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Historic Country

One of the possibilities in connection with the opening of the Panama canal in 1915 is that visitors from the United States will be able to make the journey overland to Panama to view the opening ceremonies by way of the Pan-American Railway of Mexico, purchased not long ago by David E. Thompson, former American ambassador to Mexico.

This standard gauge road runs from Gamboa, in the Mexican State of Oaxaca, to Mariscal, in the state of Chiapas, on the bank of the river dividing Mexico from Guatemalan soil, a length of 457 kilometers. The total trackage is brought up to 478 kilometers by a number of branch lines. The headquarters of the road are at Gamboa, but Mr. Thompson has his office in this capital.

The road serves a fertile and prosperous country, the population of which numbers some 300,000 persons, mostly engaged in farming, cattle raising and the cutting and manufacture of lumber. The sawmill industry is a growing one and it is expected that it will be increased rapidly with the increased transportation facilities that the railroad will give.

Chiapas is a state well adapted to the growing of fruits unsurpassed by those of California or Florida, and they can be delivered in the markets of New York and other cities of the eastern United States within eight days after being picked, by shipping them over the Pan-American, transshipping them at Gamboa over the Tehuantepec National and by boat from the port of Coatzacoalcas to the Atlantic coast of the United States.

The Mexico towns along the line range in population from 500 to 5000 and offer markets for no small quantities of the products of the soil. Both Oaxaca and Chiapas are states known to contain ores of great value, gold and silver mines being among the profitable ventures of the region. The railroad will open up new fields to exploitation.

Under the Thompson management a comprehensive plan of improvement has been inaugurated. Steel bridges are to replace wooden ones, modern stations are under construction and the rolling stock is being increased and improved.—
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