

Railroads on the Pacific Coast.

During the past year the construction of railroads on the Pacific Coast, and particularly in California, has been pushed with an energy unprecedented in the history of any country. Many of the roads previously projected have been completed, are already in good running order and doing a large and remunerative business. These roads promise soon to stimulate the occupancy of our farming lands in hitherto neglected sections of the State, by giving cheap and speedy transportation for their products to nearer and more profitable markets. This will more especially be the case with the southern portion of the State, the lands of which, though universally productive, have heretofore been considered almost valueless on account of the high cost of freighting. Another valuable feature in connection with the extension of railroads is the disposition of owners to bring large tracts of land into cultivation by selling the same in small subdivisions to actual settlers. Thus large grants of land, which have been the greatest drawback to the success of Southern California, are being broken up into small farms, and a new era of prosperity commenced which will give that section high rank for value and productive capacity. What is true of the southern is to a large extent equally correct as regards the northern portion of the State, the remoteness of which from markets, and high cost and difficulties attending transportation, has largely prevented development. Both sections only require the extension of the railroad system projected to exhibit a productiveness and wealth that will surprise all who have not studied the capabilities of their soil and climate.

One of the most important events that has marked the past year, if not the past century, has been the successful completion of the Pacific Railroad, over which trains now run from and to the shores of the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. In the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in particular, which is the western end of the grand trans-continental railway, the people of California have showed an energy and perseverance under difficulties that is beyond all praise, a large portion of the road having been built with a degree of rapidity and perfectness combined never before known. This road is now in excellent condition, is fully equipped with rolling stock and other appurtenances, and for speed and safety of transportation has no superior in the United States. Although in the incipency of development, as a means for transportation of freight and passengers, its traffic has been enormous, and its earnings of a very profitable nature. The Central Pacific Railroad now extends from Sacramento to Ogden, a distance of seven hundred and forty-four miles.

The Western Pacific Railroad, running from Sacramento, *via* Stockton, to Oakland, with a branch line some twenty-five miles long from Vallejo Mills to San José, has also been constructed during the past year, thereby opening up large tracts of land for an improved cultivation. These have heretofore been virtually worthless on account of high freights, which almost consumed the value of wheat and other grain, in seeking a market. The main line of this railroad, one hundred and twenty-three miles long from Sacramento to Oakland, was entirely built during 1868, as was also a portion of the branch line from Vallejo Mills to San José. Both pass through very fertile tracts of country, whose capabilities to produce wheat and other cereals are comparatively without limits. In anticipation of the speedy completion of the main line to Oakland, unusually extensive crops of grain were sown during the last winter, the result being an enormous harvest beyond all precedent. As an instance of the vast local freightage which will naturally seek this road, it is estimated that fully one million sacks of wheat alone were stored at the station in Livermore Valley, awaiting transportation, when the first rains of this winter set in in October. The amount of freightage over this road in future promises to be without precedent, when its length of track, without feeder or branch lines or other connecting transportation is considered. In the temporary completion of the Western Pacific Railroad a portion of the San Francisco and Alameda Railroad, extending from San Leandro to the Encinal at tide water, was used, which was subsequently followed by the merging of the latter road into the former organization.

The California Pacific Railroad, which last year was completed from Vallejo to Sacramento, has now been finished to Marysville direct from Davisville, the first cars passing over the entire road in the latter part of November, 1869. By the new section of road, through connection is had from Vallejo with Marysville, as well as with Sacramento, thereby saving considerable time and expense in transportation, the trip from San Francisco to Marysville being made in about six hours, with close connections. The Sacramento branch of this road, which was run the entire past year, is reported to have made the most profitable returns from its traffic of any on the Pacific coast. The greater portions of both branches of this road pass through some of the finest grain lands of the State which have hitherto been uncultivated, from want of cheap freightage to market.

The Napa Valley Railroad, which connects with the California Pacific Railroad seven miles from Vallejo, has done a largely-increased business during 1869. This road terminates at Calistoga at the head of Napa Valley about forty miles from Vallejo. Besides the products of that