

The Big Fight of the Railroads in Utah, Idaho and Nevada

THE year now drawing to a close bids fair to stand out in bold relief in the future history of Western railroads. Early spring saw record traffic; summer, the heaviest passenger travel to the Great Northwest on record, and fall the ushering in of an epoch of competitive construction following an era of competitive railroad buying.

While in a measure the Lewis & Clark expedition at Portland was the means of taxing the capacity of the passenger equipment of the transcontinental lines passing through Utah it is the opinion of the passenger agents that the ordinary run of passenger business has been greatly stimulated. The result is that those who came west and returned told of the wonders of the mountains, canyons, rivers, plains and ocean resorts so that more links in the endless chain of tourists and homeseekers were forged.

The freight output of the West is growing by leaps and bounds. With the closing of the Russo-Japanese war Oriental freight was added to that originating on the Pacific slope, the result being that the year 1905 was marked by the biggest car famine that ever struck the West. Heavy crops, live stock by the million head—that number of sheep being fed in the stock yards of the Oregon Short Line at Montpelier, Ida., this fall while in transit—the output of the farm, field, factory, mine, smelter, sugar plant and forest all clamored for transportation to the market. The railroads manfully did their best and are still halting consignments that should have been delivered a month ago. With more equipment and motive power only can this congestion be relieved.

In the meantime the eyes of lines terminating in Colorado and Wyoming have been attracted by the immense volume of freight that has been pouring out of Utah and the states north and west. Gould, also, believing that he did not get his equitable share of tonnage originating north and west of this state took active steps to remedy this.

The current year has witnessed the fulfillment of a vision that has long dazzled Utah—the turning of the preliminary sods of a new and competitive line to Pacific tidewater.

Following the retirement of Gould from the directorate of the Union Pacific and a like action on the part of E. H. Harriman and associates from the Denver & Rio Grande official roster, war was declared, contracts were let and at this time there is some 70 miles of grading on the Western Pacific completed from the point of the mountain on the lakeside some 10 miles from Salt Lake City.

This action on the part of Gould was like the pistol shot of the official starter of a relay race. Just as soon as it was officially announced that Harriman and Gould were at outs and each would hustle his own freight, with no quarter, other Richmonds took the field.

On the heels of the Western Pacific move came rumors that the Burlington was coming to Salt Lake; the Chicago & Northwestern was surveying an extension with Yellowstone and Idaho in view; the Moffat road would without fail arrive in the Utah capital within two years, and last, but not least, the Colorado & Southern proposed to spend part of its \$100,000,000 stock issue of a year ago in extending its line east and west so that one could ride from Salt Lake to the Gulf of Mexico over the right of way of the system the entire distance.

With the exception of the Colorado & Southern during the last sixty days there have been some very interesting developments.

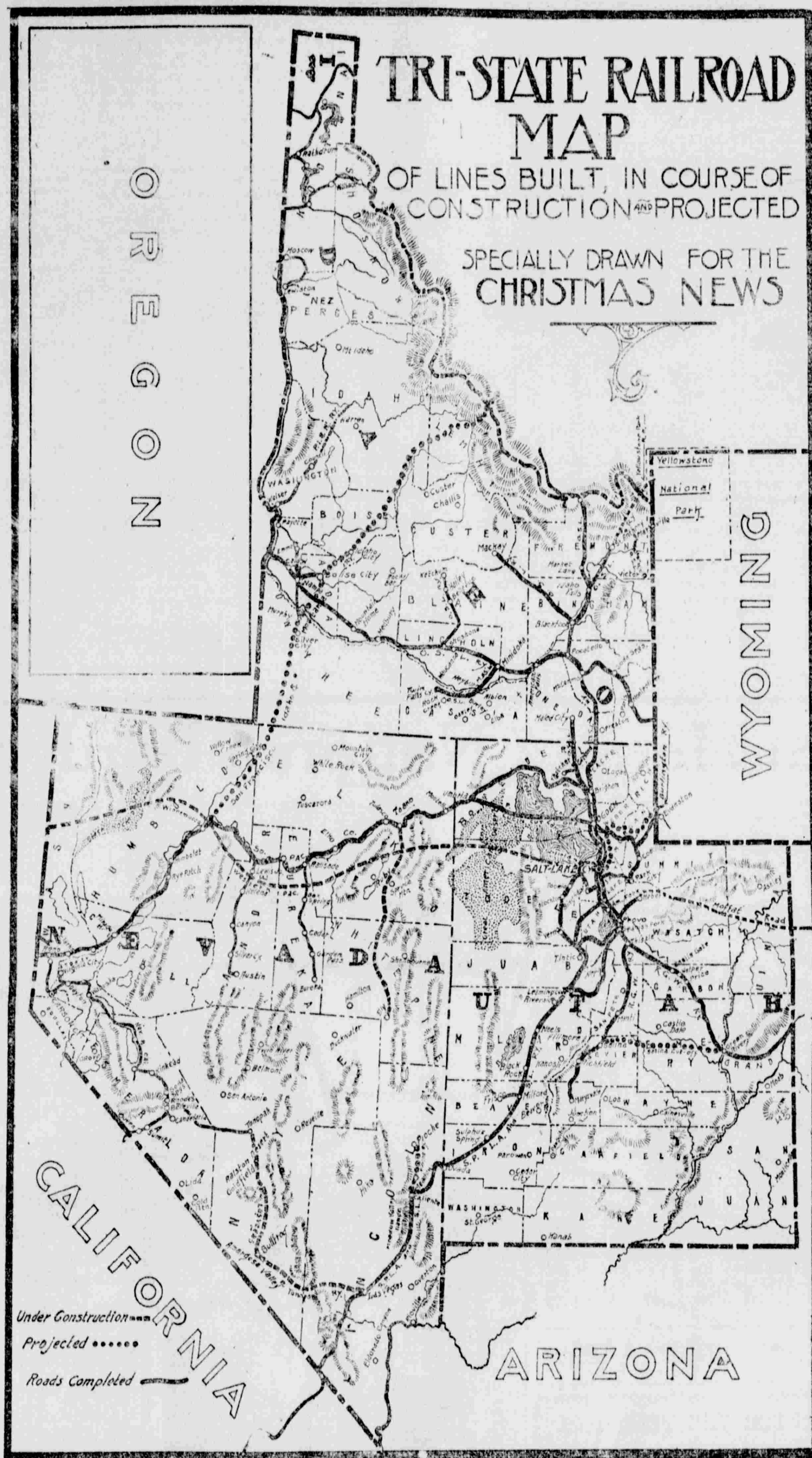
The Western Pacific has got down to work in earnest. The engineering forces have been thoroughly organized with high-priced talent at the head of each division. The contract for construction both from Salt Lake to the Nevada line and from Orville, Calif., to the eastern limits of the Golden State, has been awarded to the Utah Construction company involving an outlay of over \$11,000,000. The Utah Construction company, which is an Ogden corporation and the largest and most responsible of its kind in the West, in turn has sub-let a great deal of the work of grading to smaller contractors who in turn have let out small strips of excavating to syndicates comprised of men whose only capital is a team and scraper and sturdy arms. All along the route of the new road to the Golden Gate are strung engineering and grading camps and the forces have already caught their stride. Governor Sparks of Nevada and partner have been awarded a contract to provide \$1,000,000 in beef and mutton to build up the tissues of the army of toilers now changing the railroad map of Utah and Nevada.

The Western Pacific is off. Too much money has been spent already to draw back and in 1907 through trains will be running between Salt Lake and Oakland mole; Gould's dream of an ocean to ocean transcontinental railroad system will be an accomplished fact.

The Moffat Road, the Burlington and the Chicago & Northwestern are following in the footsteps of the Western Pacific in its preliminary stages. In the last two cases the profoundest ignorance of the purported plans is exhibited by those behind the respective projects. High officials deny that any contemplated extension is to be launched.

Of the three the Moffat road maintains that Salt Lake is its goal. David H. Moffat on Oct. 22 of this year announced that the road would reach Salt Lake six months earlier than was originally contemplated. The road is now completed as far as Hot Sulphur Springs, Colo., a distance of 110 miles from Denver and it is contemplated that trains will be running into Kremling early in the spring and by the first of the year it is anticipated that it will be within 350 miles of Salt Lake.

Of the Burlington plans G. W. Holdredge, general manager of lines west of the Missouri, announced during the third week of October that work would be started at once on the construction of 800 miles of road to extend its lines to Salt Lake City. The line will start from a point near Broken Bow, Neb., and run to Bridgeport,



MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED TRAINS A DAY.

A RAILROAD CENTER.

The regular passenger train service into and out of Salt Lake daily is:

Railroad	Trains
RIO GRANDE WESTERN	26
SALT LAKE ROUTE	20
OREGON SHORT LINE	12
SALT LAKE & OGDEN	12
SALT LAKE & LOS ANGELES	4
Total Trains	74

When the Western Pacific and Moffat roads are completed and in operation the total number of passenger trains coming into and departing from Salt Lake will be 100 or more daily.

UTAH.

Railroad	Miles.
Rio Grande Western	715.77
Salt Lake Route	189.04
Oregon Short Line	183.70
Utah Railway	41.00
San Pete Valley	54.00
Salt Lake & Ogden	10.00
Salt Lake & Los Angeles	14.00
Salt Lake & Mercur	12.00
Total	1,225.48

IDAHO.

Railroad	Miles.
Oregon Short Line	926.49
Pacific Idaho & Northern	60.03
Boise, Nampa & Owyhee	31.00
Idaho Northern	27.00
Total	1,044.52

NEVADA.

Railroad	Miles.
Oregon Short Line, main line	439.7
Nevada & California (O. S. L.)	295.0
Nevada Central	93.0
Elmer & Palisade	84.0
Tonopah Railroad	65.0
Virginia & Truckee	52.0
Nevada, California & Oregon	28.0
Salt Lake Route	215.8
Total	1,182.5

While these figures tell of the rails already laid, of the lines already in operation, they are silent as to the great and numerous road-building projects that are under way in Nevada at the present time.

Neb., where it will connect with the Guernsey, Wyo., line. From this point the distance to Salt Lake is about 550 miles. Work on the Broken Bow—Bridgeport line has started and surveyors are reported from time to time from different points in Wyoming as heading for Salt Lake.

This announcement was strenuously denied by James J. Hill, who is heavily interested in the C. B. & Q., but there seems to be no letup to the

operations of the surveying forces or the work of the grading outfits in Nebraska.

Aside from the Western Pacific in the State of Utah there has been but little active railroad construction. There has been, however, a great deal of clearing the decks for action. In Salt Lake both the Oregon Short Line and the Rio Grande Western have been acquiring valuable

realty holdings for terminals. In Ogden, too, there has been the same condition in evidence.

On Fourth West the Oregon Short Line for the past two months has been tearing down residences and clearing the ground for tracks, yard improvements, the big viaduct and the proposed union depot for the Short Line and the Salt Lake Route—improvements when completed which will cost in the neighborhood of \$1,000,000.

In Idaho there has been considerable railroad activity on the tapis during the current year. The Minidoka branch was completed early in the season throwing open to settlement one of the richest agricultural sections in the West. The line to Malad will also have been completed by the time this appears in print, while at the present time contractors are making the dirt fly on the Yellowstone Park Railroad. This line which is essentially a Harriman corporation will run north from St. Anthony to the borders of the National Park. At the same time there will be a branch line constructed to traverse the famous Teton Basin and tap the rich coal deposits in the district. This work is to be cleaned up and turned over to the operating department in time for the summer tourist season.

Over on the west side of the State of Idaho there has been also some work undertaken especially on the Pacific & Idaho Northern. This line which leaves the Oregon Short Line main line at Weiser is now being extended north from Council. Just who owns control of this small road is not forthcoming at this time. There always has been a sentiment that will not down, however, that the "Fin" road is a Hill proposition and it will ultimately be extended to tap the Northern Pacific which passes through the extreme northern section of Idaho. At present it is regarded as Hill's trump card in the Riparian controversy.

Several parties of surveyors are reported at this time to be operating in Western Idaho. One proposition on which they are working is said to be on a north and south line, the other a survey by Harriman forces for a line to traverse the central portion of Oregon. However as it is the policy of all railroads to keep corps of surveyors collecting data in the field too much stress must not be laid upon the movements of engineering parties.

Still another proposition is one to build from Butte, Mont., to Winnemucca, Nev., via Boise, Ida. This project is known as the San Francisco, Idaho & Montana Railway company. A month ago William Peyton Mason, president of the new and mysterious corporation, announced that the first 210 miles of the road had been financed in New York. The construction work, he affirms, is to begin at once, and the road is to be finished by Jan. 1, 1907. It is estimated to cost \$2,500,000. The first section of the road to be built will extend from the Snake river valley, in Idaho, southwest to Winnemucca, Nev., where a connection will be made with the Southern Pacific, thus bringing the Snake valley 600 miles nearer San Francisco. The route is laid through the district in which about \$15,000,000 is being spent by the government and private corporations in irrigation work.

But when it comes to actual competitive railroad building one must look to the State of Nevada for an object lesson. During the past two years Nevada has awakened from its lethargy and the old halcyon days when Virginia City and Comstock were at their zenith have been revived. All eyes are turning to Nevada.

The development of Tonopah and Goldfield in the western part of the state and the revival of mining around Delamar and Pioche following the advent of the Salt Lake Route in the southeastern section of Nevada have boosted freight earnings away up.

During the current year no less than eight railroad propositions have been financed. Some of these have been completed and are earning big dividends, others are being built and the balance have not gone beyond the pioneer survey stage.

The Southern Pacific, which so long as there was no opposition lay dormant and content to handle trans-continental business and let Nevada haul her freight to the cars, has awakened with energy to head off any invasion of her right of eminent domain.

Just as soon as it was apparent that Gould meant business and was not bluffing with his threat of building the Western Pacific Harriman started going after the freight and to make this easier inaugurated a campaign of construction.

One of his first acts was to build the Hazen cut-off. Then followed the incorporation of the Nevada Northern and at the present time the Utah Construction company has an army of hundreds of men at work pushing this line to its completion. The road leaves the Southern Pacific main line at Toano, Nev., 139 miles west of Ogden. At the present time of writing about 80 miles of grading has been thrown up and the forces are still heading south. To the onlooker it would appear that this line is reaching out after the immense tonnage that has been clamoring for transportation from the mines and prospects of the Deep Creek region to the smelters of Salt Lake Valley. This line undoubtedly is being built to spike any efforts on the part of the Western Pacific to penetrate this rich virgin district.

Of the other propositions under way there is the Virginia & Truckee extension which was made in the interest of self preservation and the Tonopah extension to Goldfield.

With Goldfield as its objective point the Salt Lake Route also took a hand in building feeders this year. Originally "Borax" Smith undertook to build this projected line from Las Vegas, Nev., on the main line of the San Pedro road past his soda deposits on to the new eldorado. He went to the extent of grading some 13 miles of right of way out of Las Vegas but abandoned his scheme with the announcement that the Clark road declined to give him any rates on steel, ties and supplies. Accordingly he has entered into an agreement with the Santa Fe and is now actively engaged on the preliminaries of a line from the south which will skirt the famous Death Valley and go on to Bullfrog or Goldfield.

The abandoned grade was then taken over by the Salt Lake Route and a new company incorporated under the name of the Las Vegas & Tonopah with J. Ross Clark and other San Pedro officials as stockholders. According to official announcements made a few days ago the surveyors are now at work cross-sectioning this proposed line and active work on grading will be pushed during the coming winter.

In addition to this line the Salt Lake Route has another feeder under contemplation for southeastern Nevada in the form of the branch road to Pioche. When this line will be built is not yet announced but Pioche, the famous shipper, is picking up and all indications are that it will be a factor in the tonnage of the short route to Southern California.