

Augusta May 20th 1869

To His Excellency.

Gov E. M. Pease

Sir.

At a preliminary meeting of citizens of Washington, Grimes and Walker counties at this place on the 19th inst. for the purpose of devising ways and means to open a substantial dirt and macadamised road from the town of Washington through this place, Anderson and Huntsville, on to the Trinity river, the undersigned were appointed a committee to correspond with Your Excellency and ascertain if some of the unemployed Convicts in the Penitentiary, can be procured in aid of this laudible undertaking.

The need of such a road is too palpable to require argument. During the fall and winter seasons when the produce of the country should be carried to market, the roads are almost impassible, and transportation is

enhanced from 30 to 50 %.

Private enterprise.

owing to the poverty of our people, is wholly inadequate to the undertaking. Nor is it believed that the Citizens of the Counties interested, should alone be taxed for the completion of such a road. The state is largely interested. We learn from Cal. Munroe, Financial Agent of the Penitentiary, that the annual transportation account of that institution, of its fabrics and supplies, over the proposed road is from \$1,800 to \$2,000, which over a good road would be reduced 30 to 50 %, thereby saving the State from six to eight thousand dollars annually. The incidental advantages to the Country would be enormous.

We give you a brief outline of the plan proposed, which with the labor of 100 Convicts can be made effective.

1st It is proposed to memorialize the several County Courts to appoint Commissioners to make out an air line road from Newasota to Huntsville, with such divergences only as

the nature of the ground would render necessary
— thus shortening the distance Eight miles
or half a day with loaded teams. This would
place the road after the adoption of the
report of the Commissioners under the
protection of the general laws of the State,
2^d It is not doubted but that the Citizens
interested will subscribe a sufficient amount
of money to employ a Chief Engineer and a such
skilled labor as may be necessary to build the
bridges and direct the labor of the Convicts

3^d In

like manner the Citizens will furnish the
subsistence of the Convicts while employed
and in all a every expense, save only
a guard for the the prisoners.
With this assurance on the part of the
Citizens, will the State furnish us 100
Convicts and a guard?

It may be that
there is no appropriation to pay a guard.
To this we would respectfully reply, that
subsisting the Convicts while employed
would perhaps very nearly equal the expense

of a guard, and where the annual saving
of from Six to Eight Thousand dollars to the
Penitentiary fund is considered, we feel that
the Commanding General would not hesitate
but would be abundantly justified in making
appropriation to cover the excess, if any.

We trust
Your Excellency will find it convenient to
give us a short reply by return mail, that
we may communicate it to an adjourned
meeting which is to take place at Anderson
on Tuesday week. We would also thank you
for any suggestions in aid of the object
which you may think beneficial

A favorable
response from Your Excellency will infuse
new life and energy into our people and
insure the completion of the road in time
for the Fall and Winter business

J. W. Elson
C. Caldwell
J. H. Kerr