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REVIEW OF EVENTS OF THE WEEK

RAILROAD RIVALRY IN THE WEST

RAILROAD construction in the Eastern part of the United States is confined chiefly to increasing the facilities and the capacity of roads already in operation. This is done by laying third, fourth, fifth and even sixth track and by enlarging and improving terminals and classification yards. The work of this character which the New York Central and Hudson River and the Pennsylvania Railroad have been pressing for several years has called for the expenditure of enough money to extend the St. Paul system or the Chicago and North Western through to the Pacific coast. Aside from the construction work on the Deepwater-Tidewater Railroad and on the Wabash lines there has been very little new railroad building in the East. The big operations which are either planned or in process of execution in the West attract all the more interest because of the lack of railroad building on such a huge scale in other sections of the country.

THREE SYSTEMS BUILDING

Three important systems are building. The more northerly one is the extension of the Hill lines. This is known as the Portland and Seattle Railway, a line 220 miles long extending from Kennewick, in the State of Washington, to Portland, Oregon. The road is being constructed on the north bank of the Columbia River which affords a low grade, the maximum eastbound grade being two-tenths of one per cent. Over 4,000 men are working on this line and the expectation is that track-laying will begin early next year. With the Oregon Railroad and Navigation line on the opposite bank of the Columbia for the greater portion of the way the Hill lines will come into stronger competition than ever with the Harriman lines. This competition will be further heightened by a new line which is building from a point near Kennewick to Trent, which is east of Spokane. This new road will give the Hill lines a shorter route than the one now afforded by the Northern Pacific between Spokane and Pasco, which is opposite Kennewick on the Columbia River. To make the rivalry between these two big systems still keener Mr. Harriman will extend the Southern Pacific system northward from Portland to Seattle. It has been reported that Mr. Hill will seek a route which will put his roads in contact with the Golden Gate, but this work may be far in the future. We are writing of plans which are actually being executed.

Farther southward than the Great Northern is the projected extension of the St. Paul to the Pacific coast. The St. Paul road now terminates in the northern part of

South Dakota at a point not far from the Missouri River. The new road will leave the present system at Glenham, South Dakota, and proceed in a northwest direction to the river Musselshell, in Montana, which it will follow westward. On its way to Butte the new line will cross the Northern Pacific and for some distance in Montana the two rival lines will only be from forty to sixty miles apart. Work was begun seven months ago and it is expected the line will be completed as far as Butte during the first half of 1908. The distance from Glenham, S. D., to Butte, Montana, is over 700 miles. Over the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers there will be several long bridges and there will be three tunnels. The route west of Butte has not yet been announced. At Butte the St. Paul extension will come into competition with the Oregon Railroad and Navigation, one of the Harriman lines.

Two years more will probably see the completion of George Gould's Western Pacific Railroad, which he is building from Oakland to Salt Lake City, a distance of 925 miles. Final surveys have been made for the whole road and contracts have been let for more than half of it. The construction of this line is an expensive undertaking. Engineers have planned two long tunnels and the combined length of all the tunnels will be nearly ten miles. One tunnel will be 7,300 feet long and a second 6,000 feet. Work on each of these is progressing. To protect the Union Pacific, or rather the Central Pacific, as it crosses the mountains forty miles of snow sheds have been built. By the construction of the tunnels it is expected that the use of the snow sheds may be avoided for the new line.

SHARP COMPETITION BREWING

Thus in a few years the great Union Pacific-Southern Pacific system will encounter direct competition from three rival systems which it does not have to meet at present. There will be rivalry in the Northwest between the Hill lines, the St. Paul and the Harriman lines, and there will be a struggle between the Gould road and the Harriman lines for business in and out of San Francisco. All this is definitely determined.

But Mr. Harriman is not standing still by any means. He will construct a coast line down the Pacific from Portland to San Francisco and he will build feeders for his lines in northern California and Oregon, in addition to pushing his system northward to Seattle. Besides having the territory in the West well covered he has planned to extend his system eastward to the Atlantic so that he may be able to offer better facilities for the trans-continental traffic than any rival can arrange. It is to

round out this ocean to ocean system that Mr. Harriman wants the Baltimore and Ohio and the Illinois Central, both of which he needs to form a transcontinental system and anticipate a similar movement by Mr. Gould.

In a broader sense it is a race between the United States and Canada as to which will be able to have first in operation an ocean to ocean railroad. No Government aid is being extended to the builders in the United States, but across the border the Dominion is aiding the Grand Trunk to complete a line of railroad from Moncton, New Brunswick, to Port Simpson on the Pacific coast. The Intercolonial Railway will be used to connect the line with Halifax and St. John. The eastern division from Moncton to Winnipeg, a distance of 1,800 miles, is being constructed at Government expense and will be leased to the Grand Trunk Railway for fifty years. Branches will be built by the Grand Trunk which will receive a subsidy of \$2,000 per mile and 6,000 acres of land per mile of road.

The western division which will be constructed and owned entirely by the Grand Trunk will also be about 1,800 miles long extending across the Canadian prairies through Edmonton and over the Rocky Mountains to Prince Rupert with a branch running down to Vancouver. It is expected that the line from Lake Superior to Edmonton will be completed before the end of another year, but the work on the mountain division will take more time.

TOWNS CREATED OR DEMOLISHED

With the power to make towns spring up like magic or disappear from the face of the earth the modern railroad possesses faculties akin to witchcraft. Two examples of this peculiar influence have recently been brought to notice. By the purchase of the town of Shire Oaks on the upper Monongahela River in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Railroad becomes the owner of the Banner mines of the Pittsburgh Coal Company, the First M. E. Church, the Shire Oaks brewery, a hotel, a company store and fifty houses. All will be torn down to be replaced by a monster yard for the coal trade. The community will move to Elben, several miles below. The improvements at Shire Oaks will cost several million dollars.

In the same State, near Harrisburg, and through the work of the Pennsylvania Railroad a new town is coming into existence. It is called Enola, and it is laid out on a tract of 100 acres. In the classification yards, which give rise to the new town, there are 100 miles of tracks which will be used to re-make freight trains.

Although but a few months ago the site of the town was vacant ground, it is fast being covered with well-designed and well-constructed houses, has a public school, an electric lighting plant, a complete sewer system, an incorporated fire department and boasts fully 1,000 inhabitants. The first building erected was a hotel for the accommodation of railroad men, but this has been turned over to the Pennsylvania Railroad Department of the Young Men's Christian Association; which conducts it as a railroad men's hotel, under religious influences. To encourage the residents of Enola to own their own homes, the company offers them for sale upon deferred payments upon two distinctly easy plans, similar, but in some respects superior, to the terms available in building and loan associations.

PRIZES FOR TRACK SUPERVISORS

The Pennsylvania Railroad has awarded premiums aggregating \$4,600 for the best pieces of track and road-bed between Jersey City and Pittsburg and between Philadelphia and Washington. The first premium of \$1,200 was divided between Supervisor C. M. Wisman and his assistant, L. J. Fairbank on division C, of the New York division.

Fifteen hundred homeseekers arrived at Denison, Texas, in one day last week.

VERMONT COMMISSION SUGGESTS ITS ABOLITION

Radical changes in the laws under which the Railroad Commission of Vermont operates are suggested in the biennial report of that body, which has been submitted to Governor Proctor. After referring to criticisms that have been made that the Railroad Commission is an expensive and useless adjunct of the State Government, the report says:

"If the legislative authority yields supinely to the unfortunate influence of railroad representatives outside the green baize doors of the legislative halls and permits this influence to dictate how impotent a railroad commission shall be, then the fault is with those who constitute the law-making body. The inevitable consequence is that the people must suffer the outrageous inconveniences of railroad travel, lack of proper connections between trains of different systems, inadequate facilities at railroad stations, delays in the adjustment of differences, dangers at highway grade crossings, insecure and improper management of electric railways, lack of farm crossings, and many other failures to reasonably promote the safety, security and convenience of the public. A sure result of this indifference of the law-making power to remedy these defects in the railroad law of the State is the discordant note of defiance which goes up from at least one railroad corporation whenever the Railroad Commission seeks to afford relief to petitioners upon abundant proof that wrongs are being suffered. Secure in the conclusion that the General Assembly will not clothe the Railroad Commission with any real authority this railroad company insolently refuses to obey any mandate of the Commission."

The method of financing electric railways comes in for severe criticism in the report and greater powers of supervision are called for.

Particular attention is devoted in the report of the Commission to the Rutland Railroad, which "under the new ownership and management of the New York Central system is declared to have developed a defiant opposition to the requirements and orders of the Commission both in cases where the public has petitioned for better facilities and the installation of safety devices in the cases where this Commission, of its own motion, has sought to secure safety of operation on the part of the road. Upon a purely technical point it secured the overruling of an order of this Commission prohibiting the company running an engine backward on a passenger train. A terrible accident in which two persons lost their lives would in all probability have been averted if the company had operated its engine in the way and manner in which it was built and intended to be operated."

The report continues: "If the influence of the Rutland Railroad Company at the capitol is to defeat all legislation calculated to promote and protect the people in the use of the highways of the State and calculated to furnish reasonable and needed depot facilities, then the plain duty of the General Assembly is to abolish the Railroad Commission and abandon its right to regulate the railroad corporations which it has created and permit them to prey without restraint upon the people and menace without hindrance the lives of those who travel upon our highways."

TRAIN FLAGGED BY A DRY TRAVELER

A curious incident happened last week on the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad. An express train was speeding through Nevada when it was flagged by a prospector to procure water for himself and his burros. The train crew supplied them by the bucketful as quickly as possible and then started the train on its westward way again. An old Nevada law which allows desert travelers who are in distress to stop trains and demand water and compels train crews to furnish the needed refreshments still holds. The old prospector knew it, so did the engineer.