

From the Durant Papers

Thomas C. Durant, more than any one else, was responsible for the building of the Union Pacific Railroad. While dreamers debated possibilities, he sent surveyors to explore routes; when financiers were timid, he staked his own fortune on the trans-continental railroad and organized the Credit Mobilier; as vice president of the railroad company, he superintended construction in person. From his voluminous correspondence the following letters, selected at random from L. O. Leonard's collection, are typical and self-explanatory. — The Editor.

Fort Sanders Sept 29th/63

W Snyder Esq
Supt [of Operation]
Dear Sir

I am informed that some of our employees are dissatisfied because there are to be no precincts for holding elections in Nebraska west of North Platte although heretofore with a less population there has been several and that for a distance of some two hundred and fifty miles they are to have no opportunity to vote unless they go to North Platte the nearest precinct.

As this section of our road is in the Indian dis-

strict where it is difficult to keep our employees many of whom are ready to take advantage of the slightest excuse to bring about a feeling of dissatisfaction I think it a matter of Policy on the part of the Company and advisable to meet the case by furnishing all of our men who desire free transportation to North Platte in order that they may register their names and also on the day of Election that those who wish may exercise their full privilege. Probably when the opportunity is given them many will not avail themselves of it who otherwise would be dissatisfied In other cases it will have the tendency to keep them on the line for a time Take care however that no partiality is shown any party and by all means keep the Co out of Politics

Yours

T C Durant V.P

You will act in accordance with the above suggestion.

T C Durant, V P

* * *

Paterson Aug 1 1864

Thomas C Durant Esq

13 William St N.Y.

Dear Sir

Yours of 28th ultima is at hand & contents noted

The first Engine for the Union Pacific Rail Rd Co will be ready for delivery about from the 6th to 8th of September next and the other three one in every five days thereafter

Respy Yours,
Danforth Cooke & Co
Hopper

* * *

Lancaster June 26th 1867

My dear Sir:

I enclose you the charter of the Northern Pacific R. R. Co., and another document relating to it.

I would be very happy if the result of your deliberations on the subject I proposed to you should be such as to induce you to unite with us. It is however, very desirable that I should know your conclusion before July 3rd. Will you please write to me here; or if you wish, I will come on to see you.

Very respectfully yours
Edward Reilly

[Attorney for the Northern Pacific Railroad]
T. C. Durant Esq.

N Easton April 2d 1868

Dr T C Durant

Dear Sir

In organizing our force on the Road for this season I think you should at the very earliest moment put the Grader in that 60 or 70 mile of country that is without water except in the spring We cannot commence too early on this We should also have a force whose special duty it is to sink wells where we expect to have Depots. We suffered very much last summer from neglect of ample and seasonable provision for water and in some cases put our Depots where it is almost impossible to get water and would be now economy to remove them. The Force for construction of Depots should also be organized and I think if stone masons can be easily obtained it would be economy for us in this Stony Country to construct them of Stone.

The Machine Shop and Round House at Cheyenne should be immediately started and it cant be got ready too soon. We have the Machinery ordered for it to be shipped on the opening of Navigation Machine Shop Round House and Blacksmith Shop can all be built of the rough Stone of the Country or those taken out from our cuts on line of Road — and if Stone Masons can be easily obtained will cost no more than wood and will be

safer against fire and very much better than wood I think the North Platte Machine Shop and Blacksmith Shop as large as needed — at Cheyenne the Round House should be Larger

You Dillon & McCombs can decide this matter on the ground, and will you write me how soon the machinery will be needed. We ordered it to be delivered on opening of Navigation I Suppose we shall have to pay for it then if ready by cash or note of Co. The contract with the Chicago & N Western R R for construction Freight should be decidedly fixed as to what is and what is not construction material They are now feeling that we are trying to put things in that contract that were not intended to go there. We cant afford to have any trouble this season with them that will make them give a preference to other freight than ours. They have always seemed to be anxious to have it settled just according to contract And as you made this contract with them you can undoubtedly settle it better with them than any one else

If you have time would it not be well to take the a/c along with you to Chicago and have a conference with Dunlap or the parties who made the contract with you and settle it? Our Money matters after quarter day can be more readily fixed to our minds. We shall undoubtedly have to be large Borrowers up to July when I hope we shall

be receiving Govt Bonds enough to make it easy and if our 1st Mtg Bonds shall sell as rapidly as may be expected we shall be flush. Hoping you will have a good time going over the Road and find men and teams enough to put the first three Hundred miles under contract and cover it

I Am very Respectfully

Yours

Oliver Ames

[A trustee of the Ames contract]