

## A history of the Capitol buildings of Minnesota

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### **A HISTORY OF THE CAPITOL BUILDINGS OF MINNESOTA. WITH SOME ACCOUNT OF THE STRUGGLES FOR THEIR LOCATION.**

BY HON. WILLIAM B. DEAN.

### **TEMPORARY LOCATION OF THE CAPITOL BY CONGRESS AND BY THE STATE CONSTITUTION.**

The organic act “to establish the Territorial Government of Minnesota,” passed by Congress March 3rd, 1849, provides in section 13, as follows:

And by it further enacted, That the legislative assembly of the territory of Minnesota shall hold its first session in St. Paul; and at said first session the governor and legislative assembly shall locate and establish a temporary seat of government for said Territory, at such place as they may deem eligible; and shall at such time as they shall see proper, prescribe by law the manner of locating the permanent seat of government of said Territory by a vote of the people. And the sum of twenty thousand dollars, out of any money in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, is hereby appropriated and granted to said Territory of Minnesota, to be applied by the governor and legislative assembly to the erection of suitable public buildings at the seat of government.

The third paragraph of section 5 of the act of Congress authorizing a State Government, passed February 26th, 1857, provides as follows:

Ten entire sections of land to be selected by the governor of said State, in legal subdivisions, shall be granted to said State for the purpose of completing the public

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buildings, or for the erection of others at the seat of government, under the direction of the legislature thereof.

\* An address prepared at the request of the Minnesota Historical Society, and delivered at its Annual Meeting, January 8, 1906. Mr. Dean was a state senator in 1891 to 1894, and drafted the bill which was enacted as a law by the state legislature for building the new capitol.

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The Constitution of the State of Minnesota, adopted October 13th, 1857, under the head of "Miscellaneous Subjects," Article XV, Section 1 and Section 6 of the "Schedule," makes the following provision:

### **ARTICLE XV. MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS.**

Sec. 1. The seat of government of the State shall be at the city of St. Paul, but the legislature, at their first or any future session, may provide by law for a change of the seat of government by a vote of the people, or may locate the same upon the land granted by Congress for a seat of government to the State; and in the event of the seat of government being removed from the city of St. Paul to any other place in the State, the capitol building and grounds shall be dedicated to an institution for the promotion of science, literature and the arts, to be organized by the legislature of the State, and of which institution the Minnesota Historical Society shall always be a department.

Sec. 6. The first session of the legislature of the State of Minnesota shall commence on the first Wednesday of December next, and shall be held at the capitol, in the city of St. Paul.

The preceding provisions contain all the fundamental legislation relating to the location of the temporary and permanent capitol of the Territory and State of Minnesota, and of the building to be erected.

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If it had not been for the disinterested, public spirited action of General Sibley, who was the Territorial delegate at that time, the capital of the Territory would have been fixed by the organic act at Mendota, instead of St. Paul. Mr. Douglas, chairman of the Committee on Territories, in his draft of the bill for the organization of the Territory, designated Mendota as the capital. When the bill was submitted to General Sibley, whose home was at Mendota, where he had large real estate interests, he at once remonstrated, urging that most of the people in the territory lived east of the Mississippi river, and that there was a unanimous wish to have the capitol on that side and at St. Paul. Mr. Douglas reluctantly yielded, but not without first urging the beauty and fitness of Mendota's situation at the junction of the two rivers, with the Pilot Knob peak as a grand place for a capitol building, with its beautiful and extensive view of the valleys of the Mississippi and Minnesota rivers.

CENTRAL HOUSE, NORTHEAST CORNER OF MINNESOTA AND BENCH STREETS, ST. PAUL, WHERE THE FIRST LEGISLATURE MET IN 1849. (Burned August 21, 1875.)

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It is interesting to note, that, while the bill for the organization of the Territory was under consideration, instead of "Minnesota," Mr. Douglas proposed that it should be named "Itasca"; Mr. Winthrop, of Massachusetts, "Chippewa"; Mr. Thompson, of Mississippi, "Jackson"; and Mr. Hunter, of Delaware, "Washington"; but the choice of the people of the new territory, "Minnesota," finally prevailed.

It was evidently the intention of Congress, in passing the acts for the organization of the Territory and for the admission of the State, and of the electors of the State, in adopting its constitution, that the permanent location of the capital for both Territory and State should be fixed by a vote of the people. The legislature could designate its temporary location, but its permanent place was to be determined by the choice of the people.

It is an interesting question, even if now academic, whether an injunction could have been sustained against the erection of the present permanent building, until after the people of

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the State had had an opportunity to express their choice whether St. Paul should be the final capital of the State. However, as no move of the kind was ever suggested or made, and the present magnificent building is finished and occupied, it is not conceivable that, so long as it stands, it will ever be abandoned and the seat of government changed to any other point in the State.

### **ACTION BY THE FIRST TERRITORIAL LEGISLATURE.**

Upon the organization of the Territory, the contest for the Capitol began, and either openly or covertly the attempts to induce the legislature to remove it from St. Paul never ceased, until after the passage of the acts authorizing the construction of the present building.

On Monday, the 3rd day of September, 1849, pursuant to the proclamation of Alexander Ramsey, the appointed governor of the Territory, the first legislature assembled in the Central House hotel (shown in Plate II), situated on the corner of Minnesota and Second streets, which for the time became the territorial capitol building, as well as a hotel. The site was a most commanding one, affording an extensive view of the valley of the Mississippi, and one of most surpassing beauty. The Hall of Representatives and the territorial secretary's office were on the first floor, and the library and Council Chamber on the second.

A United States flag, run up on a staff in front of the hotel in the presence of the town people and some blanket Indians, announced the gathering of the first legislature.

The Secretary of the Territory, Hon. C. K. Smith, called the House of Representatives to order, at eleven o'clock in the morning, and the Council at three in the afternoon.

The next day, the fourth of September, the Houses met in joint convention, to receive the Governor's message, which outlined with great sagacity the legislation needful for the government and development of the new territory. A writer in "The Pioneer" says, "Both houses met in the dining room, where the Rev. E. D. Neill prays for us all, and Governor

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Ramsey delivers a message full of hope and far sighted prophecy to comfort us withal, and then leaves the poor devils sitting on rough board benches and chairs, to make out, as they may, the old problem of self government." Yet no legislature which ever sat in Minnesota was made of better stuff than that which assembled to lay the corner stone of the political edifice.

Among other things, the Governor said, after calling attention to the 13th section of the organic act: "The first division of the clause in relation to the location of a temporary seat of government, makes the duty incumbent on the present legislature; but the legislation involved in the selection of a permanent site for the Capitol I understand, may be had at a future day, and by a future legislature, and, indeed, it would be premature with our comparatively small population, to decide, at this time, so important a question as the location of the permanent seat of government. In fairness to the people who will shortly occupy lands now in possession of the Indians, the decision of the question had better be postponed."

The first session of the legislature was occupied with the subjects that would naturally pertain to the good order of the Territory. Legislation was passed relating to taxes, printing the laws, selling liquor to Indians, granting divorces, granting ferry rights, creation of counties, laws relating to common schools, elections, memorials to Congress,, and the incorporation of the Historical 5 Society. But what seemed the matter of the greatest importance and that secured the most attention from the members, was the location of the temporary and permanent seat of the state government.

On September 26th, Mr. Norris, of Cottage Grove, introduced Council File No. 3, being a joint resolution, fixing St. Paul as the location of the temporary seat of government. This was read the first and second time, and laid on the table to be printed. The resolution was passed by the Council on October 4th, but was unfavorably received by the House of Representatives, and by it indefinitely postponed, on October 8th.

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During the discussion, motions were made to amend by substituting for St. Paul “a point on the east side of the Mississippi river, between Rum and Elk rivers, within five miles of a point directly opposite the mouth of Crow river.” Mr. Marshall moved to amend by submitting to a vote of the people the question of the location of the seat of government; another motion was made to substitute St. Anthony for St. Paul, and another to substitute Sauk Rapids.

In the meantime, the Hon. Joseph R. Brown, clerk of the Council, had written to the Hon. William M. Meredith, Secretary of the Treasury, in reference to the use of the money appropriated by Congress for the construction of a Capitol building; and the reply of the Secretary was that the “money could only be expended after the permanent seat of government had been located.”

Mr. Burkleo, of Stillwater, from the Committee on Territorial Affairs, to which had been referred so much of the Governor's message as related to the temporary seat of government, made a report strongly urging the selection of St. Paul, and giving many and good reasons for the recommendation.

Nothing further was done by the Legislature until the last day of the session, Thursday, November 1st, 1849, when Mr. Norris introduced a joint resolution in the Council, “That the temporary seat of government shall be at St. Paul, and the Governor is hereby required to rent suitable buildings for the legislature and the territorial officers; to be paid for out of the moneys appropriated by Congress for legislative expenses.” The resolution was passed by the Council and the House of Representatives, and was signed by the Governor on the same day. So the first legislature adjourned without having made any very satisfactory progress in the matter of the location of a seat of government.

### **THE SECOND LEGISLATURE AND THE BUILDING COMMISSION.**

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The second session of the legislature met on January 1st, 1851, in the three-story brick building on St. Anthony street, now Third, between Washington and Franklin.

On the 16th of January a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives, by Mr. Trask, of Still-water, for the election of four commissioners, whose duty should be to erect a capitol building at St. Paul and a prison at Still-water, Washington county to elect one of the commissioners, Ramsey and the counties attached to it as a district, two, and Benton county with attached counties, one. The Governor was to preside at the meetings of the commissioners, and to vote in case of a tie.

No provision was made as to the cost of either building, although an amendment limiting the cost to the amount appropriated by Congress was defeated. The commissioners were to be paid three dollars per day for each meeting attended, and meetings were limited to six in each month.

While the bill was under consideration, motions were made to strike out Still-water and insert Point Douglas, St. Paul, Little Six's village, an eligible point in Benton county,—all of which were lost. In the House Mr. Olmstead moved to amend the title of the bill as follows: "A bill to provide for carrying out a magnificent scheme of log rolling, by which a presiding officer of this House and a Territorial printer were elected." The Speaker decided the amendment to be highly indecorous, and directed the Clerk to hand it back to the mover.

The bill passed the House January 25th and the Council January 29th, and was approved by the Governor February 7th. No attention appears to have been paid to the opinion of the Secretary of the Treasury that the money appropriated by Congress could be used only for the erection of a capitol building at the "permanent" seat of government.

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On February 25th, at this same session, an act was passed to incorporate the University of Minnesota, to be located at or near the Falls of St. Anthony, to be governed by Regents who were authorized to select a site and erect buildings.

The passage of bills authorizing the capitol building at St. Paul, the prison at Stillwater, and the University at St. Anthony, all within a month, seems to confirm very clearly the agreement alleged to have been made in the legislature for the distribution and location of the public buildings,—an agreement which from that time to this there has never been an attempt to violate, excepting in regard to the location of the Capitol.

Pursuant to the Act of February 7th, 1851, the Building Commissioners were duly elected, and in their first report to the legislature, February 5th, 1852, stated that D. F. Brawley and Louis Robert were elected from the Ramsey county district; J. McKusick, from Washington county; and E. A. C. Hatch, from the Benton county district.

The Board elected D. F. Brawley building commissioner for the erection of the Capitol building, and J. McKusick building commissioner for the Territorial Prison.

At its second meeting, May 20th, 1851, the Board proceeded to select a site for the Capitol building, whereupon Mr. Robert moved that Block No. 12 of Robert & Randall's Addition be chosen, being the block opposite to the present old Capitol, bounded by Cedar, Minnesota, Ninth and Tenth streets, on which the Central Presbyterian Church now stands. The site was to be donated, and was to comprise at least four acres of ground, including the streets.

On June 27th, Col. Wilkin,\* the attorney of the Board, reported the title of the above property to be imperfect, whereupon the Board proceeded to select another site. Commissioner Hatch moved that Block No. 7 in Rice & Irvine's Addition to St. Paul be chosen, provided the owners donate the block and bind themselves to effectually drain the property. This block is opposite the new Post Office, being bounded by

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Washington, Franklin, Fifth and Sixth streets. The motion, however, was lost, and thereupon Commissioner

\* Col. Alexander Wilkin was killed, during the Civil War, while gallantly commanding his regiment, the Ninth Minnesota, at the battle of Tupelo, Mi., July 14, 1864.

8 Robert moved that Charles Bazille's offer of Block 6, Bazille's Addition to St. Paul, be accepted, being the block upon which the old Capitol building now stands. The motion was adopted and the question of site finally settled.

The plans of the Capitol building submitted by N. C. Prentiss were accepted, and an order for \$50 in payment therefor was directed to be drawn in his favor. The dimensions of the building were 139 feet front, by 53½ feet deep, with a wing in the rear 44 by 52 feet. A Greek porch fronting on Exchange street adorned the otherwise extremely plain structure.

On May 24th, 1851, five days after the Board was organized an advertisement was published, inviting proposals for the erection of the building, according to the plans; and on July 15th the Board decided the bid of Joseph Daniels, of \$17,000, to be the lowest, and directed the attorney to draw up a contract. In its report to the Legislature, the Board stated that the contract was for the completion of the exterior of the building entire, according to the plans adopted, and the Council Chamber, Representative Hall, Governor's, Secretary's and Clerk's rooms to be finished in a suitable manner.

The lowest bid for the completion of the Capitol was \$33,000.

The report states that the contract entered into by the Board does not contemplate an entire completion of the building. The Territorial Commissioners were evidently daring citizens, to let a contract for a building to be paid for from funds which the Secretary of the United States had decided could be used only when the permanent seat of government had been fixed by the people. They contracted to expend, for an incomplete building,

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almost the whole of the appropriation of \$20,000 given by the government to the Territory for its Capitol.

With great frankness they then suggest, in their report to the Legislature, that it memorialize Congress for an additional appropriation of \$20,000 to provide funds to complete the building, and suitably to lay out the grounds and enclose them with a stone wall and an iron fence. This the Legislature proceeded to do, at its next session, with a happy response by the government, partially acceding to the request, in granting an additional \$12,500 to complete the Capitol building.

FIRST CAPITOL OF MINNESOTA, 1853–1873.

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### **LATER LEGISLATURES AND THE FIRST CAPITOL.**

The third legislative session met January 7th, 1852, and assembled in what was known as the Goodrich Block, on Third street below Jackson, which is now a part of the Merchants' Hotel.

The fourth session met on January 5th, 1853, in the two-story brick building on the corner of Third and Minnesota streets.

The new Capitol building (shown in Plate III.) was first occupied by the Legislature in its fifth session, on January 4th, 1854. The Commissioners, in their report to the Legislature, announce the completion of the building, excepting the fitting of the Supreme Court room, which was then in progress. Like all public buildings, more money is reported as needed, and the Legislature is recommended to memorialize Congress for further appropriations to build and fence, and to complete other unfinished details.

Governor Gorman, who had been appointed by President Pierce to succeed Governor Ramsey, occupied the Executive Chamber in the new Capitol on July 21st, 1853.

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In looking over the proceedings of the Commissioners, old settlers will be interested in the mention of the names of those connected with the erection of the Territorial Capitol, of Joseph Daniels, I. P. Wright, C. P. V. Lull, Downer & Mason, J. T. Rosser, afterwards a general in the Confederate army, and Secretary Isaac Van Etten, besides the Commissioners already named.

The total cost of the building appears to have been \$31,222.65.

### **ATTEMPT TO REMOVE THE CAPITAL TO ST. PETER.**

The Legislature continued to meet and hold its sessions, year after year, with nothing of special note to disturb the placidity of its proceedings, until the memorable session of 1857, when an almost successful attempt was made to remove the Capital to St. Peter. It appears that a company, called the St. Peter Company, had been organized, and, in anticipation of the success of their project, had erected temporary buildings at St. Peter, for the accommodation of the territorial government, with the promise that, upon the removal of the Capital to that point, buildings equal or superior to the ones occupied at St. Paul would be erected and donated to the Territory.

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The scheme was well organized, and, if the reports current at that time were well founded on fact, some of the territorial officers, as well as members of the Legislature, were placed in a position by the promoters of the speculation to enjoy the expected profits in St. Peter stock and the enhanced value of St. Peter real estate.

The bill for the removal was introduced in the House of Representatives by Mr. Thomas, of Steele county, on February 5th, 1857, and, after considerable debate and notwithstanding all the obstructions the friends of St. Paul could interpose, was passed on February 18th, by a vote of 20 ayes to 17 noes. Our honored fellow citizen, Mr. William P. Murray, who is still with us hale and vigorous, led the fight in opposition.

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The bill came up for consideration in the Council on February 6th, when the proceedings of that body became of the most exciting and dramatic character. The fight for the bill was led by Mr. St. A. D. Balcombe, of Winona, and was opposed most vigorously by Mr. Henry N. Setzer, of Taylor's Falls, Mr. Ludden, of Marine, still living and a citizen of St. Paul, Mr. Rolette, of Pembina, and the presiding officer, President Brisbin, of St. Paul.

All kinds of dilatory motions were interposed, without avail, as the bill progressed through the Council, until its passage on February 12th, by a vote of 8 ayes to 7 noes, when it seemed that the advocates of removal had carried the day, and that St. Paul had gone down in defeat. The temper of the discussion upon the bill is revealed by the tone and spirit of some of the resolutions and motions offered. Among others, on February 6th, Mr. Setzer offered the following: "I give notice of a motion for leave to introduce a Bill to repeal so much of the organic act of this Territory as will enable His Excellency, Governor Gorman, to locate the seat of government at St. Peter."

On February 23rd Mr. Setzer introduced the following Preamble and Resolution:

Whereas, There exist reports at the present time injurious to the fair fame and reputation of members of this Council, charging them With bribery and corruption in voting for a bill to remove the Capital to St. Peter, therefore be it

Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed to investigate the truth of these charges, with power to send for persons and papers, and administer oaths, to take testimony in the matter, and report at as early a day as possible.

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On February 26th a similar Preamble was introduced, followed by a resolution directing the Committee on Enrolled Bills to retain in their possession the bill for the removal of the Capital, until otherwise ordered by the Council.

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All of these motions and resolutions were voted down by the majority, and nothing more was necessary to complete the action of the legislature but for the Committee on Enrolled Bills to make their report. The bill having passed on February 12th, and no report having been made up to the 28th, the advocates of the measure began to feel uneasy, and on that date Mr. Balcombe offered the following resolutions:

Resolved, That the Hon. Joseph Rolette be very respectfully requested to report to the Council Bill No. 62, Council File, entitled "A bill for the removal of the seat of government for the Territory of Minnesota," this day; and that should said Rolette fail so to do before the adjournment of the Council this day, that the Hon. Mr. Wales, who stands next in the list of said Committee on Enrolled Bills, be respectfully requested to procure another truly enrolled copy of the said Bill, and report the same to the Council on Monday next. And be it further.

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Council is very respectfully requested to give said bill, after it has been signed by the Speaker of the House and President of the Council, to the Hon. Mr. Wales, to deliver to the Governor for his approval.

The resolutions were read by Mr. Balcombe, and before they were read by the Secretary, or in his hands, Mr. Balcombe moved their adoption by the Council, and then moved the previous question. Mr. Setzer then moved a call of the Council, and Mr. Rolette was found to be absent. Mr. Balcombe moved to dispense with further proceedings under the call, on which there were 9 ayes and 5 noes. The Chair decided the motion to dispense with further proceedings lost, two-thirds not voting in the affirmative. It was upon this occasion that Mr. Balcombe attempted to demonstrate to the Chair and the Council that nine was two-thirds of fourteen; but the Chair, whose mathematics were more exact, insisted that 9 1-3 would be required to make the desired two-thirds, and, the third of a man not being available, that the decision must stand and the motion be lost.

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A motion to adjourn was lost, and a motion to reconsider the motion to adjourn was also lost. The Council had tied itself up completely, the objecting five members refusing to consent to any suspension of the rules, for which a two-thirds vote was necessary. This condition of affairs continued from February 28th until the 5th of March, when the Council consented to adjourn under the call, after having been in continuous session for one hundred and twenty-three hours.

The Council met on March 6th and continued in session through the day under the call, adjourning to meet on Saturday, March 7th, still under the call, and so continued until within a few minutes of the legal expiration of the session.

During this time a great many motions were made to dispense with further proceedings under the call, although, after the loss of the first motion to do so, the President refused to entertain the subsequent ones, because no business had been transacted in the meantime. Numerous unsuccessful motions were also made to suspend the rules and to adjourn, some of which were lost by vote of the Council, and some the President ruled not to be in order, refusing at the same time to entertain an appeal from his decision.

Finally, towards the end of this most protracted session, a truce appears to have been reached between the warring factions. This is not disclosed in the council journal itself, excepting as may be inferred from the action of the Council, but the daily papers of the day state such to be the case. Mr. Setzer, having voted with the prevailing side, moved a reconsideration of the vote by which the Council refused to dispense with further proceedings under the call, which motion was carried, and further proceedings under the call were dispensed with.

Reports of committees being in order, the Secretary read several reports from the Committee on Enrolled Bills, when Mr. Balcombe inquired why the report of the committee on C. F. 62, the Capital Bill, was not read with the other reports. The Secretary thereupon stated to the President that several reports of that description had been offered him,

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and that some had been left on his table and were then lying there, but he had refused to accept them because the enrolled or engrossed bill did not accompany them. The President decided the Secretary had acted correctly.

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Mr. Balcome then moved that Mr. Rolette be excused from further attendance on the present session of the Council, which the other side evidently interpreted as a violation of whatever the understanding may have been, for a call of the Council was at once ordered, upon motion of Mr. Setzer.

The motion to adjourn was then made and carried, the call still pending.

When the Council met on Saturday, the President declared the call as still pending, and without transacting any business the Council took a recess until four o'clock in the afternoon. Immediately upon assembling at that time, they again took a recess until half past seven o'clock, when the session was resumed. A committee from the House of Representatives appearing, the President decided that no communication could be received while the call was pending, and the committee withdrew. Mr. Setzer being in the chair, Mr. Ludden, having voted with the prevailing party, moved to reconsider the motion to dispense with further proceedings under the call, which was agreed to, and, upon motion, the call was dispensed with, when Mr. Freeborn, from the Committee on Enrolled bills, made the following report:

The Committee on Enrolled Bills would respectfully report that owing to the absence of the Chairman of this Committee Bill No. 62, Council File, being a bill for the removal of the seat of government of the Territory of Minnesota, introduced by Mr. Lowry, on the 6th of February, 1857, has not been reported by this Committee back to the Council. Your Committee would further state that the above named bill might have been reported back to the Council at this time, but that, after examining the enrolled copy of said bill, by the Secretary of the Council, in the presence of the Enrolling Clerk of the Council, and

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carefully comparing the same, we find numerous errors in the enrolled copy, and matter being inserted in the enrolled copy, which is not in the engrossed bill. Your Committee cannot, therefore, report the said Bill No. 62, Council File, as correctly enrolled, but retain the same in our possession, subject to the order of the Council, all of which is respectfully submitted.

JOSEPH ROLETTE, WILLIAM FREEBORN, Committee on Enrolled Bills.

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A call of the Council was ordered, and at 12 o'clock President Brisbin resumed the chair and announced the expiration of this historic session by legal limitation, and declared the Council adjourned without a day.

During the memorable contest all sorts of motions were made both in the House and Council, with the purpose of delaying final action, but without avail. Motions were made at various times to strike out St. Peter and insert Belle Plaine, Monticello, Mankato, "the other side of Jordan," Shakopee, St. Cloud, and Nicollet Island. A special police force was detailed to be on guard at the Capitol to preserve peace. The Pioneer and Democrat of March 5th says:

Alongside each member's desk was a cot bedstead on which the honorable might snatch a few hours repose when too sleepy to sit any longer in his seat. Scattered here and there through the room were baskets containing ample quantities of provisions, showing conclusively that there was no danger of the Councilors suffering from lack of food. The gentleman from Winona was still seated by his desk, endeavoring to demonstrate by figures that three times five is just fourteen.

While the Council was still under the call and it became apparent to the St. Peter removers that the original bill would remain in the pocket of the Chairman of the Committee on Enrolled Bills, unreported, another bill, an alleged copy of the bill already engrossed, was procured and enrolled; but President Brisbin of the Council, and Mr. Furber, Speaker of the

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House, refused to sign it, endorsing on it their reasons. The bill, however, was signed by the Governor and printed in the laws of the session.

During the following summer the President of the St. Peter Company applied to Justice R. R. Nelson for a writ of mandamus to compel the Territorial officers to remove to St. Peter. Judge Nelson, however, after reviewing the evidence relating to the passage of the act, decided that no law had been passed by the legislature for the removal of the Capital.

One of the veteran survivors of this memorable contest informs the writer that the St. Paul friends had abandoned all hope of preventing the removal of the Capital to St. Peter, after the final vote in the Council, and that the move of Rolette in secreting himself and the engrossed bill was originally only intended as a practical joke, to scare the Capital removers. When the Council became tied up under the famous call, the possibility of defeating the scheme dawned upon the opponents of removal, with ultimate victory as the result.

Joe Rolette, the Chairman of the Committee on Enrolled Bills, who defeated the attempt at removal to St. Peter, was comfortably enjoying his accommodations in an upper room in the Fuller House, while the sergeant at arms of the Council was searching for him with blinded eyes in all the places where he was not likely to be found. Rolette became St. Paul's mascot, and there was no tribute of devotion its citizens were not willing to lay at his feet as an evidence of their gratitude. His portrait, in life size, occupies a conspicuous place on the walls of the Historical Society, and his son became one of the caretakers in the new Capitol which his father preserved to St. Paul.

### **PROPOSED CHANGES OF BOUNDARIES OF MINNESOTA.**

Connected with the Capital removal scheme was an attempt to change radically the terms of the bill then pending in Congress for the admission of Minnesota as a State. This bill, introduced by Hon. Henry M. Rice, defined the western boundary of the proposed State about as it now runs, although not exactly. His bill fixed the Big Sioux river as a part of the

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western boundary, instead of the present line running due south from Big Stone lake to the northern boundary of Iowa.

A memorial to Congress, introduced into the Minnesota legislature on January 19th, 1857, was passed by the House on January 20th, by a vote of 25 to 10, and the Council on January 22nd, by a vote of 11 to 4 (the four being Freeborn, Ludden, Setzer, and President Brisbin), protesting against the division of the Territory by the line proposed in the pending bill, and asking for another bill to authorize the people to frame a Constitution, with such territorial limits and boundaries as the people represented in the Convention may prescribe, preparatory to admission into the Union as a State.

In an "Address" published on March 9th, 1857, after the adjournment of the legislature, "by the majority members of the Legislature to the people of Minnesota," they say, "It was found 16 that there was a diversity of interest and opinion respecting the proper line of division. While St. Paul and that small portion of the Territory lying east of the Mississippi river was in favor of a north and south line, as being more favorable to their particular interest, all southern, western, and northern Minnesota was in favor of an east and west line, as being best for the interests of the State as a whole." Further on in this "Address" they say, "as before stated, one of the principal reasons for the immediate removal was the influence it would have upon the boundary line question." The "Address" proceeds to recount the steps taken by the majority members to accomplish their aims, as follows:

First, "To memorialize Congress protesting against the St. Paul division, and asking to be permitted to form our own boundaries."

Second, "The removal of the Capital to some more western point."

Third, "The passage of an apportionment bill for the election of delegates."

The scheme was to divide the territory on the line of the 46th degree of latitude, west from the Wisconsin boundary to the Missouri river. This line would have passed near Hinckley,

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Little Falls, Elbow Lake, and about midway between Breckenridge and Lake Traverse, and just north of the line dividing North and South Dakota. The country south of this line was to be the State of Minnesota, and that north of it the Territory of Superior.

The memorial alluded to was passed by the Minnesota Legislature in January, was duly submitted to Congress, and on February 21st, 1857, Senator Jones, of Iowa, in the Senate, offered an amendment to the bill then under discussion, to authorize the people of the Territory to decide the question whether the State shall embrace all the territory south of the 46th degree of latitude. The amendment was not adopted, and the bill introduced by Delegate Rice was passed. This terminated the agitation for the division of the territory on an east and west line.

FIRST CAPITOL OF MINNESOTA, ENLARGED, 1873–1878

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### **ATTEMPTS TO REMOVE THE CAPITAL TO KANDIYOHI COUNTY.**

The Legislature of 1858 passed an act authorizing the Governor to appoint one or more commissioners to assist him in selecting the lands granted to the State for public buildings under the act of Congress authorizing a State government, passed in 1857. Governor Sibley appointed Messrs. James D. Skinner, of St. Paul, W. C. Johnson, of Stillwater, and Robert Boyle, of Hastings, as commissioners. In the performance of their duty, they selected 6,399.14 acres in Kandiyohi county, and these have ever since been designated as the Capitol lands.

During the session of 1858, an abortive attempt was made to remove the Capital to Nicollet Island, but it met with little favor, and nothing was accomplished.

In the Legislature of 1861, Mr. Kennedy introduced a bill to locate the Capitol of the State, as the permanent seat of government on the Kandiyohi lands, and on February 21st the bill passed the House of Representatives, by a vote of 25 to 12. The bill, however,

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was defeated in the Senate. The Capitol question was now permitted to rest quietly until the session of 1869, when a determined attempt was made on the part of the country members, combined with Winona, Stillwater, Minneapolis, and St. Anthony, to fix the permanent Capitol of the State on the Kandiyohi lands, and, on February 24th, a bill for that purpose passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 39 to 7, and the Senate on March 7th, by a vote of 13 to 8. Fortunately for St. Paul, Governor Marshall, who at former times had labored and voted to remove the Capital to other points in the State, saw the absurdity of locating it on these lands, and he vetoed the bill, giving as his reasons for so doing, that there was no public sentiment in favor of the removal; that the question was not before the people at the last election; that the location was not central, and the time not opportune for the State to go into an expenditure of a million of dollars or more.

Another attempt at removal was made in the Legislature of 1872. A bill was introduced by Mr. Kitchell, of Chippewa county, in the House of Representatives, to locate the Capital of the State, according to the provision of Section 1, Article XV of the 18 Constitution, in the town of Stanton, in Kandiyohi county. The bill was referred to the appropriate committee, where it still sleeps the sleep that knows no waking. (See also page 23.)

### **CHANGES OF THE FIRST CAPITOL.**

From the time of its completion in Territorial days, no change was made in the Capitol building until 1866, when gas was introduced, and candles ceased to shed their lustrous light upon legislative dignity. Old settlers will well remember the huge iron box stoves, one in each of the four corners of both Senate and House, large enough to take in sticks of cord wood length, modifying, if not wholly warming, the almost zero temperature which often prevailed in the chambers. In 1871 the stoves were dispensed with, and a steam heating apparatus was installed, rendering the whole building warm and comfortable. At the same time city water was introduced, so that the occupants of the building began to enjoy some of the comforts of civilized life. Each legislature, however, still continues

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to elect its firemen, who wander through the chambers and halls of the Capitol in a vain search for the ancient stoves, while the per diem is still gathered in by their willing hands.

In 1872, the increased representation required an enlargement of the building, and a wing fronting on Exchange street was ordered. To preserve, as far as possible, a symmetrical appearance of the building, changes were then also made in the roof and cupola, all being completed at a cost of about \$15,000, (See Plate IV.) Other changes were made in 1878, by the erection of an extension or wing on Wabasha street, accommodating the House of Representatives, and adding space for the use of the administrative affairs of the State. This work was completed in 1878, at a cost of \$14,000, making the total cost of the building about \$108,000. (See Plate V.)

The dimensions of the Territorial building had grown from the original size of 139 feet front, and 53½ feet deep, to 204 feet front, and 150 feet deep, with about fifty apartments. The business of the State was conducted in the enlarged building with more or less discomfort and inconvenience until the first of March, 1881, when during an evening session of the legislature the building was discovered to be on fire.

FIRST CAPITOL OF MINNESOTA, AGAIN ENLARGED, 1878–1881

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### **BURNING OF THE FIRST CAPITOL.**

Notwithstanding the most heroic efforts of the fire department, the flames spread with such rapidity that it was only possible to save some of the contents of the building. The most valuable records and papers of various offices and of the legislature were carried out, but the valuable law library, the supply of state laws, documents, reports, and stationery were destroyed. Fortunately, the Historical Society's library was mostly saved. No lives were lost, although a large crowd of spectators and visitors was in the building, and several very narrow escapes by members occurred.

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The origin of the fire remains unknown. The flames were first discovered bursting from the dome, to which they had probably found their way through the partitions from the lower part of the building, but no one has ever been able to give any reasonable explanation of the mysterious disaster.

### **HISTORIC REVIEW TO THE TIME OF THE CAPITOL FIRE.**

Thus passed away, upon its own funeral pyre, the first official home of the Territory and State. Within its walls were laid the plans and projects of the mighty State whose prosperous borders now compass great cities, thriving towns, fertile farms, and happy homes. Upon the face of the State the names of many of its founders happily remain stamped to remind us of the work they did so well. The names borne by the counties of Ramsey, Sibley, Rice, Marshall, Wilkin, Stevens, Becker, Olmsted, Freeborn, McLeod, Murray, Kittson, Faribault, Goodhue, Mower, Brown, Swift, Hubbard and others will remain to recall the work of these sturdy pioneers as they laid deep and solid the foundations of the government we enjoy today. Many of their contentions were sharp and bitter, but the end they patriotically sought was the welfare and development of the new State.

While the building no longer remains, history preserves the record of the work done within its walls. The Constitution itself, the labor of the dual Republican and Democratic conventions sitting in separate chambers, yet whose work was identical in every letter and line of its provisions, still remains the fundamental law of the Commonwealth.

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The lines of railroad projected by the early legislators over the prairies of the new State, whose only roads then were the trail of the Indian and the march of the buffalo, are the very lines over which now move in every direction the commerce of our people and the restless multitudes of travelers. And in the dark and troublous days of the civil war, out through the doors of the old Capitol, with unfaltering steps, came our gallant officers, bearing their commissions from the Governor and in their hands the muster rolls of our

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brave soldier boys, ready to lead them in the long hard fight for the preservation of the nation. After the contest was over, returning through the same portals of the old building, came the victorious survivors, clasping the precious colors of their regiments, riddled and battle-stained, that they might rest under the dome of the Capitol as a shrine of devotion for all patriotic hearts.

The steps of the Old Capitol will always be famous as the spot upon which Senator William H. Seward stood, when, on that delicious September day, in 1860, in addressing the assembled multitude, he gave expression to that wonderfully prophetic declaration which at the time seemed like the extravagance of rhetoric, but in these later days more like foreknowledge of the future when he said:

In other days, studying what might perhaps have seemed to others a visionary subject, I have cast about for the future of the ultimate central seat of power of the North American people. I have looked at Quebec and at New Orleans, at Washington and at San Francisco, at Cincinnati and at St. Louis, and it has been the result of my best conjecture that the seat of power for North America would yet be found in the valley of Mexico; that the glories of the Aztec Capital would be renewed, and that city would become ultimately the Capital of the United States of America. But I have corrected that view, and now I believe that the last seat of power on this great continent will be found somewhere within a radius not very far from the very spot where I stand, at the head of navigation of the Mississippi river, and on the great Mediterranean lakes.

To realize how rapidly this is being fulfilled, we have only to look upon the multitudes pressing into the Northwest in our own country, and the greater numbers finding their homes in the Canadian Northwest, far away towards the Arctic circle.

SECOND CAPITOL OF MINNESOTA. OCCUPIED 1893–1903. From a Photograph by E. A. Bromley, July, 1898.

### **OCCUPATION OF THE MARKET HOUSE.**

While the old Capitol was still in flames and its destruction evident, Mayor Dawson telegraphed to Governor Pillsbury, who had gone home to Minneapolis, offering the new and commodious market house, which the city of St. Paul had just about completed, for the use of the legislature and State officers until the Capitol could be rebuilt. Fortunately, the building was admirably adapted for the use tendered. The second story had two large halls, that could be used for the Senate and House of Representatives, and the first floor could be suitably partitioned for the State officers. Extraordinary efforts were made during the night by the city officers and citizens, and by the morning of March 2nd the halls were ready for occupancy by the legislature, which met at the regular hour and continued the business interrupted by the fire. As but two days of the session remained, the members were all anxious for the fate of the bills still on the calendar. Before the day was over the Governor and other State officers were as comfortably accommodated as the extraordinary conditions permitted.

### **THE SECOND CAPITOL.**

Governor Pillsbury secured estimates at once for the rebuilding of the Capitol, using the old walls. An act was passed appropriating \$75,000 for that purpose, and the work of clearing up the ruins and preparing for the new building was at once commenced. It was found, however, that it would not be safe to use the old walls, and at an extra session, in September, 1881, which was also held in the city market house, a further appropriation of \$100,000 was made, and a tax of one-third of a mill was levied on all taxable property, for raising the money. Further appropriations were made, and when the new Capitol was completed the cost was about \$275,000. It was occupied for the first time by the legislature which met in January. 1883.

The new building (shown in Plate VI) was in the form of a Greek cross. The Senate chamber was in the wing fronting on Wabasha street, and the House of Representatives

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was in the rear wing, fronting on Tenth street. The Supreme Court was in the Exchange street front. The building was much more commodious and convenient than the old Capitol.

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It was fairly well adapted for its purposes, excepting that the ventilation was very deficient, and there was not a sufficient number of committee rooms. All excepting the principal committees were obliged to hold their meetings in the rooms of members at the hotels, or in such corners and vacant places as could be secured.

This new and second capitol was not rebuilt without the St. Paul delegation and the citizens suffering serious nervous chills. A most vigorous move was set on foot, the morning after the destruction of the old building, to remove the capital from St. Paul, and great inducements were said to have been offered to members of the legislature to consider the proposition. Some of the most influential members were approached, urging them to assist in such movement. Governor Pillsbury, however, was inflexible in his refusal to entertain any consideration of the question, and an honorable sense of fairness with a majority of the members caused the leaders in the scheme finally to desist from their attempt, and the legislature adjourned, after having made all necessary provisions for the construction of the second capitol.

After completion, the building continued to be used through successive administrations without any special changes, excepting that during the administration of Governor Merriam substantial granite steps were erected in place of the wooden ones at the four principal entrances. Convenient toilet rooms were also installed on the second floor, much to the comfort of the members of the legislature and the state officers.

From the time the new capitol was finished, in 1883, until the meeting of the legislature of 1891, there was no active agitation of the question of the seat of the state government. The matter of its removal from St. Paul was, however, always a valuable element of

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strength with those members of the legislature who desired the help of the Ramsey county delegation in their legislative schemes.

The writer was a member of the Senate of the legislature that convened in January, 1891. A very short service only was necessary to impress anyone with the inadequacy of the building for the business of the state. The offices were all crowded to repletion. Several departments of the state had their offices in business blocks remote from the capitol. Every nook and cranny in the building was converted into a closet for storage of documents or a place for another desk. The ventilation, if there was any, was most imperfect. During the session seats were constantly vacant in each chamber, because of the illness of members suffering from the noxious air. The secretary of the State Board of Health was called in to test the quality of the air in the senate chamber, and he pronounced it utterly unfit for human beings to breathe. For legislation to be well considered and carefully discussed under such conditions was wellnigh impossible. Besides all these discomforts, the Ramsey county delegation was subjected to the same uneasy fear that frequent intimations of capital removal schemes always produced.

Notwithstanding all these unfavorable conditions, it did not seem at all likely that a legislature, of which the majority of the members were elected on a platform of retrenchment and reform, would give the slightest consideration to any project looking towards the construction of a new and third capitol, especially as the building in use had only been occupied about eight years. Yet there was withal an uneasy element in the legislature, ready and anxious for capital removal agitation, as evidenced by the resolution offered by Senator Dedon, of Chicago county, on March 2nd, "that a joint committee of nine be appointed, three from the Senate and six from the House, to confer with the owners of the Minneapolis Exposition building, with a view of securing the same for a permanent state capitol," and the bill introduced by Senator Glader, of Kandiyohi, "For the sale of lots in the city of Mennetaga on the state capitol lands in Kandiyohi county, and the erection of buildings thereat and the removal of the state capital thereto."

Both resolution and bill were disposed of in a parliamentary way so that they still remain unreported.

### **WORK OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE FOR THE NEW CAPITOL.**

One day in March, 1891, during a session of the senate, the Hon. F. G. McMillan, representing the 30th senatorial district, in Hennepin county, adjoining the Ramsey county boundary, and a member of the majority party, came to the writer and submitted the following resolution, with a request to read and give him an opinion on it:

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Resolved, That a committee of three be appointed by the president of the senate to investigate and report its findings to the next session of the legislature, as to what in their judgment is the most desirable capitol site, and if the present location is not of sufficient size for said capitol building, and also to report if the best interests of the state could be better served by the removal to a new location where larger and better accommodations could be obtained, and a capitol building erected commensurate with the dignity of a great and prosperous to state; of the end that the state at large may be informed as to merits of the different proposed sites, and that the next legislature may, if thought advisable, adopt a site and create a commission and instruct them in an intelligent manner as to the wants of this state and the amount that will be required to erect a suitable capitol building; also to obtain information as to size, style, material used, and cost of capitol buildings of other states, if thought advisable, together with a statement of their estimated cost, and the sum total of the complete building, and all other information that may come to them in this investigation of this subject, with the view that this state may avoid the errors and mistakes of other state commissions, who are known to have in a great many cases exceeded their authority, and spent large sums of money in excess of the amount originally set apart for that purpose, and that a commission when appointed, shall enter knowingly into a contract for a building complete in every respect, to be built in a reasonable length of time, and for a definite sum of money, and also held to a strict accountability and a distinct

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understanding that, for the sum named and set apart to be expended for a capitol building, the state expects a completed building, ready for occupancy, and all within the limits of the amount appropriated for that purpose.

It seemed like a gift from Greeks, and it was not possible to exclude from one's mind the suspicion that beneath lurked another plan for an agitation of the whole capitol question. There is now no doubt of the sincerity of Senator McMillan's purpose, but the writer after reading the resolution handed it back with the remark that its purpose was not then practicable.

Mr. McMillan, however, offered his resolution, when notice of debate was given, and later, upon motion of Senator Crandall, of Owatonna, it was promptly laid upon the table. A quiet conference of the Ramsey county senators was held soon after, when it was determined to encourage Senator McMillan to make another effort for the favorable consideration of his resolution, and on April 3rd he offered it again, and favorable action was secured by a vote of 25 to 18, Senator Crandall, upon whose motion it was laid upon the table, voting in the affirmative. On April 15th, the president of the senate, Hon. G. S. Ives, of St. Peter, announced the committee to be appointed under the resolution as follows: Senators F. G. McMillan, of Minneapolis; William B. Dean, of St. Paul; and Jay LaDue, of Luverne. A few days later, upon motion of Senator Oscar Ayers, the number of the committee was increased to five, and Senator Ayers, of Austin, and Henry Keller, of Sauk Center, were added. As developed afterwards, all the members of the committee were found to be favorable to a new capitol building, and all, excepting Senator McMillan, thought that it should be located at St. Paul, not far from the site occupied by the old capitol.

During the time from the adjournment of the legislature in April, 1891, until the meeting of the committee, in November, there was a great deal of quiet discussion among the people of St. Paul, concerning the most eligible site for a new building in the event of favorable action by the legislature, in 1893. Almost every part of the city had its advocates. A most

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determined effort was made in behalf of the midway district, in Merriam Park, and many reasons were advanced why it should secure the recommendation of the committee.

The committee held its first meeting on November 4th, 1891, at the Merchants' Hotel, in St. Paul, all the members being present. Senator McMillan was elected chairman, and F. N. Van Duzee, late secretary of the senate, was chosen as clerk. A short discussion disclosed the fact that, in the opinion of every member of the committee, a new capitol building should be erected as soon as practicable, and at a cost of not less than \$2,000,000, nor more than \$3,000,000, and that, as far as possible, it be built of Minnesota stone. All the members of the committee were decidedly of the opinion that the new building should be located in St. Paul, and, with the exception of Senator McMillan, that it should be upon the site of the old capitol or not very far distant from it. Holding to this opinion, the committee adopted the following resolution, Senator McMillan alone dissenting:

Resolved, That in the report which this committee will make to the senate, we shall recommend that the square upon which the present capitol stands is in all respects the most eligible situation for the new building. If the plans finally adopted should require a greater area for a building than the site named, we then recommend that sufficient ground adjacent to the present square should be obtained.

If, however, the committee should advise a removal in order to obtain a greater area than may be practicable at the present location, or to secure a more conspicuous situation, we recommend, on account of public convenience, that the new site shall not be more than three quarters of a mile from the present capitol.

The writer was then appointed a committee of one on the financial question of the new capitol, and Mr. McMillan on plans and designs.

Before the meeting of the legislature of 1893, the committee visited the Iowa state capitol, at Des Moines, as well as some of the granite and other quarries of Minnesota, so that, in

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preparing their report for the senate, they might be able to furnish as much information as possible. On February 3rd, 1893, the committee made two reports to the senate. Senators Dean, La Due, Ayers and Keller submitted the following majority report:

To the Honorable, the Senate of the Legislature of the State of Minnesota:

Your committee, appointed by resolution of April 3rd, 1891, to investigate and report to this honorable body its findings: First, as to whether, in its judgment, a new capitol building is necessary; second, if it appeared necessary to build a new building, where it should be located, together with facts and figures relative to the cost, size, etc., of the capitol buildings of other states, begs leave to report as follows:

The committee held its first meeting on November 4th, 1891, and was organized by the election of Senator F. G. McMillan, chairman, and Frederic N. Van Duzee, secretary. The committee has held numerous meetings and has taken a trip to Des Moines, for the purpose of examining the capitol of Iowa. At these meetings the committee has given exhaustive consideration to the questions placed before it by the resolution under which it was appointed.

It is unanimous in the opinion that a new capitol building is necessary on the grounds of proper consideration for the convenient and expeditious discharge of the public business, the care and preservation of the public records, the health and safety of the public servants, and the standing and credit of a great and prosperous commonwealth.

The present capitol was erected under the exigency caused by the destruction by fire of the old building, at a time of great financial depression in the state, caused by a succession of crop failures. Time and money were both lacking, and it is certain that the present capitol is the best that could have been erected under the limitations which the circumstances imposed.

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Equally certain is it that the state has completely outgrown the capacity of this building, and with the crowding together of the offices have come other evils. For more than a decade it has been a constant bill of expenses for repairs growing out of faulty and hasty construction, and has required almost annual remodeling to furnish increased room for the old departments, or an abiding place in some obscure corner for the new machinery made necessary by the growth of the state, until every available inch of space, including in some instances what was originally intended for air and light shafts, is occupied. Vault space is utterly inadequate, and a vast quantity of the valuable public documents and records of the state are now stored away in the basement, absolutely without protection from fire. The assembly halls of the legislature are poorly adapted to their uses, and legislation is impeded by the lack of proper committee rooms, while any increase in the popular representation in the senate or house is absolutely prohibited, because there is no room for another member on the floor of either house. It has been impossible to keep up with the most improved methods of heating, lighting, ventilation, and sewerage, and as a result the public business is carried on at a great risk of health. In a few years some of the departments will be crowded out of this building; and in this connection it must be remembered that, even if this legislature takes the initial steps looking to the erection of a new capitol, it will be at least ten years before it will be ready for occupancy, so that whatever is done to relieve present conditions should be done speedily.

So plain did these considerations appear to the committee, that at the first meeting it was unanimously resolved to embody in this report a recommendation that a new capitol building be erected, and that the minimum limit of expenditure be \$2,000,000.

The next matter in order for consideration was a site for the new capitol, and the question of recommending the present location, or one in its immediate vicinity, of removal to an interurban point, or a location still further removed from the state's center of population, was reviewed by the committee.

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The capitol is essentially designed for the convenient dispatch of the public business. This end can only be reached by its location as nearly as may be at the center of population, not only of the state, but of the capital city, convenient of immediate access and within easy reach of the best hotel and railway facilities. For these reasons the committee rejected the latter alternative, and at the first meeting the following resolution was made part of the record:

“Resolved, That in the report which this committee will make to the senate, we shall recommend that the square upon which the present capitol stands is in all respects the most eligible situation for the new building. If the plans finally adopted require a greater area for a building than the site named affords, we recommend that sufficient 28 ground adjacent to the present square be obtained. If, however, the committee should advise a removal in order to obtain a greater area than may be practicable at the present location, or to secure a more conspicuous situation, we recommend on account of public convenience, that the new site shall not be more than three-quarters of a mile distant from the present capitol.”

In order that the burden of cost may fall as lightly as possible upon the people of the state, your committee recommends that small appropriations be made, not larger than the annual amounts usually granted to the educational and other institutions of the state. We recommend that for the preparatory work \$5,000 be set aside in each of the years 1893 and 1894, to defray the expenses of the commission to be appointed to enable it to invite and select plans for a suitable building. After the year 1894 we recommend that an amount equal to two-tenths of one mill upon the assessed valuation of all the property of the state be set aside from the general fund to the credit of the capitol commissioners, to defray the expenses of construction then to be undertaken. This can be done and still permit of a large reduction of the present rate of taxation, so that no increase of the tax levy for state purposes may be anticipated in consequence of favorable action on this recommendation. We believe that this amount appropriated annually during the period of

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ten years will enable the commissioners to construct a capitol building commensurate with the dignity and wealth of this great and growing state, and equal to all requirements of the public service for many generations.

We cannot believe that appropriations extending thus through many years, and at such moderate amounts, will be complained of by our generous people, or press upon them with perceptible weight. The value of the property of the state now subject to taxation is, in round numbers, \$600,000,000, more than half of which is derived from the three most populous counties of the state, an increase within the past ten years of \$324,000,000. The average values of the farms of the state, including improvements, is less than \$7 per acre. The sum recommended to be annually set apart for building purposes would, at this valuation, amount to about ten cents upon every eighty-acre farm in the state,—an amount so insignificant that we are constrained to believe that every citizen of Minnesota would ratify your favorable action.

In the visit made by your committee to the capitol of the state of Iowa, we were impressed by the noble edifice the patriotic people of that enterprising state had erected to mark their appreciation of what was befitting the dignity and importance of the official home of their commonwealth. The building was undertaken in 1870, when the total assessed valuation was less than \$300,000,000, made up almost wholly of the rural property of the state, there being no city of a larger population than 20,000 or 25,000 people to share the cost of the outlay. 29 The work was completed in about twelve years when the entire assessed valuation of the state of Iowa amounted only to about \$426,000,000, or nearly \$200,000,000 less than that of Minnesota at the present time. The cost of the building was \$2,800,000,—a sum very much beyond the amount we believe it will be necessary for Minnesota to spend. We believe, under the restraint embodied in the bill submitted with this report, that a capitol worthy of our commonwealth and one of which every citizen will be proud, can be built for a sum less than the limit set in the bill. We therefore recommend

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this report most heartily to your favorable action and urge the passage of the bill herewith submitted.

(Signed) WILLIAM B. DEAN, JAY LA DUE, OSCAR AYERS, HENRY KELLER.

Senator McMillan submitted the minority report, as follows:

Many interesting and important meetings have been held by this committee, and it is with a feeling of regret that your minority committee finds itself unable to agree with the majority upon a report to be presented to this body. The principal point of difference is upon a question which is of great interest and importance to the citizens of this state, as well as of interest to those within whose borders said capitol site is to be located, and is also a question which this committee, as a whole, entirely ignored and refused to investigate, as contemplated by the provisions of the above resolutions. At the beginning of this investigation,—in fact, at its first session,—your minority committee found itself powerless to act by the adoption of a resolution limiting the investigation as to a capitol site to the site now occupied by the present building, or to a point within one-half mile of the same. This resolution was afterwards reconsidered and the limit placed at three-fourths of a mile distant. Your committee believes that such action on the part of the majority was not in accordance with the spirit and interpretation of the above resolution, which specifically stated that the commission was to present a report based upon an investigation of the different proposed sites, with the end in view that the state at large might be informed as to the merits of each. Such an investigation your committee believes would have thrown much light upon this important question, and would have given to the citizens of this state a large amount of valuable information relative to the size, cost and location of sites in other parts of the capital city. Your committee believes that in no sense would the advantages in favor of the present site, or sites adjacent thereto, have suffered by a comparison with those situated beyond the imaginary lines drawn by the majority of the committee. In view of these facts, your 30 committee would dissent from the report of the majority, and would, therefore, recommend that no restriction be placed in the bill limiting

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the commission in this respect, and would further recommend, in order that all interested may be heard upon this question, and that a capitol site may be selected that will be easy of access, commanding in view, with the grounds, in point of size, suitable to the future wants of this great state, and that a site may be obtained that will reflect credit upon the good judgement of its citizens as well as the members of the commission; that said capitol commission when appointed, shall be authorized to further investigate as to the capitol sites, their location, size, cost, etc., with power only to report with recommendations to the next session of the legislature, and to receive from that body the authority to designate the site for the said capitol building. Your committee would also report that it has spent much time in seeking information as to the size and location of grounds occupied by capitol buildings in other states, and it has been unable to find a single state in which the idea has been that the state capitol was other than the home of the state, or where it was a business building, especially located for the convenience of a few who were fortunate enough to live under the shadow cast by its great dome; or did it find a state where there was the remotest probability that in a few years at most the adjoining property would be occupied for business purposes.

Noble architecture and large and commodious grounds have been the rule followed in other states, namely: California, Colorado, Nebraska, Illinois, Michigan, Missouri, Iowa and Pennsylvania, ranging from five acres in the smallest tract to forty-three in the largest; the average was fourteen and a quarter acres. Your committee would therefore recommend that when the state decides to erect a suitable capitol building for the future wants and to be a permanent home for the state, not less than ten acres be acquired for a capitol site, and that it be so far removed from close proximity to the business district of the city that future generations will not wonder at the lack of wisdom displayed by her capitol commissioners, or by the legislature which will be responsible for such a blunder, if one is made.

Your committee would also recommend that said capitol commission should be restricted by law from adopting any plans or letting any contracts for the whole or a part of said

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building until it has been definitely ascertained that the cost of supervision, labor, material, and all other expenditures necessary for the erection and completion of said building, including heating apparatus and ventilating furnishings, and all other fixtures of the same, will in no event exceed the sum of \$2,000,000 for a completed building.

It would therefore be necessary in order to make an accurate itemized estimate of the cost of such building, which can be relied on with any degree of accuracy, to have the general plans, elevations, and sections, together with minute specifications and full detail drawings 31 of all parts that go to make a complete building, from which may be obtained the amount and quality of all material. No accurate estimate can be made without them, and even then an estimate may fail of verification on account of a change in the value of labor or material, or from errors in judgment; but in no event, with such restrictions as outlined, if the spirit and letter of the law were followed, should such a building exceed ten per cent of the original estimate.

Your committee would also recommend that the competition for the plans of said capitol building be limited to the architects of this state, and that in the event said capitol building shall cost more than the sum of \$2,000,000, said architect shall not be entitled to any commission on the sum such building costs in excess of such amount.

Your committee would further recommend that, in case a site is selected other than the site now occupied for capitol purposes, the present capitol building shall not be abandoned, but shall remain under control of the state for its present uses until such time as the capitol commission shall turn over to the state a completed building ready for occupancy. An abandonment of the present building and the scattering of state officials over different parts of the city, and the necessity for properly providing for the accommodation of the state legislature for a period of ten years would, in the opinion of your committee, be detrimental to the best interests of the state. In the report of the majority of the committee your minority committee would agree except as to the recommendations made above.

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Respectfully submitted, F. G. McMILLAN.

The minority report, besides dissenting from the majority on the subject of location, also urged that the competition for plans be limited to architects within the state.

Many of the newspapers in the state gave the most hearty support to the project for a new capitol, advocating it in the strongest terms, as a matter of the greatest necessity; others, on the contrary, were violent in their opposition, in many cases charging the most unworthy motives to all concerned in promoting the enterprise.

### **LEGISLATION FOR BUILDING THE NEW CAPITOL.**

On the same day that the committee made its report to the senate, the writer introduced a bill for the construction of a new capitol. It must be confessed that the bill was introduced with considerable trepidation. For it seemed like the wildest flight of fancy to suppose that with the Republicans 32 in control of the House, and the Democratic Alliance members in control of the Senate, such a bill from a minority senator should be considered with any favor. The majority of the senate had been elected upon a widely heralded platform of economy and reform, and it seemed almost incredible that the senate majority would permit a bill to be passed appropriating the unprecedented sum of \$2,000,000, besides, at the same time, forever settling the burning question of the permanent capital of the state.

It was the first time within the history of Minnesota legislation that the St. Paul delegation assumed an aggressive attitude on the capitol question. But the prize was worth the fight; for, if successful, it would forever settle the location of the seat of government, besides releasing the St. Paul delegation from the constantly recurring fears of removal, which often in times past had made it so subservient to the most unworthy demands.

The bill embraced the main features of the majority report as to selection of location, cost of building, and the way in which the funds were to be provided. The next day, February

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4th, a similar bill was introduced in the House of Representatives by the Hon. Hiler H. Horton, member from the 27th District, St. Paul.

In both houses the bills were referred to the appropriate committees. The bills were advanced as rapidly as possible, and on March 17th the substitute reported by the Committee on Public Buildings, making some minor changes in the original bill, was passed in the House of Representatives by a vote of 68 to 41. The substitute was reported in the senate on March 21st, and on April 6th passed that body by a vote of 34 to 20, and was approved by the governor on April 7th. The contest in both houses was severe. In the House of Representatives the brunt of the fight fell upon the Hon. Patrick H. Kelly, member from the 25th District, St. Paul. He was equal to the occasion. By his skillful management, great energy, and happy adaptability, he won friends for the measure from all parties, and it is not too much to say that to him, more than to any other person, we are indebted for the success that has forever settled the question of the location of the capitol of the state of Minnesota.

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In the Senate the contest was no less vigorous, but a fortunate situation, involving the consideration of several other measures of general public interest, together with the generous support of patriotic and liberal minded senators, of all parties, who appreciated the urgent necessity for a new building, enabled the senators having the Capitol Bill in charge to secure its favorable reception and its final passage by a large majority. And so, after years during which the location of the state capitol was made a legislative football and a matter of constant anxiety to the people of St. Paul, this completed legislation forever sealed the tripartite action of the territorial legislature of 1851, when it passed acts fixing the University at Minneapolis, the state prison at Stillwater, and the capitol at St. Paul. While there has never been any vote of the people fixing the permanent seat of the state government, as required by the constitution, one cannot resist the conviction that the capitol may now be considered as quite permanently fixed for all time to come.

### **WORK OF THE STATE CAPITOL COMMISSION.**

As soon as the act became a law, Governor Nelson advised with Mr. Kelly and the writer as to suitable persons to be appointed the commissioners, for which the law provided. Channing Seabury, of St. Paul, H. W. Lamberton, of Winona, George A. Du Toit, of Chaska, John De Laittre, of Minneapolis, C. H. Graves, of Duluth, E. E. Corliss, of Fergus Falls, and James McHench, of Martin county, were appointed and were confirmed by the senate. Mr. Edgar Weaver, of Mankato, occupied the place of Mr. McHench, who died not long after his appointment. The remaining six members of the Board are the original appointees of Governor Nelson.

It is no fulsome praise to say that no public work was ever committed to a more able and efficient body. For integrity of purpose, critical taste for the beautiful in architecture, and honesty in the discharge of their intricate duties, no state has ever been more loyally served. Minnesota and its citizens will forever rest under a burden of obligation to these gentlemen which it may strive in vain to repay.

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The commissioners all accepted the appointment and at once entered upon the discharge of their duties, by holding their first meeting on May 13th, 1893. The biennial reports of the commissioners made to the governor of the state relate in great detail the operations of the Board in the performance of its duties. It is not within the purpose of this paper to repeat the story of the work which their reports so faithfully set forth.

The requirements for the selection of plans for the new building and of an architect, as provided in the original act of 1893, were found to be altogether too rigorous and impracticable. The financial scheme too was greatly impaired by the diminishing assessments of the property within the state, which, instead of increasing yearly as was anticipated, were so seriously affected by the wide spread financial depression from which

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the whole country suffered, that it was very evident the tax provided for in the law would not furnish the amount of money appropriated for the building within the time limited.

All these difficulties in the original act were remedied by subsequent legislation in 1895, 1897 and 1899. By these amendments the commissioners were given greater liberty in the choice of an architect, and the selection of plans, and were permitted to issue their certificates in anticipation of future revenues, as might be necessary, to furnish the funds as their work progressed.

In the meantime, as the country recovered from the effects of the financial troubles, the prices of labor and of all kinds of materials advanced very rapidly. If the commissioners had been free to proceed with their work at the time they assumed their duties, the new capitol as originally planned could have been built within the sum appropriated by the act, as the commissioners themselves very clearly show in their second report to the governor.

NEW CAPITOL OF MINNESOTA From a Photograph by C. P. Gibson.

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### **THE ARCHITECT AND THE NEW CAPITOL.**

Upon the invitation of the commissioners, architects from all over the United States, many of them of the most distinguished reputation, submitted plans and drawings, forty-one in all, for the new capitol, and all anonymously. These were exhibited in public for two weeks, as the law required. After a most critical examination by the members of the Board, assisted by Mr. Wheelwright, a distinguished architect of Boston, and an almost unanimous expression by the general public, the plans offered by Mr. Cass Gilbert, of St. Paul, were chosen, although at the time he was not known as the author, and he was selected as the architect. A better selection could not have been made. Mr. Gilbert had lived in St. Paul from childhood. His ability, skill, and artistic taste were well known, and his integrity, an important element in an architect's character, was his priceless possession. The new capitol building (shown in Plate VII) is the pride of every citizen. It will remain Mr.

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Gilbert's most enduring monument, and will proclaim his name among the great architects of all the ages.

The plans and designs submitted by Mr. Gilbert, and accepted by the commissioners, were for a building of the most stately and dignified character, well befitting the official home of a prosperous and cultured people. The architecture is the Italian Renaissance. It commands admiration at once by its classic simplicity, and, surmounted by a superb and majestic dome, recalls to the beholder those celebrated structures of Europe that have been the study of lovers of the beautiful in architecture, since the days the great masters created them. As Dante on his famous seat sat for hours lost in contemplation of the perfection of the beautiful cathedral of Florence, so may we and our children for generations to come sit and study and learn what is most beautiful and classic in art in our admiration of Mr. Gilbert's great creation.

The extreme length of the building is 432 feet 10 inches. The width through the central portico is 228 feet 3 inches. The extreme height of the dome is 220 feet. In the interior ample provision is made for the two houses of the legislature and their committees; for the supreme court, the governor, 36 and all officers of the state. Special attention has been given to the heating, lighting, and ventilating systems, everything throughout being of the most complete and substantial character. The building is as nearly absolutely fireproof as human ingenuity can make it.

The commissioners proceeded at once to select a site for the building within the limits prescribed by the law. They encountered many vexatious and unreasonable obstructions. The property they desired to purchase became at once very valuable in the minds of its owners, and it was only after the most patient and perplexing efforts that they were finally able to secure the commanding location the capitol now occupies.\* The grounds embrace an area of nearly eight acres and cost \$367,161.98. The site is a most admirable one. The elevation is 199 feet above low water mark, and 88 feet above the site of the old capitol. The view from the lantern of the capitol dome, extending for miles over the surrounding

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country, and compassing the two great cities, presents the most magnificent panorama to be found anywhere within the state. Being remote from the business center of the city, the beauty of the capacious grounds and the noble building itself are the conspicuous features of the landscape, while it is readily accessible in a few minutes from any part of the city by the numerous street car lines.

\* In securing the present capitol grounds, the commissioners were very ably assisted by Hon. Henry M. Rice, Hon. Alexander Ramsey, and Mr. H. S. Fairchild. Their efforts with the owners of the various pieces of real estate, and their final success in obtaining them at something near their real value, place the state under great obligation to these gentlemen.

Following the selection and purchase of the capitol site and the adoption of the plans and designs of Mr. Gilbert, the active work of construction began at once. The contract for the excavation and foundation was awarded to Mr. George J. Grant, of St. Paul. Ground was broken on March 6th, 1896, and the first stone was laid on June 23rd of the same year. The foundation was completed on November 24th, 1896.

In the performance of their duties, the commissioners adhered rigidly to the terms of the law under which they were acting. The zeal of the legislators in their efforts to protect the interests of the state and to limit the cost of the building had caused the insertion of provisions in the act without which it would not have passed the legislature, that continued seriously to impede the work of the commissioners, especially in the matter of anticipating future revenues for the payment of the progressing work. The legislatures of 1897 and 1899 relaxed the law in this respect, and gave to the commissioners the necessary freedom in the anticipation of funds, so that the work could be carried on without interruption. On August 31st, 1897, the contract for the exterior and interior walls, up to but not including the dome, was awarded to the Butler-Rayn Company, of St. Paul. They were contractors not only of expert ability but of great fidelity in the execution of all their undertakings. The state was exceedingly fortunate in finding among its own citizens men so capable of successfully accomplishing a work of such magnitude.

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It was at this point in the work of construction that the architect made the first departure from the general expectation of the public. With so many kinds of building stone to be found within the state, from the everlasting granite to the friable limestone, it was the common belief, and indeed had been the promise of the promoters of the legislation, that only Minnesota stone would be used to build its capitol. But with a courageous devotion to the artistic and beautiful, and a consistent adherence to the fitness of a classic structure, all considerations of state advertisement were set aside and the only material adapted to the architecture of the building was selected. The beautiful marble of the Grecian mountains was not possible, but hardly less beautiful than that of Pentelikon was the marble found in the quarries of Georgia. It had already been used in the Art Gallery of Washington, and the state capitol of Rhode Island with admirable effect, and, despite manifold criticism, the commissioners determined to adopt the advice of the architect and to use it for our capitol. The completed building in its pure magnificence confirms and vindicates the wisdom of the commissioners.

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### **LAYING THE CORNER STONE.**

On July 27th, 1898, the laying of the corner stone was celebrated with appropriate ceremonies. The day itself was bright and auspicious. Elaborate preparations were made for the comfort of the great multitude that assembled to witness the interesting event. A large number of public men whose names are identified with the history of the state, many of them from its earliest days, were present. The whole city of St. Paul was adorned in holiday attire. The Pageantry of the parade, the waving of the flags, and the inspiring music of the bands, stimulated the enthusiasm of the crowd, and made the day one that will be long remembered.

The exercises began by Governor Clough requesting Archbishop Ireland to invoke the Divine benediction upon the proceedings, after which Mr. Graves on behalf of the Commissioners made a clear and most happy statement of the work of the Board, from

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the breaking of the ground to the completion of the foundation, ready for the corner stone. Governor Clough then introduced United States Senator C. K. Davis, who delivered an oration of great eloquence, commemorative of the occasion. Upon the conclusion of the address of Senator Davis, Judge Flandrau, one of the first Supreme Judges of the state, in a most fitting address presented to ex-governor Ramsey a silver trowel, to be used in the laying of the stone, which the venerable governor most appropriately acknowledged. Upon request of Governor Clough, Mr. N. P. Langford then read a list of the various articles and memorials deposited in the corner stone, "indicative of the progress of the state in art, literature, and agriculture."\*

\* In the sealed and soldered box that lies in the corner stone the following articles were placed, to lie for unknown hundreds of years:

Holy Bible.

Statutes of the state of Minnesota, Vols. 1 and 2.

Last published annual report of the secretary of state of Minnesota.

Last published annual report of the Minnesota state auditor.

Last published annual report of the Minnesota state treasurer.

Legislative manuals of Minnesota for the years 1893, 1895, and 1897.

History of Minnesota Volunteers in the War of the Rebellion, Vols. 1 and 2.

Volumes 4 and 8 of the Minnesota Historical Society Collections.

Minnesota Historical Society publication, "How Minnesota Became a State."

Congressional directory of the Fifty-fifth Congress of the United States.

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History of the new capitol legislation.

The original draft of the bill drawn and introduced in the legislature by Hon. William B. Dean, of St. Paul, for the erection of a new capitol.

Neill's History of Minnesota.

History of the Sioux War of 1862–63, by Isaac V. D. Heard.

Minnesota Year Book for the years 1852 and 1853.

Photographs of the new capitol.

Photographs and engravings of Minnesota cities and villages.

Minneapolis Through a Camera.

Copies of the last issued daily newspapers of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Badge of the Daughters of Veterans, Tent No. 1, St. Paul, Minn.

Report of the Grand Army of the Republic for Minnesota.

American flag and roster of St. Paul Camp No. 1, Sons of Veterans, U. S. A.

One \$20 gold coin, one \$10 gold coin, and one \$5 gold coin, and one each of all the silver, nickel, and copper coins of the United States of this date.

Portrait of Alexander Ramsey, first governor of the Territory of Minnesota.

Portrait of Henry Hastings Sibley, first governor of the State of Minnesota.

A copy of the introductory address by Hon. Charles H. Graves.

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A copy of the oration delivered today by Hon. Cushman K. Davis.

Copper plates of the seal of the Territory and the State of Minnesota.

Copper plate etchings of south front elevation and principal floor plans of the capitol.

A copper plate on which are engraved the names of the capitol commissioners, secretary, architect and assistants.

A copper plate on which is engraved an epitome of memorable events in the history of the organization of the Territory and State of Minnesota (copied below).

City Directory for the year 1898 of St. Paul. capital of Minnesota.

Northwestern Gazetteer and Business Directory.

A list, engrossed on parchment, of the contents of the corner stone.

A copy of the program and ceremonies of laying the corner stone.

One of the copper plates that lie in the stone bears the following inscription:

**EPITOME OF MEMORABLE EVENTS In the History of the Acquisition and Organization of the Territory and State of Minnesota.**

1784.—March 1—Cession by the State of Virginia to the United States of that portion of Minnesota lying east of the Mississippi river.

1803.—April 30—Treaty concluded with France for the cession of Louisiana to the United States, embracing that portion of Minnesota lying west of the Mississippi river.

1805.—Sept. 23—Conferences with different bands of Indians.

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1837.—Feb. 18—Convention with Wahpaakootah and other Sioux Indians.

1838.—June 15—Treaty with Chippewas by Henry Dodge proclaimed.

1838.—June 15—Treaty with Sioux by J. R. Poinsett, proclaimed.

1838.—The first pre-emption claim to land at St. Anthony Falls made by Franklin Steele.

1849.—March 3—The United States congress passed the organic act creating the Territory of Minnesota.

1849.—June 1—The governor, Alexander Ramsey, by proclamation, declared the territory duly organized. Population. 4,940.

1853.—Feb., 24—The treaty of Traverse des Sioux, made by Alexander Ramsey and Luke Lea, with the Sioux Indians on July 23, 1851, and the treaty of Mendota, made by Alexander Ramsey and Luke Lea, with the Sioux Indians on Aug. 5, 1851, were proclaimed by the president.

1857.— Feb. 26—The act authorizing the territory to form a state government passed by congress.

1857.—Oct. 13—A state constitution was adopted.

1858.—May 11—Congress passed the act admitting Minnesota into the Union, Henry Hastings Sibley being the first state governor. Population, 150,037.

1862—July 2—The first railroad in Minnesota was operated, the train running from St. Paul to St. Anthony.

1861 to 1865—Minnesota furnished more than 25,000 men for the War of the Rebellion.

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1890.—June 1—Population, United States census, 1,301,826.

1895.—June 1—Population, state census, 1,574,619.

39 When the list had been read, Governor Clough asked the commissioners to place the box in the cavity prepared for it in the corner stone, and then proceeded to call upon the honored 40 father of the commonwealth, Ex-Governor and Ex-Senator Ramsey, the first territorial governor of Minnesota, to lay the stone in its place, and while he was performing with his silver trowel this most interesting duty the bands played and the people sang the national hymn, "America." Governor Clough having announced the stone as well and properly set, the multitude was dismissed with the benediction by Bishop Gilbert.

### **DIFFICULTIES OVERCOME AND THE BUILDING COMPLETED.**

Following the laying of the corner stone, the work of construction continued with great activity. The commissioners, however, began to feel hampered by the reduced amount of funds coming into their hands from the annual tax levy of two-tenths of a mill upon the assessed value of property in the state. These assessments, as stated before, steadily diminished, instead of constantly increasing, as was the expectation at the time the Act was passed. It became apparent that the work would have to stop unless the legislature relieved the conditions.

The Commissioners in their report of January 1st, 1899, directed the attention of the legislature to the situation that confronted them, and prayed for the necessary relief. This the legislature of 1899 granted, by passing an act which authorized the Commissioners to anticipate future revenues by issuing certificates of indebtedness as might be necessary. Throughout the years of 1899 and 1900 the work progressed without interruption. The beauty of the growing building became more and more apparent, but the very splendor of the rising walls,

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“The princely dome, the column and the arch, The breathing marble and the sculptured gold,”

only brought embarrassment to the Commissioners. For while the building could be completed with all its appointments comfortable and useful and within the sum fixed by the act, yet that limit would preclude the expense of the interior classic finish so necessary to appropriately conform to the exterior.

Impressed by the situation, the Commissioners, in their report of 1901 and 1903, frankly state that “owing to the rise 41 in prices, adherence to the original limit of cost would compel the use of inferior material and workmanship.” They then proceed to specify their meaning more clearly, in detail. Wooden instead of stone floors must be used for the rotunda, corridors and rooms; tin instead of tile roofing; plain plaster finish instead of mosaic ceiling and vaulting; the grand stairways with only empty halls and plain plastered walls, instead as now of the beautiful ceiling supported by marble columns and walls embellished with marble wainscoting and pilasters; and plain oak doors for the main entrance, instead of the present massive ones of bronze. To avoid such a plain and unattractive finish, the commissioners recommended an increased appropriation, in order to carry out the more artistic plans of the architect, as well as to permit the installation of the latest and most improved methods of lighting, heating, and ventilation; and also to purchase additional lots required to complete the symmetry of the capitol grounds. Besides these important changes in the plans and designs, the architect was not unmindful of those artistic embellishments so necessary to fittingly crown this splendid symbol of the people's sovereignty. With a courage that should command our admiration and our thanks, he recommended a bronze Quadriga to surmount the main entrance pavilion, marble statuary of heroic size, and mural decorations, all by the most famous artists, and stately and dignified granite approaches to the main entrances of the building. Many of these recommendations that might have been received in the cultured centers of the world as the obvious artistic furnishings of such a noble structure, seem

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somewhat startling when suggested to the new people of a frontier prairie state. But the members of the legislature, inspired and educated doubtless by the presence of such magnificent architecture, rose grandly to these recommendations, and increased the original appropriation \$1,000,000 in the session of 1901, and \$1,500,000 in the session of 1903, making the total appropriations \$4,500,000.

The total expenditure up to January 1st, 1905, is \$3,975,860.33. The amount yet to be paid on uncompleted contracts, when finished, is \$361,989.51, making the total cost of grounds and building \$4,337,849.84.

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Although the cost of the new capitol far exceeds the sum fixed in the act for its construction, yet nothing has been done and no money has been spent that has not been fully authorized by the legislature. With a laudably ambitious purpose to erect a building of the most stately and impressive dignity, the Commissioners at the same time have been true to the law under which they acted. They are now prepared to acquit themselves of their trust, with a consciousness of work well and faithfully done. That the people of the state have accepted the result of their labors with the most justifiable pride and the greatest satisfaction, there can be no doubt. It would be a most graceful and meritorious act on the part of the state, if the legislature in its wisdom should recognize the valuable labors of the commissioners by an appropriation for their services, more in keeping with their value than the meager compensation allowed them in the original act.

There yet remain two things for the state to do, in order to round out the completeness of the work already done:

First, to purchase the property adjoining the capitol grounds and convert it into a grand park-like approach to the capitol, as already proposed in the plans submitted by Mr. Gilbert; and

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Second, to provide a state mansion on or near the capitol grounds, for the residence of the governor during his term of office, while absent from his own home, so that he will not be compelled to find an abiding place, as best he can, in some hotel or boarding house.

In conclusion, to another must be committed the pleasant duty of some time placing on the records of this Society a minute and critical description of the wealth of artistic beauty to be found illustrated in this royal home of our commonwealth. The splendid conception of Gilbert, the architect, realized in the building itself, the sculptures of French, the decorations of Garnsey, the mural paintings of La Farge, Blashfield, Simmons, Walker, Cox, Millet, Volk, Pyle, and Zogbaum, never will cease to delight our people and educate them to a better appreciation of the true and beautiful in art.