

1857, April 23

CITIZENS OF MILWAUKEE?

We see, by the Madison and Janesville papers, that they are congratulating themselves upon the results that are to flow from the recent arrangement between the Milwaukee & Mississippi and the Chicago, St. Paul & Fond du Lac Railroads. They have some reason to do so, but every blow aimed at Milwaukee, that really does affect us, injures the State at large. We can perceive, as readily as they do, that the consequences flowing from this connection *may* prove disastrous; but will Milwaukee sit a quiet spectator, and do nothing to maintain her favorable position and prospects? If our present Railroad facilities leading West are not sufficient to compete with other routes, we must make them so. If our present road is too long, we must have one shorter. The distance from Milwaukee to the Mississippi, is less than it is from Chicago, and there is no reason why we should not get there as directly and expeditiously as they do. But the truth is, we need a little more energy. We have awaited patiently the completion of the M. & M. R. Road, and now we awake to the fact that, so far as local benefit to Milwaukee is concerned, it is a failure. In these days of go-ahead-itiveness short roads are the ones most needed, and the ones we must have. With well managed roads, constructed on the shortest lines, we can compete favorably with Chicago for the Mississippi trade, even without the Grand Haven route.

When the N. Y. Central Company awoke to the fact that the Erie Road was going to compete successfully with them, because that road was a few miles the shortest, instead of saying to themselves, "Our road is paying well now, and we are contented," they determined to shorten their line, and again turn the tide of travel by way of Albany to New York. Such men as ERASTUS CORNING and DEAN RICHMOND assumed the control, and constructed the "Straight Cut" from Rochester to Syracuse, shortening the distance nearly twenty-five miles.

Milwaukee must do the same. We have men as capable as they of managing such an enterprise, and they must take hold of it. More than this, we must have a common interest with interior cities and localities. This is very important, and without it we not only lose the local trade, but drive the Eastern trade into other channels. Chicago has already constructed a road connecting her with Janesville, Beloit, and Madison; and will soon have a connection with Whitewater, Watertown and Fond du Lac; all of these connections divert trade from Milwaukee. It is true that we are connected with Madison, Janesville and Watertown by Rail Road; but with the exception of the latter, the route is long and circuitous.

The LA CROSSE ROAD, connecting us with Portage and the North-West, is very nearly direct, and when completed to the River, will undoubtedly draw a large share of the trade and travel destined to Northern Iowa and Minnesota.

But we need more than one road West, and we certainly have the foundation for as successful a system of Rail Roads, centering at Milwaukee, as has any Western city. By the completion of the Southern Wisconsin we have a straight and direct route to the Mississippi at Dubuque; with the completion of the

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WATERTOWN AND MADISON, in connection with the MILWAUKEE AND MISSISSIPPI, we have an air line to Prairie du Chien; and by the LA CROSSE AND MILWAUKEE we are connected with Northern Iowa and Minnesota. In all of those projects Milwaukee has a lively interest, yet none of them are completed. The Southern Wisconsin is said to be abandoned, and a connection made with the Illinois Central that renders its construction problematical, to say the least. The WATERTOWN AND MADISON road will probably be completed this season, but when completed comes into competition with the MIL. and MISS. road, and will not be of near as much benefit to us as it would if built in connection with either of the other roads. In addition to the construction of the WATERTOWN AND MADISON, we need a straight line from the terminus of the Lake Shore R. R. to the Junction of the MIL. & MISS. and MIL. & WAT. roads; we shall then shorten the line from Milwaukee to Prairie du Chien some twenty-five miles, and be able to compete with any road from Chicago to that point.

The MILWAUKEE & MISSISSIPPI Rail Road undoubtedly owes its existence to Milwaukee, and yet we find that Company opposing by every means in its power the construction of an air line road to Madison, the very road we need at this time.

The WATERTOWN & MADISON Rail Road is not only important to Milwaukee as affording a connecting link in the shortest line from the Lake to the Mississippi river, but also from its connections it furnishes a line that crosses the roads leading from the Northern part of the State to Chicago, at the very points where trade is easiest diverted to Milwaukee, over a direct and short route.

In these fast times it is sheer nonsense to talk of charging the "same fare" from this point or that, that other routes charge. "Time is money," and the *quickest* route gets the business; nor can freights be diverted from the natural course of travel.

The merchant and the emigrant sends his goods by the same route he himself goes, or takes them with him, if transported by the same means.

Milwaukee can compete successfully for the business that passes over the Michigan Southern and Central roads, but not until different management from the present is exercised.

The following table of Distances, will show our position in regard to the through trade to the Mississippi River:

The distance to Dunleith by the Galena and Chicago Railroad is.....	188 miles.
From Dunleith to Prairie du Chien, by River.....	76 "
Total distance from Chicago to Prairie du Chien.....	264 miles.
Distance from Chicago to Milwaukee, by Lake Shore Road.....	85 miles.
Distance from Milwaukee to Prairie du Chien, by M. & M. Railroad.....	195 "
Total distance.....	280 miles.
Distance from Chicago to Milwaukee, by Lake Shore Road.....	85 miles.
Distance from Milwaukee to Madison, by Mil. & Wat. and Wat. & Madison Railroad.....	78 "
Distance from Madison to Prairie du Chien, by Mil. & Miss.....	95 "
Total distance.....	258 miles.
Distance from Chicago to Janesville, by Chicago, St. Paul & Fond du Lac Railroad... ..	91 miles.
Distance from Janesville to Milton, by Mil. & Miss. Railroad.....	8 "
Distance from Milton to Prairie du Chien, by Mil. & Miss. Railroad.....	131 "
Total distance.....	230 miles.

It will be seen that the shortest route is obtained by the Chicago, St. Paul & Fond du Lac, and Milwaukee & Mississippi roads; the next shortest by the Lake Shore, Milwaukee & Watertown,

Watertown & Madison, and Milwaukee & Mississippi roads: the difference being 28 miles in favor of the former. The next shortest is by the Galena & Chicago and the Mississippi River, and the longest by the Lake Shore and Milwaukee & Mississippi roads.

The difference between the two shortest, can be more than obviated by favorable connections, and consolidation of interests. The Galena and Chicago is at present the only *through* route in reality, and it is represented by several interests, and combines Land and Water transportation. Notwithstanding that it is longer than the route by the St Paul road, and requires a change of freights and passengers from cars to boats at Dunleith, yet it does more business than all the routes North of it combined. Chicago controls the two shortest routes to Prairie du Chien, and the question is, what must Milwaukee do? It is useless disguising the matter, something must be done; we must have short routes—straight cuts, and consolidated, instead of antagonistical interests.

Milwaukee has done more than all the rest of the State together towards building the Rail Roads of Wisconsin, and she has a right to the benefits accruing from their construction. There is but little remaining to be done to afford a remedy — build the straight cut from the Lake Shore Road to the junction—consolidate the line, and take passengers or freights through, and over, not only the shortest route from Milwaukee to the river, but also the *quickest* route from Chicago to Prairie du Chien. We ask our citizens to consider these things, but not "*pause to consider*" — we have paused too long already.

We present these views to our citizens after much consideration, and after they have been submitted to, and approved by several of our oldest citizens, deeply interested in the prosperity and welfare of the CITY OF MILWAUKEE.

TAX PAYERS.

Milwaukee, April 23, 1857.