

OREGON SHORT-LINE RAILWAY COMPANY.

---

JUNE 8, 1882.—Referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

---

Mr. HAZELTON, from the Committee on Pacific Railroads, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill H. R. 2381.]

*The Committee on Pacific Railroads, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 2381) creating the Oregon Short-Line Railway Company a corporation in the Territories of Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming, and for other purposes, have had the same under consideration, and report as follows :*

The Senate Committee on Railroads, having had Senate bill 972, almost identical with this, under consideration, and having reported thereon, your committee have adopted the language of said report, which is as follows, as their report on said House bill:

That the Oregon Short-Line Railroad Company, as appears, by a certified copy of the articles of incorporation exhibited to the committee, is a corporation duly organized under the laws of the Territory of Wyoming, for the purpose of constructing a railroad from Granger, on the Union Pacific Railroad, in a northwesterly direction from Wyoming over the northeast corner of Utah, and across Idaho, on the most eligible route to Baker City, in the State of Oregon, or to such other point in said State as the company may determine, and thence to such point on the Columbia River or the Pacific Ocean as the company may select.

As the proposed line of road crosses the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, your committee have made inquiry of the Secretary of the Interior in regard to the matter, and have learned that an agreement has already been made with the Indians occupying said reservation for the right of way, as will more fully appear by reference to Executive Document H. R. No. 18, first session of the Forty-seventh Congress, in which the agreement, maps of the line of the road through the reservation, and the bill for ratifying the agreement will be found. (This bill has passed the House of Representatives.) The fact that the line of the road crosses this reservation is therefore no objection to the passage of this bill.

From an examination of the map it will be seen that this road, when constructed, will pass through a region wholly destitute of railroad facilities, excepting that it crosses the Utah and Northern Railroad in the Fort Hall Reservation. It will open to settlement a vast region of country that is now comparatively inaccessible; it will undoubtedly be of great advantage to the government, not only by aiding in developing the country through which it passes, but in the matter of transportation; by the connection with the Union Pacific Road it will add to the business of the latter, and thereby enhance the value of the security of the government for the indebtedness of the last-named company to the government.

The company asks for the passage of this bill for the reason that there is no law in the Territory of Idaho under which a railroad company can be organized. There will be no session of the legislature of that Territory until next winter, and, consequently, if the company must wait until Territorial legislation can be had a year will elapse before any work can be done in that Territory. In view of this the company has applied to the governor of the Territory to convene the legislature, but while he expresses a desire for the construction of the road on account of the great advantage it would be to the Territory, he declines to do this, among other reasons, because of the expense, but chiefly because the act constituting the Territory gives no power in the premises.

Your committee has conferred with the Delegates from the Territories named in the bill, and they strongly urge the enactment as one that would be greatly promotive of the public welfare.

If this bill is not passed the work will be retarded for at least a year. About 60 miles have been completed from Granger, and 100 miles more are nearly completed. The company is undoubtedly proceeding in good faith with the work. It asks no aid from the government.

The act of March 3, 1875, grants to all railroad companies organized under State, Territorial, or Congressional legislation, the right of way through the public lands, &c., and if this act is passed that is the only material advantage the company will acquire from the government, and this it would equally receive if organized a year or more hence under some general or special law of Idaho.

The bill in general is similar in its provisions to the act declaring the Utah and Northern Railroad Company a corporation in the Territories of Utah and Montana under which the road of the last-named company was constructed (see 20 Stat., p. 241).

In view of the detention that must ensue in the construction of this important line of road if this bill is not enacted into a law, and especially in view of the manifest public advantage to be derived from its speedy construction, your committee report said bill with a recommendation that it do pass.