

## SOME COLONIZATION PROJECTS OF THE NORTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD<sup>1</sup>

The nature of the relationship between the construction of railroads and the settlement of people within a given area varies according to the period and the circumstances. On the one hand, a region well supplied with natural resources for agricultural and industrial development will eventually attract large numbers of people; it is then only a question of time and politics until the area will be properly equipped with transportation facilities. On the other hand, railroads advancing into the same sort of country, prior to its settlement and development, will eventually attract the clientele necessary for the continuance and progress of their operations.

In Europe the railroad merely replaced an outworn system of transportation with a more efficient one in a land already occupied and well developed. In the United States the railroad has been the explorer of the frontier. From the time it first penetrated beyond the Alleghenies it often preceded the settler and impelled him to continue his movement westward. It "has opened up new territory, brought in population, created new industries and new wealth. It has served not as a mere connecting link between communities, but as a creative energy to bring them into existence."<sup>2</sup> In no part of the country has this activity of the railroad been more pronounced nor more typical than in the Northwest, where it did much to influence the future by stimulating and even financing immigration and settlement. The wilderness of 1850 was transformed into a home for millions by 1900 largely through the laying of the iron rail and the subsequent development of an efficient means of transportation.

<sup>1</sup> A paper read at the eightieth annual meeting of the Minnesota Historical Society on January 21, 1929. *Ed.*

<sup>2</sup> James J. Hill, *Highways of Progress*, 236 (New York, 1910).

Minnesota, like the other states of the Northwest, had characteristic inducements to offer the immigrant and prospective settler. Beautiful lakes, a healthful climate, fertile soil, and an abundance of cheap land — these were fit attractions for the nationalities of northern Europe and the classes of the New World who sought agricultural labor and outdoor life. Such a situation offered a tempting proposition to the railroads, and their development was both a natural precedent and an inevitable consequence of Minnesota's growth. Among the various causes that contributed to the rapid progress of railroads in this state after 1862 were munificent land grants by the federal and state governments, demand for a wheat and corn-producing soil, and the gradual extinction of cheap public lands in the older states. It was not, however, until 1870 and the years immediately following that the competition for settlers between the railroads of Minnesota and the lines of the other mid-western states grew especially keen. The thousands who were leaving Europe and the eastern portions of the United States had a wide range of lands from which to choose their permanent abiding places. Their choice was influenced to a very great degree, it is perhaps needless to say, by the climate, the character of the soil, and the abundance of forests. But more than this there were large numbers whose choice was "influenced or determined by free lands, political and religious conditions, groups of fellow countrymen already settled in a State or Territory, the solicitation of land and railroad companies, or the invitation of the State or community."<sup>3</sup>

With no degree of certainty can it be determined which of these various influences was the dominant factor in the replacement of the Indian, the fur-trader, and the adventurer by the artisan, the merchant, and the "hunger-fighter"; in the substitution of populous cities for scattered colonies and of wheat-filled elevators for isolated sod houses; in the transformation

<sup>3</sup> Marcus L. Hansen, "Official Encouragement of Immigration to Iowa," in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, 19: 159 (April, 1921).

of the Territory of Minnesota into a well-peopled state. This much, however, is certain — that all the land-grant railroads in Minnesota, whether transcontinental or purely local in character, made strong efforts to attract settlers to lands contiguous to their lines. All had lands of practically equal merit to offer. The roads that wished to expand most rapidly, therefore, were forced to use other and more fruitful means of inducement than the advertisement of the advantages of their lands in order to attract settlers.

The idea of sponsoring the formation of colonies that would settle on railroad lands or on territory adjacent to railroad lines was developed early. Such a project was mutually beneficial. To the companies it meant more rapid taking up of land and the consequent enlargement of a constituency that would soon include shippers as well as consumers of railway-transported products. To the prospective settlers it meant ease and comfort in traveling, a certain assurance that they had a definite place to which to go, and the satisfaction of knowing that they could emigrate with friends and relatives and live in the same community with them upon arrival in the new land.

As will be seen in subsequent illustrations, some of the colonies were formed among Europeans before they left their native lands; others had their inception in the eastern parts of the United States or Canada. Some of the groups were sponsored by the representatives of religious sects; some were placed under the more direct charge of appointees of the companies; others were under the supervision of land companies and were almost independent of the railroads. Always, however, the colonizing agents and the railroad companies coöperated closely and synchronized their efforts. The latter usually aided by supplying the advertising, offering reduced rates, erecting receiving houses, and making all the customary inducements.

No road with lines in Minnesota was more active in this type of commercial enterprise, perhaps, than the Northern

Pacific. This road was chartered on July 2, 1864, with a grant of 12,800 acres per mile through the states and twice that amount through the territories that it would traverse in following its course from Lake Superior to the Pacific. After incorporation the company passed through a five-year period spent in an attempt to get further government aid for the project.<sup>4</sup> Actual laying of track was started in 1870 through the assistance of Jay Cooke and Company, bankers, and by the end of the next year 229 miles of rails had been laid across Minnesota. The road passed through the growing village of Brainerd, on the upper Mississippi, to Moorhead, on the Red River.<sup>5</sup>

It was one of the avowed purposes of the Northern Pacific, according to Jay Cooke, "to promote, so far as possible, immigration by colonies, so that neighbors in Fatherland may be neighbors in the new West."<sup>6</sup> During the early seventies, when the competition for settlers was becoming increasingly keen among the railroads of Minnesota, the Northern Pacific

<sup>4</sup> Lewis H. Haney, *A Congressional History of Railways in the United States, 1850-1887*, 142-144 (Madison, Wisconsin, 1910); *Congressional Globe*, 39 Congress, 1 session, 3361, 3807, 3866; United States, *Statutes at Large*, 14: 255, 15: 255, 346.

<sup>5</sup> Minnesota Commissioner of Statistics, *Report*, 1880, p. 247; *Progress of the Northern Pacific Railroad*. The latter is a four-page folder published by Jay Cooke and Company in 1871.

<sup>6</sup> Jay Cooke to the president of the immigration convention at Indianapolis, in the *Duluth Minnesotian*, December 31, 1870. A more complete statement follows:

This company aims, first, to select as its immigration agents, at home and abroad, only men of the highest character; second, to permit no representation to be made by its authority, which the facts will not fully warrant; third, to promote, so far as possible, immigration by colonies, so that neighbors in Fatherland may be neighbors in the new West; fourth, to exercise over immigrants, from the time they leave one home until they reach another, whatever supervision their best interests may require, seeing to it that transportation charges are the lowest obtainable; that accommodations on ships and cars are comfortable; that their treatment is kind; their protection against fraud, compulsion, and abuse of all sorts complete; that every dollar of unnecessary expenditure en route is avoided, and the emigrant enabled to husband his scanty means for the work of starting a homestead.

was one of the first to develop an organization to carry out its colonization plans. This rather complex organization included a land department, designed to hasten the sale of its lands, and an emigration department, with a European agency, designed to speed up the settlement of territory adjacent to its lines.<sup>7</sup> These departments were expected to bring to a successful fruition the aims of Jay Cooke and had for their special purpose the promotion of immigration by colonies. The departments began to function actively in the early months of 1872 and continued to operate until July, 1874, when financial conditions in the United States caused them to be discontinued until 1879.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> An advertisement at the end of W. Milnor Roberts, *Special Report of a Reconnoissance of the Route for the Northern Pacific Railroad between Lake Superior and Puget Sound* (Philadelphia, 1869), published by Jay Cooke and Company, notes that the railroad is organizing a department of emigration to "facilitate and render certain the rapid sale and settlement of its lands, and to promote the early development of the entire belt of Northwestern States and Territories tributary to the road." This is described by the company's land commissioner in a pamphlet entitled *Letter of John S. Loomis to Frederick Billings, Chairman of Land Committee, February 20, 1871, Recommending a Plan for the Organization and Operation of Land Department, Including Plans for Promoting Emigration and Land Settlement*, 3-11 (New York, 1871). A copy of this pamphlet is in the archives of the land department of the Northern Pacific Railroad at St. Paul. Loomis' plan is admirably discussed by James B. Hedges in an article on "The Colonization Work of the Northern Pacific Railroad" in the *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 13: 314-317 (December, 1926).

<sup>8</sup> A wealth of manuscript material relating to the colonization activities of the Northern Pacific is to be found in the archives of the land department of the company. Sixteen bound volumes of letters, covering especially the years from 1871 to 1874 and each containing from a hundred to two hundred and fifty letters, were used in the preparation of this paper. They bear the following titles: "Foreign Agents," 5 volumes; "Lands and Colonies," 4 volumes; "Minnesota Agents," 2 volumes; "Soldiers' Colonies," 1 volume; "Foreign Emigration," 1 volume; "Yeovil Colony," 1 volume; "Red River Colony," 1 volume; and "Detroit Lake Colony," 1 volume. In referring to these letters the names of the volumes in which they are contained have been used. The writer is indebted to Mr. Richard H. Relf, assistant secretary of the Northern Pacific, for the privilege of using this material.

One of the first of the Northern Pacific colonies to get under way was that of the New England Military and Naval Bureau of Migration at Detroit Lake in Becker County and the Red River Valley. In 1871 the Northern Pacific organized a bureau of immigration for soldiers and sailors, pursuant to an act of Congress dated July 15, 1870, providing homesteads for veterans of the War of the Rebellion. In November, 1871, this bureau, which had headquarters in New York and was part of the land department, published a pamphlet suggesting the organization of colonies. According to this publication "colonies duly organized" could send out committees "to secure the most favorable locations" before migration started. The railroad company offered to provide transportation at reduced rates, to build reception houses, and to sell "ready-made houses" and building materials at wholesale prices. More than this, it offered to furnish circulars and propaganda to aid in the organization of the work.<sup>9</sup>

Even before the publication of this pamphlet, G. H. Johnston, president of the New England Bureau of Migration, had written to J. Gregory Smith, president of the Northern Pacific, in regard to the organization of a colony to be located near Detroit Lake. The former promised that a thousand people would settle in the colony during the coming year if the following conditions were observed: the Northern Pacific should sell all the lands within the designated township; the Puget Sound Town Site Company should not be allowed to locate land in this township; timber land for building purposes should be reserved in township 139, range 40; and a section of land should be donated for religious purposes.<sup>10</sup> At a meeting

<sup>9</sup> George B. Hibbard, *Land Department of the Northern Pacific Railroad Company, Bureau of Immigration for Soldiers and Sailors*, 1, 4, 8 (New York, 1871).

<sup>10</sup> Johnston to Smith, August 1, 1871 (copy), in "Detroit Lake Colony." Johnston wrote from Detroit Lake. The Puget Sound Town Site Company, a colonizing company organized on the Pacific coast, was planning to found several colonies along the lines of the Northern Pacific, and it had been

of the board of directors of the Northern Pacific at Brainerd in the middle of August, Johnston's letter was presented and it was decided "that in order to secure early Emigration, and in view of the circumstances of this particular case, the Land Committee be instructed to sell to the New England Bureau of Migration the Township Number 139 North, Range 41 West, reserving to this Company all the land it may declare to be necessary and convenient for its own uses." Smith informed Johnston of this action on August 19 and arrangements satisfactory to both parties were subsequently agreed upon.<sup>11</sup> By December printed matter issued by the Northern Pacific was being distributed to all the post commanders of the New England Bureau of Migration in Massachusetts, and arrangements were pending to run one-inch advertisements in a number of weekly newspapers for four weeks. Johnston was successful, too, in securing the coöperation of the governor of Massachusetts in the matter of encouraging emigration. A preliminary settlement had evidently been made at Detroit Lake prior to this time, for early in 1872 Johnston complained to Loomis that the people there were not getting the railroad privileges and accommodations extended to others. He also asked for new postal facilities, since the route via Otter Tail had been abandoned.<sup>12</sup>

Events moved rapidly after this. On January 25, 1872, Johnston thanked the Northern Pacific for the aid it was giving the emigration plan. He also announced his satisfaction with the mail arrangements that had been made and asked

negotiating with the railroad for several sites, one of which was in the Red River Valley. In his letter to Smith, Johnston expresses the fear that the colonists that the Puget Sound Company would bring into the region would be ruffians, and he evidently was trying to prevent them from settling near his colony.

<sup>11</sup> Memorandum dated August 14, 1871; Smith to Johnston, August 19, 1871, in "Detroit Lake Colony."

<sup>12</sup> Johnston to George B. Hibbard, December 20, 21, 1871; to Loomis January 18, 1872, in "Detroit Lake Colony."

regarding the possibility of free railroad transportation for the battery and equipment of an artillery company that was being organized. On February 2 he wrote that "everything is lovely and the goose hangs high." The company was spreading its organization to different states, and prominent soldiers in Rhode Island, Connecticut, and other states were sought as vice presidents or asked to give references. Efforts were made to get the indorsements of Generals Burnside and Hawley, for it was felt that their names would look well in print.<sup>13</sup>

A small group of people bound for the Detroit Lake colony left the East early in March, 1872, and the main party departed about the first of April. Smaller bodies of colonists continued to leave throughout the next few weeks, many of them being men of means who planned to start various kinds of enterprises in the West.<sup>14</sup> Members of the first of these detachments, who arrived in Detroit on April 9, were somewhat disgusted with the conditions they found, it appears. Four of the colonists, who left almost immediately for St. Paul, complained that the climate was like New England in November, that snow was everywhere; that the soil was only a foot deep instead of three, as Johnston had described it; that the timber was good for firewood only; and that the land was well watered as advertised, but so well watered that a fifth of the township was swamp land.<sup>15</sup>

The Northern Pacific gave the struggling colony real constructive aid in June, when the board of directors passed a resolution authorizing the construction of five hundred houses for settlers on the lands of the company. These were to be sold on the same terms as the company gave in selling lands,

<sup>13</sup> Johnston to Loomis, January 25, 1872; to Hibbard, February 2, 1872, in "Detroit Lake Colony."

<sup>14</sup> Johnston to Loomis, March 9, 1872; to J. G. Dudley, May 14, 1872, in "Detroit Lake Colony"; E. M. Brown to Hibbard, April 15, 1872, in "Soldiers' Colonies."

<sup>15</sup> *Saint Paul Daily Press*, April 16, 1872.



“that is, one-tenth down and the balance in ten annual payments.” Early in August a traveling reporter of the *Minneapolis Tribune* noted that thirty or forty houses had been constructed and that a newspaper — the *Detroit Record* — was being published by A. J. Underwood, a former member of the legislature from Hennepin County.<sup>16</sup> The village already had aspirations of becoming the county seat of Becker County.

Little detailed study of the subsequent history of the colony can be made here. The winter of 1872–73 was a severe one for the struggling colonists, who were not yet any too well situated, and it was with considerable difficulty that Johnston counteracted the statements of Boston papers that “the Boston colonists have been obliged to call on the state for aid, as they were freezing and starving to death.”<sup>17</sup> The New England Bureau of Migration and Johnston himself continued to spread information about the colony through the fall of 1872, the spring and summer of 1873, and the winter of 1874. There was apparently no abatement of interest in the Detroit Lake colony among Easterners who desired to emigrate.<sup>18</sup>

Another colonial enterprise of a similar nature sponsored by an American company was the so-called Red River colony at Glyndon in Clay County, where the Northern Pacific crossed the St. Vincent extension of the St. Paul and Pacific, one of the roads that was later incorporated in the Great Northern, about forty miles west of the Detroit Lake colony. This scheme was in the hands of L. H. Tenney and D. R. Haynes, heads of the Northwestern Land Agency, with headquarters

<sup>16</sup> *Weekly Record* (Detroit), June 15, 1872; *Minneapolis Tribune*, August 11, 1872.

<sup>17</sup> Johnston to Hibbard, January 18, 1872; March 1, 1872, in “Detroit Lake Colony.” See also in this volume a form letter sent out by Johnston asking settlers to describe their experiences with cold weather as compared with their former homes. Johnston spent the winter of 1872–73 at Detroit.

<sup>18</sup> G. H. Johnston to Dudley, August 17, November 13, 1872; to Hibbard, November 29, 1873; James M. Johnston to Hibbard, April 7, July 14, 1873, in “Detroit Lake Colony.”

at Duluth. In January, 1872, Tenney got in touch with Frederick Billings, chairman of the Northern Pacific's land committee, regarding the founding of a colony in the vicinity of Detroit Lake, providing land could be obtained there for two thousand families. He asked for very definite information regarding the terms and conditions of sale, the amount and time of payment of commissions, the time allowed for settling lands, the control of town sites, and the facilities for the transportation of fuel and lumber. He hoped, he wrote, to compete with the National colony, started on the Sioux City road by Miller and Hunniston.<sup>19</sup>

A contract was subsequently entered into between the Northern Pacific and an organization known as Tenney and Company, which was controlled by Tenney and H. L. Turner of Chicago. According to the terms of the contract certain lands in Clay County were to come under the exclusive control of Tenney and Company, which was to get a ten per cent commission on all sales; the colonists of the land company were to be offered the same inducements as all the other colonists who settled on railroad lands, that is reception houses, local land agents for recording sales, and similar advantages; the railroad company was to assist the settlers in draining the Red River flats; the Tenney company was to be allowed two years from May 31, 1872, for the sale of its lands; the railroad was to assist in advertising the colony; and the company promised that by January 1, 1873, two-fifths of the reserved land would be sold, or four hundred families would be settled.<sup>20</sup>

By the middle of the following March, Tenney and Company had an extensive advertising campaign under way and as a result were receiving thirty or forty letters of inquiry daily. A part of the advertising scheme consisted in publishing

<sup>19</sup> Tenney to Billings, January 20, 1872, in "Red River Colony."

<sup>20</sup> Billings to Tenney and Turner, February 10, 1872, in "Red River Colony."

the *Red River Gazette* and broadcasting it throughout the land; another phase of Tenney's advertising was the printing of small advertisements in numerous papers of the East and Middle West.<sup>21</sup> The project progressed well throughout the spring of 1872, and early in May the land company reported that colonists were "coming forward in good numbers." A seven-column newspaper was started at Glyndon and Tenney endeavored to get the Northern Pacific to underwrite a hundred copies of each issue, since the articles on the progress of settlement along the line of the road would serve as good advertising material for the railroad as well as for the land company.<sup>22</sup>

By the middle of the summer it appeared that things were going more slowly than had been expected. More than ten thousand dollars had been spent for advertising and other purposes and one thousand dollars had been raised to build a church and school, but only a hundred settlers, representing as many families, had arrived. True, Tenney and Company had received applications for twenty-five thousand dollars' worth of railroad lands, but delays in the construction of reception houses, higher freight rates and living expenses than the *Northern Pacific Guide* had indicated, and wild stories of extremely cold weather in northwestern Minnesota had aroused antagonism toward the Red River colony and, in fact, toward the Northern Pacific. Because of the unexpected delays in

<sup>21</sup> Turner to Billings, March 9, 16, 1872, in "Red River Colony." In the second letter Turner listed some of the newspapers and periodicals in which his company was advertising; they include publications issued in New York, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Hartford, Toledo, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Springfield. In addition the writer noted that small advertisements had been published in 850 county newspapers and two Swedish papers. Some of the advertisements occupied from six inches to a column of space, but those in the county papers usually were not more than two inches long.

<sup>22</sup> Turner to Billings, March 16, 1872; Tenney to Billings, May 18, 1872; Tenney and Company to Billings, May 6, 1872, in "Red River Colony."

getting the colony started, Tenney was anxious to secure an extension of time for carrying out his contract with the railroad. Requests for such an extension for a year beyond the stipulated date were made from time to time throughout the winter of 1872-73, and the company was finally rewarded with success in March, 1873.<sup>23</sup> Its time was extended to June 1, 1875, and a forfeiture clause in the original contract was waived. The Tenney company also secured the right to serve as the local land agent of the Northern Pacific at Glyndon and Duluth. These arrangements made it possible for the company to continue with its colonizing efforts despite the setback of 1873, although, of course, activity was at a minimum for many months.

There is probably no more typical example of a European colony than that which had its inception in the mind of the Reverend George Rodgers of Stalbridge, Dorsetshire, England. His idea ultimately developed into the Yeovil colony, located at Hawley on the Northern Pacific in Clay County just east of Glyndon. In April, 1872, Rodgers proposed to George Sheppard, who was European agent of the Northern Pacific with headquarters in London, the organization of a colony of "good and prosperous persons." Rodgers believed that he could secure two or three hundred people as a nucleus for a village community if he were allowed to make a preliminary inspection of Minnesota conditions. A month later Sheppard notified Billings that he had made an agreement with this Congregational minister to get a colony of people from the south of England for Minnesota. The Northern Pacific was to pay Rodgers a moderate salary and the expenses of a trip of inspection for the purpose of selecting a suitable location.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Tenney and Company to Billings, June 18, 1872; Tenney to Billings, December 25, 1872; William A. Howard to Tenney, March 12, 1873, in "Red River Colony."

<sup>24</sup> Rodgers to Sheppard, April 15, 1872; Sheppard to Billings, May 28, 1872, in "Foreign Agents," vol. 1.

Rodgers and a few companions left Liverpool on July 18 to examine the territory along the Northern Pacific. L. Henderson of the Liverpool agency of the company and Sheppard saw them off. The party of eight, several of whom expected to settle immediately, arrived at Duluth on August 5. Rodgers was both surprised and satisfied with the country he inspected and he reported very favorably on conditions as he found them in Minnesota.<sup>25</sup> He returned to England in the fall to carry out his colonization scheme.

The progress of Rodgers' plan was hampered somewhat by the so-called "Yeovilian Fraud." A bit of *Advice from an Old Yeovilian*, published presumably by the Union Pacific, the Kansas Pacific, and the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas railroads, advised the English to steer shy of the Northern Pacific lands because of the extreme cold and unbearable conditions in the North. The London agency of the latter road immediately issued a circular, which carried a reprint of *Advice from an Old Yeovilian* and included letters from officials of the railroad companies involved denying their connection with the affair.<sup>26</sup> The circular was distributed widely throughout Somersetshire and Dorsetshire.

As had been planned early in the year, the first group bound for Hawley left Liverpool in March, 1873. There were about eighty in the party, which was under the supervision of Rodgers himself. A second and larger party was to leave about a month later under the direction of S. Partridge.<sup>27</sup> As was the case with the other colonizing projects, the earliest arrivals

<sup>25</sup> *Liverpool Post*, July 19, 1872, quoted in *St. Paul Press*, August 9, 1872; *Duluth Minnesotian*, August 10, 1872. Rodgers' report on "Minnesota as a Field for Emigration" is reprinted in the *Minnesotian* of October 19, 1872, from the *Liverpool Daily Albion*.

<sup>26</sup> Sheppard to Dudley, October 29, 1872, in "Foreign Agents," vol. 2.

<sup>27</sup> Sheppard to Billings, January 10, 1873; to Hibbard, March 22, 1873, in "Foreign Agents," vols. 2, 3; *St. Paul Press*, February 28, 1873. See also a circular dated January 18, 1873, in "Foreign Agents," vol. 3.

were disappointed with the conditions they found. They felt that the land was bad, and they did not believe that all the land had been taken out of the American market as had been promised. Much was done by Rodgers and James B. Power, then general agent of the Northern Pacific at Brainerd and later land commissioner with offices at St. Paul, to keep the colony together and get it properly under way. In May the colony was "finally settled and tranquil," and a month later Rodgers wrote to Hibbard that about fifty farmers were settled on the land and were well pleased with their prospects. It was possible to buy a good farm, he said, for less than one year's rent in England, and he hoped that Hibbard and the Northern Pacific would attempt to induce more good farmers to come. He was anxious, however, to keep out clerks and shopkeepers.<sup>28</sup>

Another colonial experiment, similar to the Rodgers movement and subsequently known as the Furness colony, was started in October, 1872. On October 22 a public meeting was held in Furness County, in northern England, at which it was determined to form a colony to settle on certain lands of the Northern Pacific in Minnesota. A committee was appointed to make arrangements for the organization of the movement; on November 4 the committee met and decided to hold meetings and place their proposition before the public. A circular was published about this time that explained the arrangements already made and presented the rules of the colony. Those in charge — William Hurst, Joseph Moses, and Richard Bailey, who were president, treasurer, and secretary respectively — had secured evidence regarding the worth of the land in Minnesota from disinterested parties and had decided that there was no risk involved in the enterprise. They had also decided that it was better to go in a group. A small body of pioneers

<sup>28</sup> Rodgers to Hibbard, April 21, June 13, 1873 (telegram); to Howard Espe, April 21, 1873, in "Yeovil Colony"; Hibbard to Sheppard, May 2, 1873 (copy), in "Foreign Agents," vol. 5.

was to leave early to select the location, a pastor of a Union church was to go along, the railroad company was to furnish a station and a post office, and traffic in liquor was to be absolutely prohibited. Besides these provisions, the circular listed some rather definite rules for the colony: business would be carried on by three officers and a committee of nine; members must have good moral character; they must take an oath to support the ideals of the colony; and they must have sufficient funds for passage, the journey inland, and starting an establishment after arrival.<sup>29</sup> Late in November, in accordance with the plans of the committee, a meeting was held at Dalton, which was attended by over four hundred people. Henderson reported to Sheppard at this time that the movement for the Furness colony appeared to be stronger than that which established the Yeovil colony. Less than a month later seventy-three families had been enrolled; included in this group were farmers, blacksmiths, merchants, and others, each of whom had from fifty to five thousand pounds. There were indications that at least two hundred people would be ready to depart in May, the bulk of them from such northern counties as North Lancashire, Durham, Westmoreland, and Cumberland.<sup>30</sup>

Members of the Furness colony's committee of selection, headed by Bailey, left Liverpool in April, 1873, and reached Brainerd about the first of May. They immediately inspected land at Wadena, Perham, and Audubon, all located on the line of the Northern Pacific between Brainerd and Glyndon, and also looked over the situation nearer the Red River. By June 5 Bailey and Hurst had decided on a tract of land near Wadena, about halfway between Brainerd and Detroit Lake, and they wired for their friends to come immediately. The land set aside included about forty-two thousand acres of

<sup>29</sup> A copy of the circular is in "Foreign Agents," vol. 2.

<sup>30</sup> Henderson to Sheppard, November 30 (copy), December 18, 1872, in "Foreign Agents," vol. 2.

railroad property.<sup>31</sup> A few settlers set out from England for the Furness colony in 1873, but most of those who had planned to join the colony desired to wait until the next season, and April, 1874, found a larger group leaving for Wadena.<sup>32</sup>

These four colonies — Detroit Lake, Glyndon, Yeovil, and Furness — are, of course, only isolated illustrations of the Northern Pacific's activities in the sponsorship of colonies in Minnesota during the years from 1871 to 1873. They are, however, the only colonies described in detail in the railroad's archives. Further evidence of the extensive interest in the colonization work of the company can be gleaned from the correspondence of the land department of the railroad for the years 1871 to 1874. Scores of letters from individuals, colonization societies, missionary societies, soldiers and sailors' organizations, and real estate companies indicate that dozens of other colonies were contemplated at this time.<sup>33</sup>

The success of the Northern Pacific's colonization work can be neither accurately nor adequately measured. A few figures, however, will lend some color. According to a report issued by the company in the fall of 1873 "the progress of settlement and the success of settlers in raising crops are fairly illustrated by the fact that the Northern Pacific Railroad will carry to market of this year's product from one to two thousand carloads of wheat from counties in western Minnesota, whose

<sup>31</sup> Sheppard to Hibbard, April 7, 1873; Hibbard to Sheppard, May 2 (copy), June 6, 1873 (copy), in "Foreign Agents," vols. 3, 5; Bailey to Hibbard, May 5, 1873; Hurst and Bailey to Hibbard, June 5, 1873 (telegram), in "Lands and Colonies," vol. 4.

<sup>32</sup> C. A. Wackerhagen to Bailey, April 24, 1874 (copy), in "Foreign Agents," vol. 5. It is interesting to note that though the settlers brought with them three times the amount of baggage usually allowed, no extra charge was made for transporting it.

<sup>33</sup> These letters are included in the four volumes entitled "Lands and Colonies." They came from people in all parts of the United States and Canada and inquire about the sale of lands and the inducements and commissions offered to colonizers.



residents twenty-four month ago imported their bread-stuffs." Further evidences of progress are the facts that in 1875 five hundred thousand bushels of wheat were raised on lands tributary to the road, that in 1876 fifty thousand acres were planted in wheat, and that before 1877 the total land sales of the company had amounted to nearly a million acres at a total cost to the settlers of over four and a half million dollars.<sup>84</sup>

In crossing Minnesota from Duluth to Moorhead, the Northern Pacific traversed ten counties, several of which were served by other railroad lines. Between the federal censuses of 1870 and 1880, these counties increased in population from barely ten thousand people to more than forty-six thousand in a period when the total population of the state had not even doubled. The four Northern Pacific colonies here studied were located in three counties — Becker, Clay, and Wadena. Becker County, with only three hundred people in 1870, grew to more than five thousand in 1880; Clay County's population increased from ninety-two to nearly six thousand; and Wadena, with only six souls in the former year, attracted well over two thousand before the federal census of 1880 was taken. This expansion of the Northern Pacific's constituency, it should be pointed out, took place in spite of several unusually severe winters, in spite of the annual grasshopper plagues, in spite of the failure of Jay Cooke and Company, and in spite of the serious financial depression that began in 1873.

The prosperity of northern Minnesota and that of the Northern Pacific Railroad were interdependent to a large degree. Long before the construction of the railroad was started in 1870, it was readily apparent that the section of Minnesota it traversed could not be successfully developed without the assistance of transportation service. That it would aid so directly and so materially in the settlement of that section could

<sup>84</sup> *St. Paul Press*, October 15, 1873; Northern Pacific Railroad Company, *Reports*, 1876, p. 12, 13.

not at that time be foreseen. On the other hand, the railroad could not be permanently successful unless agriculture and other industries were prosperous. The construction of the Northern Pacific in Minnesota and the contemporary growth of the section of the state it traversed was pretty much a give-and-take proposition, since each was necessary to the success of the other.

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