

HEADQUARTERS HOTEL,
Hubard & Tyler,

Fargo D.T. Aug. 24, 1877

J.J. Hill Esq;

Dear Sir:

I had hoped to have seen more of you when in St. Paul. When Mr. K. returns, I will come down and talk matters over. Before the close of navigation it is necessary to know as near as possible what the Co's program will be for the next year in order to know what calculations to make on regard to repairs and what material we must have on the ground for that purpose. The business of the river is gradually undergoing change, which I can see better here than my employees can being located in St. Paul.

To keep the companies property in shape to meet these changes and still not be caught with a lot of unfavorable property on hand when the great change comes is the problem to which I have devoted considerable thought and no little anxiety. The most noticeable changes in business this season are 1st. The increase in the proportion of Passenger to Freight business, calling for all the passenger accommodations our little line can furnish, with an apparent lack in the demand for the larger class of barges. This last of course on account of not having large amounts of grain flour and no R.R. iron to transport. This feature in our business will be quite as prominent next season as this, for it is quite evident to my mind that there will be a continuation next year of the immigration begun so briskly this season and the amount of business must increase in proportion. It would not take a great amount of increase to justify a daily line, which could be done with a reasonable degree of certainty if the road were extended to Grand Forks with four boats in any ordinary stage of water, in fact, the passenger business should it increase in proportion next year would almost demand a daily line. We see this up here because we actually see the passengers, and you in St. Paul "can't see it" only seeing the figures, and as our *passengers* with our rates, they

rates bear no comparison without rates, they cut a small figure in trip statements. Still at the end of the year it will be found that our passage and meal receipts go along way towards paying the expenses of the line, more so than in former years; besides this branch of business talks more than freight - that is - every passenger speaks for himself, while freight is represented by comparatively a few shippers, and it is necessary to give this class of our business as much accommodation and dispatch as possible to prevent pressure against us. Hence my great desire of keeping up regular days and hours of departure making quick time and sure connections. I feel certain it has been a splendid card for us this year, more than you in St. Paul can appreciate. Of course this branch of business is killed when the R.R. is completed, so the policy should now be to give the best possible passenger facilities while we can hold the trade with what passenger boats we now have without investing any more capital or as little as possible in that kind of property; but keeping what we now have in reasonably good shape.

The second noticeable change in the business is the turning of freights (grain) back up stream this will of course have to be done in barges, and in that respect generously our barges are not in good shape. That is those that are adapted for the business (particularly up in this end of the river where the grain is and the river is very shallow) are not in good repair; where those that are in good repair are not at all adapted for the business. In the former I will mention the Chipewa Marty, Pembula^{WPC} Red Lake, Potter and city of Moorhead. Some of these ~~are~~ ^{are} very poor and some almost worthless and all in very poor repair. I have neglected repairing them much because last year we had we had greater use for the larger class of barges which were in good repair, and it was the policy not to spend any money on boat or barge when it was not actually needed. But these barges are now the only ones adapted to the carrying of grain from D~~et~~----- and Goose River to Moorhead, according to Mr. K's letter to D----- he promised him six barges. Will we have ~~not six barges~~

Well we have not six barges (adapted to this upper river) in fit order for use. I have no gang at the boat yard that could do any thing in the way of repairs at present, and wish also to put off till we regularly begin for the winter. So we will get along the best we can with our little barges in their present condition; but to have all our light stock up here is very embarrassing for boats running to Fishers Ldg. When a boat has about 50 to 75 tons more than she can take on herself a barge like the Chippewa is handy. The idea of having to take a big 300 ton barge clear to Winnipeg just for 50 tons of freight and push it back 350 miles makes a practical Steamboatman shudder, but this is the way we are fixed in trying to carry out the spirit of that letter. Now as to the barges, Ilowa, Freighter, W-----, M-----, and Oneida, they are all in reasonably good repair being nearly new, but to big and heavy to push up stream in this little shallow crooked river. They don't carry enough in proportion to their size or say 20 in. in fact they draw from 8 to 10 in. light, and you have to push too much barge for too little freight. The Winnipeg (purchased from Merchants Line), and Mendota (built by us at Grand Forks) are more medium size and better adapted for either light or heavy business.

In the matter of barge property we are not exactly in the same fix as with passenger boats, for barges will be required after the R.R. is built, and I think the Co. justified in keeping up a set of barges adapted to the trade. For this purpose I intend to haul out and repair four or five of the old light barges this winter, if they are not caught off somewhere in the ice, and I shall recommend the building of two new light medium sized handy barges for the carrying of wheat in bulk and agricultural implements, thrashers etc. on deck, which would be a great addition to our facilities for doing business. Of course, I have to insist on this and as it will involve a cost of over \$5000 the Co. must decide what is to be done. This brings me to the subject of repairs which is one not fully understood by those connected with the management of the Co. in St. Paul. Now although the Red River is in no way a

dangerous river, the w--- and t--- of S.B. property is very great. Narrow, crooked, and shallow there is any amount of bang-
ing around, and while these knocks singly don't do any apparent damage taking them altogether they make old boats and barges fast. The person who has charge of the Co's accounts and money matters has no more appreciation of this than a little child, and makes frequent allusions to "Large disbursements" and great expense at boat yard, and shows an inclination to find fault with things that he knows nothing about. He should know that wear and tear of S.B. property is constantly going on day and night and almost as much when idle as when in use.

I don't think \$10,000 per year is an extravagant estimate to keep the R.R.T. Co. property in repair when there is no serious disaster. If there is, it would be proportionally greater. This winter if we carry out the understanding I have partially entered into with Mc Arthur on behalf of Manitoba people in transferring the "Cheyem and Alpha" to new Co. quite a lot of work will have to be done to them. What we have talked is to put light cabins in place of the board shanties now on them and change Cheyem's machinery. The idea is also to change the names of both of them which can be done when ever they become registered at Winnipeg. All this with the repairs of barges and possibly building of two barges will involve "Large disbursements", and should any of our boats meet with accident during the low water this fall rendering docking necessary (which is not impossible) the repair expenses will be increased in proportion. There is one thing that steps right in the way in the eyes of some people to all this which is the single word "Dividend"

Now don't you think it is better to use some of the Co's money to keep them in condition to compete with the R.R. or other boat lines if they come, than to divide the whole of it and leave themselves in bad shape when competition comes. When no stockholder no matter how big his dividends may be now, will want to put his hand in his pocket to help the Co. Besides outside stockholders only go and brag about big dividends. (You can't prevent that) which stirs up outside competition. I am sorry that I can't speak a

a stockholder, am sorry Mr. K. never thought me of enough consequence or took enough interest in my personal prosperity to give me a show to get hold of stock which could have been done. You are at liberty to show him this whole letter if you think worth while, for I certainly don't think I have been used well by the Company in that respect; and I don't care who knows it. It has always been the greatest mystery to me why Mr. K. who seemed to have confidence in me in other respects should have treated me as he has in regard to this matter. I thought from what you told me the winter before I went into the line's employ that I would have had a better chance. People who have freight or threatened the Co. or on the other hand those who preferred that "certain parties" want them to go in and get up a new line (which is all pretense and no reality) seem to stand very well and get stock when others cannot. Such practices are hardly worth of a man, and I shall be lowered very much in my own estimation when I have to resort to them.

I hope you will excuse the length of this communication, have a whole day on my hands (waiting here for the "selkirk") and hope you will have a whole day of leisure if you ever attempt to read it.

Write or telegraph me when Mr. K. returns don't leave it to the secretary, for he will never do it.

Shall leave for Winnipeg tomorrow.

Yours truly,

E.V. Holcombe

Missoula Aug 9 24/77
Messrs. Kirk Saunders & Acker
Gentlemen -

Enclosed please find daily
statements for yesterday's business ~~in addition~~
~~to one already sent you.~~

Some Mr. Crocker's order
was for 10 tons of lumber, but by the same man of lumber
that seems to hang to me got but 9 1/2 in case
of which it was too late to notify, R & Co say can't
correct billing on age of rate being made for 10
tons but next can have for them can make it
ok. unfortunately I have no other for them at
present

Truly Yours
J. M. Simpson

Mount City Aug 24/77

Wm Smith Esq.

D. Geo

Your statement from 17th to 21st
is at hand. You omitted to charge me
with invoice Kennedy & Co.

August 13th 19.70 and I do not see
that Hamon invoice yet for 24th from
July 3rd otherwise we agree.

Yours truly

Charles

Hope your family is better.
Am very truly

Mound city Minn August 24/77

Prof^r Kate Saunders & Ocker

Gents

Yours of Aug 23^d regarding the
M^{rs} D. B. Co sugar received today. I
beg to state that the Pac R.R. Co, does
never ship Oil in the same car with
M^{rs} D. B. Co. I have had no oil since
May 14th and it came by way of
Wagonette & the sugar came by M^{rs} D. B. Co
I think. I had no oil, nor oil barrels
in the store. The barrel of Oil having been
emptied in the tank, at once on its
arrival & the barrel was sold. Besides,
the sugar was kept in another room
altogether. I noticed no stains on
the outside of the barrel when I
received it, and had no occasion
to use any sugar out of it myself.

The first intimation of it being
spoiled came from one of the
hotels who returned 25 pds. Some
was sold in the country, and the
people, since, have informed me that
they had to throw it away. I lost
some customers by it and think
I am damaged. While at the RR
office, we frequently received sugar for
wholesale houses which was damaged
by del. They always took the sugar,
but claimed damages. May be,
this house had some, some time, judging
from other goods received from them, they
are not ever reliable. The same invoice
contains 1 caddy ¹² ~~12~~ ¹² tobacco pipe, plus
light. The light box is only on the outside,
the inside is black. As far as the RR
receipt goes, I believe the good order
refers to packages only not to the
contents. The barrel was received
by me in good order. The fault

certainly was not ours, and
altogether that invoice of goods
has put me to inconvenience, trouble,
expense and some loss of custom,

The poor goods consisted of
Coffee, Sugar, crackers and
Tobacco. I sold all the other
articles at cost, and then had hard
work to get rid of them. The crackers
were billed at 6 ¢ and as Soda, Mr.
Armstrong who sees those crackers here,
will tell you that was common
hard tack, labelled Soda crackers.

Yours very truly
J. Smith

BOYDEN & MARTIN,
RETAIL DRUGGISTS,

Goss-Boyden Block, Second St.

Hudson, Wis., Aug 28th 1877

Miss Will Saunders & Acker
Saint Paul Minn. Uts.

When your Mr Saunders
was here Saturday we told him
we would mail some Crystal
oil in three or four days and
asked him for a quotation and
he named 25[¢]. We ordered
Monday, and you billed same
yesterday 28[¢]. We shall hold
subject to your order.

Yours truly,

Boyden & Martin

Milwaukee Aug 20/77
Messrs. Hill, Brander & Acker
Gentlemen -

I got N M Score 570 Mrs. Chase arrived
this am, and order for 2 cans steel for
J & Tris Northfield Aug 20th also this am
2 cans about Sept 1st does this mean it leaving
or only if am looking the 2 first cans today
if get order from you by Monday now wait not
to send them can send to some other party, what
say you -

Discovered yesterday's business with tissues
seems to be a new bill CLK, have taken back
about the weights as much as I think I am entitled
to, I have examined the tickets of these cars & contents
our weights are correct, I shall go down & see Mr
Brown Augst see if this new business cannot be
settled -

Truly Yours
Wm N Simpson

X Sioux City Aug 24/77

C. A. Sanders, Geo,
St. Paul,

Gents, Please

Ship as follows

1 Car 12 Tons Large Egg
2 " " Small "
2 " " Nut Coal
8 " " Stone Coal

if it does not make
any difference to you I
wish you would send
then say two car when
you receive this and then
wait a day or two and
send two or three more,
and so on, our side track
is so short it bothers
us to unload, please find
Enclosed \$500⁰⁰ for you
Truly,
J. H. Jones



Northern Pacific Railroad.

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE.

Brainerd, Minn. Aug 27 1877

E. A. Samderson Esq
St Paul

Dear Sir

Please furnish
for my private use the
coming winter I have had
coal shipped to me at
this place at your
convenience.

Sincerely
J. A. Brown

Yours
I expect to be in
St Paul in about two
weeks & would be glad
to see you at that time.
J. A. B.

Milwaukee Aug 24 1877

J J Hill Esq.

Trst. S Paul Minn

Dear Sir -

your of 22nd in regard to Minn's
Des Co. freight acct the am. I return you this
Statement & also copy of statement sent you Aug 16
as per your request of Aug 14th this shows a shortage
in the 34 cars of 3700⁺ - 120⁺ to the car between their
weights & the weights sent you -

To save time & cost I did not
weigh these cars but loaded directly from truck -
this is all the light I can throw upon the matter
& am of the opinion that if we had weights shown
we could not have come any closer -

Truly Yours

Wm H. Simpson

Drops has about quit mining -



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org