

GENERAL MERCHANDISE

THE MAIN LINE FROM THE MOUTH OF THE RIVER TO PORTLAND (OREGON) AND BURNED STOVES.

It is a well known fact that the Snake River is a wide and often cañoning through immense gorges and over high, perpendicular falls. The Snake River is a wide and often cañoning through immense gorges and over high, perpendicular falls. The Snake River is a wide and often cañoning through immense gorges and over high, perpendicular falls.

The line would follow the line of Snake river, or over Snake river plains to Burnt river. This plain is so wide and the country so uniform, that nothing but an instrumental survey could determine the exact location of the line; but no great difficulty would have to be overcome on any of the numerous lines down Snake river that have been discussed by the citizens of Idaho and Oregon. From the mouth of Burnt river to the Columbia, crossing over the Blue mountains, is the difficult portion of the route. The Blue mountains are high in altitude, rugged, and the distance to overcome them is short, but the pass at the head of the Grand Ronde is said to be the lowest in the range. The route indicated now as most practicable is up Burnt river, crossing to Powder, following its tributaries to a low pass leading into the waters of John Day's river, and follow the valley of the Columbia, or crossing from Powder river valley to the Grand Ronde, and up it or its tributaries to the pass, and then down the tributaries of the Umatilla or Walla-Walla to the Columbia. Nothing but a thorough and careful instrumental examination of this country could determine the proper line. However, I am satisfied, from the profile and formation of the country, that a line can be obtained over this range of mountains with grades not to exceed 80 feet per mile, and with work that will not be difficult or very expensive. After reaching the Columbia, that valley would be followed to Portland. On striking the Columbia at Umatilla, or at the mouth of the Umatilla or the Walla-Walla, the navigable waters of the Pacific are virtually reached, and the road down the Columbia could be pushed just as fast as desired, as it could be used and worked upon at as many points as its early completion required. Charters for roads up this valley already exist, and short railroads around the Dalles and Cascades have already been built. The local business of Oregon and Idaho would support the road to-day. No such difficulties in obtaining material, labor, or transportation would have to be encountered on this line as we have had to overcome in building the Union Pacific Railroad.

From Portland, or Fort Vancouver, to Puget's Sound, the work and grades are light and the alignment good, with no mountain ranges to overcome. A line would follow the general direction of Cowlitz valley, and make its terminus on Puget's Sound, at Olympia, or push farther north to Steilacoom. There is no difficulty which cannot be overcome on this portion of the route. The road could be built at any time, or at such time as the branch was building, as all material for constructing this part of the road except iron for superstructure and equipment, which could be taken around by sea, is to be found in abundance along the coast.

LINE TO MONTANA. The line to Montana would leave the Oregon line in Snake river valley or Soda Springs, following up Snake river valley, passing the main Rocky Mountain range at the head of the streams leading to the waters of Jefferson Fork of the Missouri. Two hundred miles would bring us right into the heart of this Territory, and the line, after crossing the main range of the Rocky Mountains, would take the direction that the interests of the Territory demanded. It would develop the valley of the Jefferson and Madison, and accommodate all portions of the mining regions of that Territory.

In road, grades and alignment, the route is feasible, and could be run at all seasons of the year. Snow on this route never has obstructed travel, and the passes over the Rocky Mountains, in this latitude, do not reach an elevation of 6,500 feet above the level of the sea, while the general elevation of Snake river valley is from 4,500 to 6,000 feet above the sea, giving but little elevation to overcome, with good valleys and plenty of distance to overcome it in. The fact being determined beyond a doubt, that there is not only a feasible but a remarkably favorable route from the U. P. R. R. to Idaho, Montana, and Portland, the questions arise: What are its advantages over all others? What are the inducements to build it? And in what time can it be built?

Rocky Mountains on the east and north, by the Cascades on the west, and by the rim of the Great Basin on the south, which are the main mountain ranges, timber and all the precious metals of the world. I am inclined to believe that eastern Oregon, as soon as this road is built, will exceed in its products, its means and inducements that this road will give, and hold out to settlers the advantages of the country I have described, as no one can now estimate the possibilities of this territory. Now uninhabited, vast inland territory will develop. I am told that to-day the little valley of the Walla-Walla produces for shipment by the Oregon Steam Transportation Company's boats more produce and grain than they are able to transport. It gives Oregon and Washington Territory an all-rail communication with the Atlantic. It reaches the Pacific without having to overcome any grade to exceed 80 feet, and avoids the Wasatch and Sierra Nevada ranges, with their troublesome snows and inhospitable winters.

4th. It accommodates Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon with a railroad several years sooner than can be obtained by any other line from the east. In connection with the navigation of the Snake and Columbia rivers as temporary aids or auxiliaries, it gives that people a communication with the U. P. R. R. by the building of only 285 miles of railroad, whereas, by coming from the east, they must build from 1,700 to 2,000 miles, through an uninhabited, inhospitable, mountainous, broken country, portions of which are held today by hostile Indians, portions of it impassable in winter, in consequence of deep snows, and no portion of it having the great advantage the U. P. R. R. had while building, of being near the great line of overland travel indicated by God in the formation of the country, adopted by the instinct of the buffalo, followed closely by the savage, who now has been forced away from it by the advance of civilization. This branch has one great commercial and local advantage—it not only accommodates Montana, Oregon and Washington, but the whole northwest coast is benefited, and no one portion at the expense of the other. It holds the trade, commerce, and traffic of that country in its natural channel, and as it is built, mile by mile, every foot can be used in connection with the existing lines of water communication now established there.

Finally, with the proper financial support, I undertake to say, that our company can build a road from our line to the navigable waters of the Columbia in eighteen months from the 1st of January, 1890; or if necessary, we would commence building, with the proper financial aid, from the Columbia east, and finish the work in two years from January 1, 1898.

It seems to me, with a route that nature has intended for a railroad to the Pacific, near our northern boundary, that the people of all that vast territory should abandon all other projects and concentrate all their energies upon obtaining an outlet east, through a country, a great portion of the way susceptible of cultivation, and nearly all the way abounding in precious minerals, with an entire length to the Missouri river not to exceed 1,670 miles, with only an all-rail build to build of 785 miles, and only 285 miles, using the navigable waters of the Columbia and Snake rivers, rather than to build the great distance and encounter the great obstacles they would have to overcome on a route due east. The time may come when the country will demand the building of the Northern Pacific; but to-day all it assumes to accomplish for the country west of the Rocky Mountains, all the advantages to be derived from building it, can be obtained from building the Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington branches to the Union Pacific.

It is not fiction, the great vision of Columbus; it is a fact, that we will soon have the means of directing a large portion of the trade of Asia across the continent of America. We will leave the Pacific Ocean at Puget Sound or Portland and San Francisco, and reach the great inland channel of trade and travel across the continent, the Union Pacific Railroad, and be only five days from the principal ports of the Atlantic. The great saving of time and insurance, with quick returns upon capital invested, will overcome the extra cost of freight, and, as a passenger route, no one doubts its general advantages—it virtually annihilates time.

I am, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
G. M. DONOR,
Chief Engineer.

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