DE BOW'S REVIEW

AND

Industrial Resources, Statistics, etc.

DEVOTED TO

COMMERCE, AGRICULTURE, MANUFACTURES, INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS, POLITICAL ECONOMY, GENERAL LITERATURE, ETC.

"Commerce is King."

EDITED BY

J. D. B. DE BOW,

PROFESSOR OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, ETC., IN THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA,
SUPERINTENDANT U. S. CENSUS.

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this route. As might be expected, Mr. Johnson undertakes to defend the proposed route from any serious inconvenience in this respect; and we have no doubt his proofs are quite as convincing as any that have hitherto been adduced to the same end. It is more gratifying, and, indeed, more satisfactory, to find him presenting interesting details of the geological and geographical features of the country along the projected line, showing the vast stores of timber and minerals on which the future States of the Northwest will have as much need to rely hereafter as on the noble rivers and rich soils which invite to the settlement of the territories.

The subject of a Pacific Railroad has taken deep hold on the popular mind, and it will not rest contented until something more practicable than mere survey-reports and memoirs grow out of public or private enterprise. It matters little what may be the motives which actuate parties in proposing any particular route; the wants of the age make a road necessary, and public or private munificence will ultimately construct it. It is at best a chance which points shall be the real termini, although ostensibly points may be determined by the surveyor's chain and the contractor's dictum. Commerce is king, and erects its own monuments—pursues its own route.

The Secretary of War has sent to the United States Senate a document containing the reports of the different parties who have been in the field the past season making surveys and explorations of the proposed routes for a railroad to the Pacific.

The following is a summary of the report made by Governor Stevens, of the *Northern* route:—

Accompanying Governor Stevens' report, is a map sketch on a scale of $\frac{1}{250000}$ of the route of the proposed road from St. Paul to the Shayenne River, and Governor Stevens is "confident no grade will be found of more than twenty feet per mile," and "cost without equipment will not exceed $20,000 per mile."

Another map sketch is given on a scale of $\frac{1}{1440000}$ from St. Paul to Fort Union. He says the "inclosed sketch of a railroad route is certainly practicable at a cost not probably exceeding $40,000 per mile. * * * The great key points of the country are the valley of the Moose River, and the region of the Bois de Sioux." No grade is mentioned, nor profiles given, of any portion of the route.

West of Fort Union no sketches of the country have been received. The rivers along the route are reported as being very much out of place on the maps, and indeed it is impossible to trace the route definitely upon ordinary maps. No astronomical positions are given.

The nature and substance of the results obtained west of Fort Union, so far as reported, are as follows:

At Fort Benton.—Governor Stevens says, "up to this point we have found the country entirely practicable. Whichever pass in the mountains is decided upon, the Milk River Valley will furnish a good approach."

At St. Mary's Valley.—He reports that two approaches to Cabot's Pass

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were examined, both requiring a tunnel, "not exceeding a mile in length," and a grade that will not "probably exceed forty or forty-five feet per mile."

To the West, "the descent down the Hell-gate River was mostly through an open valley, till the Hell-gate passage is reached, where the river winds in a narrow defile, requiring for a railroad expensive sustaining walls and embankments, and probably some small tunnels to avoid short curves." "It can be turned by tunnelling a marble mountain to the south of it, or by crossing over from a tributary of the Hell-gate in the open valley of the pass to the valley of the river Jocko, one of the principal southern tributaries of Clarke's fork." This was explored, and a barometer profile taken; "in the absence of it, can only state it will probably furnish a practicable mode of avoiding the Hell-gate defile."

Cabot's Pass is reported as being "nearly 3,000 feet below the South Pass," and "a much better one, both in summer and winter." A small party examined a Pass in the Rocky Mountains south of Cabot's Pass, and was fitted out to examine the Marias Pass to the north of it.

The Bitter Root range, west of St. Mary's Valley, are said to be impracticable.

At Olympia, Dec. 5.—Governor Stevens reports that a route was surveyed over the Cœur d'Eleine Mountains from St. Mary's to Fort Colville, but no barometer profile taken for want of an instrument. "It is probable" these mountains might be passed with a tunnel not exceeding "six, or perhaps four miles, without involving impracticable grades." Difficulties from snow "should be carefully investigated."

Lieutenant Donnelson surveyed the general line of Clarke's fork. Governor Stevens says he "reports the route from the debouche of the Hell-gate Pass to the banks of the Spokane" * * * as "practicable, involving no other difficulties than are usually met with in the Atlantic States, and that it will connect well with a route through the Marias Pass, should a practicable one be ascertained. The grass is generally good, there having been a scarcity only two nights."

The Columbia was explored from Fort Colville to the forty-ninth parallel. Captain McClellan explored the Cascade range as far north as the forty-ninth parallel, and his examinations were connected with the others under Governor Stevens.

Governor Stevens refers to Captain McClellan's examinations, and "I apprehend no difficulty whatever in the Sno-qual-me Pass to the passage of a railroad; and from information I have received from old residents, particularly from Mayor Goldsborough, a civil engineer who has carefully examined the country, it will be an easy matter to carry it to a good harbor on the sound."

According to Captain McClellan's report of September 18, the Sno-qualme Pass "is at the head of the main Yakima," some thirty-five miles north of Mount Reginer. The lowest point of the divide is 3,543 feet above Vancouver. The descent to the east to Lake Katchelas, a distance in a direct line of about three and one-fourth miles, is 1,129 feet; beyond this "there is no difficulty in the construction of a road of any kind." He did not "proceed more than a few miles beyond the divide" to the West, but as far as he went, "the valley was narrow and the descent steep." He reports Nahches Pass as 4,966 feet above Vancouver, and not so favorable as the other. In both Passes the snow accumulates in the narrow valleys, probably 20 feet, and in the mountains five or six feet.

Owing to the lateness of the season, the survey was to be continued to Puget Sound by the line of the Columb a and Coulitz.

Governor Stevens does not mention any grade as the probable maximum from the summit of Cabot's Pass to Puget Sound. The extent of country adapted to cultivation, and the facilities for wood and water, are not par-

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ticularly alluded to. At the date of Governor Stevens' last communication (December 5,) the finished drawings and estimates had not been made for any portion of the work. The explorations west of the Cascade range are not terminated. The reports of those sent to guage the snows had not been received, nor of the party left to finish the survey of the Missouri River, nor the one to run a line from St. Mary's to Fort Hall.

REPORT OF THE SURVEY OF WALKER'S AND THE NEIGHBORING PASSES.

Depot Camp, Pose Creek, Aug. 31, 1853.

I have just returned here from a twenty days' examination of the various passes of the Sierra Nevada, and give the results so far.

I started from this point, which is eight miles north of Kern River, and went through Walker's Pass, the northernmost point on the Sierra, where it is supposed possible to carry a railroad across. Then reascending to the summit of the pass, I wished to follow the backbone of the mountain, southwardly, til it joined the coast range; thus necessarily seeing every depression in the ridge. Having thus ascertained the lowest points, I then intended to ascertain if they were accessible from both bases. This plan I followed most successfully, and I have now a good knowledge of these mountains—am certain that no pass exists (within the above limits) that I have not examined—and am now prepared to commence a survey of the best of them.

I regret to say that the difficulty of crossing the mountains is much greater than I anticipated; but I think there is no doubt of the practicability. I have been through eight passes, most of which are very bad, and I will briefly describe some of them. You must understand, however, that my opinions here expressed may be modified, when I get a more accurate knowledge from surveys.

With this understanding, I will commence by saying, that *Walker's Pass is out of the question*. To reach this we ascend Kern River (properly the Potum-ko-la) for some fifty miles, where a branch comes in from the east. This we ascend, in a wide and gently ascending valley, for some twelve miles, when we leave it, cross the divide, and enter the plain or basin beyond. The difficulties are: 1st, ascending Kern River; 2d, ascending to the summit from the valley of the branch; 3d, descending to the basin.

1st. On Kern River high mountains come down abruptly on each side, forming a cañon of five or six miles in length, impassable for mules, and probably for footmen, since there is no Indian trail through it—and these mountains cannot be turned. Hence, to go by Kern River, an immense deal of cutting, blasting, &c., would have to be done. Rock, granite. This river falls in the fifty miles, fifty feet to the mile on an average.

2d. The ascent to the summit for five miles is over 300 feet to the mile, and rugged rocky mountains on each side, cut up by precipitous ravines, prevent a winding course to gain distance.

3d. The descent from the summit to the basin is eight miles, and over 250 feet to the mile. The altitude of Walker's Pass is over 4,500 feet above the Tulare Valley, and over 5,000 above the sea. The basin is 2,500 feet above the valley.

Proceeding south, the next pass worthy of note is one never before passed through, so far as I can ascertain. The ascent from the basin is uniform, and not more than a hundred feet to the mile, arriving at the lowest point but one of the Sierra Nevada—3,100 feet above the Tulare Valley. A creek runs from the summit to the valley, but the descent for ten miles is 300 feet to the mile. Possibly, by winding in the hills, a more gradual descent could be found—still it would be difficult, and very expensive. Instead of following this creek we can follow along the crest of the mountain,

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