philadelphians to construct a road from Harrisburg to Pittsburg, without hazarding the welfare of the latter, that I offered, some days since, to attach a proviso to this bill, postponing its effect to the first of June, 1840—and rendering it null and void, if the subscriptions to the continuous road should be made. And, Sir, the more I examine the subject, the more firmly am I grounded in the opinion, that this policy ought to be adopted. It is, in my opinion, the true policy of both cities, and of the State generally. Granting the right of way may not do as much for that city. The grant may not be embraced, and will not be, if it be the interest of that company to carry it elsewhere. If I cannot arrive at my object in any other way, I shall feel constrained, by my own judgment, and by the interests of that section of the State, which I represent here, to vote against any bill granting the right of way to the Baltimore and Ohio Company during the present session; but, Sir, I desire at the same time to say, that if the Philadelphians should fail or neglect to proceed with the continuous road, and I should live to take a seat in this Senate at its next session; and the friends of the right of way will take such a bill as will protect the interests of the State in her public works, I shall advocate and vote for its passage. It will then come within the general principles which I have laid down upon subjects of this kind. If Philadelphia will not act, the right of way will, and ought to be granted; and I desire to impress upon her citizens the fact, that there is for them no other alternative—no escape from the consequences of the extension of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, except by uniting with the balance of the State to construct an avenue for Western trade and travel through our territory. The travelling public will no longer be confined to canal boats and stages—that day has gone by.

But now Sir, I am brought to consider what the effects of an immediate and unconditional grant of the right of way to the Baltimore company would be upon this grand enterprise of Philadelphia. What influence would it have upon the minds of those who are to furnish the capital to prosecute this noble design? It must be apparent to all that the effect would be most injurious; that it would paralyze it not completely prostrate this grand scheme, upon the success of which, in my opinion, the future welfare of the state to a very great degree depends. A considerable amount of capital would, I have no doubt, be furnished from mere feelings of local pride and patriotism, and a still larger amount, from considerations connected with the commercial interests of Philadelphia. But these would not, I

fear, be sufficient. Men must be induced to take stock in this work, with the view of receiving profitable dividends. These gentlemen will view the matter with coolness and deliberation—they will see a powerful competitor winding its way from the south—stretching forth its iron arms to grasp the glittering prizes of the Ohio to arrive at Pittsburg simultaneously with the continuous road, to compete with it, not for a part, but for the entire trade and travel, for every passenger and every pound of tonnage, and when they contemplate the nature of the competition that would be likely to arise between two powerful corporations, brought into close proximity partaking somewhat of the sovereignty of two great states—stimulated by the commercial interests of Baltimore on the one hand, and those of Philadelphia on the other—and when they call to mind the consequences of such competition, as presented in the case of the Reading Railroad and Schuylkill navigation companies, I fear they will become alarmed and refuse to assist. But Sir, it is said that it would be the interest of the company constructing a continuous road to have the Baltimore and Ohio road to terminate at Pittsburg; that it would be less injurious at that point than at any other on the Ohio river. It matters not Sir, whether the apprehensions to which I have referred be founded in error or in truth; they will be none the less potent for evil, for the time being, to this new enterprise; and thus, I fear, it may be nipped in the very bud. I am perfectly satisfied Sir, that if both roads terminated at Pittsburg, the chances of success would be against the Baltimore road. The Pennsylvania road would have many advantages. The distance from Philadelphia to Pittsburg, by the Baltimore road would be about 442 miles, while by the continuous road it would not exceed 342, leaving a clear advantage in distance of 100 miles. This advantage would certainly be decisive as to all travellers going to or returning from New York or Boston, and if a railroad should be constructed from Harrisburg to York, it might even attract much of the travel destined for Baltimore, as the Pennsylvania route will be still the shorter of the two; travellers would be likely, at least to alternate on these routes. Time and distance would therefore, be in favor of the Pennsylvania road. These are very important features in the law of trade, but they are often neutralized by other principles of the code. The produce of the west first seeks the best Atlantic market, and then the shortest and cheapest route whereby to reach such market, and hence it may and will happen, that the shortest and cheapest route for the produce of the west to reach the Atlantic cities, will not always be embraced; because such avenue may lead to an inferior market. These principles also tend to insure the success of the Pennsylvania road, because Philadelphia, and New York are the leading markets in the east. They afford not only a more extensive and equally favorable market for the trade of the west, but their exchanges are made on better terms; merchandise can be purchased at lower rates, and hence the western merchant consigns his produce to these markets, even if the costs of transportation should be a little higher than would enable him to arrive at an inferior eastern market.

But we are told that if the Baltimore and Ohio road be not allowed to come to Pittsburg, that it will reach the Ohio river at Wheeling or Parkersburg, and that its termination at either of these points will render it much more efficient as a competitor to our public works, or to a road through our own state—that it will arrest and carry off all the ascending trade and travel of the Ohio river. To prove this, it has been stated, that the three-fourths of all the travellers now coming up the Ohio river, leave the steamboats at Wheeling and go by stage, on the national road, 132 miles, to Cumberland, and from thence to Baltimore by the Railroad. These facts, Mr. Speaker, are well known and will not be denied by any one. But, Sir, why is it so? Is the reason found in the difficulties of the route from Wheeling to Pittsburg? No, Sir, it is because there is no way of reaching the East from Pittsburg in the winter season except by stages to Chambersburg, or by the Northern route through Huntingdon and Lewistown, and in the summer season by the Pennsylvania Canal, or the Monongahela navigation to Brownsville, and from thence to Cumberland by stages. These routes are tedious and laborious. But, Sir, how many would leave the river at Wheeling, if they had the opportunity of taking a railroad at Pittsburg, leading to Philadelphia? Why, Sir, not one man. Even the passengers destined for Baltimore would come to Harrisburg, and go thence to York by stages. But it may be asked how the matter would stand, if the Baltimore road were extended to Wheeling? Would it take a greater proportion of travel than it would do if terminating at Pittsburg? This, Mr. Speaker, I confess is a question surrounded with some difficulty. I may not be competent to answer it correctly. I incline to the opinion, however, that at all times when the river was in reasonable navigation order, passengers for Philadelphia, New York, or any of the eastern cities, would continue

up the river to Pittsburg, and go thence by the Pennsylvania road. I believe, Sir, that the further south the connexion is made, the more unsuccessful will this road be in carrying off the trade of the Ohio river—and the less so will it be in carrying tonnage. I cannot persuade myself that a railroad lying parallel with the steam navigation on the Ohio river, with no advantages in distance, and the disadvantages of high grades and curves, with the still greater disadvantages of leading to an inferior market, can succeed in the transportation of heavy goods or western produce. The higher up the connexion with the Ohio river, the more powerful will the competition of this road be for the business of our public works. The route from Cumberland to Pittsburg is undoubtedly the shortest and best location named for this road. To save the tonnage to our public works, is an object of two fold importance. It will secure to the state the revenue she so much needs, and to Philadelphia her usual commerce; for it is not by permitting travellers to go to Baltimore, that this great city is to be injured in her business; it is by sending the produce of the west to the Baltimore market. And it should not be forgotten, that if the terminus of this road should be at Wheeling or Parkersburg, all the business and travel above such terminus is secured to the Pennsylvania works free of competition, and should a railroad be made to Cleveland and one towards Cincinnati, this will constitute the largest portion of the western business. Where will this road terminate, if it be not allowed to come to Pittsburg? The Virginia Legislature, for two successive sessions, has refused to grant the right of way to Parkersburg. The President of the company has condemned the Wheeling route as being virtually impracticable. Is it to remain at its present terminus? It is not fair to presume that it will. This would be virtually throwing away the large amount of money already expended in its construction. Then, Sir, will it come to Pittsburg, if the right of way be granted; or will our law be used to obtain more favorable legislation from the State of Virginia? On this point, Mr. Speaker, we are much in the dark. No Senator seems to have any knowledge of the disposition of the Baltimore company on this subject. If we are to judge from the public actions of the Company, they do not desire to come to Pittsburg, and will not do so if they can get permission to go elsewhere. Then, Sir, what may be the effect of our action here? We may be giving this company the power more effectually to injure us. We may be making one chance in the game against ourselves. If the effect of this legislation should be to open all the routes, then it would be a matter of cool business calculation with the Company, which to adopt. And no set of men in the country are better able to decide this question correctly, than the officers of this Company. If they should arrive at the conclusion that they can come to Pittsburg and successfully compete with the Pennsylvania improvements, they would do so; if not, they would go to Parkersburg or Wheeling. If, Sir, a connexion at either of the latter points, presents all the advantages which are claimed for them by some gentlemen on this floor, then, Sir, this road never will come to Pittsburg; but if it should do so, we have, and can have, no guarantee that the Ohio river will not be tapped lower down, and that when we have introduced a powerful competitor into the very heart of our own business, we will not still be visited with the consequences of a competitor below. Indeed, Sir, we have evidence that we will have such a competitor, in the shape of the Richmond and Guyard Improvements.

But I have said, Mr. Speaker, that we can test the sincerity of the Philadelphians in reference to the construction of the continuous road, without hazarding the interests of Pittsburg as connected with the right of way. And how Sir? Why, Sir, at the Baltimore and Ohio Company desire to come to Pittsburg with their road, they will not think of adopting any other terminus in one or even two years, and most certainly they would not do so, if the proviso which I intend to offer to this bill, should be adopted. It will be no inconvenience to them to delay to June, 1847; or until it shall be ascertained that the stock of the Pennsylvania road will be subscribed. I believe, Sir, they now have no means to go any where. They are financially weak. True they have three millions of Maryland bonds, which they are required to sell at par or not at all; but even if this restriction were taken off, they could not make them available without sustaining enormous loss. Besides, Sir, they are as you will perceive by the public prints, inviting proposals to re-build some thirty miles of their road lying between Harper's Ferry and Baltimore, which road was constructed on the old perishable plan, with flat rails, and I am assured, that by next season, another part of this road will require to be re-built. Thus, Sir, are the funds and energies of the Company required to repair their present road, and they will not, perhaps, even have means to examine and survey the route for the new road, much less proceed to construct it. This road may at some time be constructed to the Ohio river—but we seem to be looking upon it as an event of tomorrow. Why, Sir, this company, with all their original means and energies have been some seventeen years getting from Baltimore to Cumberland, and if they are forced to go to either Fishing Creek, or Parkersburg, their work is yet in its infancy—it is not half accomplished. At the same time, the construction of this road, it will be twenty years reaching its destination. Time enough, Sir, reaching the destination, to make the continuous road to Pittsburg and make both her and Philadelphia rich, before this competitor can get into full power. And, Sir, may not the Virginia improvement on the South and West

on the North, have a tendency to confine this work where it now is? I cannot imagine, for the life of me, Mr. Speaker, why it is, that some gentlemen have so much confidence in the ability of Baltimore and this company to finish this great work, and so little confidence in the ability of Philadelphia, Pittsburg and the interior of the State, to construct a railroad from Harrisburg to Pittsburg, a much less work. Why, Sir, Philadelphia is better able of herself to make a road from Harrisburg to both Pittsburg and Erie, than Baltimore is to extend her road to the Ohio by the Fishing Creek route—better able, Sir, to construct a road the entire distance from Harrisburg to Cleveland, than Baltimore is to reach Parkersburg with hers. Thus, Sir, I am satisfied that we can postpone a grant of the right of way either positively or conditionally, without endangering the interests of Pittsburg, or delay the ultimate completion of this road. But, Sir, I may be told that if the stock of the Pennsylvania road should be subscribed, then the Baltimore road would never come to Pittsburg. Be it so, Mr. Speaker. If those roads are incompatible—if we can have but one of them, I cannot hesitate in selecting the Pennsylvania road; nor Sir, can I see that Pittsburg would have any cause of complaint, if a road be made connecting with the Atlantic cities by the shortest possible link.

I now desire to submit some remarks in reference to a continuous railroad to connect the eastern and western waters. I am glad that this subject is beginning to attract a portion of the public attention which its paramount importance entitles it to. I am especially rejoiced, Sir, that our great commercial metropolis is becoming awake to the importance of an improvement of this kind, and I trust the day is not far distant when this great work will be accomplished. I desire to see our two great cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburg, speedily connected, by an artery of this kind, extending over our own territory, without reference to any particular location. I am willing to leave all the routes open to the choice of the company. The question of the route is one that nature has decided, and it will be for the company to ascertain where that decision is. I care not that company may select the middle route of Mr. Schlatter's survey, pursuing the Susquehanna river for a few miles above this place, and then crossing to its western shore and following it to the mouth of the Juniata, and thence upon the southern shore of that river to Lewistown, and from thence up the Kishacoquillas creek to Stone Mountain, and from thence by the valley of Shaver's creek to the Little Juniata and Parkersburg, thence to the summit of the Allegheny at the Sugar Run Gap, and from thence to Pittsburg, or whether they select the northern route, up the valleys of the West Branch of the Susquehanna river and Bald Eagle creek, and in this way reach the summit of the Allegheny; or that they follow the Cumberland Valley road to Chambersburg, and go from thence to Johnstown in Cambria county, which, though never surveyed, is said to be a practicable route. Let but a road be made. Let the route which nature has designated be adopted. If the location should happen to be considerably north or south of the route not yet provided for. The people in the southern tier of counties urge the right of way for the Baltimore and Ohio company, partially on the ground that they derive no direct advantages from the public works, whilst they are as constantly called upon to contribute their portion of revenue to meet the interest on the debt contracted in the construction of these improvements. This, Mr. Speaker, to some extent, is correct; but the same position might be assumed with even more propriety and truth in reference to nearly all the northern tier counties of the State, constituting one-fourth of her territory. These counties derive little or no advantages from the public works, and unlike the southern counties, they are now and poor, and greatly need the means for developing their wealth. Why, Sir, no county in the State has more just cause of complaint, on this score, than the little county of Clearfield. Her citizens not only derive no advantages from the public works, but they are forced by means of these works, to sustain an annual injury to double the amount of their taxation. Prior to the construction of the public works, her people had a natural avenue to the eastern markets; her hardy sons placed their coal and lumber in arks and rafts, on the smooth surface of the placid Susquehanna, and floated safely down the current uninterrupted by tide waters nor dashed to pieces by violent cataraets. But Sir, in the construction of the public improvements, dams have been thrown across this noble river, which are productive to the descending navigation of great delay and danger. Estimating the number of arks and rafts descending the river, from this county, annually at six hundred, and the additional expense in making a trip to market, at an average of four days, at five dollars per day; and you have the sum of twelve thousand dollars annually. This Sir, is a very small county, is no trifling burden. And in addition Sir, these dams prevent the shade ascending the river in the Spring, and thus we upriver people are deprived of a valuable luxury, which nature intended we should enjoy, and which, Sir, in the opinion of a gentleman of your good taste, I have no doubt, is a most generous privation. This, Mr. Speaker, is no fish story. Every allegation I have here made could be established in a court of justice, and yet Sir, let the railroads and canals go where they may, our people have not, and will not complain.

Allusion to the odious doctrine of repudiation has been made in connection with these railroad questions. Sir, this ought not to be. This Jacobinical, degrading, honor-tarnishing and wicked doctrine has been consigned to oblivion by the honesty and virtue of the people of Pennsylvania, and there let it rest. Let no man, at this day, for small or great cause, drag its hideous visage again before the eye.

The Allegheny mountains, Mr. Speaker, present the only great obstacle to a railroad communication between the east and west. On this subject I wish to read an extract from a publication made in the United States Gazette, some time last fall, and which a friend has placed in my possession—I have a personal knowledge of its author, and know that the facts stated, or many of them, were ascertained upon actual examination by competent scientific men. The writer advocates the construction of a main stem of railroad to the summit of the Allegheny, and from thence branches to Pittsburg and Erie. He says—

"The whole distance from Philadelphia to Pittsburg is 336 miles, and from Harrisburg 229 1/2, with no grades exceeding 45 feet to the mile.—106 1/2 miles of this road are now completed. Examinations made since Col Schlatter was on the ground, have brought to light some controlling facts. The crossing or the avoiding the Allegheny range is the problem to be solved in all connections to be made between the east and the west.—It is a remarkable circumstance, that in all the surveys made by this state and by chartered companies, the most feasible point for surmounting that barrier, has never yet been examined. The writer works, I should not complain, as it would accommodate the people; and develop the resources of a portion of the State