

projected of three great transcontinental lines, is the last to be completed. Yet time has justified the wisdom of Thomas Jefferson in causing the route it follows to be explored as the best natural highway for commerce from ocean to ocean, and justified, too, the foresight of Whitney and the engineering skill of Johnson in claiming in advance of its actual survey that it offered the best line for railroad construction and traffic.

A history of the Northern Pacific enterprise should be something more than an account of the efforts of adventurous capitalists and energetic railway builders to open a great transportation line across the continent. It should be, in its beginning at least, the history of a national movement to find an outlet to the western sea. In this spirit I have endeavored to treat the subject. No other railroad enterprise ever enlisted among its stockholders so numerous and widely scattered a constituency; no other ever attracted for so long a period so large a share of public attention; no other of considerable magnitude ever passed successfully through such vicissitudes and perils; no other ever developed so vast an area of country adapted for the uses of civilized man, and I believe no other is destined to reap such great and lasting prosperity.

E. V. S.

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