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### Arkansas Gazette editorial, February 11, 1885

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and their influence on the resources of Arkansas.

The wonderful developments experienced in this state within the last decade are due to many and varied causes. Much has been said and more written concerning our beautiful and healthy climate, which has tended to sweep away the cobwebs of prejudice from the eyes of particularly our northern friends, who once seemed to think that this was solely the land of malaria, swamps, moccasins, and bow-knives. But as they became better informed on these points and still further learned of the grand possibilities which the state affords to the agriculturist, the miner, the manufacturer and the citizen, by reason of her almost inexhaustible forests of live timber, her vast fields of choice bituminous coal, her extensive water courses, her valuable deposits of valuable ores, silver and gold, the capitalists ever ready to invest where investments are reasonably certain of adequate returns, began to look into the matter for themselves. As a result of these investigations, the "old-fashioned guard of civilization," the extremists, began to persuade the state from each point of compass, and waste places were reclaimed and made to blossom as the rose. Population began to pour in from all portions of the globe, until, within the last decade, her citizenship has been more than doubled, and now numbers over four million of happy, contented people. Lands are plentiful and cheap, markets are accessible and the products of the state come in profitable competition with all competitors. Railroad capital is sensitive to a degree, and can be employed only where a liberal policy on the part of the public will guarantee remuneration. Several railroad enterprises are contemplated in this state. Surveys have already been made, capital stock subscribed and in the event that no adverse legislation is indulged in by our law-makers hundreds of men will soon be employed in opening up new territory for the use of the immigrant as the railway track extends its way through various portions of the state. It would be well for our state to adopt the most liberal policy towards these new enterprises. We learn there is a bill now before the legislature, looking to the donation, by the state, of her forfeited lands in the counties through which new railroads will pass, to assist them in their enterprises. This applies only to such roads as will enjoy no other land grant subsidies. Such a measure, while liberal on the part of the state, would well repay her in the future receipt of revenue from taxes derived from the roads themselves and from the new settlers along the line. We are informed that the directors of the contemplated Western Arkansas Railroad to run through the inexhaustible coal beds of Sebastian county from Fort Smith to Texarkana, have recently secured assurances from Iowa capitalists that all the capital necessary to build the road will be furnished, provided the present legislature will adopt a liberal policy towards railroad enterprises, or at least, if they do not adopt an adverse policy. As an illustration of the power for good in the development of this state, as a result of the presence of railroads, we have taken the pains to collate the following facts, which have been kindly furnished us by Mr. J. K. Brantly, chief clerk and cashier of the and department of the Iron Mountain Railway.

To this gentleman and to his chief, Col. Thomas Essex, land commissioner of that important road, are the people of the state of Arkansas indebted for much of her wonderful prosperity, as they have been the instruments through which thousands of immigrants have been induced to settle in this state and add to her general prosperity.

From the data before us we find that since the opening of the Iron Mountain road in this state, now only twelve years since, there has been sold, through their land department, 470,124.49 acres of land along their lines of road. The average of purchase was about sixty acres, representing 7,835 purchasers, most of whom are actual settlers upon their lands. The sale of town lots on their line of road amounted to 1203. The company have still remaining and for sale cheap and on easy terms, some 900,000 acres of as choice lands as can be found in the southwest.

Fifty-five towns, villages and cities have sprung into vigorous existence since the advent of the road. Beginning at Texarkana on the south, with her 6000. Hope 2000, Prescot 700, Malvern 1800, Beebe 1000, Newport 3000, Warren 2000, etc. These are but fair representatives of the whole number.

Much has been said in disparagement of the railroad system in this state, and but little credit given to their influence for good. Now let us figure some of the good results. The Iron Mountain Company have paid into the treasury of the state of Arkansas, in the way of taxes since 1875, the handsome sum of \$503,440 41, and this vast sum was paid principally upon her lands, as it has been but two years since she has paid taxes upon her plant. The road has also paid in that time to agents for commissions, for advertising purposes, etc., the sum of \$423,484 56. Again, the taxes paid by this company when distributed through the various counties through which the road runs, have advanced the value of county scrip from, say 25 cents, to par, in most instances. Still, people will clamor against railroads as "blood-suckers, leeches," etc. Let us look for a moment at the various industries developed by the presence in this state of this one road. Eighty-six saw-mills, some of them of great capacity, are in full blast along the line of this road and its branches, six of the most extensive cotton seed oil mills in the world are located on this line, whilst numerous factories of various kinds are earning money for their owners. As a carrying agent to the markets of the world, the Iron Mountain, as well as all other roads in the state, has rendered it possible to develop all of the natural resources of the state. In fruits and berries alone enormous revenues will eventually be realized by producers. During the months of May and June, 1883, there were shipped from Judsonia alone 14,560 packages of garden products, 7000 packages were of strawberries, the remainder consisting of peas and beans. Of fruits we have no accurate data—six years ago not a single package of fruit or garden products of any kind, was shipped from that point, about the same proportion of fruit and berry shipments were made from other fruit growing centers along the line of the Iron Mountain road. Malvern, Austin, Beebe, Jacksonville, Little Rock and many other points furnished their full quota of shipments.

This article is already too long, but the subject is worthy of the space, and if we have been the means, through this medium of strengthening the hands of the friends of progress, and checking the growing tendency to adverse legislation, as affecting railroad interests in this state, we will be well rewarded.