

## *AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE.*

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### WHERE SHOULD IT BE LOCATED?

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LETTER FROM HONORABLE JAMES S. ROLLINS TO  
HONORABLE F. MUENCH.

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COLUMBIA, January 24, 1866.

HON. F. MUENCH, *Senate Chamber, Jefferson City:*

DEAR SIR:—When at the Capitol of the State, a few days since, it was my purpose to have called upon you, but being pressed for time I was deprived of that pleasure. Knowing the great interest which you take in everything pertaining to the welfare of Missouri, I desired to compare views with you in regard to the proper location of the proposed Agricultural and Mechanical College. Deprived of the opportunity, I avail myself of this mode and take the liberty of making to you a few free suggestions on the subject.

The quantity of land to which Missouri is entitled under the act of Congress "to provide colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts," is 330,000 acres. The law further provides: "that whenever there are public lands in a State subject to sale at private entry, at one dollar and twenty-five cents per acre, the quantity to which said State shall be entitled shall be selected from such land within the limits of such State." And there being still a large amount of public land in this State "subject to sale at private entry at one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre," it follows that the entire quantity of land to which Missouri is entitled under the above recited act, must be selected within the State. Other States having no public lands are authorized to receive scrip, to sell the same, and to invest the proceeds thereof, and "apply the interests thereon to the uses and purposes prescribed in the act of Congress.

The first question which naturally suggests itself, is the value of this land to the State of Missouri? What is it worth? And how soon can the fund be made available for the purposes to which it is dedicated? Remembering that the land to which we are entitled must be selected from the refuse lands of the State, which have been in the market for many years, I have met with no intelligent person who fixes the value of the grant at a greater sum than fifty cents an acre, which would give to Missouri \$165,000. But what period of time it will take to realize this sum so as to make it productive and available in sustaining a college "for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts," is rather difficult to tell. Certainly after the lands are selected it will be a good many years before all of them can be sold, and until then the fund must remain unprofitable. It occurs to me, then, when we consider the actual sum to be realized from these lands, and the length of time that it will necessarily take to convert them into cash, the policy of dividing the fund will be subversive of the objects of the National Government in making this grant to the States, and especially so in Missouri. There should be no division of the fund here. By a wise policy the lands should be made to bring the largest sum, and the whole amount thereof ought to be forever and sacredly invested to promote the beneficent object for which the grant was intended. Instead of squandering the fund by a division of it to a half dozen different institutions, and yielding enough to support a single professorship, it should be consolidated and made a permanent endowment for a department of learning, devoted to "agriculture and the mechanic arts," accessible to all the youth of the State, and of which every citizen in all future time should be justly proud.

Having made these suggestions in regard to the probable value of the fund and against the policy of a division of it, the next question which presents itself is, where is the best point in the State for its location? Under the law of Congress "no portion of said fund, nor the interest thereon, shall be applied directly or indirectly, under any pretense whatever, to the purchase, erection, preservation or repairs of any building or buildings. Whatever sums may be needed for these purposes must be provided for, either by taxing the people of the State, or by donation from the people of the county wherever the college may be located, unless the State has already under its control buildings suited to the purpose. And although the law of Congress provides that "a sum not exceeding ten per cen-

tum upon the amount received by any State, under the provisions of the act, may be expended for the purchase of lands, for sites or experimental farms, whenever authorized by the respective Legislature of said State," it is not desirable that the original fund should be at all diminished.

Wherever located the people of the county ought to be willing to provide land sufficient for the use of the college, and thus save for the permanent benefit of education the whole Congressional grant.

The next question which presents itself, is the State in a condition to plant the proposed institution without taxing its treasury, either for money to erect the necessary buildings or the purchase of a suitable farm? Allow me to say that what I shall add upon this subject is prompted by no consideration of self-interest, I desire simply to encourage the adoption of such a policy as will save the fund from waste, the State treasury from heavy burden, and the location of the college at a point where it can at once be put into successful operation, and where its final success would be insured beyond reasonable doubt. If the State University was located at any other place than where it is, with all its attendant advantages, I would most certainly be an earnest advocate for connecting the Agricultural College with it, and I offer the following conclusive arguments, to my mind why this should be done:

1. The State here has a spacious edifice, sufficiently large for the accommodation of one thousand pupils, and which, with the grounds upon which it stands, could not be had elsewhere for less than \$200,000.

2. The libraries, chemicals, philosophical and astronomical apparatus, with mineralogical and geological cabinets are estimated to be worth not less than \$100,000.

3. The University has a permanent endowment of one hundred and thirty thousand dollars, which, properly invested and managed ought to yield, for educational purposes, at least \$13,000 per annum.

4. There is connected with the University a corps of professors, all scientific men, provided for at great cost, partly out of the funds of the institution, who can teach five hundred pupils with just as much facility and success as they can teach a class of one hundred.

5. Columbia, the seat of the University, nine miles from the Missouri river, and twenty miles from the North Missouri Railroad, and which in a year or two will have finished a branch railroad connecting with the North Missouri Road, is situated in one of the most healthy and fertile ag-

ricultural districts in the State, and in the midst of an enterprising and intelligent population.

6. In addition to the foregoing powerful considerations, I may add that it is proposed to furnish the required quantity of land for the purpose of the Agricultural College, and contiguous to the University, without any appeal whatever to the State.

If the Agricultural College was located to-day, in connection with the University, it could be put into successful operation next week? Now, I may well ask, what other point presents any such advantages as those which I have stated above? Located elsewhere, how long will it take to prepare the necessary buildings? Who is to furnish a suitable farm? Is the General Assembly prepared to add to the already heavy taxes of the people to purchase these, when the State has them already provided? Where is the money to come from to purchase the necessary and extensive libraries, such as the University now has? How are the chemical, philosophical, astronomical, botanical, mineralogical, geological departments of the Agricultural College to be supplied, unless it be connected with the State University? Let it be remembered that all these are absolutely essential to the success and proper endowment of the Agricultural College. Chemistry, botany, philosophy, mineralogy, geology are sciences, all intimately connected with agriculture, and wherever this institution is located, all these must be provided in connection with it, and the question again recurs, where are the funds to come from to purchase all these? The State University has already, as I have stated above, a well-organized corps of teachers. It is not contemplated that the young men, who will seek instruction in the Agricultural College, are to become theoretical or practical farmers only. But added to these, they will need to become accurate and profound scholars. In a country like ours, where agriculture is the prevailing pursuit of a majority of the people, and which indeed is at the very foundation of all our prosperity, it is a matter in my view, of the very first importance, that all this large and controlling class of men should be thoroughly educated, and in providing a department for their especial benefit, we should be careful to add to it all the needful appliances for thorough education, as well as for moral, intellectual, and physical training; and I repeat, all these are now well provided in the University of the State. In short, the State has now an investment in lands, in buildings, in books, in apparatus, in cabinets, in endow-

ment, and to all of which an offer is made to add a suitable farm amounting in actual cost value to between \$300,000 and \$400,000, and all of which may be turned to the very best advantage in promoting the immediate and permanent success of the Agricultural College. Where else are such controlling and powerful inducements to be found? Other localities may provide funds sufficient—one to erect the necessary buildings, another to purchase a farm—but what county will give \$200,000, much less \$400,000, a sum which the State has already invested, and will be the solid foundation on which this Agricultural College will rest securely forever. No doubt there are many suitable localities in the State, and that different counties would be pleased to obtain it. But as all cannot get it, the only question to be settled is, how best can we preserve the fund for the benefit of the people of the whole State, and what plan presents the largest number of advantages for the location? And the answer of this question, will I think, be found in what I have urged above. If Missouri was likely to derive a very large fund from this Congressional grant, like Ohio or New York, we might think of attempting to build up a distinct Agricultural College. Even, then, however, it would not be sound policy for us to do so. As it is, our funds are entirely inadequate for any such purpose. We had better, therefore, imitate the example of Connecticut, Kentucky, Rhode Island, and other States, by locating the Agricultural College in connection with a State institution, already well provided for, and in successful operation. Nothing is asked on the score of mere favoritism. In deciding a question of this sort, no one has a right to make any such appeal, but we should so act as to secure the best location, and build up an institution which shall be the pride and glory of the State, and which will continue, in all future to dispense its blessings amongst the people of the great valley in which our destiny is cast. I might add that the location of the Agricultural College, in connection with the State University, would have the effect to build up simultaneously this great educational interest, a debt which the State owes to it; and especially so, when the fact is stated, that for its entire endowment, and its advantages above enumerated, the people are alone indebted to the General Government, and to the citizens of Boone County. What then is the objection to connecting the Agricultural College with the State University? Is there any well founded? And is not the argument unanswerable in its favor?

We sometimes hear it said that the people of Boone County are disloyal! Such an estimation may reach the prejudices of some, but it is no argument addressed to the judgment of sensible men. Like every other county in the State, it is true, that there were to be found disloyal persons in our midst, but in this connection the fact should always be stated that the county of Boone furnished 1,200 brave soldiers to the Federal army! Whatever may have been the political status of this people, in years gone by, we think we may safely say that now none are more anxious to uphold the laws, and to maintain the just authority of the Federal Government in our midst. But, in my view, the everchanging political sentiments of a county is no argument for or against the location of an institution like this. The people may be Conservative to-day, Radical to-morrow. Twenty years ago, I well remember, when I had the honor of accepting a seat in the Senate of the State, a man(\*) of narrow views, and who has since met a sad fate, in order to defeat some liberal provision of law for the State University, charged upon the people of this vicinity as entertaining "freesoil sentiments." By the same individual a similar charge was hurled against the present distinguished head of the University, and hence the institution was not entitled to the fostering care of the State. But we find that same gentleman still at the helm, he has weathered the storm in all the vicissitudes of party and of our country. True to his calling, he has borne aloft and elevated the standard of popular education in Missouri, and Radical though he is in his political sentiments, no greater benefit can accrue to the State if he shall be allowed to aid in shaping the character and destiny of the infant institution whose foundation you are now preparing to lay.

The Governor of the State, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Curators of the University, whose memorial now lies upon your desk, all disinterested umpires, argue the necessity and propriety of uniting the Agricultural College with the State University. Prompted alone by a desire to subserve the cause of education in the State, and asking to be pardoned for this lengthy communication, I remain, with high regard, your friend and obedient servant,

JAMES S. ROLLINS.

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(\*) The late Claiborne F. Jackson, ex-Governor of Missouri.

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