

# THE NEW ROUTE TO THE PACIFIC.

## The Coming Commercial Metropolis of the Pacific.

TAPPING THE "LAND OF OPHIR."

AN INTENSELY INTERESTING LETTER FROM A. K. OWEN.

Full of Facts, Figures and Philosophy.

CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA. }  
June 13, 1880. }

HON. CAMILO VEGA, *Member of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies from Sinaloa.*

DEAR SIR:—In reply to your request, I take this opportunity to make a brief statement to show the situation of Topolobampo harbor—its extent and its importance as an entre-port for the outgoing and incoming commerce of North America.

The harbor of Topolobampo was first published to the people of Mexico and the United States in my reports of 1873. It was then used by persons secretly shipping silver and gold ores out and clandestinely bringing goods into the country in robbery of Mexico's dues. When I examined the harbor, September, 1872, there were no persons living nearer than five miles of its shores; but it now has a custom house and has been formally declared a port of entry by the United Mexican States.

Guaymas and Acapulco, up to the time of my report upon Topolobampo, were thought to be the only safe and accessible harbors on the west coast of North America south of San Diego, California. Mazatlan and San Blas were frequented, when the sea was calm, the former by mail steamers plying between Panama and San Francisco, and the latter by coasters mostly in quest of log or Brazil wood; but both are open-roadsteads and are situated on low, sickly and hot shores.

Topolobampo is situated in the State of Sinaloa, lat. 25° 32' N., and is 185 miles south of Guaymas,

784 miles north of Acapulco, and 204 miles north of Mazatlan; and while Mazatlan is 193 miles from Cape San Lucas—the southern point of Lower California—Topolobampo is but 175 miles from the same cape, hence Topolobampo is 18 miles nearer than Mazatlan, via the sea, to San Francisco, the Sandwich Islands, Japan, China, and Australia. Topolobampo harbor and its vicinity has been surveyed, mapped and reported on three occasions by the United States Hydrographical Bureau, once by the United Mexican States, and three times by my associates. The official surveys made by the United States not only show Topolobampo, but the entire coast of the United Mexican States from San Diego as far south as San Blas; and we may readily examine and compare the superior bays on the peninsula of Lower California, together with the roadsteads and harbors on the coast of Sonora, Sinaloa and Jalisco. It is only after such examination that Topolobampo as a commercial haven can be appreciated. Topolobampo harbor is 18 miles long and from 1 to 6 miles wide; consists of two great basins connected by a strait—the Straits of Joshua—and contains 54 square miles of water area, 12 square miles being from 21 to 90 feet deep. The depth on the bar at low water is 51 feet, and the tides rise from 4 to 6 feet. Guaymas, so much spoken of, contains but one-half square mile of anchorage area and even that is not secure from southwest winds. It is shut in on three sides by barren mountains of porphyry, is one of the hottest places in the world, though remarkably healthy, and its city area is limited and already occupied. San Diego, California, has an anchorage area of 6 square miles, or one-half that of Topolobampo, while New York, Jersey and Brooklyn cities, with a water frontage on the Hudson, East and Harlem rivers, all combined have but 12½ square miles of anchorage, or but one-half

square mile more than the deep and mountain locked anchorage of Topolobampo. The country in the immediate vicinity of San Diego is a sandy, treeless desert, and it has already cost the United States a large sum of money and much time to turn the San Jose river into False Bay, for it threatened to fill the harbor of San Diego with sand, etc. But San Diego is a good harbor and safe anchorage. Admiral Rogers, U. S. N., in 1870, said: "San Diego is amply capacious to accommodate twice the present commerce of the Pacific coast," and the engineers of the Texas Pacific railroad company calculated that San Diego, with a wharf from every alternate street, has room for 550 vessels, with an anchorage in the channel for, at least, twice as many more. Topolobampo, we repeat, is twice the size of San Diego. Acapulco is a secure harbor, attracting the visitor with its granite mountains which completely enclose it, so completely indeed that it was necessary to cut a passage through the mountains that the population in the town might get a sea breeze. It is subject to epidemics and earthquakes; but its admirers claim that it has room for 500 vessels. Topolobampo, like Acapulco is an extinct crater and is markedly picturesque. The mountains on the south shore rise immediately from the waters' edge to a height of about 800 feet. The Peak of Joshua, on the south side of the Straits of Joshua, is reported by Com'd George Dewey, U. S. N., to be 876 feet. Hills of porphyry, 200 to 400 feet high, stand on the north side of the said straits, and immediately back of these there are buttes of porphyry rising 400 feet to 897 feet above the bay; while the north shore of the inner basin sometimes called San Carlos and at others Ohuira Bay, is a plateau stretching 18 miles to the Rio Fuerte, and fronting the harbor with a shell bluff about 12 feet or more above high water. Standing on the site of Carman City, which fronts for six miles on the shell bluff just spoken of and which is already laid out and mapped—

and which contains 25 square miles of area, over 50,000 building lots, and the largest public reservations and parks in any city yet planned—we may look across the San Carlos Bay to the south—at this point 6 miles wide—and to the west, and enjoy a panorama of mountain and bay which for grandeur and picturesque-ness are not surpassed in any part of the world.

Topolobampo is midway between the Fuerte and Sinaloa, two of the largest rivers in Mexico, and as they drain their respective districts there is no stream or rivulet emptying into the basins of Topolobampo; hence the water in the harbor is clear and the white sand on the bottom may be seen at a depth of three and four fathoms. Crab or muscle life are not found in this bay or upon its shores; hence the sea breeze, even from over the low *playas* or beach, is sweet, enjoyable and health-giving. Conshell Point, at the outer entrance to the port, is a deposit of pearl oyster shells. Fish of many varieties and the great sea turtle are in great abundance; and, at times, porpoises play in the San Carlos Bay. Seals sun themselves upon its islands, and even whales have been known to sport upon its waters. The atmosphere is marked for its clearness and the temperature at noon is never below 52° nor above 86°, winter or summer.

Hon. David Turner, U. S. consul, at La Paz, Lower California, writes: "I am well acquainted with the country back of Topolobampo, and indeed once entertained the project of founding a city there and opening a wagon road to the city of Chihuahua, with a view of its extension to the Texas and Pacific railroad. I looked out the road through the Sierra Madre and found no great difficulties in the way, but the pronunciamiento of Diaz against Juarez put a stop to it. Topolobampo is a splendid harbor and not difficult of access by steamers, but the entrance is narrow and is difficult for sailing vessels. It has the finest back country in the world and I have been with carts back 80 miles on natural roads. A city founded

there would almost kill Guaymas and Mazatlan—for a short time, at least; but in the long run there is plenty of room for all of them, and there will be plenty of business if peace and quiet prevail and the resources of the country are developed.”

Commander William T. Truxton, U. S. N., reports relative to Topolobampo: “In fact, for safety, no more secure anchorage is to be found, while, with the aid of two or three buoys, access to it could be made perfectly simple.”

Fred G. Fitch, C. E., and an attaché of the Captain Charles P. Stone survey of the California gulf coast, writes: “No clear-sighted person can fail to see the importance which the geographical position of Northwestern Mexico offers as a terminus to some future system of railways, which must connect somewhere in this vicinity with one of the shorter routes to Japan, China, and the East Indies. Canton, the Sandwich Islands, and the mouth of the Gulf of California lie each within a few minutes of the 22d parallel of north latitude. Within easy reach of this parallel lie Australia to the south and Japan to the north. \* \* \* While from here east we are not only nearer New York, but absolutely clear of the dread snow blockades. When we take all this into consideration, together with the fact that such a road would pass through both great agricultural and mineral wealth, who can doubt but that in time the steam whistle may be heard as the train whirls down the slope of the Sierra Madre, chasing away ignorance, superstition, and darkness from one of the fairest portions of this earth. \* \* \* Centrally situated between Alaska and Cape Horn, with no rival to equal its magnificent harbor and bay; a climate unrivalled in the world, partaking of both the torrid and temperate zones; surrounded by a land capable of producing all that the most favored climate yield for the comfort and luxury of mankind; with forests of magnificent timber growing almost in sight, on the one side, and a water teeming with the finest fish, turtle, and

oysters on the other; mines of gold, silver, copper, quicksilver, tin, iron, and lead, on her right hand within her grasp, balanced on the other hand by pearl fisheries and alabaster-quarries, together with immense and inexhaustible deposits of both salt and sulphur; why, with all these advantages, may not this nearly obscure bay of Topolobampo become one of the great points toward which shall center the greater portion of the commerce of the Pacific. I sincerely believe that as the needs of the world are developed, this point, dormant since the creation, shall spring into a life rivaling ancient Carthage and eclipsing the famous maritime agent in which Venice was mistress of the sea. This is no dream, for we have but to study the capacities of the bay in question, its surrounding resources and geographical position, together with the necessity which approaches on the rapid wings of civilization, to believe all that we predict as to its future.”

Topolobampo, latitude 25° 32' North on the Pacific Ocean, occupies geographically the apex of the great commercial V of the North American continent; that is to say, that each and every port on the coasts of the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico, from Halifax, Nova Scotia, to Brazos de Santiago, and that each and every great centre of industry and population in Canada, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and the United States, east of the Rocky Mountains, the great lakes and the valley of the St. Lawrence, is nearer and has less interruptions from topographic barriers and climatic extremes to Topolobampo than to San Diego, San Francisco, or Puget Sound. Data in support of these statements have been published in official pamphlet (War Department). The demonstrations showing the advantages in distances cannot be refuted successfully, if the principles of Euclid are not in error. St. Louis, Mo., is 316 miles nearer, as the crow flies, to Topolobampo than to San Francisco. Omaha, Neb., is 150 miles nearer to Topolobampo than to

San Francisco, and Fort Worth, Texas, is over 400 miles than to San Diego, and nearly 800 miles nearer than to San Francisco. New York is 340 miles and Philadelphia is 350 miles nearer to Topolobampo than to San Francisco.

Merchandise shipped to Galveston, Texas, could be expressed to the Pacific, via Topolobampo, in a distance of 957 miles—compare this with the land transportation of 3,303 miles from New York to San Francisco, via Union Pacific; or with the distance from Galveston to San Francisco, via San Antonio, El Paso and Fort Yuma, of 2,100 miles; or, via the same route, to San Diego of 1,700 miles.

Vicksburg is 400 miles nearer, in a straight line, to Topolobampo than to San Diego; and Memphis is over 300 miles nearer to San Diego, and 540 miles nearer than to San Francisco. Indianapolis is 200 miles nearer to Topolobampo than to San Diego, and 360 miles nearer than to San Francisco. Washington, D. C., is 215 miles nearer to Topolobampo than to San Diego, and 380 miles nearer than to San Francisco. From Brunswick, Georgia, to Topolobampo, via Mobile, New Orleans and San Antonio, there would be about 1,750 miles of track. This avoids the Gulf of Mexico, if such should be desired, and gives the nearest all-land line, which is practicable, from a deep and convenient port on the Atlantic to a deep and magnificent harbor on the Pacific Ocean. For further arguments see pages 14 to 30, official pamphlet (War Department).

If the actual distances of the trans-continental routes were compared, it would be found that that from New York to Topolobampo, via San Antonio and Eagle Pass, is 1,027 miles less than that from New York to Puget Sound, via Northern Pacific; 784 miles less than that from New York to San Francisco, via Union Pacific; 421 miles less than that from New York to San Diego, via Texas Pacific; and 362 miles less than that from New York to San Blas, via the line proposed by Edward Lee

Plumb. From New Orleans to Topolobampo the distance, via San Antonio, is 544 miles less than that (1,754 miles) given by *The Texas New Yorker*, from New Orleans to San Diego, via Texas Pacific; is 1,190 miles less than that (2,400 miles) from New Orleans to San Francisco, via San Antonio, El Paso and Fort Yuma; and is 690 miles less than that (1,900 miles) from New Orleans to San Diego, via the same route. Galveston would have 790 miles less track to Topolobampo, via San Antonio and Eagle Pass, than to San Diego, via Houston and Dallas; 743 miles less than to San Diego, via San Antonio, El Paso and Fort Yuma, and 1,143 miles less than to San Francisco, via the same route. To reach the Pacific Ocean by rail, at present, from New Orleans one must travel 3,120 miles, and from Mobile 3,060. The route via San Antonio and Topolobampo would save from New Orleans 1,910 miles, and from Mobile 1,728 miles travel. The track distance from St. Louis to the Pacific Ocean, via Union Pacific, is about 2,258 miles; while via San Antonio and Topolobampo it would be but about 1,650 miles. St. Louis may save 600 in reaching the South Sea by building 785 miles of new track—from Austin to San Antonio, Eagle Pass, and Topolobampo.

An all-rail line from Galveston to San Diego, via Topolobampo and Fort Yuma would be 1,750 miles. An all-rail line from Galveston to San Diego, via San Antonio, El Paso and Fort Yuma, would be 1,700 miles.

While the Austin-Topolobampo Pacific indisputably will give a less track and a less "equated" distance from all ports on the eastern coast, and from all metropolitan centres in the Atlantic sections of our continent, it, also, will have a superior claim upon the through travel and traffic between Europe and Asia.

In arguments made in '73, and since, I have presented this subject with more or less emphasis. The data which I now submit is

for general information upon a subject, which special and combined interests, more or less, distort to favor special purposes.

North America stands between oceans and between continents, and its shores are washed by the two "great ocean-rivers" or trade currents—the Gulf and Kuro Siwo streams. Its coast on the Atlantic trends south-westwardly, and its coast on the Pacific trends south-eastwardly, thus forming a wedge of continent which renders the distance across it less as the degrees of latitude are reduced. The distance along the 51st degree of north latitude being about 3,000 miles, and that on the 19th degree, or from Vera Cruz to Mazanillo, being less than 600 miles. But while the land distance is shortened, that across the Atlantic, between Europe and North America is increased as the degrees of latitude are reduced, rendering the distance from Liverpool to Galveston 5,060 nautical miles, almost double that—2,580 nautical miles—from Liverpool to Halifax. On the Pacific, likewise, the direct distances to Asia, from ports in British America, are less than from those on the coasts of the United States and Mexico. Mazatlan is 776 nautical miles further from Hawaii, the most advantageous centre for all parts of the Pacific ocean, than San Francisco.

I herewith present a series of tabulated distances, which, together with those before published, may assist in giving an approximately correct view of the subject in question :

	Nautical Miles.
Liverpool to—	
Halifax (Nova Scotia).....	2,580
Quebec.....	2,634
Boston.....	2,700
New York.....	3,060
Philadelphia.....	3,147
Norfolk.....	3,291
New Orleans.....	4,767
Galveston.....	5,060
Vera Cruz (Mexico).....	5,060
	Statute Miles.
New York to—	
Puget Sound, via Duluth & North Pacific.....	3,546
San Francisco, via Omaha & Union Pacific.....	2,303
San Diego, via Marshall & Texas Pacific.....	2,940
Topolobampo, via San Antonio & Topolobampo Pacific.....	2,519
Magdalena (Lower California) via Topolobampo.....	2,734
San Blas, via Fulton, Laredo & Lagos.....	2,881

New Orleans to—	
San Francisco, via San Antonio, El Paso and Fort Yuma.....	2,400
San Diego, via the same route.....	1,960
San Diego, via Texas Pacific.....	1,754
Topolobampo, via Eagle Pass.....	1,210
Galveston to—	
San Francisco, via San Antonio, El Paso and Fort Yuma.....	2,100
San Diego, via the same route.....	1,700
San Diego, via Texas Pacific.....	1,747
Topolobampo, via Topolobampo Pac	957

Nautical Miles.

Puget Sound to Hakodate, Japan...	4,265
San Francisco to Yokohama, Japan, via Great Circle.....	4,764
*San Francisco to Yokohama, Japan, via Quickest Route.....	5,250
San Diego to Yokohama, Japan, via Great Circle.....	4,815
San Diego to Yokohama, Japan, via Quickest route.....	5,139
Magdalena to Yokohama, Japan, via Great Circle.....	5,268
New York to—	
Honolulu, via Union Pacific.....	4,955
" " Texas.....	4,857
" " Topolobampo Pacific.....	5,031
" " Topolobampo & Magdalena.....	4,917
Norfolk to—	
Honolulu, via Topolobampo.....	4,831
" " " and Magdalena.....	4,667
New Orleans to—	
Honolulu, via San Diego.....	3,825
" " Topolobampo.....	3,931
" " " and Magdalena.....	3,817
Galveston to—	
Honolulu, via San Diego.....	3,819
" " Topolobampo.....	3,673
" " " and Magdalena.....	3,509
Liverpool to—	
Yokohama, via Tehuantepec.....	12,000
" " Suez Canal.....	11,403
" " N. Y. & San Francisco.....	11,182
" " N. Y. and San Diego.....	10,756
" " N. Y. and Topolobampo.....	11,060
Yokohama, via N. Y. and Topolobampo and Magdalena.....	10,967
Magdalena to Yokohama, Japan, via Quickest Route.....	5,530
Magdalena to Hong Kong, China, via Great Circle.....	6,902
Cape San Lucas to Yokohama.....	5,621
Guaymas to Yokohama.....	5,995
Topolobampo to ".....	5,810
Mazatlan ".....	5,828
San Francisco to Honolulu (Sandwich Island).....	2,683
San Diego to Honolulu.....	2,300
Magdalena to ".....	2,540
Topolobampo to " via Cape San Lucas.....	2,841
Mazatlan to Honolulu.....	2,859
Panama to ".....	4,780
Honolulu to Shanghai (China).....	4,478
" Canton.....	5,500
" Sangapore.....	5,832
" Calcutta.....	7,512
" Auckland (New Zealand).....	3,817
" Tahiti (Society Isl'ds).....	2,400
" Calloo (Mercator and Sailing).....	5,145
Honolulu to Valparaiso (Mercator and Sailing).....	5,992
New York to—	
Yokohama, via Cape Horn.....	17,340
" " Good Hope.....	15,150
" " Suez Canal.....	13,493
" " Darien.....	10,210
" " Tehautepec.....	9,435
" " Union Pacific.....	8,122
" " Texas Pacific.....	7,696
" " Topolobampo Pac.....	8,000
" " Topolobampo and Magdalena.....	7,907

\*The mail steamers now plying between Yokohama and San Francisco, for the purpose of exchanging mails in mid-ocean, steam on a line between the great circle and the 80th Parallel Route and cross the Pacific in a distance of about 4,770 nautical miles. The passage would be quicker, however, if one kept to the former and the other to the latter.

Liverpool to—	
Yokohama via Norfolk and Topolobampo .....	11,091
Yokohama via Norfolk, Topolobampo and Magdalena .....	10,973
Liverpool to—	
Yokohama via New Orleans and San Diego .....	11,431
Yokohama via N. O. & Topolobampo .....	11,624
Yokohama via N. O., Topolobampo and Magdalena .....	11,531
Liverpool to—	
Yokohama via Galveston and San Diego .....	11,718
Yokohama via Galveston and Topolobampo .....	11,702
Yokohama via Galveston, Topolobampo and Magdalena .....	11,609
Liverpool to—	
Yokohama via Boston-Topolobampo .....	10,901
Liverpool to—	
Honolulu via Norfolk-Topolobampo .....	8,122
“ “ N. Orleans-San Diego .....	8,592
“ “ N. O., Topolobampo .....	8,697
“ “ N. O., Topolobampo and Magdalena .....	8,584
Honolulu via Galveston, San Diego .....	8,876
“ “ “ Topolobampo .....	8,733
“ “ “ “ and Magdalena .....	8,616
Topolobampo to Cape Lucas .....	175
Mazatlan to Cape Lucas .....	198
Topolobampo to San Francisco via Cape San Lucas .....	1,300
Topolobampo to San Diego via Cape San Lucas .....	936
“ “ Mouth Rio Colorado .....	480
“ “ Guaymas .....	185
“ “ Mazatlan .....	204
“ “ La Paz Bay .....	109
*Topolobampo to Magdalena Bay (Lower California) .....	187
Topolobampo to Honolulu .....	2,841
“ “ Manzanillo .....	494
“ “ Acapulco .....	784
“ “ Panama .....	2,211

To all points on the Mexican Pacific coast, via the ocean, south of the Gulf of California, and in Central and South America, Topolobampo has more than 1,000 nautical miles advantage over San Francisco; more than 800 nautical miles advantage over San Diego; and over 185 nautical miles over Guaymas. The advantages enjoyed by Topolobampo, on the land, over those by San Francisco, San Diego and Guaymas to points in Mexico and in Central and South America are much greater than on the sea.

	Statute Miles.
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Northern Pacific, (1,700 miles to be built) .....	3,546
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Union Pacific .....	3,303
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Texas Pacific, (1,400 miles to be built) .....	2,940
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Topolobampo Pacific, (700 miles to be built) .....	2,519
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Tehuantepec Line, (via Havana) .....	2,523
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Honduras Line (via Havana) .....	2,523

\*Currents and winds being favorable, steamers can go from Magdalena Bay to lat. 30° N. long. 160° W., thence to long. 150° E. lat. 30° N., to Yokohama, dist. 5,530 miles.

The quickest average time possible from England to Japan, across North America, may be made via. Norfolk, Topolobampo and Magdalena,

New York to Pacific Ocean, via Nicaragua Line .....	2,587
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Panama R. R. .....	2,330
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Darien .....	2,367
New York to Pacific Ocean, via Cape Horn Route (via Rio Jano. and Magdalena .....	8,480

So far as direct distances are concerned, the above tables give a practical solution to the subject in review; but attention must now be given to trade winds, ocean currents, icebergs, fogs, and calm belts, which play an important control on the high-sea routes; and to the snow, ice, frost, and topography, or the equated distances of curves and grades, which must be more or less contended with in passing across North America. It is sufficient that attention be called to these facts. The details would be too tedious for this occasion. The quickest time from Europe to Asia, *all routes being equally free from obstacles*, would be on that route having the shortest water and the longest land distances. In the economy of expenditure, however, the reverse would be the fact. For a basis to calculate the expense of water carriage, it may here be stated, that steamers, now plying between New York and Galveston, carry freights (about 2,000 miles) for 15 cents per 100 pounds. To move a ton of wheat 100 miles over an average railroad costs as much to ship it 2,300 miles on the ocean. Even taking St. Louis at but 316 and Chicago at but 221 miles nearer to Topolobampo than to San Francisco a ton of wheat could be sent from St. Louis to Topolobampo, and 7,268 miles over the ocean—into Japan, China, and East India—or from Chicago to Topolobampo, and 5,083 miles by sea—into Central and South America—for the same freightage that would put it on the quays at San Francisco.

It may be readily learned of seafaring men that the average passage by steamer from Liverpool to Halifax is longer in time and less safe than the average passage between Liverpool and New York, although the former is 480 miles less in distance than the latter. The late Commander M. F. Maury, in his "Geography of the

Seas," says, that the average passage from Liverpool to New York and that between Liverpool and Norfolk are equal, the latter being free from icebergs in the summer and comparatively free from fogs in the winter—these advantages in the second overcoming the 231 miles advantage of the first. In glancing at the Pacific it is seen that San Francisco stands within 4,760 miles of Japan, yet vessels steam from her port 5,250 miles, so as to have the advantages of the upper edge of the trade winds and current which sweep towards Asia on and below the 30th parallel of north latitude. A steamer or sailing vessel from Magdalena bay, or from Cape San Lucas, has stronger winds and currents for the Sandwich Islands, and in all ports of Japan and China, than from either San Francisco or San Diego—sufficient, it is believed, to almost overcome the disadvantage—the direct distances. The advantage a railroad line would have from Norfolk to Topolobampo, over the route from New York to San Francisco, is 1,014 miles, and over that from New York to San Diego is 651 miles. When the equated distances of the trans-continental lines are established and compared, the Norfolk-Topolobampo route will appear, it is thought, to still greater advantage.

Norfolk will be recognized as the port the furthest north unembarrassed by ice and snow in winter, and the furthest south free from tropical epidemics in the summer; consequently, as the harbor through which, at all seasons of the year, tourists and freights may be forwarded to the great basin of the Mississippi and to the South Sea, which is a peculiar advantage this ports maintains above every other on the Atlantic seaboard. Norfolk occupies, on the Atlantic, the same superior relations to the back country that Topolobampo, on the Pacific, monopolizes. Topolobampo, likewise, is the harbor furthest south free from the malaria prevalent in the Tierras Calientes of Mexico, being in fact, in that happy zone of perpetual summer, where it is too cool for

the full growth of the banana, and yet sufficiently warm for the luxuriant palm.

It is in consideration of the above, together with other facts not necessary to be dwelt upon on this occasion, that I still suggest to the southern railroad interests the propriety of straightening and improving their existing lines of track, between Norfolk, Virginia, and Austin or San Antonio, Texas, and to push across Mexico to Topolobampo and to the South Sea. Such a consolidation of interest and co-operation of effort would not only establish a permanent base for the diversification of southern industries, but would attract and control a due proportion of through travel and exchange, which pass across North America en route from Europe to Asia, India, Australia, Mexico, Central and South America.

The characteristics of the country which separates Topolobampo from San Antonio, the out-post railroad connection in Texas, are many and are attractively interesting. It is a section of country rich in traditions, picturesque in scenery, and studded over with the ruins and relics of pre-historic peoples. The zone of continent lying south from the borders of Arizona and New Mexico to a line drawn from the mouth of the Rio Grande to Mazatlan, and stretching from the western edge of Texas to the eastern coast of the California gulf contains an area of about 325,000 square miles, or 50,000 square miles more than the entire State of Texas, which contains an area equal to four times the size of the six New England States, or 210 times the area of the State of Rhode Island. The States included in this zone of continent, are Chihuahua, Sonora, Sinaloa, Durango, Coahuila, and parts of Nuevo Leon, Zacatecas, and Tamaulipas, and, perhaps, have a mixed population of Spaniards, Mexicans and Indians of one million or more.

Relating to the fertility of the land bordering on Topolobampo, of that of the State of Sinaloa and of that of the zone of continent lying between Topolobampo

and the Texas border, I have published about a dozen pamphlets, and from those now in possession of Mr. Vega may be found full information on the subject. The only section presenting any hard work for a railroad passing from Topolobampo to Texas is that for about 90 to 100 miles in the mountains in the extreme western part of Chihuahua; and as Mr. Vega works a copper mine in the upper valley of the Fuerte river, in the very midst of these mountains, and on the line which I have again and again proven to be easy and of little cost, when compared with the work on the Sierra Nevada on the route of the Central Pacific railroad, he will no doubt sustain the reports of those persons who have passed over the route from Topolobampo direct to Chihuahua City, and who have reported its advantages for an east and west road.

When the plateaux of Western Chihuahua are reached then a railroad may be run to the East, North and South for a thousand miles without having to cross any mountains or any grades worthy of remark. From Fort Yuma, Arizona, now connected by 731 miles of track with San Francisco, to Topolobampo a railroad would find a level country for the entire distance of 650 miles, and nothing except some small streams to add to the cost of construction. Adding 731 to 650 miles we have 1,381 miles as the track distance from Topolobampo to San Francisco. From Topolobampo direct to the City of Mexico the line would pass along the level coast country of Sinaloa and Jalisco, cross the mountains over the wagon road of Tepic Pass, and, via Guadalajara, reach the capital in a distance of about 850 miles.

When Topolobampo and its advantages become known to business men in the United States and Mexico, it will be rapidly connected with all the trade centres of North America, and be acknowledged as the greatest commercial

discovery of the age, and there will rise on its shores the greatest and wealthiest metropolis on the Pacific coast.

There are two ways to build railroads. One—the *old plan*—is for the Government to surrender its right of *Eminent Domain*, and to grant concessions, subsidies, credit and special credits. The other—the *new plan*—is for the Government to preserve its rights of *Eminent Domain* as sacred, and through a commission or syndicate to construct railroads and to issue treasury money in full payment of the labor and material used to complete the same; the said railroads to belong to the government, but to be leased and operated by the said commission or syndicate under restricted regulations made in the interests of individual rights. The first builds up the corporation in lieu of the State. The second builds up the State in lieu of the corporation. The first is the sinister designs of tricksters to subvert free institutions, public institutions and national credits for the selfish use of soulless bodies. The second is the plans of statesmen and patriots to preserve and perfect free institutions, public works and national credits for and in the interest of the public, to the end that the individual may be free and that the State may be great.

The new plan has been presented by me to the Governments of the United States and the United Mexican States, and I never lose an opportunity to dwell upon its details. This letter, however, is already too long.

I sincerely trust that no railroad will ever be built to Topolobampo or to any other part of Mexico, which has to be constructed and monopolized by a corporation, home or foreign; that has to be controlled for, by and in the interest of a licensed class of pirates, who will prey upon and finally enslave the Mexican people.

Respectfully,

A. K. OWEN.