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MINING.

The Oasis

THE
BEST WEEKLY
NEWSPAPER
IN ARIZONA.

SECOND SERIES,
Vol. VIII, No. 4.

NOGALES, ARIZONA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1906.

Whole No. 710

SOMETHING DOING.

Activity in Railroad Circles in Arizona and Sonora and Plans That Attract Wide Attention.

Interesting in the extreme is the railroad situation in this section at the present time. Particularly interesting to the people of the line cities, the principal ports on the Arizona-Mexican line, and the point at which another extensive railroad system now wishes to touch.

The Southern Pacific system is now anxious to make Nogales the junction of the line that is to connect the Sonora railroad with the Cananea road to the east of this place. At the same time the Gulf & Arizona line, to be built from Denver, Colorado, to the Gulf of California, is casting about for a way to touch Nogales.

From Port Lobos, Sonora, on the Gulf of California, via Caborca, Sonora, and Tucson, Arizona, to Denver, runs the route soon to be surveyed for the construction of the Arizona & Gulf road. More than fifty miles of the southern end of the new road has been already surveyed, between Port Lobos and Caborca, Sonora, and construction work will be commenced within two weeks. At the same time railroad engineers, who have been reconnoitering the route from Caborca north, to the Mexican-Arizona line, will commence surveying the road to the international line, which will be crossed somewhere in the vicinity of Sasabe, Son., about ninety miles southwest of Tucson, Arizona. From the international line the survey will be continued through American territory, via Tucson, to Denver.

In addition to the construction of the railroad from Denver to the Gulf of California, the same people who are included in the Gulf & Arizona Railway Company, as members of another corporation, will establish a line of steamers to operate along the Pacific coast of North and South America and across to Asiatic and European ports.

The promoters only of the enterprise are known here, but they are backed by eastern railroad and steamship operators; men who already control one of the great transcontinental lines that enter Denver. Those men, however, will keep in the background till the route from Tucson to Denver has been finally decided upon. The promoters are John Henderson of Nogales; J. H. McKibben of Cincinnati, Ohio; W. K. McKibben of Pasadena, California.

The Gulf & Arizona road will give Arizona shorter and more direct connection with the transcontinental lines of the north and will give to Sonora and the west coast of Mexico the same advantage. To travel north from Arizona points at the present time it is necessary to go east to New Mexico and north through that territory, or west through California and north through that state. The new road, running north and south, will cut off hundreds of miles of travel and hundreds of

miles of freight hauling for Arizona. And it will give railroad connection to a large undeveloped portion of the territory, both north and south. In Sonora it will pass through one of the richest mineral sections in the Mexican Republic—the famous Altar district.

The inception and gradual broadening of the plans of the Gulf & Arizona line to their present extension is itself an interesting story and a practical demonstration of how "great oaks from little acorns grow." A few years ago Mr. John Henderson of Nogales, mining promoter and prospector, entered the Altar district of Sonora, there acquiring the Calera and Lista Blanca mining claims. With time and labor the claims developed into valuable mines and a smelter was needed to treat the ore. More capital than was at the prospector's command was needed and the promoter started out to find it. The McKibben brothers were finally interested and with others organized the Ohio-Mexican Company and the smelter was established. Later it was learned that coke could be bought in Spain and laid down on the gulf coast at a cost of \$8.50 per ton. The same article, purchased in the United States and laid down at Santa Ana, on the Sonora railroad, cost \$14 and a haul of seventy-five miles by wagon was then necessary to place it at the smelter. The difference in the cost of coke was great and Mr. Henderson spent weeks cruising along the gulf coast in a launch, seeking the port most convenient to Caborca, near which town the smelter is located. He decided upon Port Lobos about fifty miles from Caborca. The question of getting the coke from Port Lobos to the smelter was next to be settled and a concession from the Mexican government was secured for the construction of a railroad from the port to Caborca. Knowing the rich country lying to the north of the proposed road, the promoters next formed the plan of extending the line north to Tucson. The question of a further concession from the Mexican government was brought up and the north to the international line at Sasabe, they desired a concession northeast from Caborca to Nogales, Sonora, from which place they would build north to Tucson and on to Denver. Coming into Nogales, Sonora, would give them connection with the Sonora railroad, right at the international line. For months railroad engineers operated in the country lying between Nogales and Caborca. From Caborca to Saric, twenty-two miles from Nogales, is easy building, but the last twenty-two miles is through rugged, hilly country, that would require a large outlay of capital to penetrate. But the desire of the railroad magnates was to build to Nogales, the main port promoters were given to understand that the desired concession to the international line would be granted. Further capital was needed and John Henderson visited the eastern cities. Chicago men were interested and finally

some of the great railroad builders of the day entered into the plans. They studied the country and instead of the route from Caborca of entry, to the west states of Mexico and a few more months were devoted to considering the project. Finally it was decided that it would be cheaper to go to Tucson by way of Sasabe. From Tucson a spur can be built up to the Santa Cruz valley without a necessity of crossing a hill and the desired connection with the Sonora railroad, and thereby with the entire Cananea, Yaqui River and Pacific system now being extended to Guadalajara and the City of Mexico, can be attained.

Mr. Henderson, who was in Nogales this week, stated that everything is now arranged and construction work will begin the first of the year on the Port Lobos end of the line and the engineers will at the same time begin surveying the route north from Caborca.

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Another feature of the railroad situation in this section just now is the demonstration of how the plans of one railroad system influence another system. For some time the Southern Pacific system, owning the Cananea, Yaqui River & Pacific road into Cananea, and controlling by lease the Sonora railroad, has desired to build a cross line connecting the two roads. A concession was recently granted for a cross line from Cananea west to Imuris, a distance of about seventy miles. It is said that the route was selected not by the Southern Pacific but by President Diaz. Just now the Southern Pacific people would prefer to build the connecting line from Cananea to Nogales, as the construction later of the cut off between Nogales and Tucson would give them a direct route from the Pacific coast to the very heart of Sonora and would shorten the northern connections of both the Mexican routes of the Southern Pacific system. Thirty-four miles of construction work from Calabasas, ten miles from Nogales, to Twin Buttes, twenty-eight miles south of Tucson, would give the Southern Pacific a cut off between Nogales and Tucson, as the Twin Buttes road out of Tucson is already built. The difference that would be cut off by extending the Twin Buttes line the additional thirty-four miles would be the difference between 137 miles and seventy miles, almost one-half. The difference in the distance traveled to reach Cananea from Nogales, should the road be built from Cananea to Nogales instead of Cananea to Imuris, would be much greater. By arranging to construct the two cut-offs as soon as possible the Southern Pacific system can have its Mexican lines shortened before the Gulf & Arizona line is fairly started.

Under the new conditions every influence possible will be brought to bear upon President Diaz to grant the Southern Pacific system the desired concession from Cananea to Nogales. The Nogales and Santa Cruz County Board of Trade directors are giving the matter

considerable attention and Messrs. P. Sandoval, B. Schwob and others of Nogales, Sonora, have joined in the efforts to bring the road here. Through them some of the leading men of Sonora, including among their number Don Rafael Yzabal, governor of the state, and General Torres, commander of the military zone, have been enlisted in the cause and a delegation will leave shortly for the City of Mexico to importune President Diaz to grant the desired concession to the Southern Pacific and it will be clearly shown the Mexican President what great advantage the connecting link of the road will be to the industrial development of Sonora. Added to the influences mentioned no doubt will be now the influence of all the magnates who have their millions invested in Sonora and especially in Cananea.

Efforts will be made to induce President Diaz to so change the concession granted as to permit the railroad company to run the connecting line in such a direction (northwest) as would bring them between Imuris and Nogales and between the two points to make a Y, running one spur to Imuris and the other to Nogales, thus giving the President the cross line from Cananea to Imuris desired by him and the railroad company and others the Cananea-Nogales line that seems to be desired by all interested except President Diaz.

To people not acquainted with conditions in Mexico it may appear strange that the President of the Republic should discriminate between two points, but people on the border believe they know why. During the trouble in Cananea last June it was suddenly and emphatically brought to the attention of the Mexican government that though there are several railroad lines running north and south, there is not one running east and west in northern Mexican territory. To get troops into the troubled section of the state by rail it would have been necessary to bring them north through American territory. It was necessary, to avoid the contingency mentioned, to march troops across the country from Imuris to Cananea, afoot, and the governor of Sonora found it necessary to depend upon the citizens of Arizona for temporary assistance in keeping order at Cananea. It is believed that President Diaz wants the east and west connection of lines on Mexican territory to avoid any possible repetition of the emergency that necessitated depending upon foreigners for assistance.

Taking this view of the matter no effort will be made to induce him to change his mind as to the line running from Imuris to Cananea, but every influence possible will be brought to secure the additional privilege for the Southern Pacific system to build from Cananea to Nogales, by means of the Y before mentioned, as the railroad company, under present conditions, is willing to build lines to both towns for the privilege of building into Nogales from Cananea.

PATT R. SULLIVAN.