

prise of General Brown; and believe that the time is not distant when our city will be brought within a transit of three days' travel of Denver; and that the proposition of General Brown, to establish a regular line of steam passenger cars from Nebraska City to Denver, not only meets with our hearty approbation, but we have the fullest confidence that it will prove entirely successful and be highly remunerative. * * *

"That to prove more fully our confidence in the practicability of the enterprise thus inaugurated by General Brown, we request the Commissioners of Otoe county to take into earnest consideration the proposition to establish at the public expense a road of suitably low grades from Nebraska City to the western line of the county. * * *

Another resolution, offered by A. F. Harvey, editor of The News, the redoubtable "Ajax," was also adopted, by which "we the people of Otoe county" pledged themselves to build such a road, on suitable assurance of a second road-engine being put on the line, and, as was customary, the New York City papers were "requested to print these proceedings."

Thus it appears that the people were in a state, not wholly unwarranted, of exaltation over the prospect that was suddenly opened before them, that "the vast amount of travel by stage and otherwise would be concentrated to one point on the Missouri river," and that point, of course, Nebraska City. Even if they had known the predicament the pregnant machine was in at that moment, they could hardly have taken a lower tone, for, as The News said, "though the present machine *may* not be entirely successful, if it is not, its failure will not prove the system a failure."

Next week we find a clipping from the Scientific American, which influential journal appears to have taken quite an interest in the steam wagon project; but also we find a notice of the catastrophe.

"General Brown's Steam Wagon, which left here last week, has, we regret to learn, met with an obstruction in the shape of an accident. About twelve miles from the city one of the cranks of the driving shaft broke, and stopped further progress for the present.

* * * It is peculiarly unfortunate that this accident should occur just as it did. The wagon had got over the last rise of ground, and was about to start on the long divide which runs clear through to Kearney, when it broke. The accident will cause a delay of about three weeks. General Brown left immediately for New York with the broken parts to have them replaced."

After that we hear no more of the matter for four weeks. The News of August 30th, 1862, contains a long let-

ter written by General Brown in New York on the 16th. He has forwarded the new crank by express, and says the Wagon can be in travelling order again in about a week. But as to additional machines, he finds all the shops overcrowded with work, and has therefore determined to remove a Wagon which he had in Minnesota and put it on the Nebraska City-Denver route, which he will do by the first of November.

"In April next," he says further, "we will have two new Wagons with the necessary cars * * * so graduated as to propel the Wagon two hundred miles in 24 hours. We can then have a semi-weekly line until about the middle of July, when two other Wagons of the same power are to be delivered. They will enable us to run a tri-weekly line until the other two Wagons shall be delivered, which will be about the first of October, 1863, when we will be enabled to keep up a daily line. *

* The success of the experiments with the Steam Wagon at Nebraska City, has created quite a sensation here. All who look at the subject are satisfied that the principal [sic] has been settled, as to the feasibility of using Steam Wagons on our Western Prairies. *

* * * I leave today for Minnesota, and will reach Nebraska City in about a month."

The editor of The News therefore exhorts "the people of this city and county" to bestir themselves and get the road ready for the imminent prosperity. "F. C. Morrison, Esq., has explored a route, and has ascertained that a road of suitable grades can be made for less than \$2,000. * * * The line of Steam Wagons from Nebraska City to Denver is now a fixed fact."

Nevertheless, that was the last of it. The same paper gives an account of the Indian outbreak in Minnesota, and states briefly that "Hon. J. R. Brown's family, numbering eighteen, were all murdered." And that may after all be the real reason why Omaha and not Nebraska City became the chief town of the state.

The writer has found only one more mention of the project in the papers of the time. The News of October 25th, 1862, contains the following:

"The people voted by a majority of 429 votes to levy a special tax for the construction of a road, for Steam Wagon travel through the county. The steam wagon enterprise will go on early in the spring. General Brown, the proprietor, will be here in a few weeks. His losses (some \$30,000), by the Indian difficulties in Minnesota, will delay the matter some, but not end it."

And so the county issued bonds for \$2,500, and the road was built, "with bridges" says the old book in the court house "of sufficient strength to support and hold steam wagons of twenty tons each." It was a crooked road, but level

and easy, following the high ground throughout; and the first section line road south of the north township line, when it was afterwards built, because it followed its route approximately, took its name, and is known as the steam-wagon road to this day. But all the travel the big machine ever accomplished after its break-down was to be drawn back to Arbor Lodge, where it stood many years as a monument, very convenient for children to play on and for hens to nest in; and it was finally broken up for old iron, though part of its machinery went into the Nebraska City gas works.

Under the heading "Nothing new under the sun" the Nebraska City News of August 10, 1861, prints a letter from Thos. L. Fortune, of Mt. Pleasant, Kansas, propounding a scheme which, the editor considers, "is not so astonishing or extravagant as one might suppose at first thought. The Chinese are said to have used steam wagons some thousands of years ago."

Mr. Fortune has invented a steam wagon for running on dirt roads. A light wagon of his kind will run eight to ten miles per hour, and a freight wagon, carrying fifteen to twenty tons, four miles per hour, and up a grade of twenty degrees. He has built one of his machines in St. Louis, 28 feet long, 12 feet wide, with 8-foot wheels, and has it at that time in Atchison; "she has given general satisfaction at the latter place."

He then goes on to say that his wagons can be built for \$2,500 to \$3,500, "according to taste," and to state the terms on which he will build a road from any point on the Missouri River to Denver, and stock it with his motors.

It therefore seems that Mr. Fortune is entitled to the award for priority in introducing locomotive engines in the territory west of the Missouri. If any one in Kansas or elsewhere can tell what became of him or his engine, THE CONSERVATIVE would like very well to have the information.

Chicago only secured thirty-five carloads of young evergreens for Christmas trees in 1899, but the year before the same city consumed seventy carloads.

Already the scarcity of young and symmetrical conifers is experienced. And what shall be the scarcity of forest products Christmas time a hundred years hence? Then; will they recall the folly and extravagance of a silly and wasteful generation which for Christmas trees destroyed forests that would have made millions of homes for the people in 1999? Stop cutting down trees for a useless custom.