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Meeting Minutes of the Committee in Detroit

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N. A. Balch

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January 22, 1847

[Detroit, Michigan?]

Minutes of the committee in Detroit, which was organized to support Albertus C. Van Raalte and his people in making a settlement in Michigan. The meeting was held in the Presbyterian Church. Seven people were appointed to the committee: Theodore Romeyn, Shubael Conant, Rev. George Duffield, E. C. Seaman, A. S. Porter, E. P. Hastings, and J. W. Brooks. Other people in the state were designated to assist Van Raalte as needed such as Rev. O. P. Hoyt, the Hon. N. A. Balch, of the Senate, in Kalamazoo; George Young in Grand Rapids; Rev. Wm. M. Ferry and Henry Pennoyer in Grand Haven; and J. R. Kellogg and E. B. Bassett of Allegan and others.

“Rev. Van Raalte, in a most touching and impressive manner, expressed his gratitude for the sympathy and aid proffered to his countrymen, and his gratification at having advanced thus far in the preparatory steps for the settlement in a land where labor would meet with its reward, and civil and religious freedom be secure.”

S. Conant was chair of the meeting and N. A. Balch, secretary.

In typescript.

The Van Schelven papers, Holland Historical Trust Collection, the Joint Archives of Holland, T88-0167.

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EMIGRATION FROM HOLLAND.

It being understood that there was a probability of a large emigration from Holland in the course of this year and thereafter, and the agent of the first emigrants being in this city, after having explored the western part of this State with a view to the settlement in it, a meeting was convened at the Session-room of the Presbyterian church, on the evening of Friday, the 22d inst. (Jan. 22, 1847) at which were present a number of citizens of Detroit, and of other portions of the State.

Rev. Mr. Hoyt, of Kalamazoo, Rev. Mr. Taylor, of Grand Rapids, and T. Romeyn, of Detroit, (Having been appointed a committee, by a previous meeting held at the office of Judge Conant, in Detroit,) submitted certain resolutions through Mr. Romeyn, who gave to the meeting a statement of the origin of the present movement in Holland, and of its probable importance.

The interference of the government with the exercise of religion and exclusive control of education, accompanied by inhibitions to teach or worship, except according to certain arbitrary ordinances, conjoined with the intolerable taxation and other civil oppression - had led to such a state of feeling among a nation like the Dutch, always attached to their religion, and distinguished for their opposition to arbitrary power, that now large masses of the people were ready and anxious to leave. This emigration proceeding from such motives, and embracing men of various and diversified pursuits, would bring a most valuable class among us, if they selected our State as their resting place.

✓ If ...
Shubert Conant

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Michigan had been much misrepresented abroad, and the agent of these colonists had come here prepossessed against us, and inclined to go elsewhere. But he had met with sympathy, countenance and aid, and was disposed to commence his colonization here. By so doing, he was entitled to our co-operation; and a little sacrifice by individuals, a little advice and attention to the emigrants, might be of inestimable advantage. Several hundreds of them were already in the United States, and many more would soon arrive.

After these and other remarks, Mr. Romeyn submitted, as the report of the committee, the following resolutions:

Resolved, That this meeting have heard with much interest of a large prospective emigration from Holland to this country, proceeding from a love of civil and religious liberty, and stimulated by the oppressive interference of that government with education and the exercise of religion, it commends itself to our admiration and sympathy. We pledge ourselves to co-operate, as far as we can, with those who elsewhere may aid and sustain this movement: and, if these emigrants make their abiding place in Michigan we will extend to them the hand of fellowship and friendship. We admire the past history and character of the people of the Netherlands. For their faith and independence they struggled for more than thirty years against the powers of Spain and Germany. They stood side by side with our English ancestors in arduous conflicts for freedom and civil and religious matters. They gave an asylum to the persecuted Puritans. They aided in the settlement of our most important State. In their industry, their enterprise, their frugality, their integrity, their love of

country, their devotedness to their faith and to freedom in their civil institutions, we recognize those qualities which entitle their descendants to our respect and welcome.

Resolved, That a committee of seven be appointed, who may associate with them such others as they deem expedient, and whose duty it shall be to aid, in every practicable way, the emigrants who may reach our limits, and to correspond with such other associations or committees as may be found elsewhere, and in other ways, to invite, encourage and direct the settlement of these emigrants within our State.

Resolved, That we recommend the appointment of committees and associations for a similar purpose, at such other points as may be deemed desirable by the Rev. A. C. Van Raalte, the agent and pioneer of this movement, and whom we cheerfully recommend as a gentleman of energy, talent, piety and disinterested zeal.

The resolutions were unanimously adopted.

The following persons were appointed the committee at Detroit: Theodore Romeyn, Shubael Gonant, Rev. George Duffield, D. D., E. C. Seaman, Hon. A. S. Porter, E. P. Hastings, and J. W. Brooks.

Mr. Van Raalte having suggested the expediency of committees at the places here in after designated, and gentlemen being present from those parts of the country, the following were appointed.

For Marshall - Hon. J. D. Pierce, and Hon. H. W. Taylor, of the House of Representatives, and Samuel Hall.

For Kalamazoo - Rev. O. P. Hoyt, William Denison, and Hon. N. A. Balch, of the Senate.

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For Grand Rapids - George Young, John Ball, and Rev. A. B. Taylor.

For Grand Haven - Rev. Wm. M. Ferry, Henry Pennoyer, and Thomas W. White.

For Allegan - Hon. J. R. Kellog, E. B. Bassett, Ezra C. Southworth, and F. J. Littlejohn.

For Saugatuck - S. D. Nichols, Wm. Carley, and Wm. G. Brittan.

It was further resolved, that the proceedings of this meeting be published in the papers of this city, and that the country papers generally be requested to publish them.

Rev. Van Raalte, in a most touching and impressive manner, expressed his gratitude for the sympathy and aid proffered to his countrymen, and his gratification at having advanced thus far in the preparatory steps for the settlement in a land where labor would meet with its reward, and civil and religious freedom be secure.

After an interesting and appropriate reply from Hon. John Ball, the meeting adjourned.

S. CONANT, Ch'n.

N. A. Balch. Sec'y.

*A. Van Schelton
H. Pennoyer
March*