



The construction of a narrow-gauge road from Cheney, W. T., to Medical Lake, a distance of eight miles, is seriously considered. The estimated cost is \$3,000 per mile.

Trains began running through the Mullan tunnel near Helena on the fourth of November, saving nearly an hour of time formerly consumed in climbing over the steep summit. This great tunnel is 3,850 long and 5,548 feet above the level of the sea.

The Bellingham Bay & British Columbia R. R. Co. has on the way from Philadelphia a cargo of steel rails, a locomotive and construction cars, which will arrive in April. It is the intention to have several miles of the road graded at that time and to then push the work with vigor.

The Summit Valley R. R. Co. has been incorporated in Montana, with a capital stock of \$50,000. The object is to build a narrow-gauge road from Butte City to Walkerville, for the accommodation of the mines, mills and smelters. Much grading has been done and the rails will soon be laid.

The temporary injunction against the building of a bridge across the river at this city by the Northern Pacific has been dismissed. The decision is based on the common sense ground that congress in granting the company a franchise certainly intended to give them the power to bridge all streams encountered.

At Port Ladlow the Puget Mill Co. is constructing the largest barkentine ever put on the stocks on the Pacific coast. She will be used as a lumberman and will have a carrying capacity of 700,000 feet of boards. The company will also construct a large tug boat, 146 feet long and 26 feet beam. The Washington Transportation Co. will build at Utsalady an elegant side-wheel steamer, to run on the route between Seattle and Whatcom.

On its steep mountain grades the Northern Pacific has adopted a device for preventing such accidents as the horrible one at Tehatchepi pass on the Southern Pacific. Gravity switches are put on the side of the track, being nothing but quite a long stretch of level or slightly rising side track. When a train passes one of these on its way up the grade the switch is thrown open, and any car that may break loose and run down the grade, or even the whole train if it should become unmanageable, would be turned off upon the side track and stopped by its own gravity.

On the third of November an engine and seven flat cars were taken across the Columbia at Ainsworth and put on the track of the Cascade division, three miles of which have been laid. Slow progress is being made by the three hundred men at work, and but twenty-five miles are under contract. Whether, in view of the policy of retrenchment recently inaugurated on the Northern Pacific, this division will be completed speedily

or not it is impossible to predict, but it is probable that it will not stop short of Yakima, as to do so would leave it without any business to pay the expense of operating it.

The Oregon Short Line has issued \$4,500,000 six per cent. bonds on completed portions of the road, and \$8,000,000 of capital stock. The total of stock and bonds on a completed mileage of 524 miles is \$12,500,000, or \$23,855 per mile. Though the road is only operated to Caldwell, in Dixie valley, it is practically completed to the first crossing of Snake river. Work on the three bridges spanning that stream is in progress, and as soon as they are completed the line will be finished to Huntington, the point of junction with the O. R. & N. Co. on Burnt river. This the managers hope to accomplish early in the spring.

Still another transcontinental railroad company has been organized, in spite of the fact that the great "People's" road of Indianapolis has commenced its active career by suing the Chicago Times for libel. The last corporation, which is called the United States Central Railroad Company, but might better be known as the "Patchwork Route," has a capital stock of \$75,000,000 and has been organized by Colonel Lyman Bridges, a prominent civil engineer of Chicago, who occupies the position of chief engineer. It is a consolidation of the San Francisco & Ocean Shore, California Central & Denver and the Hot Springs & Pacific companies. The route has been extensively surveyed for these various corporations and has been located 800 miles east of San Francisco and 200 miles west of Denver. The route crosses the San Joaquin valley, the Sierra Nevada near the Yosemite and big tree groves, southern Nevada, southern Utah and Colorado to Denver. We doubt if money can be raised for another transcontinental road by any new company.

All work on the Canadian Pacific on the east slope of the Rocky mountains has been discontinued. Advices from Winnipeg state that this action has been taken because of the discovery that Kicking Horse pass is not as desirable a route as has been supposed, and that on account of the disagreement among its engineers the company has called a halt until the best possible pass through the Selkirks has been ascertained. It is asserted that this action will postpone the completion of the line until 1887. These statements have been contradicted by General Manager Van Horne, who says that work has only been suspended until spring for the reason that it could not be prosecuted to advantage in the Selkirk range during the winter season, that there is no disagreement among the engineers about Kicking Horse pass, and that the whole line will be completed in 1885 as before announced. Time only will reveal the actual situation. If it should be true that the road is to be delayed till 1887, it will be a blow to the developing industries of British Columbia, though that province is already finding in the Northern Pacific an outlet quite convenient and valuable.

The Black Hills & Montana R. R. Co. has been incorporated in Dakota to build a road from Cheyenne into the cattle regions of Dakota, Wyoming and Montana.

The question of passenger and freight traffic, over which the Pacific railroads have held so many consultations, has been settled and the

threatened war of rates averted. The Northern Pacific has agreed not to compete for San Francisco business and the Central and Southern will keep out of Oregon. The same rates will be made by the Northern Pacific from eastern points to Portland, Astoria and Puget sound ports as are made by the other roads from the same points to San Francisco, while the local rate will be charged on all through freight passing between Portland and San Francisco. Freight and passengers for Portland coming via San Francisco will be charged the ocean local rate from San Francisco to Portland in addition to the regular rate from Chicago to Portland by the Northern Pacific. By this compromise a ruinous railroad war is avoided and business placed on a legitimate basis.

Everywhere throughout the great west railroads are ringing the death knell of the stage line. The Deer Lodge *New Northwest* thus speaks of the history of staging in Montana: "But what a unique chapter of history the stage coaching days of Montana would furnish! Don't you old-timers recollect how Jno. Oliver, Fd. House and Ed. Conover, who were carrying express from Fort Bridger, Salt Lake and Bannack, in 1863, soon after the Alder diggings were struck in June, rigged up a broncho stage line between Bannack and Alder; how they had rope harness and dead axe springs; how it took a half dozen men to hold the bronchos till the last tug was hitched, and when they were turned loose they struck a dead run and kept it up to the next station? The drivers didn't know there were any "sleeping places" on the road those days. And then when Last Chance was struck in November, Oliver & Co. put on the Virginia and Helena line, making the run through, 120 miles, by daylight. In 1865 Ben Holladay came in with the mail contract, and Wells, Fargo & Co bought the important stage line, from Salt Lake north. Then came Wm. H. Taylor, as superintendent, with Pullman palace ideas of staging, giving Montanians the ideal line, but making it cost W. F. & Co. so much money that in 1869 Gilmore & Salisbury bought their lines for a song and started them again as a money-making enterprise. We didn't always or often have good accommodations or rapid transit, except when Huntley & Co., Taylor & McCormick, Alex. Rallston, Joe Daddon or L. M. Black put on opposition, but rain or shine, mud to the axle or snow to the blinders, the mail and passengers were generally landed at the home stations about schedule time; and although we thought the fares extortionate, it didn't cost as much or any more for local travel than it does now by car or bus. With O. J. Salisbury, Wm. C. Child and Captain H. S. Howell as superintendents the past ten years, the G. S. & Co. lines in Montana were expanded to a great enterprise, having had as high as 1,165 miles of mail and passenger coach lines, the most of them with service daily each way. A year and a half ago the company had 800 head of horses and \$120,000 worth of property in service. Six months ago, with the encroachments of the railroads, the lines had been shortened up, but they still had 500 horses and \$85,000 worth of property on hand. Now their total stage lines in Montana aggregate only 175 miles, being the Helena and Dillon line, with branches to Butte and Virginia City. They have yet on hand, besides the horses, thirty four and six-horse coaches, fifteen jerkies, twenty sleighs, four road buggies, twelve deadaxe wagons, and harness enough to equip a thousand miles of road."