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Roads – Minnesota. Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting a report of the Topographical Bureau, respecting certain roads in the Territory of Minnesota.

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ROADS—MINNESOTA.

LETTER

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF WAR,

TRANSMITTING

A report of the Topographical Bureau, respecting certain roads in the Territory of Minnesota.

DECEMBER 23, 1851.

Referred to the Committee on Territories, and ordered to be printed.

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, December 22, 1851.

SIR: I have the honor to transmit, herewith, a report of the colonel of Topographical Engineers, in answer to the resolution of the House of Representatives of the 15th inst., calling for information as to the progress made in the construction of certain roads in Minnesota.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. M. CONRAD,
Secretary of War.

To the Hon. LINN BOYD,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

BUREAU OF TOPOGRAPHICAL ENGINEERS,
Washington, December 22, 1851.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge your direction to report upon a resolution of the House of Representatives, of the 15th instant, in reference to certain roads in Minnesota.

The first notice of this subject, in any report from this office, will be found in the annual report of November 14th, 1850, from which the following extract is made:

“A law of the 18th July, 1850, directed the construction of certain roads in the territory of Minnesota; ‘the said roads to be constructed under the direction of the Secretary of War, pursuant to contracts to be made by him.’ As contracts could not be made without a knowledge of what was to be contracted for, it became a necessary preliminary operation to have surveys made of these several routes, before the number and kind of bridges required could be known; the extent of ground to be grubbed

and cleared of its timber, and the extent of causeway work, or other means of making marshy ground passable, should such ground be encountered in the routes, and of the extent of level which would merely require ditching. For these purposes it was necessary to have the survey made by some one of knowledge in road making, in order to collect the data upon which the contracts were to be made.

"Having no officer of the corps to spare for the duty, it became necessary to procure some unemployed and adequately informed civil engineer. I was not successful in this respect until some time in September, when the services of J. S. Potter, Esq., were obtained, who is now there and engaged upon the duty. He was directed, in the first instance, to survey the route from Mendota to Wabashaw, as the most which could probably be done this season, and to report results, so that contracts could be made, and data be had for the necessary additional estimates for this and for the other roads.

"The following are the several roads referred to in the law :

"1st. A road from Point Douglass, on the Mississippi, via Cottage Grove, Stillwater, Marine Mills, and Falls of St. Anthony to the falls or rapids of the St. Louis river of Lake Superior. This road will be, by Nicollet's map, about one hundred and fifty miles long, and the appropriation in the law is \$15,000.

"2d. A road from Point Douglass, via Cottage Grove, Red Rock, St. Paul, and Falls of St. Anthony to Fort Gaines. This road is about one hundred and fifty miles long, and the appropriation in the law is \$10,000.

"3d. A road from the mouth of Swan river, or the most available point between it and the Sauk rapids, to the Winnebago agency, at the Long Prairie. This road is about seventy miles long, and the appropriation in the law is \$5,000.

"4th. A road from Wabashaw to Mendota. The length of this road is about seventy-five miles, and the appropriation is \$5,000.

"These several appropriations can, of course, have contemplated only the necessary preliminary operations and a limited portion of work. The law does not designate the kind of road, but it is supposed to contemplate what is usually understood as a country road ; that bridges are to be built where bridges are required ; swamps or marshes to be made passable where either are encountered ; trees to be felled, and undergrowth removed, where these are encountered ; and ditching on the sides of the roads over flat land. The surveys will be directed to determine these peculiarities of the routes, as it is from a knowledge of these that the required contracts will have to be made.

"No report of the survey directed has yet been received. The bureau is, therefore, without anticipated data for additional estimates.

"The desire was to present a probable estimate for the completion of each road, and then to submit a partial estimate for as much as would probably be required during the ensuing fiscal year.

"Under these circumstances, and as the amounts appropriated are totally inadequate for constructing operations during the ensuing season,—and as estimates have to be made for the consideration of Congress, in reference to the necessary future appropriations,—estimates will be made upon the best information now in the possession of the office ; that is, from estimates for similar roads in the adjoining territory.

"These estimates are based upon the following data :—In 1839, roads had to be made under United States laws, in the territory of Wisconsin.

Captain Cram, of the corps superintending the construction of these roads, in that territory, was directed to make estimates in detail of the probable cost of making the roads.

“The general plan of these roads is as follows :

“The road to be laid out four rods wide.

“All shrubs, brush, and trees, of what size soever, that may be found standing on a centre strip of two rods wide, to be cut down close to the soil, and to be removed, on each side of this centre strip, upon the adjoining part of the road ; and all impediments to the easy and safe motion of wheel carriages to be removed from said centre strip.

“In places of low wet ground, a good, solid, high and dry embanked road-way to be made eighteen feet wide, top covered with gravel, and to have good side ditches.

“The abutments and piers of bridge work to be constructed in substantial dry rubble masonry, where stone can be conveniently procured ; otherwise they are to be constructed of sound hewn timber, well clamped and tied together.

“In all spans over twenty feet, the bridges to be constructed with a single road-way twelve feet wide, upon the plan invented and patented by Lieutenant-Colonel S. H. Long, Corps Topographical Engineers, with such modifications as circumstances may call for. In spans of less than twenty feet, they are to be constructed with string pieces, and plank flooring well spiked thereon.

“In conformity with these general views, estimates were made for two roads, namely :

“For a road from Fort Howard, on Green Bay, to Milwaukee. The distance is one hundred and fifty-eight miles, and the average of the estimate three hundred and six dollars the mile.

“For a road from Racine, on Lake Michigan, to Sinipee, on the Mississippi, one hundred and fifty miles, and the average estimate two hundred and eighteen dollars the mile. Much less bridge work was required on this road, which reduced its average cost.

“The views for the roads in Minnesota will differ from these in some particulars.

“1st. The road-way to be opened will be one hundred feet wide.

“2d. The centre strip to be thoroughly cleared for a width of fifty feet.

“3d. Gravel is not supposed to be abundant, or very accessible in that country. The low wet places will have generally to be made passable by log causeways covered with earth ; and, where it can be done, to be drained by suitable ditches leading from the lateral road ditches into the river. It is also understood that there are many such places in these routes for roads.

“It is not supposed that the routes for any of these roads are heavily timbered, and there may be a scarcity of suitable timber for bridges. Nor is it supposed that facilities for work are as great in Minnesota as they were in Wisconsin at the time of those estimates.

“On these accounts, it is supposed to be the most judicious course to take the larger of the two average rates stated, as the basis for a conjectural estimate of the Minnesota roads.

"1st. Road from Point Douglass to the St. Louis river of					
Lake Superior, 150 miles, at \$306 the mile					
	-	-	-	-	\$45,900 00
Amount appropriated	-	-	-	-	15,000 00
					<hr/>
Amount required	-	-	-	-	\$30,900 00
					<hr/>
"2d. Road from Point Douglass to Fort Gaines, 150 miles,					
at \$306 the mile					
	-	-	-	-	\$45,900 00
Amount appropriated	-	-	-	-	10,000 00
					<hr/>
Amount required	-	-	-	-	\$35,900 00
					<hr/>
"3d. Road from Swan river to the Winnebago agency, 70					
miles, at \$306 the mile					
	-	-	-	-	\$21,420 00
Amount appropriated	-	-	-	-	5,000 00
					<hr/>
Amount required	-	-	-	-	\$16,420 00
					<hr/>
"4th. Road from Wabashaw to Mendota, 75 miles, at \$306					
the mile					
	-	-	-	-	\$22,950 00
Amount appropriated	-	-	-	-	5,000 00
					<hr/>
Amount required	-	-	-	-	\$17,950 00
					<hr/>

"These are presented as conjectural estimates, for the reasons and upon the data given.

"At the ensuing session a revised estimate, upon facts and prices as collected from the actual survey of the roads, will be submitted.

"But these facts will justify me in submitting to your consideration the items in the subjoined estimate referring to each road for the ensuing fiscal year.

"The same law directed the surveying and laying out of a military road from Mendota, on the Mississippi, to the mouth of the Big Sioux, on the Missouri. The length of this survey will probably be not less than 260 miles. The appropriation for the duty is \$5,000. It will require the organization of one party, consisting of a chief and two assistant engineers, with the usual complement of rod-men, chain-men, laborers, &c.; and it will require one season to enable such a party to survey and mark out the road; the marking involving no other labor than affixing suitable stakes at specified distances along the centre line of the road. The party will be itself its own escort, as the Indians are not troublesome in that region.

"To make this survey of two hundred and sixty miles as indicated, will, on a careful estimate, cost very near \$10,000. The amount appropriated being \$5,000, there will yet be required \$5,000 to make this survey. It is contemplated that the survey will exhibit the profile as well as the horizontal line of the road; and as in these surveys means of transporting the baggage and provisions of the party have to be carried with it, as well as the required provisions, they are more costly than surveys in a settled and populated country.

"Too much care cannot be bestowed on these preliminary surveys. The results always involve a saving both of time and money. In my opinion,

there is no engineer of intelligence and experience, who will not say that such surveys save time, lessen unnecessary and costly labor and enable him to lay out the work on the ground, and direct its construction with more intelligence and with greater economy in cost. These surveys have to be made, and, if not made in the first instance, are usually made out of appropriations for the construction of the work, at more cost, under such circumstances, than if made by the surveying parties already in the field."

In conformity with these views, estimates for the construction of these roads were submitted, but no appropriations were made.

Under such circumstances, the only course was to persevere in the surveys which had been commenced. With the view of pushing these surveys with more energy, on the representation of Governor Ramsay, approved by the War Department, an additional surveying party was organized; and the superintendence was placed under First Lieutenant J. H. Simpson, of the corps.

The annual report from this officer, dated at St. Paul, September 15th, 1851, gives so full an account of his operations, that I beg leave to add a copy of it to this report. The last report from this officer is in a letter dated November 6, 1851, a copy of which is hereto appended, marked No. 2.—Copies of the estimates referred to in this letter are not given, as they are merely estimates for funds to pay the surveying parties.

In the annual report from this officer, of last November, now before Congress, the allusion is made to these roads in the following words:

"The survey of the several roads in Minnesota has been completed, and estimates in reference to the same are now submitted, in order to justify the War Department to make the several contracts for these roads, in accordance with the law.

"These estimates will not complete the roads, but are made under the rule of asking for no more than can be judiciously expended during the ensuing fiscal year."

The following is a copy of the estimate submitted with that report:

"For Roads in Minnesota."

"For the further prosecution of the road from Point Douglass, on the Mississippi, to the St. Louis river of Lake Superior,	\$30,000
"For the further prosecution of the road from Point Douglass to Fort Gaines,-----	30,000
"For the further prosecution of the road from Swan river to the Winnebago agency,-----	20,000
"For the further prosecution of the road from Wabashaw to Mendota,-----	20,000

In reference to the amounts expended of the appropriations which were made in 1850 for each of these roads, the following statement is submitted:

Statement of expenditures on account of roads in Minnesota Territory.

Objects of expenditure.	Amounts appropriated.	Amounts expended.	Amounts available for future expenditures.
No. 1. Construction of a road from Point Douglass to the rapids of St. Louis river of Lake Superior	\$15,000 00	\$4,594 50	\$10,405 50
No. 2. Construction of a road from Point Douglass to Fort Gaines	10,000 00	3,289 00	6,711 00
No. 3. Construction of a road from Swan river to the Winnebago agency..	5,000 00	1,732 50	3,267 50
No. 4. Construction of a road from Wabashaw to Mendota.....	5,000 00	2,473 00	2,527 00

From this exposition it will be seen how extremely small are available amounts, in reference to probable cost; and as the laws prohibit contracts beyond available amounts of appropriations, it was considered advisable to delay contracts for the construction of these roads, until Congress could have an opportunity of acting upon the submitted estimates.

Therefore, it will appear, in answer to the first specific inquiry of the resolution, that no part of the construction of these roads has yet been commenced; and in answer to the second specific inquiry of the same resolution, that estimates for these roads were submitted with the annual report from this office, of November, 1850; also that estimates for these roads are now before Congress, as part of the annual report from this office for November, 1851; and also that these last estimates are repeated in this report.

By reference to the annual report of Lieut. Simpson, hereto appended, and marked No. 1, it will appear that the road No. 1 will be about two hundred miles long, and in relation to its probable cost, he says: "It cannot be less than \$400 a mile."

The entire cost of this road will therefore be not less than	\$80,000
The road No. 2 will be about 146 miles long, and the average cost per mile is stated at \$192, making a total of-----	\$28,032
The road No. 3 will be about 58 miles long, its average cost is stated at \$350 the mile, making a total of—(assuming the greatest probable length of the report)-----	\$20,300
The road No. 4 is about 75 miles long. The detailed estimate of Mr. Potter gives for this road an average cost of \$450 the mile, (\$449 $\frac{62}{100}$), the total cost will then be-----	\$33,750

Respectfully submitted by, sir, your obedient servant,

J. J. ABERT,

Colonel Corps Topographical Engineers.

Hon. C. M. CONRAD,
Secretary of War.

No. 1.

ST. PAUL, TERRITORY OF MINNESOTA,

September 15, 1851.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report of operations connected with the survey and construction, during the past year, of the roads in the Territory of Minnesota, authorized by Congress in July, 1850. These roads are as follows:—

A road from Point Douglass, on the Mississippi river, via Cottage Grove, Stillwater, Marine Mills, and falls of the Saint Croix river, to the falls or rapids of the Saint Louis river of Lake Superior. Length, about two hundred miles. Appropriation, \$15,000.

A road from Point Douglass, via Cottage Grove, Red Rock, Saint Paul, and falls of Saint Anthony, to Fort Gaines, (now called Fort Ripley.) Length, one hundred and forty-six miles. Appropriation, \$10,000.

A road from the mouth of Swan river, or the most available point between it and the Sauk rapids, to the Winnebago agency at Long Prairie, length varying from thirty-eight to fifty-eight miles, depending upon the point of starting on the Mississippi river. Appropriation, \$5,000.

A road from Wabashaw to Mendota. Length, seventy-five miles. Appropriation, \$5,000.

A military road from Mendota to the mouth of Big Sioux river. Length, from two hundred and fifty to two hundred and seventy-five miles. Appropriation, \$5,000.

On the 9th of November last, Mr. J. S. Potter, civil engineer, arrived here in obedience to the instructions of the bureau, to take charge of the survey and construction of these roads. By the 31st of December he had located and surveyed the road from Wabashaw to Mendota, and on the 20th of January submitted to the bureau his estimate in detail of the cost of the same. He also subsequently submitted to the bureau a map of this road. The cost of the road he estimates at \$33,871.72, or at the average rate of \$449.62 per mile. Between the date of getting off his map and estimate of this road, and the 9th of May, Mr. Potter, not being able on account of the cold weather to survey any of the remaining routes to advantage, was engaged in reconnoitering the Point Douglass and Fort Gaines route, the Mississippi and Long Prairie route, and as far as from Point Douglass to the falls of the Saint Croix, the route from Point Douglass to the Saint Louis river.

On the 8th of May I arrived at Saint Paul, in obedience to the instructions of the bureau, for the purpose of organizing a second surveying party for the field, and to take the general charge of the survey of all the roads. The same day I relieved Mr. Potter of the general charge of the roads, and left him in particular charge of the Point Douglass and Saint Louis river road.

On the 13th of May I left Saint Paul on a reconnoissance of the road from Point Douglass to Fort Gaines. This reconnoissance employed me to the 22d of May. On the 29th of May, a party, which had in the mean time been organized, composed of one principal assistant-engineer, Mr. Charles L. Emerson, one second assistant-engineer, Mr. Joseph R. Smith, and ten men, accompanied by one wagon to carry the supplies, started from Saint Paul to Point Douglass, to commence the location and survey of the said road from Point Douglass to Fort Gaines.

The survey of the Point Douglass and Fort Gaines road being put in a train of accomplishment, my attention was next given to the Point Douglass and Saint Louis river road. To reconnoitre this route I left Saint Paul on the 2d of June, and returned on the 28th of the same month. On the 3d of July, a party, which had in the mean time been organized, composed of one chief assistant-engineer, Mr. Josiah Knawn, (Mr. Potter, in consequence of ill-health, could not take charge of the party, and therefore resigned all connexion with the surveys, July 11th,) one second assistant-engineer, Mr. S. Raymond Champlin, and ten men, accompanied by one wagon, set out from Saint Paul for Cottage Grove, to commence the location and survey of the said Point Douglass and Saint Louis river route. This party had, on the 4th of September, reached Snake river, one hundred miles distant from Point Douglass; and it is believed will be just able to finish the survey through to the Saint Louis river this season. Were the road an old one, or had the route been already particularly located, the survey could be completed in the course of fifteen or twenty days; but as every inch of the ground has to be looked up, and this in a swamp and marsh country, where it is scarcely possible to find ground for a road at all, the survey cannot be executed properly, except after a great deal of search, which must of necessity involve both time and patience.

On the 20th of August, the survey of the Point Douglass and Fort Gaines road having become nearly completed, I left Saint Paul to make reconnoissance of the route between the Mississippi and the Winnebago agency at Long Prairie. This reconnoissance employed me till the 30th of August. On the 3d of September, the survey of the Point Douglass and Fort Gaines road having been completed, and the party paid off, a new party, composed of Mr. Emerson, principal assistant, Mr. Sweet, second assistant, (Mr. Smith having resigned,) and seven new men, three more to be obtained on the way, accompanied by one wagon, left Saint Paul, for the purpose of locating and surveying said route from the Mississippi. This survey, it is believed, will be finished by the middle of October.

Having thus presented a sketch of operations up to the present time, I will now speak generally of the several routes so far as my reconnoissance of them will enable me, reserving the more full and particular description of them to be elucidated by the maps and estimates which are to be made up so soon as the parties come in from the field.

The route from Point Douglass to Fort Gaines runs entirely on the east side of the Mississippi river, and with but two or three exceptions within a mile or two of the river. The country through which it passes, is an *interminglement* of prairie and oak openings; the prairies aggregating about sixty-four miles of the distance, and the oak openings about eighty-two. The prairies, as well as the oak openings, generally approach a plain surface; the country between Point Douglass and Saint Paul, however, forming an exception, the prairie and oak openings in this interval being highly rolling.

The soil, both of the prairies and of the oak openings, except between Cottage Grove and Saint Paul, a distance of sixteen miles, is a black sandy loam.

Between Cottage Grove and Saint Paul, the soil of the oak openings, is more or less a hard pan gravel; of the prairie, of a marly argillaceous character.

The principal rivers to be crossed are, Coon creek, forty-eight and a half feet wide, distant from Point Douglass, forty-five miles; Rum river, one hundred and thirty-six feet wide, distant from Coon creek, six miles; Elk

river, one hundred and two feet wide, distant from Rum river about twelve miles; Rock river, thirty-three feet wide, distant from Elk river about forty-four miles; Platte river, eighty-eight feet wide, distant from Rock run about ten miles.

The heavy work on the road will be the bridging the streams named, and the construction of the roadway at the following points: Between Red Rock and Saint Paul; about four miles of the distance; between Saint Paul and Saint Anthony, about half a mile of the distance between Rice creek and Coon creek, all the way near five miles; between Benton City and Watab, six miles; between Platte river and the mouth of Swan river (Aitkins), six miles of the distance; in all about twenty-one and a half miles of road. A rigid estimate of the cost of the road it will not be possible for me to give, till all the data of the survey can be examined in the office; but approximating it now in the best way I am able, I should place the cost, including the bridges and all other kinds of work, at not exceeding \$28,032, or at the average rate of \$192 per mile.

In regard to the road from Point Douglass to the rapids or falls of the Saint Louis river, it runs entirely on the west side of the river Saint Croix, keeping, as far as Sunrise river, (Mennokag river on Nicollet's map) a distance of about seventy-eight miles, with the exception of the portion about Cottage Grove, within a mile or two of its banks. Thence it runs generally about north-west to Snake river, a distance of twenty-four miles, crossing it just below the mouth of the Lake Pokegomag; thence along the east side of Lake Pokegomag, a distance of about eight miles; thence in a direction generally N. 30° E. to Kettle river, a distance of about forty miles; and thence in about the same general course to the falls or rapids of the Saint Louis river, a distance of about fifty miles; making the whole probable length of the road, two hundred miles.

From Point Douglass to Stillwater, a distance of twenty-four miles, the country through which the road passes is prairie, more or less rolling. From Stillwater to Otis, three miles beyond Marine Mills, or for a distance of fifteen miles, it is brush and oak openings, with occasionally a section of prairie. From Otis to the Saint Louis river, it is dense timber, the greater portion of which is traversed by extreme marshy and tamarack swamps.

The cost of the road through the prairies and oak and brush openings, except when deep ravines intervene, as between Cottage Grove and Stillwater, and except when steep acclivities occur, as at Stillwater, will be but moderate; but through the thickly timbered, swampy and marshy portion, which includes about three-quarters of the whole road, it cannot be less than four hundred dollars a mile. I would, therefore, in the absence of the data necessary to predicate a rigid estimate, state that the cost of this road will not fall much short of seventy-three thousand dollars, or at the average rate of three hundred and fifty dollars per mile.

In regard to the road from the Mississippi river to the Winnebago agency at Long Prairie, the country through which it will run being almost a thickly timbered and brush country, and intersected by low swamps and marshes, I would lay its cost, allowing the line which is at present being run, which will be about twenty-eight miles long, to be taken at nine thousand eight hundred dollars, or at the average rate of three hundred and fifty dollars per mile. Supposing, however, that late this fall, or early in the spring, a more desirable route should be found direct to Watab or Sauk rapids, an allusion to which will be made in the sequel, then the length of

this route being about fifty miles, I would estimate its cost at seventeen thousand five hundred dollars, or at the average rate of three hundred and fifty dollars per mile.

In regard to the military road from Mendota to the mouth of the Big Sioux river, not yet, from the want of requisite engineering force, having given my attention to it, it is impossible for me to state, with any thing like certainty, the cost of its construction.

In regard to the financial condition of the roads under my charge, it is not possible, on account of the absence of the parties in the field, to state it with absolute precision, but approximating it very nearly, I would give it as follows :

Expenditures and liabilities on account of the Point Douglass and Fort Gaines road,-----	\$3,150
Point Douglass and Saint Louis river road,-----	3,039
Mississippi and Long Prairie road,-----	893
Wabashaw and Mendota road,-----	1,350
Mendota and Big Sioux river road,-----	293
	<hr/>
Total amount,-----	<u>\$8,725</u>

To meet these liabilities, Mr. Potter received from the treasury and paid out, according to the statement he has left filed in the office, \$2,200. I have received from the treasury \$5,924, and have expended of this amount \$4,325.32, leaving an available balance in hand of \$1,598.68.

In regard to the importance of putting these roads under contract at the earliest possible moment, there cannot be the slightest question, at least in respect to three of them, to wit: the Point Douglass and Fort Gaines road, the Point Douglass and Saint Louis river road, and the Mississippi and Long Prairie road. The Mendota and Wabashaw road, and the Mendota and Big Sioux river road, both running through a country the Indian title to which is not yet definitely extinguished, do not so pressingly require of the Government their immediate construction. The other three roads, however, are now of the utmost consequence, and should be made available at the earliest possible moment. The Point Douglass and Fort Gaines road, through a portion of the territory to which emigrants are flocking in great numbers, is the great highway by which the Government supplies reach the Indians in the Winnebago territory and in the Chippewa district. It is also the road by which the Government supplies are transported to the troops at Fort Gaines (Fort Ripley.) The Mississippi and Long Prairie road is the branch road from the Point Douglass and Fort Gaines road, by which Government supplies are conveyed to the Winnebago agency at Long Prairie. The Point Douglass and Saint Louis river road is of the utmost consequence in the accommodation it will afford to the lumbering interests high upon the Saint Croix, upon Snake river and Kettle river; this road being the only avenue, especially in the winter, by which supplies can be transported to these points for the maintenance of those engaged in the trade. During any other season except the winter, these supplies, in consequence of the utter impassability of the road, on account of swamps and marshes, and rich, moist, shaded soil, have to be boated up swift streams, where the boatmen, in addition to the weariness of poling against a strong current, have not unfrequently to contend against formidable rapids and falls, by resorting to portages around them. At present,

there is a road between Stillwater and Marine Mills, which scarcely ever a wagon ventures to travel. Between Marine Mills and the Falls of Saint Croix, a narrow road has been cut out, but in the summer time it is utterly impassable on account of mire and hills. Between the Falls of Saint Croix and Lake Pokegomag, a narrow road has been cut for the lumbermen in the winter, but in the summer time it is as much as a man can do to get through safely, even on horseback. Between Lake Pokegomag and the falls of the Saint Louis river there is not as much as a well-defined trail; and as for traveling through with a wagon, I could not in my reconnoissance of it get farther on horseback than fifteen miles beyond Pokegomag, and the balance of the way, about ninety miles, on account of marshes and swamp, I had to journey on foot.

But in addition to all the reasons I have adduced in favor of immediately opening and making available the roads referred to, the great one of developing the resources of the country, is yet to be stated. The territory of Minnesota is, as I believe, peculiarly the land for health, enterprise and enjoyment, and, as such, in connection with its sufficiently fertile soil, is destined to become the *eldorado* of all who, to a good soil, wish to see conjoined a pure bracing atmosphere and beautiful and variegated scenery. But, in addition to all this, the time is not far distant when this territory will be the platform upon which is to be forged the iron link which is to connect the great commercial interests of the east with those of the valley of the Upper Mississippi. The approximation of those interests, by means of the New York and Erie canal, and the great chain of lakes terminating with Lake Superior, at their head, as well as the feasibility of a railroad across thence to Saint Paul, or some other point on the Mississippi or Saint Croix, which my personal knowledge of the country enables me to attest, give assurance that the day is not far remote when this territory, too, will feel the electric influence of this powerful auxiliary in developing its resources. How important is it, then, that the Government should, in the infancy of the territory, do what it can in opening the country, by means of common roads, to settlers, and thus facilitate a work which would not be more territorial than national in its character.

In regard to the application of the balance remaining available, of the appropriation, after the present surveys are finished, I would recommend it in the case of the Point Douglass and Fort Gaines road, to be applied, first, to the bridging of the main streams, Coon creek, Elk river and Rock river. Rum river and Platte river might be left for the present, as over the first is a ferry, and over the second a bridge; though the insecure nature of the latter might make it advisable to lay a new bridge also over this stream. Second, to the opening and constructing a passable road between Rice creek and Coon creek, a distance of nearly five miles. Third, to the opening and construction, as far as it will go, of the road between Rocky Point and Watab, a distance of eight and a half miles. I would recommend this, because, if this were done, the present road would be made passable at all seasons, at least to within a few miles of the mouth of Swan river.

In the case of the Point Douglass and Saint Louis river road, I would recommend that the balance of the appropriation remaining after the survey is completed, which will be about \$11,000, be applied to the immediate opening and construction of the portion of the road between Stillwater and the Falls of the Saint Croix, a distance of thirty-two miles.

In regard to the Mississippi and Long Prairie road, as it is all important, if possible, to locate a route for this road, which shall be *entirely within*

the Indian country, and thus prevent their strolling through the white settlements on the east side of the Mississippi, which they do now, in their peregrinations to and from the payments at the agency, and which they will continue to do, if the route between Swan river and Twin river is adopted, I would recommend that nothing be done in the construction of this road till a reconnoissance can be made, in the spring, to establish the practicability or impracticability of this desirable route.

As soon as the parties which are now in the field shall come in from their surveys, which will be in a month and a half or two months, the labor of preparing the maps and estimates will at once be entered upon, and they be forwarded, when completed, to the bureau for its action.

All which is respectfully submitted.

J. H. SIMPSON,

First Lieutenant Corps Topographical Engineers.

To Colonel J. J. ABERT,

Chief of Corps Topographical Engineers, Washington City, D. C.

No. 2.

St. PAUL, November 6, 1851.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you that the parties have come in from the field, they both having accomplished the surveys of the roads upon which they were engaged, to wit: the road from Point Douglass to the Saint Louis river; and the road from the mouth of Swan river to the Winnebago agency. They both came in on the same day, November 1st.

The chief of the Point Douglass and Saint Louis river road party reports that he has found better ground generally beyond Pokegomag than was anticipated. The Swan river road party had to abandon the attempt to find a practicable route through from the Mississippi to Long Prairie, on the south side of Swan river, and were necessitated to take up with the old road on the north side.

This road follows the war trail which has been followed from time immemorial by the Indians, and is without doubt the only practicable route for a road between the points given.

It being impossible to make any surveys in the winter that will be of practical use, the parties, excepting the assistants, have been paid off and discharged. The assistants are now engaged in getting up the maps and estimates.

I enclose estimates on account of the road from Point Douglass to the Saint Louis river, the Wabashaw and Mendota road, and the Fort Gaines road.

In the paragraph of my annual report, of 15th September, commencing, "In regard to the application of the balance available," &c., there is an error, which I beg to correct. The words "2d, to the opening and constructing a passable road between Coon creek and *Rum river*," should read, "2d, to the opening and constructing a passable road between *Rice creek* and Coon creek."

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. H. SIMPSON,

Lieutenant Corps Topographical Engineers.

Col. J. J. ABERT,

Chief of Corps Topographical Engineers, Washington City.