

DIRT IS MOVING ON THE BIG CANAL

Correspondent Surprised Not to See Greater Activity in the Ditch.

STEVENS IS NO TALKER

Chief Engineer Meets the Sixtieth Newspaper Man Who Comes With Advice With Very Scant Courtesy and No Smile.

BY WOODWORTH CLUM. CULEBRA, Canal Zone, April 29.—(Special Correspondence.)—As in some vast necropolis, we find perchance one mourner to a thousand dead, so here at Culebra, where mountains meet literally by torn down and tumbled into the sea, I find one puffing, snorting and industrious steam shovel to a thousand deserted acres.

The monotony of the engine bell is softened as it filters through the valley—more like a requiem than a signal of industry. Now and then there is a rumble as of far-away thunder. It is the blasting gang working with a dozen drills and a dozen cans of powder. Occasionally a train of flat-cars loaded with dirt steams away around the mountain, seeming to efface with the consciousness of its own spasmodic energy. Then for a moment all is quiet.

In 15 minutes another dirt train may give chase to its predecessor down the rickety track that leads to the dump. For an hour I sat upon the brow of Culebra Hill watching this futile scene. Surely, this could not be the spot upon which the American people are concentrating their interest.

Steam Shovels Far Between.

Comparatively no work is being done on the canal proper. I say comparatively, because if we should gather together the 18 steam shovels that are working here and there along the line, we could dig a hole as deep as the hole in Uncle Sam's payroll, and ring all the bells and blow all the whistles of all the engines—if we should do this within the area of one square mile, the scene would be refreshingly active.

But when you look down the "brim," as the engineers call the Culebra cut, and see a steam shovel, like a nervous fly, on the mountain side, or glance down on the floor of the valley and see a tiny puff of smoke, as if a mosquito had rustled its wings in the dust of you stand there on the brow of the hill, as I did, and slowly grasp the greatness of it all, the appalling magnitude of the task to which we have set ourselves, I think you will realize with me that the "dirt has not begun to fly."

I say this as a statement of fact—not as a criticism. The official bureau of information at Washington permits the idea to get abroad that considerable digging was being done. But, if you stop to contemplate now much there is to do, and how much room there is for more steam shovels and more trains and more tracks, you will come to the conclusion that the present condition is activity only in miniature.

Machinery and Men Arriving.

More steam shovels are coming—at least some 50-odd have been ordered—more laborers are being landed every week—more dump cars are on route—more engines will soon be clanging their bells and puffing their way to and fro. It may take another year for this better condition to materialize.

Culebra Is Being Well Built.

The site of the city is on the hillside and the houses cling like mountain goats on the steep incline. Roads have been built of crushed stone, perfect natural drainage has been installed, a reservoir for drinking water has been constructed upon the crest, of an even higher hill, a mammoth hotel is catering to the appetites of 300 white employees—in fact, nothing is being left undone that will add to the completeness of a modern village, and I am told that in Culebra that the administrative headquarters of the Canal Zone are soon to be transferred.

Look once more at the intermittent activity of the steam shovels, and then contemplate the energy that is being exercised by the carpenters, the painters, et al. Yes, we are a nation of builders and not diggers.

Where the Schoolmarum Presides.

As I walked up the hill through the town there was a lull in the din of hammers and saws, and this is what I heard: "Three times one is three times one, two is six, three times three is nine—"

It was not one voice, but a chorus, and I looked in the window. There sat a dozen little boys, none and daughters of the officials, whose families were at Culebra. Presiding over them was as pleasant and congenial a school marum as I ever had been my good fortune to encounter. She listened to their recitation patiently corrected their errors, and then she sang the recess bell. Out came the youngsters, singing and laughing, to romp for a few moments on the hillside.

On the very crest of the hill, overlooking the country for miles around, I found a beautiful residence, where Mr. Stevens, the chief engineer of the canal, is permanently established. There is no prettier or more beautiful site on the entire Zone than this. The breeze that blows around the wire-screened porch are cool and invigorating. The vista is inspiring. A mile or two away, nestling on the crown of another hill, is the town of Empress, its white walls glistening in the sunlight like diamonds set in green. Mr. Stevens has his office here, and the waymen told me that every night he burns the midnight oil, poring over plans and diagrams and wrestling with the intricate problems that are of necessity involved in such a gigantic enterprise.

Engineer Stevens Not a "Mixer."

Mr. Stevens is a worker. His friends claim that he works too hard. The worst that his enemies say is that he does not know how to handle men. He has been educated in the school of corporation power.

I presented my card to Mr. Stevens. He glanced at it, and then at me. He did not proffer his hand, he did not warm up, even to a smile. In a cold, deliberate manner he said:

"Yes, you are about the sixtieth newspaper man that has been here to help me dig this canal."

I started to tell him I had troubles enough of my own without raising any canal work, but he said something about it being his busy day. So I departed for the more congenial atmosphere of the working people.

pertaining directly to the canal digging, we find a typical Government office. The clerks—a hundred or more—come and go the same as in Washington or any other place. There is an occasional clatter of typewriters and a persistent murmur of voices.

My guide at Culebra was Lieutenant Foley, an old Washington boy, who is now in charge of the nineteen policemen that patrol the streets and camps in this thriving town. There are about 1500 laborers and 700 white employees here, all of whom constitute a considerable community. Law-breaking is rare, and the offenses are insignificant as a rule. The law-breakers soon become stone breakers, however, and in the jail yard they spend many days swinging a sledge hammer on wooden blocks.

Jamaicans as Skilled Mechanics.

As we leave Culebra, let us take a glimpse at the machine shop and the roundhouse, where the engines used to haul the work trains are kept in good condition. Here we find the foreman as black as the proverbial midnight, and naturally so, for he is a full-blooded Jamaican. At night the engines come rolling into their respective berths, each with some variety of mechanical ailment. The engineer of the disabled steel calls loudly for the foreman. He comes; the case is diagnosed, the trouble ascertained, and with the deft fingers of genius the foreman repairs the damage.

END SHIP SUBSIDY GRAFT

IF PASSED, TRUST MAGNATES GET ANOTHER BLUDGEON.

High Financiers as Mendicants Beg Millions Yearly as a Gift From the Nation.

SALEM, April 29.—(To the Editor.)—The proposed ship subsidy bill, embodying, as it does, all the self-evident earmarks, dips and angles of a most stupendous steal, naturally attracts and fascinates the average National lawmaker of the upper house. The original bill provides for only \$5,000,000 annually, running for a period of 20 years, aggregating the modest sum of \$100,000,000. This sum looks almost startling to the disinterested observer, especially when he takes into consideration the fact that no one such an expenditure for such purpose, except certain transcendental "guys" who go to make up the membership of our American "House of Lords," and a shipping trust which has more money than it knows what to do with, but is desirous of getting Mr. Rockefeller in the shade as a capitalist and trust magnate.

Mr. Gallinger, the most eminent of the whole huddle Senatorial gang, has labored without cessation for years for the consummation of this stupendous swindle, an outrage on the American people. The bill is reported to have passed the Senate in the early days of March, possibly in a somewhat modified form, but as an entering wedge, nevertheless, whereby the original intent will ultimately be accomplished. "What use would we have for ships if the agricultural, mining and other labor interests should cease production, and what would be thought of the sanity of a National lawmaker who would offer a bill to appropriate and equitably distribute \$5,000,000 annually for the promotion and furtherance of agricultural, mining and other productive interests, without which these shipping syndicates and trusts would have little use for any ships whatever?"

There is certainly no interests of greater moment to us all than the success of the mighty host of producers, and no class who labors so constantly on so small a margin of profit. If we are visited with times of financial depression, what do we do but helplessly wait until the farmers "raise good crops," and thereby lift us out of our financial "slough of despond?" The Gallingers tell us, in explanation of the graft, that the American shipowner is compelled to pay so much higher wages to American seamen than foreign shipowners do that they are fast becoming destitute, and that the little gratuity they ask is indispensable to the maintenance of our National prestige and pride. If it suited their purpose better, the ship subsidy people would in the next sentence be telling us that, as a matter of fact, pretty much all American ships are manned by foreign seamen, and that, in grace. Suppose their statement to be true, is it not equally true that there is a corresponding increase in the wages of every employe of the agriculturalist, miner and all other forms of production? All will agree also that the farmer works longer hours, lives more economically, makes less profit and is infinitely more essential to the general prosperity of all, than the "capitalist," who, for present purposes, assume the role of mendicants. In order to perpetrate this enormous graft, can this measure be viewed in any other light than that of re-queing the producers of this Nation to dig these millions out of the ground and pass it up to these capitalists as a gift, as an inducement to them to use their capital for the furtherance of their own financial interests? There can be no brand of brazen impudence equaling the proposition. Our Government has been, in one way and another, nursing and coddling just such progeny as this, until the braze have outgrown pretty much all parental authority, and give great promise of ultimately overthrowing the paternal household. Being above and superior to the law, they are consistent in not often appealing to it, but, with the aid of past masters in intrigue, they bring secret forces to bear with a merciless power, to spread wreck and ruin on all who presume to object to being devoured, digested and assimilated within their all-pervading financial grasp.

VERY LONG WHISKERS.

The Wind Iz-zers Raised in Historic Pike County, Missouri.

Spencersburg (Mo.) Cor. New York World. Valentine Tapley, of Spencersburg, and E. K. Gates, of Curryville, are belittled by the people of Pike County to have the longest beards in the world.

Gates was born in Kentucky, was a gold-hunter in '68, and has lived in Pike County since before the Civil War. He is an old friend of Champ Clark and a former Judge of the district. He wraps his whiskers about his body and under his chin, and the casual observer would not realize that the appendage is so long.

Valentine Tapley is past 80, and his whiskers are 11 feet long. He is one of the oldest residents of the county and one of the wealthiest. He caldies his whiskers with much pride, and dislikes anyone who questions whether they are the longest in the world. He is hale and hearty and lives an active life on his farm, doing the hardest of work which does not endanger his remarkable whiskers; but he will not burn brush or work around a fire. The belief that shaving quickens the growth of a beard is not sustained in the case of Tapley, for he states that he never did shave. The beard appeared when he was 15 years of age. Before he was 20 Tapley had to plait his beard and wear the tip of it inside his vest. In the next five years he began to wear it inside his shirt. The next provision was to wear it around his body beneath his clothes.

When the beard was eight feet long it was declared the longest in the world, and Tapley received a fine offer to exhibit himself in a museum, but he disliked publicity and the thought of leaving the farm.

The Overland Mail.

Outing.

The man who panned and backed the Overland Route were big and brave, but they could have done nothing without a little army of agents and drivers every where as big and brave in their humbler spheres of action. And it was action, white-hot and picturesque, such as you may find today only on the firing line of an army.

There was an agent in charge of each division of 250 miles of road, with all its stations and equipment. He bought and distributed rations, fodder, mules, harness, and kept the buildings in repair. He fed his passengers and fought for their lives, he kept his drivers on the jump, and his mule teams fit and ready. His stations were for as well, in which he must stand off the Indian raids that lent zest to a trip in the Overland coach. There was no summoning a wrecking train, by wire, when a coach toppled off a mountain road. The agent was king of his territory and his responsibilities demanded that order of ability which made the American pioneers a race of giants.

The stage driver took his chances and counted himself lucky if his skin would hold whiskey, without leaks and annoying bullet-holes, at the end of his run. The road he must travel was no more than a trail, and one of his chief concerns was to keep in it during the wearing night hours. Stage driving as an art departed with the passing of this race of experts. Now and then you will find in the quartermaster's wagon trains of the regular army a grizzled pilot of four or six Government mules who learned his trade in the far West, and who may be called on to test the skill of the men on the boxes of the "Overland."

Have You Been There?

Exchange.

There isn't much hope for a curly-haired youth who plays a mandolin.

domestic trusts to individual interests in our home commercial, productive and agricultural affairs. That the proposed subsidy would be promptly utilized for the accomplishment of just such purpose, no candid and intelligent observer of past events can for a moment question. It is not so much the proposed dissipation of \$100,000,000 worse than thrown away—or the fact that a debauched United States Senate is the instrument through which the tolling millions are to be thus robbed and plundered. It is the evident purpose of these depollers of human interests to place the measureless curse of industrial slavery over all oceans, and thereby make complete the temporal curse of the human race. Such results are inevitable, or the study of the history of recent trust exploitation is a foolish waste of time.

I cannot but feel that the United States Senate, composed of intelligent citizens of this republic, who are oath-bound as it relates to conserving the interests of our common country, and who will solemnly dole out their long-drawn hypocritical speeches in pretended defense of their self-evident villainy, ought to be branded with eternal infamy. Senator Foraker, in his speech in the United States Senate April 1 in opposition to the Hepburn bill, the purpose of which is principally to put a stop to the rebate system on the part of the railroads, was much grieved to find a sentiment in the lower house and among the people, which regarded opposition to the bill as a species of treason, against whom, and in what way nobody seemed to know. Mr. Groveson, of Ohio, has just recently received a message from the people of his state which pretty clearly indicates that they do know, and if the signs of the times indicate anything, Mr. Foraker is in a fair way to be the recipient of a similar notice.

Another characteristic performance was the suppression, in the Senate committee, of the Payne Philippine tariff bill, not even allowing it to come to a vote in the Senate when it passed the House by a vote of 28 to 71. If any one thing is proved by such action of this Senate cabal, it is the fact that they are, as it relates to the Payne bill, absolutely dominated by the sugar, tobacco and rice trusts. Thus, by securing the Foraker, Gallinger, Aldriches, Flatts, Depewa, Gorman, etc., in control of such committees as are likely to have trust interests referred to them, the trust interests are truly "in the saddle," and public appeals count for nothing. It is only the controlling influence of such men that makes the proposed ship-subsidy a possibility, and except for the fact that we have a President who is honest, patriotic and capable, the temporal interests of 30,000,000 citizens of this country would be almost without hope.

With the clearer understanding of these issues being acquired by the people, and the course being pursued by our Chief Executive, there is hope that the time is not far distant when the average trust-sucked United States Senator will find it to his interest to "ret up and take notice," and that the professional "stand-patter" will also discover the fact that there is some merit in intrinsic justice. The certainty of this course of trust-owned Senators' invariable opposition to every measure tending to curb the rapacity of their owners and masters, and their total indifference to the tolling millions who ask no gratuities, but are pleading for the privilege to live, is something most truly alarming. It constitutes a source of danger to our form of government more portentous than that before which patriots trembled during the darkest days of our great Civil War. A climax is not difficult of discernment on the part of distant posterity. Eighty millions of people will not forever continue to implore, plead and pray to a corrupt cabal of trust hirelings for a just consideration of their unquestionable rights as citizens.

Trust must be rendered subservient to law, or our government in its present form cannot continue to exist.

W. A. C.



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