

UTAH NORTHERN RAILROAD.

Address of Moses Thatcher at the Railroad Meeting at Boise City, Idaho.

The members of the Legislature and a large number of citizens assembled on Friday evening last (Dec. 11), to hear Hon. Moses Thatcher, President of the Utah Northern Railroad, on Railroads. Major R. E. Foote was called to the chair, and introduced Mr. Thatcher, who is an excellent reader. He delivered an address, which we give below, which will be read by all the people of Idaho with the most profound interest, as it is an able document:

GENTLEMEN—Believing that the people of Idaho, like the inhabitants of her sister Territories, are interested in any and all enterprises which will directly and speedily develop, for the general good of the masses, the resources of our interior country, I have apprehensions as to the good results which will follow a fair and continued advocacy of early railroad communication for your Territory, with the rest of the civilized world—East and West, North and South. I am led to this conclusion by the spirit and meaning of the following act, which was passed by your last Legislature, and which, I have no doubt, echoes the voice of the people:

AN ACT

To exempt Railroads, built within the limits of Idaho Territory, from Taxation, for seven years.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Territory of Idaho as follows:

SEC. 1. That so much of any railroad as shall be constructed within the limits of Idaho Territory, including rolling stock and depots belonging to the same, is hereby exempted from all Territorial, county and municipal taxation, until the first day of January, A. D. 1880; *Provided*, the company owning and constructing such railroads shall claim such exemption within one year from the date of the approval of this act, by filing their claim in the office of the Secretary of the Territory; and *provided* further, that such claim shall be accompanied by the written agreement of said company, stating, that in consideration of such exemption from taxation until the first day of January, A. D. 1880, said company will charge no higher rate or tariff for freight and passengers in the ratio of the distance carried to and from any point in Idaho Territory, over the whole or any portion of their line, than shall be at the time charged for freight and passengers of the same class, for the same distance on the Central and Pacific Railroads; said agreement to be in force during the period of said exemption.

SEC. 2. This act to take effect, and be in force from and after its approval by the Governor.

APPROVED January 9, 1873.

The above was appreciated and thankfully accepted by the railroad company which I have the honor of representing as General Superintendent, and under the direction of our board of directors, the Utah Northern Railroad Company claim the greater honor of having constructed the first and only part of a railroad yet in your Territory, our road at present extending about one and a half miles over the Utah line into Idaho.

If properly encouraged by parties interested, we shall add some eighty miles during the summer of 1875, reaching Snake River, at or near Fort Hall, a distance, I should judge, of not more than 175 miles from this city.

It can, then, no longer be said that the prosperous Territory of Idaho, with her thriving, industrious and intelligent population of nearly 30,000, are any longer without a railroad.

It is true Fort Hall is not the point at which a terminus for you should be made; such a terminus would greatly aid you, but would neither answer your interest nor satisfy your demands. But, gentlemen, either Fort Hall or Boise City are excellent points at which to form the junction of two roads. The Utah Northern Railroad will, without doubt, in the early future, be extended, by a combination of interests of the inhabitants of Utah with those of Montana, aided by

eastern capital, into and through the heart of the latter Territory; tapping, in its course, the richest mineral region of the United States. For, Montana without question can produce, in abundance, ores superior in quality to any yet discovered, aside, perhaps, from the few great mines of Nevada and Utah. And I have been told by men whose judgment on such points I cannot question, that Montana only needs a railroad to demonstrate that her mines are superior in number and in quality to those of either Nevada or Utah.

This position certainly seems strongly fortified by the evidence already produced in her not unsuccessful effort to transport the ores of her mines, from 350 to 400 miles with mule and ox teams, which has been done to a considerable extent during the present year.

But the mines of Montana are not her only source of wealth. She, like Idaho, possesses fine agricultural and grazing facilities, the latter eminently adapted, as with you, to the raising of the finest stock in the world, and producing in abundance, wool—even rivaling in this particular our neighboring golden State, California.

But all these sources of wealth are to-day comparatively undeveloped, and can only be utilized through the agency of railroads, and consequently cheap and speedy transportation. Our interior streams are not navigable, and if they were, they run in the wrong directions. Aerial navigation to date has proven, at least so far as utility is concerned, a failure. Thus the hopes of the hardy pioneers for future prosperity, wealth, and ease rest alone upon the feasibility of early railroad communication with the outside world, and, like the barometer, those hopes must rise or fall as science and capital, backed with the grit and muscle of the people, demonstrate the wisdom or non-wisdom of constructing railroads for the interior.

Compare the Utah of to-day with the great transcontinental railroads passing through the heart of her Territory, and her two medium and six narrow gauge feeders thereto, with the Utah of the past, without railroads, and we shall learn which picture presents the most pleasing aspect.

I have seen both, and I think I am safe in saying that our inhabitants, financially or otherwise, are not desirous to return to the "old way." When a pound of iron, lead, or even eastern wood could never be sold there for less than twenty-five cents, because the cost of transportation was equal thereto, to say nothing of the immense profits we had to pay—because of the delay, the incidental expenses of the purchaser, interest on money, and profit charged because of the probable loss which may have been sustained from Indian depredations, who may have been friendly enough in the main, it is true, but then, there was danger—a remote possibility of a train being plundered by them, and of course the consumer must pay profit due on risk account.

Whilst I am no advocate of railroad or other monopolies, believing it right to "live and let live," yet I often smile when I hear our Utah business men complain of excessive tariffs, which may be in some instances more than they should be—but facts as demonstrated are stubborn things, and stand in favor of the present mode of transportation in Utah as against the "old way" as three stands to twenty-five. It is true this may, only indirectly, aid the merchant or speculator, but it directly lightens the burden of the consumer. The change therefore is a good one, and whilst I deprecate the petty envy of the smaller minds towards those who have, by their brilliant intellect, grasped herculean enterprises and forced wealth from heretofore undeveloped sources, and made the wilderness to hum with the busy sounds of industry and enterprises, yet, am I on the other hand the avowed enemy of all monopolies, large, or small, which have as their mission alone, the massing of fortunes wrung from the hard earnings of the people, and wherever I can induce the latter, by any influence for good which I may possess, to co-operate with their means and with their labor to hedge off the attempts of the unscrupulous and designing to enslave them financially, I use it freely. On the other hand I as freely condemn the words and action of the poor man

when prompted by jealous hatred toward his more wealthy neighbor, whose every act has benefited the majority and built up and improved the country in which he lives.

Gentlemen, excuse this thoughtless digression and I return to the subject of Utah without railroads—Did she then export in value from one to five million dollars annually in bullion and ores? I think not; did she export a single dollar's worth of silver, lead, or iron ore? Not that I am aware of. Did she export hides, wool, grain, or other products? No. Had she comparatively any claim to wealth previous to the advent and use of railroads? Very little indeed. It is true, valuable minerals were there, then as now, but they were useless, and would to-day without railroads be comparatively valueless.

During seventy days of last year Utah shipped to the market of San Francisco alone 10,000,000 pounds of wheat, a small beginning of course, but just see what a nice little mule train of 2,500 wagons of two tons each it would have required to move it. The Utah Central Railroad, thirty-seven miles in length, carries now on an average more weight each month in the year than formerly came into and was sent out of the entire Territory in any one whole year previously. This road carried during the year 1873, 288,920, 184 pounds of freight as follows:—Crude bullion 10,507,137; Lead 5,791,457; Iron ore 12,890,670; Hay 248,441; Coke 14,498,670; Ice 1,554,900; Sundries 3,407,599; General Merchandise 3,645,742; Silver, Lead and Copper ore 24,768,535; Wool and Hides 1,049,603; Produce 2,497,062; Live Stock 172,500 pounds.

The Central is the pioneer road of the Territory, and as in many other cases the wise heads of Salt Lake City and elsewhere declared it would not for years secure traffic sufficient to produce income enough to pay its bonded interest. The same individuals would now be very pleased to hold a few shares of Stock in it as the day for assessments has passed and such dividends have been declared and paid thereon as make it rank among the most desirable Railroad stock in the United States.

The Utah Northern Railroad, 3 feet gauge, from Ogden to Franklin, 80 miles, with Corinne branch 4 miles, is the longest home road we have at present, and is the pioneer narrow gauge of the Territory, and bids fair to become one of the best paying roads in the country, as it is bonded very lightly, being within a fraction of only a third of that of the Central. This is pre-eminently a people's road, the stock being held principally by the people of Northern Utah, and those of Southern Idaho. They control the road and thus far have done so wisely. I suppose there is not a road in the United States of equal length the stock of which is distributed so extensively among the working men along its line. Such being the case they have no fears of a close corporation or excessive tariffs, for they have the power to adjust such things. They have built and successfully run 84 miles of railroad and can build more. The iron and rolling stock have been furnished by Mr. Richardson, an eastern capitalist, the rest has been accomplished, and well accomplished too, by the best wealth the world possesses—union of interest and concert of action, backed by the bone and muscle of the independent farmer, the hardy lumberman, and the intelligent miner.

Gentlemen, co-operative labor, if it cannot accomplish all things, can at least accomplish much that is good, and under its system there is no good reason why the laboring man side by side with the wealthy, may not build railroads and own them, nor is there any reason why capital should not join hand in hand with labor to the mutual interests of each. The building of the Utah Northern, yet to become the great North and South road of the interior, is at least a happy illustration of the plan, successfully demonstrated beyond the question of a doubt.

The Eastern capital invested is well secured, and the investor I believe well satisfied, while the people who have constructed the road are financially in a better condition than they would have been without it. The reasons are obvious—1st, Railroad communication with the East and West, and with the South to some extent, has opened up a market for their surplus produce, which without a railroad would have been to them comparatively valueless. 2nd, The resour-

ces of Northern Utah and Southern Idaho have been materially developed through its agency. 3rd, It has made transportation easy and cheap; and, 4th, It has greatly increased the value of real estate, and has relieved the people from their former isolation, and infused correspondingly life and activity into all kinds of business; and finally, it has changed the whole face of affairs, by making all more active and enterprising. It has quickened the pace of the farmer and brightened the ideas of the laborer, either of whom can now tell you, in three minutes (instead of three days) what he will take for a ton of wheat or a load of lumber. The plodding ways of the past are melting before the click of the telegraph and the hiss of steam, like the soft snow before the rays of the sun, and the shriek of the locomotive on our mountain tops, in our canyon passes, and echoing through our beautiful valleys, proclaims, in the language of the nineteenth century to our hardy and brave pioneers, that isolation on the backbone of the continent is a thing of the past.

The genius of America, ever onward and upward, plans and executes, in a single day, what older nations required a quarter of a century to meditate upon. The air we breathe prompts to activity and the grappling with stupendous enterprises. European nations think we are fast and so we are, and by being so with a population of 40 millions, we possess more newspapers, more miles of railroad and telegraph lines than they all put together.

They say we make financial failures with our wildcat schemes, railroad building, telegraph lines and newspapers humbugs—so we do sometimes—Chicago burned but little more than three years since, yet on its ruins has arisen, magic like, one of the finest cities of the world. The late war hanging like a pall over our nation during four years and yet scarcely had the sighs of the dying been hushed in the grave when the recuperative power of a young nation was demonstrated by piercing the heart of the continent from ocean to ocean, and joining in a friendly grasp of iron bands the Atlantic with the Pacific.

The financial panic of last year swept from East to West, and from North to South like a huge tidal wave, and with it, we were shaken like a reed in the wind; we bowed, and bent, yet are erect again.

Possessed of less courage our revolutionary fathers would never have secured and bequeathed to us the greatest of human gifts—liberty—and we, in developing the immense wealth of our land, and floating under the protection of our country's flag, our commerce upon every sea, with push and enterprise unparalleled, do but show our lineage. Our railroads, our telegraph lines, our halls of justice, our colleges, and other institutions of learning all demonstrate the bent of the American people; progress and improvement in their daily strides leave their footprints on the face of our fair land.

Idaho, Montana, and Utah should seek their share. The latter being the earliest settled Territory is in some respects better developed owing principally to the advantage since 1869 which she has had in railroad communication. As an illustration, her assessable property in 1869, the accumulation of twenty-two years hard labor without railroads, was about ten million dollars. In 1872, three years later, with railroads, her assessable property amounted to over twenty-one million dollars.

Gentlemen, this showing needs no comment, and I am bound to say judging from what I have seen, that your Territory would, under equally favorable circumstances, make similar progress in developing and utilizing the wealth with which you are so abundantly surrounded. You have, I understand, excellent mines capable of producing great quantities of paying ores if you only had the means of cheap and speedy transportation. I have been informed also that you have immense forests of the finest kind of timber, which, together with your unsurpassed agricultural facilities, if properly utilized, would prove sources of wealth to the people here, beyond the conception of the most sanguine.

How can these resources be brought into use is the serious question, no doubt, of every man interested, financially or otherwise, in this Territory? I can claim but little interest here financially that

I know of, but I am interested, and warmly too, in the prosperity of our common country, particularly of the interior portions, for herein I have been a pioneer from my boyhood up, and I, like the native, love our grand old mountains and beautiful valleys, but nature as we find it here is not less attractive when diversified by the useful works of man. Gentlemen, the great need of this Territory, with perhaps Boise City as its central point, is railroad communication. You are fully able to accomplish it, directly and independently, or by combining your interests with others.

I do not know the exact distance from here to Fort Hall, but according to correct measurements made on the most reliable maps I have been able to secure, I should estimate the distance to be about 170 miles over a smooth, unbroken country, almost equal, for easy and cheap railroad construction, to the Platte valley, upon which the U.P. Co. built a road comparatively without grade.

Petition your Legislature this winter to pass a good railroad incorporating act, and as early thereafter as possible incorporate with a capital stock of say \$2,550,000 or \$15,000 per mile; issue first mortgage 7 per cent. interest bearing bonds of \$1,000 each, say twelve to the mile.

Five thousand dollars cash per mile, will, I am satisfied grade, cross tie, construct and put in running order, a three feet gauge road. Therefore, \$850,000 cash, or labor and material at cash prices, will finish in good order 170 miles of road, and, if your capital stock be, on that distance, \$2,550,000, or \$15,000 per mile, it will cost the holders 33 1/3 per cent. Your bonds with the interest coupons, properly guaranteed until the road be finished, would without doubt induce capitalists to furnish the necessary iron and rolling stock. In addition to this, if not prohibited by law, you should secure, in order to have the task as easy as possible, Territorial, county and municipal aid, or if you deem it inexpedient, to incorporate an independent company another, and perhaps the better way would be to join your interests with those of the people of Oregon, taking as your basis the early construction of the Portland, Dalles and Salt Lake Railroad.

The adoption of this plan by your people would, in my opinion, secure you the more speedy means of railroad communication, and would while accomplishing all you desire, draw less heavily on the resources of your Territory. Should this plan receive your approval, I would suggest that you promptly petition your honorable Legislature, now in session, to pass such a bill in aid of the enterprise as will fairly represent the feelings of the people regarding the matter.

You might ask them to grant a direct subsidy of \$3,000 per mile on that portion of the line to pass through your Territory. But in the present financial condition of the people here, I should consider a petition of this nature extreme folly; it would ask for what the Territory is obviously and wholly unable to perform, and if granted would do more harm than good. You can, however, guarantee, by an enactment of your legislature, the payment of five per cent. interest per annum on \$2,000 per mile of railroad to pass through the heart of your Territory, say a distance of 300 miles, this would aggregate \$600,000, the interest upon which at five per cent. per annum would amount to \$30,000. Now I have shown you that Utah with railroads in three years increased the value of her taxable property \$11,000,000. Suppose your Territory, with railroad communication successfully established, should produce one-half that increase, or a gain of \$5,500,000 in three years. Certainly this is drawing the comparison very mildly, and it does not, in my opinion, do justice to the resources of Idaho.

But what does it show? Simply an increase of material wealth of \$5,500,000, upon which you could assess, if you chose, a tax of two per cent., producing a revenue for the Territory of \$110,000. Now, gentlemen, pause here, and after the expiration of three years, draw a balance sheet and ascertain whether the transaction has produced loss or gain. The following would be the result, viz.:

Idaho Territory by her financial agents, the legislature acting for her, to 5 per cent. interest per an-