

Many New Railroads for Greater Montana

Proposed Lines Make Enormous Mileage Total of 2,058

Over 1,000 Miles Assured; Some Prospective Projects; New Sections to Be Opened

MORE than 2,000 miles of railway lines—2,058 miles to be exact—are projected or proposed for construction within the borders of Montana within the next few years. At a cost of \$30,000 a mile this would involve an outlay for track construction alone of \$60,000,000, to say nothing of expenditures for yards and roundhouses, machine shops and stations and rolling stock. Nor does this include the cost of double-tracking present lines, already under way on the Great Northern.

Some of the projects have been pending for four or five years, awaiting a more favorable financial situation and the release of capital from other enterprises. A considerable proportion of this mileage is already surveyed, in some cases the grading has been completed and the roadbed is ready for the laying of track. A number of the projects would have been carried through ere this had it not been for the outbreak of the European war with the consequent unsettlement of the money market. Some of the lines included in the list are merely proposed and possibly a few of them will never be built, but it is likely that these will be offset in the calculation by the construction of lines as yet not even suggested. More than half the mileage included in the count is virtually certain of early construction.

"Soo" Extension to Give New Transcontinental Line.

One of the lines, the extension of the "Soo" through western North Dakota and up the Missouri river to the mouth of Arrow creek, thence to Great Falls and northwest to Crow's Nest pass, would provide an entirely new transcontinental line through the state. This road was to cross the Yellowstone at Sidney and run south of the Missouri, 20 to 30 miles north of the Great Northern's Great Falls-Lewistown-New Rockford cut-off. As it neared the southward bend of the Missouri at the mouth of the Musselshell, it was to run down Squaw creek and up Crooked creek, thence to the mouth of Arrow creek. The greater part of this route was surveyed four or five years ago. From Great Falls the road was to run northward to some point in southwestern Alberta to connect with the Canadian Pacific near Crow's Nest pass.

This line will shorten the "Soo" between Minneapolis and St. Paul by about 200 miles. Running through Crow's Nest pass to Spokane and thence to the coast, the route will be the shortest between Chicago and the Pacific. The "Soo" has long considered paralleling the Great Northern lines at sufficient distances to assure the creation of entirely new business and it intends eventually to extend the line that now has its terminus at Whitetail until it connects

from Winnett to the town of Weede on the Musselshell along which both roads will operate. From Weede the Great Northern will push on eastward, while the Milwaukee will run a line southward to connect with its transcontinental line at Melstone. From Fairview the construction has proceeded simultaneously eastward and westward. It is under operation as far east as Watford City, McKenzie county, North Dakota, and as far west as Lambert, Richland county, Montana. The tracks have been laid as far west, however, as Richey, Dawson county, Montana.

Musselshell-Circle Stretch To Be Built in 1918.

The line into North Dakota was built south from a junction with the Great Northern main line at Snowden, 14.3 miles to Fairview, and thence east, a total of 50.6 miles. From Fairview the line was built west to Lambert, giving a total east and west line of 72.7 miles. To this should be added 25 miles, the distance from Lambert to Richey, to which point the line is being operated to a degree under construction forces. It is expected that the line will be completed next year to Circle, 50 miles farther west. As the line from Winnett is expected to be completed to the Musselshell by the end of next year, this will leave between 110 and 120 miles to be constructed in 1918 for the linking of the east and west lines.

The Great Northern intends ultimately to make additional cut-offs in the western part of the state between Great Falls and Libby that will put Lewistown and other towns on the New Rockford line on a new transcontinental route. One of these cut-offs would extend from the western terminus of the Great Falls-Gilman line, northwestward past Swan Lake to Kalispell, shortening considerably the present roundabout route via Shelby. Another cut-off would run a little north of west from Kalispell to Jennings, 15 miles east of Libby, shortening by more than half the present route by way of Columbia Falls, Eureka and Rexford.

New Agricultural Empire To Be Opened by Cut-off.

The New Rockford-Lewistown cut-off is expected to double, triple and quadruple within a few years the population of a vast territory once regarded as worthless for the growing of crops, but now recognized as an agricultural empire that soon will be among the world's foremost wheat producing and flax-growing districts. The cut-offs west of Great Falls will make possible greater development of the lumber industry, the opening of new mines and the settlement of the mountain valleys by orchardists.

Milwaukee to Shorten Line From Missoula to Great Falls.

Still another transcontinental road, the Milwaukee, through its proposed Missoula-Great Falls cut-off, yet to be constructed from Clearwater to Manchester through Ovando, Clemons and Riebeling, together with the projected line from Grass Range eastward and from Weede south, contemplates an alternative routing in the overland journey. With the completion of these lines the transcontinental traveler could pass through Roundup, Butte and Deer Lodge going one way, and on his return, by leaving the present main line at Bonner, a few miles east of Missoula, to rejoin it at Melstone, could visit Great Falls and Lewistown, traveling continuously the meanwhile on Milwaukee lines.

The intention of the road to build this cut-off became clearly evident when, in the construction of the Agawam line, heavy main line rails were laid from Great Falls to Manchester, whence the survey runs southwesterly to Clearwater, to which point construction was completed last year from Blackfoot junction, a distance of 25 miles, working northeasterly from Bonner.

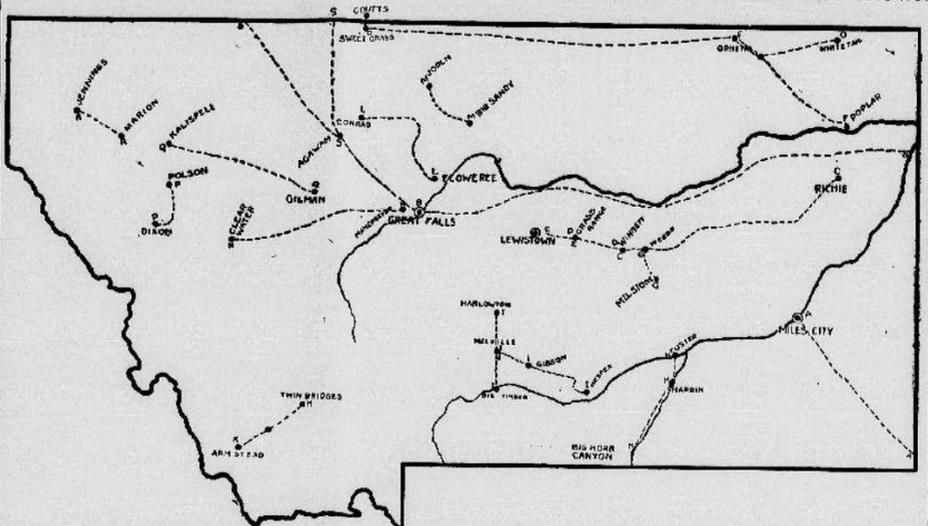
Just at present Boyes and Pinefle in the southern part of Fallon county are the center of homestead excitement, largely due to rumors in that section that construction work is soon to start on the proposed Bellefourche-Northwestern branch of the Chicago & Northwestern, which would bring another big railroad into the state. The line would enter Montana near the southeast corner and run northwesterly to Miles City, where is located the world's greatest horse market—the center also of the cattle-raising industry in that part of the state.

Relations With Alberta Will Be Made Closer.

The proposed railroad construction will make closer the relations between Montana and her Canadian neighbor, Alberta. Besides the extension of the Soo lines with the building of feeders, the Milwaukee is considering an extension of its Choate-Agawam line, completed a few days ago, northward to the coal fields that the line possesses in Alberta. Freight, including coal, is already being transported over this line, but passenger service will not be started until the spring or early summer after the ballasting has been finished. The roadbed of this line was completed last year, but all the rails, from Great Falls to Agawam, a distance of 70 miles, were laid this year.

The heavy crops of Montana this year, when the yield of grains throughout the middle west was below normal were the one thing needed to turn construction suggestions or proposals into actual projects. Between the Teton and Marias rivers are

MAP SHOW RAILROADS IN PROSPECT; LINES CONSTRUCTED OR IN OPERATION NOT SHOWN



KEY TO MAP.—aa—Bellefourche, South Dakota, to Miles City; bbb—Soo cut-off from Minot, North Dakota, through Berthold into Montana, crossing Yellowstone at Sidney, thence up Missouri to Great Falls and northward into Alberta; cc—Great Northern cut-off from Winnett to Richey; dd—Milwaukee cut-off from Grass Range to Winnett to be shared by Great Northern; ee—Great Northern cut-off, already graded, from point nine miles east of Lewistown to junction with Milwaukee mile and a half east of Grass Range; ff—"North Country" railroad from Ophim to Poplar; gg—Milwaukee extension from Weede to Melstone; hhh—Custer to Big Horn canyon; iii—"Big Basin" road, Hesper to Gibson, thence to Melville and Harlowton; jj—Big Timber to Melville, Northern Pacific branch; kk—Armistead to Twin Bridges, Gilmore & Pittsburg extension; ll—Conrad to Flowerere, Great Northern branch; mm—Joplin to Big Sandy, Great Northern branch; nn—Clearwater to Manchester, Milwaukee cut-off; oo—"Soo" extension westward from Whitetail; pp—Dixon-Polson Great Northern branch; qq—Kalispell-Gilman Great Northern cut-off; rr—Jennings-Marion Great Northern cut-off.

hundreds of thousands of acres of rich farming land, much of it already taken up by homesteaders, that has been without convenient railroad facilities. The center of this area is the town of Genou. For several years there has been talk of the building of a Great Northern branch through this territory and upon most of the half dozen or so routes proposed Genou was located. The population of the district was taken by surprise, however, when, a few days ago, 35 surveyors from Great Falls, under the personal charge of Chief Engineer M. A. Butler of St. Paul arrived in Conrad to make the permanent survey of a railroad east from that city to connect with the Havre-Great Falls line. They are running several preliminary lines, all of which pass through Genou. The eastern terminal, however, has not yet been chosen. The route most favored runs through or passes close to Solland, Montrose, Selma and Genou to Flowerere. A more direct line suggested would run southeastward through Lytle and Genou to Tunis. Carter also has been considered as a terminus.

Surveyors to Be in Field Until Middle of February.

The preliminary lines will be run through such portions of the territory as offer the most alluring prospects of freight and passenger business while presenting the least difficulties from a construction point of view. The engineering chiefs of the Great Northern, after reports of the preliminary surveys have been submitted, will select the most feasible

route. It is expected that the surveying party will be in the field until the middle of February and that the final selection will be made before it is withdrawn. It is the belief of rail-



A. J. Earling, President of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway.

road men that actual construction of the line will be started in the spring. Among the suggestions previously considered was a branch leaving the Shelby line at Brady, extending northwesterly across the Marias and terminating at or near Kenilworth,

there connecting with the proposed Great Northern branch from Big Sandy to Joplin, which is expected to be routed through Kenilworth and Brinkman. Another proposal was for a line to follow the Marias valley southeastward and connect with the Havre line in the vicinity of Loma. Another line suggested was to run from Chester south to Fort Benton or Great Falls. It is generally understood that all these proposed lines, except the Big Sandy-Joplin project, have been superseded by the line now being surveyed from Conrad.

Construction of "North Country" Line to Ophim Assured.

The opening up of another rich agricultural section is assured by the construction of the "north country" railroad, a branch of the Great Northern from Poplar through Glentana to Ophim, for which rights of way already have been secured. The railroad company through agents who represented themselves to be home-seekers, recently completed the purchase of a right of way from the main line through to Ophim and bought 160 acres for a townsite within a half mile of where Ophim now stands. The route was surveyed this year and it is probable that construction will begin in the spring.

Yet another line assured that will serve a rich farming district is the Lake Basin railway, the construction of which from Hesper, in Yellowstone county, to Gibson, in Stillwater county, a distance of 38 miles, has already been authorized. This is regarded as a branch of the Northern Pacific, or at least the property of the Northern Pacific. It does not connect up with the Northern Pacific, however, as Hesper is on the line of the Billings and Northern, a Great Northern offshoot. The general direction of the line as far as Gibson, to which point it is to be completed next year, is northwesterly. One of the important stations along the route will be the town of Steckley.

From Gibson the line will be continued ultimately in the same general direction to Melville and thence north to Harlowton. By a line from Big Timber to Melville the Northern Pacific will thus be able to connect Harlowton with its main line.

Contract Let for Construction Of Dixon-Polson Line.

The contract already has been let for a branch line of the Northern Pacific north of Dixon. This will run through St. Ignatius and Roman to Polson on the Flathead lake, a distance of about 40 miles. It is likely that the construction will be completed sometime next year.

Rumors are again abroad that the Gilmore and Pittsburg, the "road of mystery," is about to be extended northward through Dillon to connect with the Northern Pacific branch at Twin Bridges, simultaneously with the extension of the Gilmore and Pittsburg west from Salmon City, Idaho, to Pasco, Washington. The Gilmore and Pittsburg is a subsidiary of the Northern Pacific, which purchased it two years ago. The two cut-offs proposed would provide a new transcontinental line which would be used extensively for freight as this southern route furnishes the only continuous water grade from western Montana to the coast.

A railroad 68 miles long from Custer to Hardin and thence up the Big Horn river to the foot of the canyon near the southern boundary of the state is planned in connection with the proposed construction of a dam 480 feet high by the Big Horn Canyon Irrigation & Power company of Hardin. Spur lines would be run from the canyon terminus of the line to the base and top of the dam. The surveys for this railroad were made in 1913. The building of the line

would precede the construction of the dam, one of the objects of which would be to provide power for the electrification of the railroads of southern Montana.

Northern Pacific Soon to Build From Wilsall to Ringling.

It is likely that one of the next stretches of construction to be undertaken will be the extension of the Wilsall branch of the Northern Pacific to Ringling. The survey for this line was made several years ago, but the project was held up by the outbreak of the European war. The original intention of the Northern Pacific was to run this line clear through to Great Falls, utilizing the White Sulphur Springs & Yellowstone Park railway's line from Ringling to White Sulphur Springs, building thence up Smith river and turning northeastward near the mouth of that river through the coal fields. The Milwaukee, however, checked this more ambitious move of the Northern Pacific for the time by purchasing the White Sulphur Springs and Yellowstone Park outright. The extension of the Wilsall line to Ringling still remains a lively prospect because of the agricultural wealth it would tap.

Suggestions for many other lines have come from farmers' organizations and commercial clubs, of which some undoubtedly will receive serious consideration from the men who build railroads. At a recent meeting of the Chinook commercial club that was attended by representatives of the farmers, measures were discussed for obtaining the construction of a railroad from Chinook northwest through Blaine and Hill counties. Efforts are being made to induce the Great Northern to build the line. If this plan fails, it is proposed to have Chinook interests finance the project. The most popular proposal is for a road 50 miles up the Red Rock. It is pointed out that the grade would be easy and the route would be virtually straight. It is said that a right of way could be obtained at little cost.

Another big project likely to be undertaken within the next year or two is the rebuilding of the Northern Pacific line between Bozeman and Logan at a cost of \$2,000,000.

Vast improvements, including the double tracking of virtually its entire main line in Montana, are already projected by the Great Northern. Contracts will be awarded shortly after the first of the year for the double-tracking of 44 miles of the main line at six different points.

This work will consist of four miles of double-tracking between Havre and Pacific Junction, 25 miles of double track between Shelby and Cutbank, nine miles of double track between Columbia Falls and Whitefish, and a change of line and con-



Louis Hill, President of the Great Northern Railroad.

struction of double tracks between Essex and Java. At present the Great Northern has only 14 miles of double track in the state. This was constructed in the last few years in the vicinity of the summit of the Rocky mountains.

Great Northern to Expend \$500,000 in Great Falls.

The Great Northern expects to spend half a million in construction work in Great Falls alone next year. New freight yards will be built at a cost of \$200,000, while \$300,000 will be expended in the construction of new shops.

The yards at Havre and Cutbank, both division points, are to be enlarged.

The considerable stride that has been made within the past year in electrifying railway lines in Montana is likely to be regarded two or three years hence as mere pioneering. Within the year the Milwaukee added nearly 190 miles to its electrically equipped and operated lines in the state between Deer Lodge and Alberton, leaving less than 30 miles to be finished out of 440 covered by the original appropriation. The completion of this final stretch is held up by the heavy snow in the high hills. Now the Great Northern has financed an arrangement for electrifying its lines in the western part of Montana and it is expected that the Northern Pacific soon will follow the example of the other two lines. Montana then will be the first western state to have all its mountain railway lines completely electrified.



J. M. Hannaford, President of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

with the Canadian Pacific at Sweetgrass and Coumts. This construction would be followed by the construction of feeders between the two main lines in the state, one of which would probably extend southward from Ophim to the cut-off south of the Missouri, thus providing a direct route between the northeastern part of the state and Lewistown. This feeder, which might also serve as a link in an alternative transcontinental route, is not shown on the map because of its highly conjectural character.

New Rockford Cut-off Steadily Being Extended East and West.

Entirely beyond the realm of conjecture is the Lewistown-New Rockford cut-off of the Great Northern, which is being steadily pushed to completion. Track has been laid for nine miles out of Lewistown to the big tunnel, where excavation is proceeding rapidly. This bore, which will have a length of 3,100 feet, is more than half completed. It is expected that it will be finished about the first of May, when the laying of rails to Winnett will begin. A second tunnel on the route between Grass Range and Winnett is about a third completed. The Milwaukee has completed the grading of its line from Grass Range to Winnett, which will be used jointly by the two railways. A double track will be laid between these two points in the spring. The two lines meet a mile and a half east of Grass Range. At this junction either one or two elevators will be built. Early in the spring it is expected that the Great Northern will begin work on the extension

Summary of Proposed Railroad Construction in Treasure State

1. Extension of Bellefourche-Northwestern branch of Chicago and Northwestern, from Bellefourche, South Dakota, to Miles City; 140 miles in Montana.
2. Cut-off of Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault St. Marie, popularly known as the "Soo line," entering Montana from North Dakota, crossing Yellowstone near Sidney, following Missouri river generally to mouth of Arrow Creek, thence to Great Falls, thence northward into southwestern part of Alberta and on to Crow's Nest pass; 550 miles in Montana.
3. Great Northern cut-off from New Rockford, North Dakota, to Winnett; line already completed from eastern boundary of Montana to Richey, leaving 190 miles to be built in Montana.
4. Milwaukee double-track cut-off from Grass Range to Winnett, to be shared with Great Northern; grading completed but rails to be laid in spring; 26 miles.
5. Great Northern cut-off from Lewistown to junction with Milwaukee, mile and a half east of Grass Range; line completed nine miles east of Lewistown, leaving 25 miles to be built.
6. Branch of Great Northern from Poplar to Glentana and Ophim; rights of way being purchased; 80 miles.
7. Milwaukee extension from Weede to Melstone; 22 miles.
8. Road proposed from projected irrigation dam in Big Horn Canyon to Hardin and Custer; 70 miles.
9. Lake Basin railway, regarded as branch of Northern Pacific; construction already authorized from Hesper, on line of Billings and Northern, to Gibson, 38 miles; extension probable to Melville, thence to Harlowton, making total from Hesper to Harlowton 90 miles.
10. Northern Pacific branch from Big Timber to Melville, 20 miles.
11. Extension of Gilmore & Pittsburg, Northern Pacific property, from Armistead through Dillon to Twin Bridges; 50 miles.
12. Feeder for Great Falls-Shelby Great Northern line to run probably from Conrad to Genou, thence to Flowerere and connecting with Montana Western; 60 miles.
13. Great Northern branch from Big Sandy, through Kenilworth and Brinkman to Joplin; 50 miles.
14. Great Falls-Missoula cut-off of Milwaukee line from Clearwater to Manchester, through Ovando, Clemons and Riebeling; 125 miles.
15. "Soo" extension from Whitetail westward, paralleling Great Northern, ultimately to reach Sweetgrass and Coumts, connecting with Canadian Pacific and serving as cut-off; 250 miles.
16. Branch of Northern Pacific from Dixon through St. Ignatius and Roman to Polson; 40 miles.
17. Great Northern cut-off from Gilman through Swan Lake to Kalispell; 125 miles.
18. Great Northern cut-off from Marion to Jennings; 40 miles.
19. Extension of Agawam branch of Milwaukee to coal fields in Alberta owned by railroad; 80 miles in Montana.
20. Extension of Northern Pacific Wilsall branch to Ringling, already surveyed; 50 miles.