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Wm Burn May 19th 1859

Washington Long Esq

Dear Sir,

Yours of 30th ult. was duly received, and I ^{was} delayed writing till I was sure of your return to Arrostook.

I am gratified to know that you are opposed to the increase of price of our state lands, as contemplated by the Bill to be submitted to the people for their adoption or rejection. The idea of a Railroad to the Arrostook being in any manner connected with the contemplated Bill, appears to me to be "one grand humbug."

We were told quite recently, by the Pioneer, that the Railroad to Houlton or vicinity would be built first, and in preference to that which is to cross the Boundary and form the great connecting link of ^{the} European & American railway. Now, how any man, in his right senses, (much less our Editor,) can suppose that a branch road leading to, and connecting with, nowhere and nothing, will be built in preference to one that will connect Nova Scotia & New Brunswick to Maine, and not to Maine only but to the whole boundless west, is to me inexplicable.

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The "Bill" and Mr McCrellis' speech, taken together, conclusively show, beyond the need of argument, that the completion of the C. & N. American Railroad is the great object of the authors and abettors of the thing; and a secondary object, to enhance the price of our lands.

The idea, that funds or money can be derived from the sale of our settling lands, even at one dollar per acre, to aid the construction of any Railroad, stands completely demolished by the remarks of Mr Prentiss of Bangor.

By his figuring, which he took from data in the Land Office, he showed that it has actually cost the State, in cash, not less than one dollar & quarter per acre, for every acre that she has disposed of under our present settling law. I think I am right as to the amount, nearly, though probably, not quite. We might here, put a question to those who are so zealous of "State aid", to be derived from the sale of, or the enhancement of the price of our lands; If it costs the State one dollar & quarter ^{per acre} to give away ^{its choicest} lands, what quantity will it require to sell at one dollar per acre, to enable it to aid in the construction of the contemplated Road or any other? and how long ^{time} will it require to emancipate such aid?

It is evident, therefore, that no aid in money can be expected from the State, towards the accomplishment of this enterprise; and, consequently that a portion of our lands will ^{be} demanded in lieu of money, and that demand will be complied with, provided the Road from Mattawamkeag to the boundary is built. I believe, this Act, if adopted, will retard the settlement and consequent prosperity of our County; for, if the men of Maine and New England have been slow to occupy our fertile lands, while they could be had for the asking, the conviction is irresistible that they will be much more so, when those lands can be obtained only by paying one dollar per acre therefor, and that money.

I fear this bill will be adopted, and its adoption, in the end, bring the worst of consequences to our country — retard its growth, and ultimately transfer the most, if not all, of our State lands to Railroad Co's.

~~I have written hastily and have not time to copy, you must therefore excuse the appearance of this sheet.~~

I am Sir

Very Respectfully yours

A. S. Richards