

***Dakota News, Watertown, Dakota Territory, January 24, 1881***

**“Mistakes of Eastern People**

They think Dakota is so far off that once here they would be cut off from all the world, and from all the friends and acquaintances of a lifetime. The emigrant leaving Chicago at 10 A.M. by the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad finds himself here the next day at 7 P.M. just one night out—one day and a half from Chicago, and three days from New York. Every season brings with it cheap excursion rates to all points east and south, and furnish ample opportunity to visit the east at a trithing cost.

Eastern people think we live like barbarians, and that we are deprived of most of the luxuries of life. This is another eastern folly. Here is a town built up since the first of March 1879, yet we have every luxury and convenience that can be found in thirty year old towns east, of four times our population. People live as well and dress as well, and enjoy themselves as much as in any of the older towns. We have good schools for the young, church societies and competent clergymen for those religiously attached. Three public halls furnish ample facilities for fraternal societies, public lectures, theatrical performances and social parties, with all of which we have been beautifully supplied.

The railroad and telegraph and daily mail and express, are all at our door, and with such facilities all other good thing[s] follow. We have no tramps, no loafers, no dead beats, no gambling dens, no houses of prostitution, no idlers, no lawlessness, no crime. Our people are intelligent, social and generous. Buds of promises adorn the present, the blossoms of hope garland all the future.

**Exaggerated Weather Yarns**

Many newspapers in the east have been teeming with exaggerated stories about the weather and the suffering of the people of Dakota, and as the press reports passed from mouth to mouth they have continued to be exaggerated until they now surpass in ridiculous improbabilities the story of Sinbad the Sailor, or Baron Munchausen.

Here comes a letter away from Aylmer Ontario, saying that it is reported there, that Watertown was blown all to pieces by a blizzard. This is but a sample of a thousand wild stories floating all over the east, that have not, in fact, a shadow of foundation. Not a house, or even a shanty, has been blown down or injured in any particular. Nor has any one been frozen to death. We had one day when the thermometer marked 37 degrees below zero, which in this atmosphere is equivalent to about 20 in Wisconsin, Michigan, or New York. This may seem improbable, but it is attested by the experience of all who have wintered here in or in northern Minnesota.

Then there are the stories about the snow ten feet deep, and snow blockades of railroads. As yet we have not had snow enough to make good sleighing. What little we had was dry when it fell, and drifted into the railroad cuts, and as the business is light at this season of the year, this end of the road for some 100 miles was closed for ten days. Such a blockade on an eastern road would have been considered nothing, and would not have delayed trains twenty-four hours. But suppose some person had been frozen to death on that unusual cold day, and that snow had fallen here in Dakota very deep, and our railroads had been so badly blockaded that the utmost exertion could not have opened it for several days? Have not all these things frequently happened in Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, New York, Maine, etc., etc.?

It is strange how soon people forget. At Madison, Wis., on the 1st day of January 1864, at noon of that day at Harvey hospital, mercury congealed. It was the coldest day ever known in Wisconsin. Many people who ventured out for a few miles that day were frozen to death, yet the people did not jump to the conclusion that such was to be the average of winter weather for all time to come, and fly from the state. Yet it would have been just as sensible for them to have done so as for the same people to now rush to the conclusion that Dakota winters are too horribly cold to be endured, because we have had a day or two of remarkably cold weather.

Again in the winter of 1875 all the railroads in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa, were several times blockaded with snow, and some of the leading roads were blockaded several days. Snow

blockades excite no surprise or alarm in the eastern states and why should there be such an ado about them when they occur here? It is because those who do not want to come west, or cannot come, do not want any one else to come, and every opportunity to exaggerate to the detriment of the territories or to belittle their advantages, is seized upon and made use of by a certain class of eastern people.

The man who is afraid of a little cold weather, or that the Indians will scalp him, or that he will have to work out here, is not wanted here; the country has no use for such nerveless, cowardly stock. Such men had better stay within easy reach of their mother's apron strings, or migrate so far toward the tropics that a breech clout [*sic* – cloth?] will meet the most extravagant demands of the weather, or of fashionable life. There, in the shade of a palm leaf, on a diet of shrimps and snails, and tropic fruits they can realize the ease they are pining to enjoy.

### **The Weather in Dakota**

A correspondent at Galesburg, Ill., writes us to know what kind of weather we have had here during the fall. Just why the people east and south entertain so many doubts about the weather and climate of Dakota, we cannot explain, but we have found in our travels that many people entertain the notion that Dakota is away up almost among the icebergs, where the warm weather season is too short to mature anything but wheat and early potatoes. The fact remains, however, that the growing season here is longer by two weeks at least, than southern Wisconsin. Spring is two weeks earlier here than there, and frost hangs off as late or later, in the fall. Why this is we leave to scientists to explain. The weather during the entire fall, up to the October storm, which prevailed throughout the entire north, from the Atlantic to the Pacific slope, was as the fall weather as we ever saw. Those who have been here during the past two winters pronounce the winters as mild and free from storms as Wisconsin and Iowa.

### **Chicago and Northwestern Railroad**

The liberality and enterprise so proverbial of the Chicago and Northwestern Railway management is nowhere made more apparent than in the disposition of their lands, and their

treatment of settlers along the line of the Winona & St. Peter Railroad. With a land grant unsurpassed by any in the northwest for agricultural purposes and to which emigration is rushing in one unbroken tide, they have resisted all temptation to raise the price of their lands, and are still continuing the sale thereof at prices and upon terms within easy reach of all who may desire to profit thereby. Their lands are not only offered at remarkable low rates per acre, but unusual accommodations and facilities are tendered to all actual settlers.

Such necessary articles as wood, coal, lumber, shade and ornamental trees and shrubs, are carried at rates that greatly reduce the cost of such supplies at the point of delivery. Intelligent settlers appreciate the liberal treatment thus extended to them, and are not slow to herald all such considerations to their friend in the east.

The steady tread of emigration to the lands along the line of this road, is a sufficient demonstration of the wisdom of the management in this behalf. Fanatics and mischievous agitators are wont to repeat and enlarge upon that old maxim of the law, "that corporations have no soul," and it is pleasant to have an opportunity to illustrate that while "corporations have no souls" managers have."