

THE
WESTERN RAILROADS
TOPOLOBAMPO COLONISTS.

WHAT IS SAID OF THEM.

When Hercules had finished his seven labors, there were not wanting plenty of people who said, "What! Only seven!!"

Extract from President Diaz's message, September 16th, 1892: "The Colonists at Topolobampo have built a canal eleven kilometers in length and a federal custom house in accordance with the terms of their concession."—*The Two Republics*, September 17th, 1892.

vg dup

WEBSTER ON RAILROADS.

THE GREAT LAWYER TOOK AN ADVERSE VIEW OF THEIR FUTURE.

In the year 1840 the locomotive was a small, weak machine that was employed to drag a few coach-like cars at a speed of about ten miles an hour. Then the directors and stockholders of railroads constituted the meekest class of citizens; very different from the dictatorial, influential class of the present.

Daniel Webster, in describing the American railroad of that time, said, "They are made of two stringers of scantling, notched into ties that often get loose in the ground. Upon the stringers two straps of iron, the width and thickness of wagon-tires, are nailed.

"These straps of iron frequently get detached at the ends, which turn up like snakes' heads and pierce the floors of the cars." Such an accident actually happened to a car between Elizabeth and New York.

"Then," said Webster, according to *Youth's Companion*, "the wheels slip on the iron straps, in winter especially, so much that no dependence can be placed upon the time of arrival, and many people think that it is not certain that railroads will be a success."

THE TOPOLOBAMPO COLONISTS.

A telegram from Engineer Tays, in charge of the co-operative ditch at Topolobampo, announces that water has at length been admitted to it, and that after ten hours of flow, nine inches were emerging from the end of the big canal upon the farming lands of the colonists, miles away from the Rio Fuerte, where the water enters the head gate of the canal. This is good news for all who have sympathy for the brave band of pioneers, men and women, who are seeking to establish on the far off Mexican shores of the Californian gulf, homes for themselves and for all who find themselves elsewhere jostled away from their means of livelihood in the fierce contest for financial supremacy which characterizes business and all life in so many quarters of the globe to-day. It will be remembered that some 300 to 500 American colonists have been making a precarious living around the harbor of Topolobampo chiefly by that kind of hot, dry country agriculture whose kinship to gambling with the odds against one is so familiar to West Texas agriculturists. During their stay on the Pacific Coast these colonists have not been idle. They have managed to support themselves, and have in addition invested their labor in a great canal which is to make their precarious crops certain, to extend indefinitely their area of cultivatable land, to make them purveyor to the rich markets in the mining camps of the Sierras just east of their lands, and in general to form a basis for the many industries which they propose to establish and conduct as a joint stock company, owning their capital and material, employing their own labor, and sharing, as dividends on the stock earned and invested, the profits to be made. The history of joint stock co-operative associations or companies has been almost an uninterrupted record of industrial triumphs. Such organizations when conducted on strictly business principles have nearly always resulted in making their members first independent and then opulent. Such may in part be the future of the colonists on the Rio Fuerte, yet their basis is so broad, and their power of expansion so great that their growth must necessarily be in the direction of numerical comfort rather than of unlimited wealth. For more than half a decade they have been struggling along valiantly resisting misfortune and hardships, such as protracted drought in a new and exclusively agricultural community always produce, and with commendable faith in their plans and methods co-operating for the final success of what must have appeared to the least observant, at best an experiment. Now, however, their enterprise has passed the experimental stage. Their industry is based

upon a commercially sound business venture—for agriculture under irrigation in a mining country is always remunerative, and in Mexico agricultural products never lack a market at good prices. Previously they could only ask men to invest their savings in “ditch scrip” or “improvement bonds,” or the obligations of the trans-continental railroad as an experimental venture; now they can offer their various funds as the best and safest investments to the most careful investors—an investment which, while any man with \$10 to spare can secure its benefits, is yet as safe as government bonds, because it represents the sole indebtedness of an industrious community engaged in remunerative business and so organized as to be liable neither to “watering” nor repudiation.—*Eagle Pass Guide, Texas, July 16th, 1892.*

THE TOPOLOBAMPO COLONY.

A private letter from Sinaloa, Mexico, June 13th, 1892, to a Boston merchant, contains statements of interest regarding the Topolobampo colony and the Pacific States of Mexico south of California and Arizona. The author is Mr. William V. Lamphar, who writes:

“The Topolobampo colony is still prospering. They have now finished their great ditch for irrigating the Mochis lands, and I think they have a bright future before them if they pull together and have no bad management in their affairs. They have not commenced to build their railroad yet, and I do not know when they will. The concession they have is very favorable, and they ought to get capital enough to build the road. They are to receive 10,000,000 acres of government land in all and they can select it where it will be valuable and ought to be enough to build the railroad by itself. I hope they will soon start the work and push it. The time is not far distant when this gulf coast of Sinaloa and Sonora will be the great tropical and semi-tropical fruit-growing section of the Pacific coast, and lands here will be valuable. For such fruits it has a decided advantage over California, Florida or any part of the eastern coast of Mexico, as the fruits grown here are of much finer quality and from one to two months earlier than in either of the other places, and with direct railroad communication from this coast to Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas and all other northwestern states, we will have an unlimited market for all the fruits this coast can produce at prices to make the fruit growers rich in a few years.

This gulf coast is also capable of producing all the sugar the world would need to consume. So, with enterprise and capital to develop the great agricultural resources of these valleys, and the great mineral resources of these mountains, there can be no doubt that this state of Sinaloa would be the richest spot on the Pacific coast, California not excepted. Railroad communication with the mining camps of these mountains is becoming a necessity, as the traffic cannot be carried on

successfully on mule-back. Tons of freight are left on the coast every year for lack of transportation to the mountains. The miner pays exorbitant prices for all the products of the valleys he consumes, on account of the slow and costly mode of transportation. Corn is the principal article of food here and in the mining camps, and it is now selling at \$4 per bushel. The proof of the richness of the mines in these mountains is that they can be worked successfully under such adverse conditions.'—*Boston Herald*, July 17th, 1892.

TOPOLOBAMPO.

Indications are that fortune is about to smile upon the Topolobampo colonists are not lacking. The successful accomplishment of their first considerable venture is not only a guarantee of their working and staying powers, but is furthermore a solid financial basis for all future undertakings. If men can build a \$500,000 ditch without any capital, they can certainly be depended upon to construct \$300,000 worth of railroad when supported by \$1,000,000 worth of productive property. This is exactly their condition; without capital they dug their ditch, supported by its earnings can they build thirty miles of railroad? There can be but one answer to this question. They can; and when their road is thirty miles long it will begin to pay, hauling provisions and materials to the mining camps and hauling ores and bullion to tide-water at Topolobampo. Incidentally it is notable that capitalists take this view of the Topolobampo railroad prospects. They believe the road will be speedily built, and are already looking out for opportunities to connect with it—witness the delegation of Corpus Christi railroad men in this city this week.—*Eagle Pass Guide*, Texas, July 30th, 1892.

THE EAGLE PASS AND GULF RAILROAD.

A party of gentlemen from Corpus Christi were in the city during the earlier part of the week. They had made the trip from the coast to Eagle Pass in buckboards, and spent some ten days in spying out the land. They returned toward the coast last Wednesday, taking a more southerly course. Their object is to examine the country as to its railroad supporting qualities. They are in the employ of some eastern capitalists looking out for an eligible line for a short transcontinental line. The idea in coming here is, if practicable, to form a junction with the Topolobampo road. As to the country lying between Eagle Pass and the coast, these gentlemen found it more promising than they had anticipated; they have lived in Texas and are able to make allowance for the present drouth. With the prospects here, also, they were pleased, and in order to post themselves more thoroughly as to the

local trade possibilities they spent some days looking into the resources of the neighborhood. It is the Topolobampo connection they were most interested in, however, and, of course, a two hundred mile railway of easy grades, almost straight, forming the eastern link of a short transcontinental route would be very valuable. The prospectors looked upon the future of the Topolobampo road with hope. They will make report to their employers in the east next October, and we may see them in Eagle Pass again if the people in the east are as favorably impressed as their representatives here were. The party consisted of Mr. Westervelt, Mr. Peters and Mr. Griffiths. The *Guide* has often directed the attention of the investing public to the opening of a railroad between Eagle Pass and the Gulf of Mexico. Just now when, according to the coast people, deep water at Aranzas Pass is assured, the opportunity for building the road is better than ever. The necessity for a second railroad at Eagle Pass, if there is to be any town left, becomes plainer every day. There is probably no stretch of equal length in the state which would better repay the railroad builder than from Eagle Pass to the Gulf. Such a road would connect an immense and growing Mexican trade with deep water, would join the best fuel supply in Texas with the coast; would traverse the most promising undeveloped agricultural district in the state; and would before long become a part of of the shortest of North American transcontinental routes. — *Eagle Pass Guide, Texas July 30th. 1892.*

THE EAGLE PASS AND GULF RAILROAD.

A party of gentlemen from Corpus Christi were in the city during the latter part of the week. They had made the trip from the coast to Eagle Pass in both directions and spent some ten days in exploring out the route. They returned toward the coast last Wednesday being a more easterly course. Their object was to examine the country as to its fitness for a railroad. They are in the employ of some eastern railroad company. Their object was for an efficient line for a short transcontinental line. The line is to be built from Eagle Pass to Corpus Christi and the coast. They had found a more promising route than the one which they had followed. As to the country lying between Eagle Pass and the coast, they had found it more promising than they had anticipated. They had found it more fertile and able to make allowances for the present drought. With the present drought, they were pleased and in order to test themselves more thoroughly as to the

OPINIONS OF SOME OF THE COLONISTS.

Below we give the opinions of some of our colonists, of our prospects, our reasons for hope, etc. Following the name of the person whose opinion we publish, is the former P. O. address.

"My opinion after living here five and one-half years is that I love to live here; that this is a healthy, delightful climate. The soil is productive, and co-operation is the only life that has any charm to me."—HANNAH M. LUTTON, Denver, Colo.

"I have been here over three years. I have never been despondent one hour as to our final success. Our prospects are brighter than ever before."—SUSIE L. PAGE, Salina, Kansas.

"I am well pleased with this colony and the delicious climate. After living here over twenty-two months, I would not think of returning to the States to live again. Our prospects as a colony are good. We have land and water and now we shall succeed."—V. W. EMRICK, Seeley, Kansas.

"We have been here twenty-one months, and we are well pleased with the climate and people, have never for an instant thought of returning to a cold climate or the competitive system."—Mr. and Mrs. PEET, Delpho, Kansas.

"No. I have not lost faith in the C. F. Co., or in our principles to regulate our conduct. I have worked for and believed in success. Our prospects were never brighter than they are to-day.

Yes, I have lost faith in democratic government, and my faith in human nature is strained and out of shape—having seen and known all things from the beginning.

But nothing would induce me to leave the Colony where I have put in the happiest years of my life.

With a wise Board of Directors, our future is safe, and an assured fact."—THOMAS YOUNG, Denver, Colo.

"I have been in the Colony over three years and am much pleased with the climate, the Colony and the people, and I am confident that we shall make a grand success of co-operation. The prospects for the future are bright and grand."—MRS. AURELIA JONES, Riverside, Cal.

"My opinion is that the great danger in the way of the Credit Foncier Co. is too much democracy at first. Democracy is all right where a large majority are intelligent and good; but dangerous when that democracy is ignorant and selfish. I think Mr. Owen should keep

the guidance of the C. F. Co. in his own hands, assisted by the council of the wisest members, until such time as experience shall demonstrate that the people can be safely entrusted with the power. This is no more than justice to Mr. Owen as founder and organizer of this co-operative scheme."—N. THURSTIN, Hope, Kansas.

"I have been in the Colony three years last March. During this time I have never for a moment doubted that we would be ultimately triumphant.

I think that our possessions in Sinaloa will soon blossom as the rose. I know of no spot of earth's broad surface so well adapted to our necessities, and no plan of organization so nearly perfect as that of A. K. Owen."—GEORGE L. PAGE, Salina, Kansas.

"We came to the Colony among the first in 1886, to assist Mr. A. K. Owen in carrying out a plan of Integral Co-operation as proposed by him.

We have never yet had the occasion to regret this move, and we who have been here from the first can recognize a slow but sure advancement toward the object sought, and the day of prosperity is brighter than ever to all who are willing to work faithfully for themselves and humanity."—H. PATRICK, Concordia, Kansas.

"If you want to know what I think of Integral Co-operation it is just this: That after spending five and a half years here, I think the same as I have thought ever since I came. That if the laboring people of the world could *only know* the chance there is for them here, they would come by the hundreds of thousands."—J. BYRNS, Portland, Ore.

"After having lived here over three years, I am well pleased with the country, climate and the people, and I believe we are bound to make a grand success here."—SAMUEL JONES, Riverside, Cal.

"I have now lived in the Colony more than five and a half years, and feel well set, as if I could not easily be uprooted, especially as my roots have just struck an abundant supply of water.

The Colony is not so far along on the road to success as five years ago I expected it to be at this time; but I feel that the cement, in which the foundation stones were laid so long ago has all the time been crystalizing into impregnable strength. There have been almost constantly occurring shocks, both small and great, but shocks are often aids to crystalization.

The hand of man could not adjust the climate any more nicely to meet all the requirements of life had man the power. Sitting on a veranda, one on your right may say, 'It is a little too cool here.' One on your left may reply, 'It seems to me a rather warm day.' The latter has only to take off his necktie, add it to the toilet of the former, and both are comfortable.

There is plenty of sun for a marvelous growth of plants, and plenty of shade for the comfort of man. There is now plenty of water for both. There is variety of scenery to charm the eye, and soon will be variety of food to suit the palate.

The Colony is going to be built right up just as fast as it can clinch every principle, and that is fast enough."—SERA E. WILBER, Greeley, Colo.

"A splendid climate, and now water is on our land, in abundance and at command, we could accomplish such a success as never has yet been attained, if—we would give up our present muddling way of conducting our business and proceed only on a plan of careful, well directed co-operative labor. Good substantial houses are necessary for those who desire to enjoy even the least amount of comfort; and I would also give it as my opinion, that, if Solomon's advice were followed, the result would be 'as before' and 'ever since.' 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.'"—JAMES ALFRED KINGHORN-JONES, London, Eng.

"I have never seen a place where a man can make a living as easy as he can here. With water on the land he can have crops every month of the year."—WILLIAM C. PAGE, Salina, Kan.

"My opinion may seem superflous in here, as I have been accustomed in every number of this paper since I first took charge of it, over seven years ago, to show our readers what I think of our enterprise; still I will add a few lines 'in form.'

I am here now a little over four years. Our progress towards homes has been slow, but it was inevitable. Now, the obstacles to genuine progress are being rapidly removed. The water is flowing through our great irrigating canal upon the Mochis lands; at the Bay the stone custom house, a fine, substantial building has been erected, also a substantial wooden warehouse on our widened and extended pier; the canal way to the City site is being rapidly cleared by contract. A strong corps of Indians under a good foreman are clearing the way and grubbing the roots from the center, so that the New Era graders, when they arrive, can be put to work immediately. Very soon, then, the water will be at the City site, and a cry of triumph will go up all over the world wherever our cause has friends. That means the building of park city. It means our permanent homes, schools, workshops, factories and foundries. It means that the last great barrier to our material prosperity is removed.

To be sure we have waited long and even now have hardly commenced; but, thank heaven! we are moving and we see our way clearly. Everybody knows that we have a magnificent climate—more nearly perfect than any I ever expected to see on earth—sunshine, warmth, glorious breezes, bird songs and flowers, and, with irrigation, the perpetual growth of food for all, and the finest and best food on the earth.

Just now, August 17, the *Mazatlan* comes from Guaymas bringing *only* corn, when a general supply was expected. For twenty days we will have to endure some privation, but this is nothing, it simply serves to recall those times when actual hunger confronted the pioneers and they were without money then, and without the sustaining knowledge that carloads of supplies were on the way.

Whatever way we may look, everything appears bright for the Colony. Never did the cause of the people have a more earnest, honest, steadfast or indefatigable friend than Albert K. Owen. If he ever takes a wrong view, or proposes an impracticable measure—and no one can be infallible, we can do him no greater favor than to show him his error, for he is noble through and through. This, we his friends, have demonstrated, and, more than once, by actual experience. He deserves a firmer trust, a more general faith in the absolute integrity of his motives, and in his ability as a leader than he has ever had—in short he should have our more cordial support and co-operation. To be sure he is an enthusiast, like all great innovators; and if the hearts of his supporters had all been touched with fire from the same altar, all things would have been gained to-day that we now must wait years for. Seeing things in too rosy a light is always laid to the charge of Mr. Owen. It is so cheap and easy to question one's motives! They measure him by low standards, and say he is personally ambitious. This is not true. He is ambitious for the grander success. It is the *prosperity of the commonwealth* he is wearing away his life for—toiling for as no slave in a mine ever toiled. If others all around him can work with him and secure the happy homes he dreams of, then *he* can build his own and enjoy it. If they will not; if he must sit down to his well appointed table while others are hungry; live in a beautiful house while others are in hovels; educate his children in the best schools while those of his neighbors must grow up in ignorance—why, I think he would prefer to continue homeless as now, and keep on until he dies struggling to find others who can see how easy it might be to build up a rich and prosperous, refined and cultivated co-operative commonwealth of people believing in the Brotherhood of Man.”—M. HOWLAND.

THE CREDIT FONCIER OF SINALOA.

Topolobampo, Sept. 1, 1892.