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The South Shore Road

The Duluth News gives this interesting history of the project to connect Duluth with Sault Ste. Marie by a railroad running along the south shore of Lake Superior, in its issue of Monday last. Being written by a Duluth editor, and from a Duluth standpoint, it, as a matter of course, gives all the credit for the conception of the enterprise and its development to the point which it has now reached to Duluth parties, but it deals truthfully enough with the importance of the road, which is destined to handle an immense traffic, from the day it is open for business:

In 1879 W. W. Spaulding was president and W. Van Brunt secretary of the Duluth chamber of commerce. In those early days they were interested in several new railway schemes for Duluth, and in relation to The DSS&A the following facts were then laid before the Montreal chamber of commerce by these gentlemen, substantially as follows:

The route proposed and advocated by St. Paul and Minneapolis passes through a wilderness and where not an acre of land grant to aid in the construction. The distance is 425 miles by an air line, but in reality it would be much greater in order to avoid the lakes and difficult portions of the upper peninsula of Mi.

The other route, or what is called the South Shore line from Duluth to Sault Ste. Marie, has a land grant almost its entire length with part of the road already completed and running and other points under contract. The distance from Sault Ste. Marie to Marquette is 144 miles, most of which is covered by a land grant to the Marquette & Mackinaw railroad, twenty miles of which, east from Marquette, is under construction, and the whole contract to be finished by 1881. From Marquette to L'Anse is sixty miles, already completed, and passing through the richest iron district on the continent, giving it an immense local traffic.

From L'Anse to Ontonagon river, forty-two miles is covered by a land grant to the Marquette & Ontonagon railroad, the line passing through forests of pine and hard woods, within easy reach of the most extensive and valuable copper mines already known. The output of the iron mines exceeds one million tons per annum, which will be largely increased as railroad facilities are added, and the value of the copper produced reaches nearly ten millions of dollars per year. The business of the mines alone would support the whole through line, while the proposed line from St. Paul would pass so far south as to be unavailable for their use.

From Ontonagon to the Montreal river, sixty miles, the line would pass along the south side of the copper range, not only accommodating the mines, but favorably located for the lumbering interests of the vast pine country tributary to the three great branches of the Ontonagon river.

From Montreal river to Duluth, eighty miles, is covered by a grant to the NP, through a country rich in undeveloped minerals and fine lands.

The distance from Duluth to the Sault was stated to be 386. A map was submitted showing the proposed line, and that it formed an almost direct line from ocean to ocean via the Sault.