

From Edward Fitch to Dear Father

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Lawrence May 20th 1858

Dear Father[,]

Your letter written at Westboro has just come to hand but too late to save the Warrant. I preempted my claim yesterday using the Warrant and 60.\$ of the 100. that Appleton sent me. I could not have preempted at all without more than the warrant of course. The Warrant paid for 120 acres. 50\$ in cash paid for 40 acres and it takes 9.50 to get through the office that is for fees. 1.00 for certificate of filing, 5.00 for preemption proof, & .50 for locating warrant, total cost to me calling warrant 120. = 179.50. Ten dollars more than it would have cost me if I could have had the money and bought a Warrant for 160 acres which I could have got for 160\$ or perhaps I might have had to pay 165\$. So you see it would have been impossible for me to have sent back this warrant and preempted now and circumstances were such that it was important that I should preempt immediately. So if I had bought a Warrant with the 100 sent by Appleton (which by the way was sent for another purpose), where would the 69.50 come from to pay up the rest? To be sure the Land sales I suppose now are postponed till Oct. That will not make me any better off if I wait till then. If it has been one year then it would have been of some benefit.

English's Bill or rather juggle has passed Congress. Well, you say, if we accept we ought to be Slaves so I say but I am sometimes seriously afraid it will be accepted or at least so declared by the Gov. And now I will give my reasons first stating some facts. English Bill is worse than Lecompton-Walker for it gives us less land. It is worse because it leaves the matter wholly undecided. It settles nothing, ends nothing only keeps the matter open and leaves it in a worse shape than ever. The Crittenden Bill finished the business but this Bill even the Fathers of it dont know whether it submits the Constitution or not. But now for my reasons.

1st Every thing that can will be brought to bear to make us accept the Prop. of Congress. The original Lecomptons are for it. They of course carry all that they can influence in the same way. Then the Whole force of the influence of the Land Office will be brought to bear for it. The Officers talk to every man that comes there from all over the Territory and tell them what a good thing it will be for us to get into the union right away. Now that either the Land sales will be postponed or else that 5 per cent of the sales will come to the State Government. Then they tell them that the only way to keep and secure peace is to be admitted, as a state. Many believe it and will vote For on that promise.

2nd There are lots of men here who care more for getting a Rail Road than they do for Free State principles. They vote "For" because it will build Rail Road and increase the value of the lands. They will influence all they can to vote for the proposition and be admitted right away.

3[rd] There are those who pretend to be Free State who Because the Leavenworth Con. makes the negro a voter will turn a[nd] support the Lecompton Con. just out of spite to the other.

4[th] A Majority of the Boards that have this matter in hand are Democrats & Pro slavery. Gov Denver is no better than he should be. His Secy Walsh is a perfect tool and will do any thing and his Atty Genl is of 'the same stripe'. They then have the power according to the bill to do the whole work with out any chance of Babcock & Dietzler having any chance to do anything. They will receive, I have no doubt, all such returns as Gov. Walker and Secy

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Stanton refused to receive last October and then the Majority for the Proposition can be swelled to any amount without voters.

5th The Blue Lodges of Missouri were never in more successful operation than at present. They are making every calculation to send men all over the Territory quietly a little while before the Election and have them stay and vote after the manner of the 30th of March 1855 only more quietly and if that is done of course Gov D & the rest will ignore the fact and say it a fair election.

6[th] There will be renegade free State men enough that will think that the advantages of Rail Roads will overbalance the disadvantages of living under the Lecompton Con. for a while for they say that we can change the Constitution within 60 days and have a Free State Constitution. For they say Calhoun will give the Certificates to a majority of Free State members and they can do what they please.

These are some of the reasons why I think the proposition of Congress may be accepted tho I hope that it will not. As far as I am concerned if Congress had offered to give every man in Kansas his claim I should have been against just as firmly as now. The people, as a general thing, are right but these influences being brot to bear up on them may turn the vote in favor of the Proposition. However I think it more likely that it will be carried by imported votes from Missouri. It is their last chance and good for nothing at that for let us be admitted under that Constitution and we are just as sure to become free state as we live one year, mark my word. It is perfectly impossible to make Kansas a Slave State just as impossible as it would be to make Hell out of Heaven.

For my own part I should rather remain a territory for the next fifteen years than to come in under the "Lecom Cons" but I believe that the next Congress will be such a one as will admit us as a Free State if we reject this Constitution -- the English Bill to the contrary not withstanding.

But as you say we ought to be slaves if we accept it, then you agree with me exactly. Yet for the reason stated I think it may be carried. You of the North have no idea of the state of things here and cannot see all the influence that will be brot to bear on the Free State men for the Constitution there for you will not sympathise much with us if we seem to accept it but if you were here you would see how it is.

I have let my Farm to a couple of families from Indiana who have come on here with their families. In the two families there are only 19 persons here, the rest having staid in Iowa. There are eight of them now in the house [while] I am writing. One family consists of Mr[.] &

Mrs[.] Coon with four children, two grown up daughters (both good looking and educated for teachers), one daughter 9 and one son about 7 years old.