

Transcontinental Railroad & the Decline of the Buffalo Worksheet

Part I

Directions: Read the passage below & then answer the questions below using complete sentences.

(A) railroad, from some point on the Mississippi, or its tributaries, to some point on the bay of San Francisco, is the best route that can be adopted for the purpose of securing the Commerce of China and India;...to open a great national highway from California to the Atlantic coast, (and) would be a greater defense and protection than all other military works. It would also be the means of great daily intercourse between the East and West coast of this Republic,...to prevent those sectional feelings which have ever been the destruction of wide-extended governments....(It) is the duty of this Legislature to encourage the speedy building of a Railroad from the Atlantic to the Pacific, across the territory of the United States.

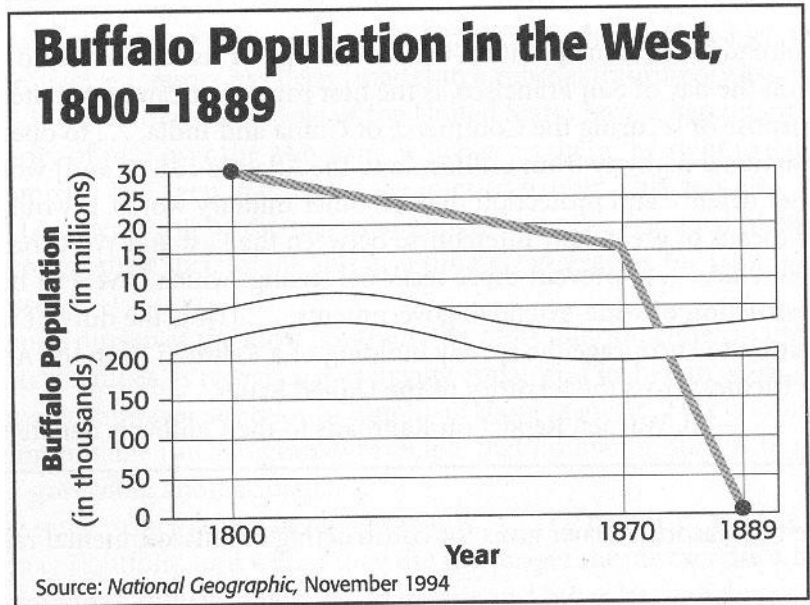
– J.J. Warner, Report on Railroads to the California Senate (1851)

1. What are the reasons Warner gives for constructing a transcontinental railroad?

2. Who is responsible for encouraging the building of such a railroad, according to Warner?

Part II

Directions: Examine the chart below & then answer the questions below using complete sentences.



3. By how much did the buffalo population in the West decline between 1870 and 1889?

4. What was the cause of the decline in the buffalo population?

5. What effect did the declining numbers of buffalo have on the Plains Indians?
