

source of immense national wealth and prosperity. Throughout the greater part of that immense pastoral region, cattle require no stored food in the winter season, for the grass of the prairies, whether green or dry, is always good and nutritious.

The recent discovery of rich gold placers in New Mexico adds greatly to the importance of this road. In fact, it seems that from the point where the mountains are first reached, on the western border of the vast buffalo-grass plains, to the shores of the Pacific, the line of this road will run through one continuous field of the precious metals, besides much timber and coal.

Leaving Albuquerque, the line through the heart of Arizona—that richest of our territories in gold and silver, but the most difficult to reach—presents no serious difficulties. Long valleys, running in the right direction, bear it onwards towards the border of California, whence, turning the southern extremity of the great Sierra Nevada range, it passes up through Southern California, midway between the mountains and the ocean, to San Francisco, touching the fine port of San Diego by a branch, and the head of the Gulf of California, and the port of Guaymas, if need be, by others.

This route may be somewhat longer than that through Utah and Nevada, but its gradients will be so much less that it will more than compensate for this lengthening of the line. For all purposes for which a railroad is desired to be shorter, to wit, greater speed and economy of transportation, it is believed that this is really the shorter line. But whether it is longer in miles than the other is not yet known; for the length of line necessary to wind through the labyrinthine mountains of Utah is yet an unknown quantity. Be that as it may, it is certain that its grades will be lighter, that it can never be obstructed by snow, and that the country it will open up and develop, whether agricultural, or pastoral, or mineral, is tenfold more valuable.

A party of gentlemen of scientific ability, about eighty in number, headed by General W. W. Wright, chief engineer, and comprising, among others, Dr. John Leconte, of the Smithsonian Institute, as geologist, Dr. Perry, who was engaged in the survey of the line between the United States and Mexico, with eminent topographers and photographers, are now engaged in a careful examination, survey, and development of this route. The party is out under the auspices and employ of this company. Other surveying parties of equal ability are now engaged in locating the road between Pond Creek and Denver.