

A WESTERN DEMAND FOR INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS

[One of the constantly recurring demands of the settlers of the Upper Mississippi Valley for many years was for Congressional legislation providing for the improvement of the navigation of the Mississippi River, which, until the coming of the railroads, was the great highway of commerce. A typical demand of this character is to be found in the following editorial copied verbatim from *The Miners' Express* (Dubuque), Vol. III, No. 3, Friday, November 3, 1843.—DAN E. CLARK]

In one short month the 28th of session of Congress will commence, and that the long session too! We wonder if it will sit long enough to attend to the interests of the great West? No part of the whole Union has paid more clear cash into the coffers of Uncle Sam, than the young and prosperous States of the West, bordering upon the mighty Mississippi and her tributaries. What return has the Government ever made to the pioneers for piling in their dollars, and making the wilds of savage life "bloom and blossom like the rose?" *None whatever!* Their great highways, that are capable of being made the finest and most safe inland navigation in the world, have been permitted to fill up with snags, and rendered unsafe by rapids,—our lakes made useless for want of harbors, while the representatives of the *people*(?) have gone on, and lavished with a profligate hand, the money that was exacted from our hardy settlers to building fortifications, making harbors, &c, upon some obscure point, or squalid town upon the shore of the Atlantic. The fostering hand of Government has never been held out to the West, alone, unaided, she has had to contend against great obstructions and impediments;—while old, and worn-out States which neither God nor na-

ture seemingly ever designed for habitation or cultivation, have been the recipients of millions of dollars.

Within the last few years there has been more property destroyed upon our Western rivers, than would clear them of snags, rapids, and all other obstructions!! In one place in the Ohio called the graveyard, there have been more boats lost, and goods destroyed, than would twice pay for the clearing of that river.

Our Government was kind enough to create an Agency to filch a fifth from the hard earnings of the laborious miner, — but Congress has never had magnanimity scarcely to vote one dollar for the removing of the obstructions of the Rapids, which are the great impediment to the transporting of our useful staple. Nor would we inhabiting the Mineral region, be so selfish as to utter only our own complaints upon this occasion, but rather give vent to the outbreaks of the pent up indignation of the whole North West. Congress should turn its attention to the improvement of Western waters — the people of the entire North West demand it, for it affects not only their own interest, but the trade of the whole valley of the Mississippi!! Let her representatives remember this, let them make for once an appropriation for the West, and if done, let us have no wasp-waisted dandies imported to oversee the work, but put it in the care of some sound old practical pioneer who will not waste the money in wild-goose pranks.

The present session appears to us particularly auspicious for the interest of the West. All her members should be most emphatically Western representatives, and tend to the true interests of their constituents. With an increase of Western members under the new apportionment — entirely new representatives from many states — we look forward anxiously for some measure that shall speak devotion to Western interests. Let, gentleman, the subjects of Bank,

Tariff, and President-making alone for a little while, and go in for improving Western navigation, and the voices of two or three millions of freemen shall sing hosannas to your names, and you will certainly rejoice in the sentence of—
“well done, good and faithful servants.”