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ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

The publisher of THE WEST SHORE, accompanied by one of our staff artists, has just returned from a trip across the continent over the Northern Pacific Railroad, and in the February number will furnish our readers with the first of a series of articles and illustrations descriptive of the wonderland through which this road passes. The entire series will embrace all of Montana Territory, the National Park of the Yellowstone, Pyramid Park, and scenes on both the headwaters of the Columbia and Missouri rivers.

NEW TACOMA.

When the project of a transcontinental railroad parallel with and nearest to the northern boundary of the United States was first brought to the knowledge of the public, the expectation arose and became general that among the momentous results of the undertaking would be the development of a large city at that point on Puget sound which should be chosen as its western, or Pacific ocean terminus. Nine years elapsed after the charter and formation of the Northern Pacific Company ere the site of its western terminus was selected, and nine other years have elapsed since the last named event, and yet, although the expectation has not been realized according to the measure of time, there is right near at hand, as appears from unmistakable indications, an era of rapid growth that will more fully meet the early calculations of those who placed high value on the idea of the western terminus, and backed their estimates by investment of money.

When but a comparatively small portion of the main line had been constructed on the eastern end from Lake Superior westward, the company deemed it expedient to make a showing on the Pacific coast, and to finally choose the point where the immense volume of its commerce of the future should meet that of the ocean, and accordingly began the construction of what is known as its Pacific division, connecting the Columbia river with Puget sound by a line running northward. Work on the Pacific division was begun at Kalama, forty miles down the river from Portland, under the supervision of General J. W. Sprague in the spring of 1871, and by the summer of 1873 had progressed northward a distance of sixty-six miles to the new station named Tenino, which is the present point of connection with the Olympia and Chehalis valley railroad, being thirty-nine miles south of the nearest point on the water suitable for shipping purposes. So far

the precise objective point on Puget sound was not known—that is, the terminus had not been located. The selection of the terminus was properly regarded by the company as a very important matter demanding thorough surveys and examinations, and great care and good judgment; because upon the location of the terminus necessarily depended the direction of the line of road, and consequently the location of the grant of lands which the law does not permit the company to shift after the filing in the Interior Department of the map showing the final location of its line of road. The act of filing such a map is the act of definitely fixing the line of railroad, and is in the nature of a notice to all the world that the odd-numbered sections of land within the prescribed limits on either side are subject to the grant, and so appropriated that the even-numbered sections within those limits may be taken by settlers at the double minimum price, and that the lands outside of those limits, both of even and odd-numbered sections, may be taken by settlers, and that at the single minimum price of \$1.25 per acre. It is not difficult to imagine the confusion, hardships, and wrong which a change of line and consequent shifting of land grant at the pleasure of the company, after definite location, would work against the interests of settlers and the government, and herein lies the reason of the law by which the terminus as located attained a fixed character. It was in the face of such rulings of law and for the further obvious reason that there was nothing in view to justify the company in building more than one line of railroad to earn its land grant when one was sufficient, that the Board of Directors exercised the utmost care in making selection of a site for the western terminus of the road; and the selection of that site under the circumstances was equivalent to a declaration by the most competent judges that all other points on the Sound within the range of practicability for the purposes in view were inferior. This act summed up to the deliberate conclusion of the best judgment of this great corporation, enlightened by the best professional skill and thorough knowledge of all the essential facts and questions involved. The manner of the selection was through a board of commissioners comprising one of the leading officers of the company in the east, Mr. R. N. Rice, of Maine, vice president, and Capt. J. C. Ainsworth of Portland, Oregon, the managing director for this coast, one of the foremost men of the Pacific coast, whose signal success in directing large transportation interests in the northwest fully attests his superior ability and clear judgment. These two gentlemen were appointed commissioners by a resolution of the board of directors for the purpose of locating the western terminus. Their instructions were to examine the western shore from Steilacoom to Muckilteo. The west shore between these two points and beyond both north and south, had been carefully surveyed by eminent and able engineers whose reports were before the commissioners. In all that distance of about one hundred miles of shore line there were but four points deemed worthy of consideration, namely: Steilacoom, Commence-

ment Bay, Elliott's Bay and Muckilteo. Considering all the advantages of the several places in question the commissioners fixed upon the shore of Commencement bay as affording a site decidedly more suitable in all respects for the purposes of the terminus, and they so declared and made report accordingly to the board of directors. Their report was, after discussion and careful deliberation, adopted by the company, and the board of directors thereupon affirmed the action of the commissioners by passing the following resolution at a meeting held in New York city on the 10th day of September, 1873:

"Resolved, That the N. P. R. R. Co. locate and construct its main road to a point on Puget sound on the southerly side of Commencement bay in T 21, R 3 E of Willamette meridian, and within the limits of the city of Tacoma, which point in the said city of Tacoma is declared to be the western terminus of the main line of the Northern Pacific."

The "city of Tacoma," referred to in the resolution, was the town known as Tacoma City, plat of which was filed in the auditor's office of Pierce county, on the 3rd of December, 1869. It was a small town of few inhabitants, which had grown up around and was chiefly dependent on the saw mill of Hanson, Ackerson & Co. Even as late as the selection by the commissioners there was no store in the place except that of the above firm, and the number of houses was limited to such as were occupied by the families of the men employed in the mill, except the residences of Gen. M. M. McCarver, Job Carr, his two sons Anthony and Howard, and a Mr. Stewart. After the commissioners had made their decision in favor of the southerly shore of Commencement bay, but before they had openly declared it, Mr. E. S. Smith, acting for the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, bonded the saw mill of Hanson, Ackerson & Co., for the sum of \$100,000, at which price the purchase was afterwards consummated; but after the failure of Jay Cooke & Co., this property was sold to Hanson, Ackerson & Co., for \$45,000. He also purchased on same account three thousand acres of land for town-site purposes, which included the site of the present city of New Tacoma. About the same time General Sprague contracted for the purchase on account of the Lake Superior and Puget Sound Company, of a large adjoining tract, lately acquired by the N. P. preferred stockholders.

These transactions brought the railroad company to face a prospective town-site business of great magnitude, and as this was out of the line of legitimate railroad business the members of the company deemed it expedient to manage this branch of its interests through the medium of a subordinate corporation.

Many of the largest shareholders of the company resided in Philadelphia. That was the residence of Jay Cooke, who was the financial agent of the company. A corporation was formed under the laws of Pennsylvania, named the Tacoma Land Company, having a capital stock of \$1,000,000, divided into 20,000 shares of the par value of \$50 each, and the object of which was to acquire, hold and sell land at the terminus. The