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PORTLAND, OREGON, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1900.

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REPORT ON CANAL

Findings of Isthmian Commission

SENT TO CONGRESS

It Recommends the Nicaragua Route.

PANAMA LINE NOT ACCEPTABLE

Estimate Cost of the Canal Is Over Two Hundred Millions—Ten Years' Time Will Be Required to Build It.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—The report of the Isthmian Canal Commission, submitted by the President to Congress today, gives the unanimous conclusion of that body that "the most practicable and feasible route for an isthmian canal under the control, management and ownership of the United States is that known as the Nicaragua Route."

The commission estimates the cost of this canal at \$200,000,000. This estimate is much in excess of any heretofore made and is due to increased dimensions and other features not heretofore considered. The commission also estimates the cost of a canal by the Panama route at \$142,570,000, according to one route, or \$156,358,000 according to another route.

As between the Nicaragua and Panama routes, the commission sums up a number of advantages favorable to the former. It states also that under the concessions given by the Government of Colombia to the Panama Canal Company that Government is not free to grant the necessary rights to the United States except upon conditions made by the company.

The report is a document of about 17,000 words, almost as long as the President's message. Although the work of the commission is not yet complete, many of the field parties still being out, yet it has been sufficiently advised to make it practicable to present this preliminary report giving the essential findings.

The Commission's Investigation.
A thorough investigation has been made not only of the Nicaragua and Panama routes, but of other possible routes, the commission keeping in mind the industrial, commercial and military value of an interoceanic canal, and also the privilege and franchises necessary to be secured for the construction of a canal under the control, management and ownership of the United States. In all, 31 working parties were organized and sent into the field, making a force of about 220 engineers and assistants, besides about 600 laborers, boatmen and other workmen employed in the various countries, making a total of more than 800. Meanwhile, the members of the commission personally conducted a series of branches of the work. One party went to Panama, where they examined the details of the Panama Canal project, now being executed by the Panama Canal Company. A detailed description is given of the trip over the several routes. Along the Nicaragua route it was found that the short section of partially constructed canal, perhaps, in no good condition, was when the work was stopped. The buildings, however, are all rotten and the dredges, boats, etc., are worthless. The commission visited President Zelaya and other officials of Nicaragua and found them greatly interested in the project. The occupation of their territory by the United States for canal purposes did not seem to be regarded as a serious obstacle, provided the sovereignty of the Republic was respected.

Along the Panama route the commission found a large force of workmen engaged upon the canal line, about 300 in number, according to the Panama Company. The canal had been opened to some extent at both ends. Immense quantities of machinery, implements and tools were found along the route. Much of this property, the commission reports, is ill-adapted to American methods of work and all of it is now from 15 to 20 years old, so that no value should be given to the plant now on the isthmus.

A visit was also paid to President Iglesias, of Costa Rica, and his Cabinet and a strong sentiment found to exist for an American canal along the Nicaragua route. Reports are made along the Darien route.

After touring over the several routes, the commission considered the dimensions of the canal to be built. Having in mind the increasing size of ocean-going vessels, it was determined to fix upon a depth of 33 feet at mean low water, and a bottom width of 150 feet, with some increase of dimensions at certain points. These dimensions are larger than those proposed by any previous canal scheme. While they may seem excessive today, the commission says that the canal is not likely to be opened within 10 years, during which time the increase in maritime dimensions is likely to continue. A width of 150 feet will allow all but the very largest ships to pass each other in the canal, while the locks are of a dimension to permit even the largest ships afloat to be maneuvered. The size of the locks is 76 feet in length, 54 feet in width in the clear, with a depth of 35 feet.

The Nicaragua Route.
Taking up the Nicaragua route in detail, the commission says the route adopted follows essentially the line laid down by the Nicaragua Canal Commission in its report of 1897-98. It begins near Greytown, on the Atlantic side, follows the San Juan River, enters Lake Nicaragua and terminates at Brito, on the Pacific side. The distance from ocean to ocean is about 136 miles. Plans are given for the great harbors required at Greytown and Brito. The most difficult engineering work is the dam across the San Juan River to regulate the waters of the lake. The time required to build the canal hinges almost entirely on the time required for the construction of this dam. The commission says eight years would probably be a reasonable estimate for the building. At least two years will be consumed in preparatory work and opening a harbor at Greytown, so that if work on the dam should be commenced immediately thereafter, the time required for completing the entire work will be about 10 years.

The commission then submits the following estimated cost of a canal on the Nicaragua route:

Eastern division (from Greytown to Boca San Carlos dam) \$2,962,000
Middle division (from Boca San Carlos dam to Las Lajas) 25,436,000
Western division (from Las Lajas to Brito) 51,680,000
Ninety-eight miles railroad 7,500,000
Total \$87,578,000
Engineering, police, maintenance and general contingency \$3,425,000
Aggregate \$91,003,000

This estimate is for a canal suitable for navigation by the largest ships now in existence, and thus in accordance with the terms of the bill pending in Congress. It provides for a double system of locks, in order that navigation can be maintained if one system is closed for repairs or renewals. If a single lockage system is provided, the cost will be reduced \$19,578,000. Narrowing the bottoms one-third will permit a further reduction of \$15,940,000. This would bring the estimated cost down to \$55,510,000.

The Panama Route.
Concerning the Panama route, the commission states its natural extracanal line is the combination of a very narrow isthmus with a low summit. The width of the isthmus is less than 35 miles, while the Panama route is about 50 miles long. After a detailed description of the entire route, the commission gives the following estimated cost of completing the Panama Canal route:

Colon entrance and harbor \$1,734,573
Ingleses locks, including excavation \$10,718,238
Boca Chica locks, including excavation \$10,982,349
Lago de Chiriqui locks, including excavation \$2,746,419
Culebra section \$4,573,255
Pedro Miguel locks, including excavation and dam \$1,906,325
Pedro Miguel level \$1,160,411
Miraflores locks, including excavation and spillway \$7,720,353
Pacific level \$12,562,500
Obispo locks \$5,500,000
Gigante spillway \$1,124,524
Channel between the locks \$1,448,675
Chagres River diversion \$1,238,976
Gatun locks \$100,000
Panama Railroad diversion \$1,357,500
Total \$119,618,815
Engineering, police, maintenance and general contingency \$3,723,763
Aggregate \$123,342,579

This estimate is capable of reduction to \$115,941,215 if single locks and a narrow bottom are adopted. An alternative estimate is submitted based on having the Alhajuela dam built to impound the waters of the River Chagres. This estimate is \$104,378,353.

The commission reports that the value of the French work already done is estimated at \$33,304,403. It is estimated that the tonnage that would use the canal would amount to 7,000,000 tons in 1909.

Commercial Advantages.
Referring to the commercial advantages of an isthmian waterway, the report says:

"As compared with Europe, the United States will derive from the canal far greater benefits both commercially and industrially. The commerce of Europe with the Pacific Coast of North, Central and South America, under existing conditions, is somewhat larger than the total volume of the present traffic of the United States that may be considered tributary to the canal; but this fact does not indicate the relative advantages which the canal will possess for the trade of Europe and that of the United States. As soon as it has been opened our trade with the west coast of South America will rapidly increase, as will also the volume of our trade with the Orient. The amount of the American commerce through the canal will quickly surpass the total amount of European trade."

"An isthmian canal will strengthen the unity of the National and political interests of the United States; develop its Pacific territory and promote the commerce and industries of the entire country. The benefits which Europe will derive from the canal will be commercial. In addition to this, ours will be political and industrial. By bringing the Eastern and Western sections of our country into closer relations, by reducing the time and cost of transporting our Western products to Europe, and by enabling the Eastern, Southern and Central States to reach the raw materials and markets of Pacific countries cheaply and expeditiously, the

(Continued on Third Page.)

DOWN TO BUSINESS

Both Houses of Congress Begin Their Real Work.

SUBSIDY BILL IN THE SENATE

Frye Reported the Measure With a Long Speech—The House Today Will Consider and Probably Pass the Army Bill.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—The programme of the Senate leaders for a business session was taken up in earnest today, and material progress was made. What is popularly known as the ship subsidy bill was made the unfinished business of the Senate instead of the Spooner Philippine measure, and the discussion of it was opened by Frye (Rep. Me.), chairman of the committee on commerce, from which the measure was reported. He

pointed out that under present conditions it costs the United States from 40 to 50 per cent more, principally in wages and food, to operate its ships than it costs Great Britain, and about 30 per cent more than it costs Norway, and that the United States is forced to compete under such a handicap with the encouraged and protected ships of foreign countries. Frye discussed at some length the question of export bounties and discrim-

every other argument in our favor, the United States has permitted its commercial rivals to seize the pathways of commerce and hold them practically to the exclusion of this country. Last year, of all the enormous exports and imports of the United States, only 9 per cent was carried in American bottoms, and the United States paid to foreign nations (principally Great Britain and Germany) \$50,000,000 a day for doing carrying trade work for this country. He pointed out that during the war with Spain the United States was forced to search the seas over for auxiliary cruisers and transports because we had sacrificed our carrying ships.

"The world," Frye declared, "has entered upon a fierce commercial war and it is to be a long and strenuous conflict. Each nation is seeking the advantage of its rivals in this conflict and is pressing forward to gain that advantage. Most of the foreign nations are looking for commercial advantages in the East. Russia, France, Great Britain, Italy and Germany are paying an aggregate of \$50,000,000 per year in subsidies for the carrying ships of the Eastern trade."

He pointed out that under present conditions it costs the United States from 40 to 50 per cent more, principally in wages and food, to operate its ships than it costs Great Britain, and about 30 per cent more than it costs Norway, and that the United States is forced to compete under such a handicap with the encouraged and protected ships of foreign countries. Frye discussed at some length the question of export bounties and discrim-

inating duties, maintaining that export bounties were impracticable and that the matter of discriminating duties, the United States would encounter no less than 21 different treaties. These would have to be abrogated if discriminating duties were abrogated. The abrogation of these treaties would be an offense to every nation involved.

"Our relations with European countries today," he said, "are most amicable. Do you think it wise to disturb these relations at this time?"

Frye said he could see no reason why any man should favor free trade as a remedy. In this connection he referred to the shipyards of the United States and expressed the opinion that a great maritime nation like this might as well be without a constitution as to be without shipyards. Frye showed how much greater was the cost of building and operating ships under the American flag, if these expenses were not greater, he said, there would be no excuse for the pending bill and its foundation would fall. He presented an array of figures to prove that it cost not only more to construct American ships but it cost more to operate them after they were built than foreign ships. This indicated that ships of Great Britain had an advantage of from \$4.50 to \$5.00 per gross ton over American ships in the expense of construction and operation.

He related the incident cited by Clyde, of the Clyde Steamship Company, before the commerce committee, of the operation of a ship under a Norwegian flag and an exactly similar vessel under the American flag. The expense of operating the Norwegian ship, he said, was just half that of operating the American ship between the same ports. Frye also referred to the line of vessels run by the John Roach company from New York to Brazil. They came into competition with a line of Spanish ships exactly similar in size and speed to the American ships. The Spanish vessels had a yearly advantage of \$20,000 over the American ships and made money carrying freight at \$5 per ton, while the American vessels, in order to make money, had to charge \$10 per ton. Mr. Roach was forced to sell the line of vessels and Mr. Thurber and the other purchasers of the ships eventually lost their entire investment.

Frye then took up that provision of the bill which provides the amount of subsidy to be paid vessels and explained how the payment was regulated. He said that by the terms of the measure the 10-knot vessel out for 15 days would draw \$5,000 a year beyond the cost of her coal and handling and that the amount of the subsidy would in percentage diminish with the increase of the speed of the ship.

Clay (Dem. Ga.) asked if it were true that a 21-knot ship would draw, under the bill, \$304,600 a year. Frye replied that the amount drawn by such a vessel would be about \$22,000 in excess of her coal consumption and handling.

"But," persisted Clay, "is not the gross amount of the subsidy of the 21-knot ship \$304,600 per year under this bill?"

Frye admitted that it was.

"I understand," said Clay, "that the 10-knot and 15-knot ships which carry the agricultural products of the country do not receive more than one-third the subsidy of the fast passenger vessels which carry no agricultural products."

"And I was showing," responded Frye, "that the low speed vessels were the ones which received the actual benefits from the subsidy and not the fast passenger ships."

At this point Frye yielded the floor for

(Continued on Second Page.)

THE MERCIER PLAN

How France Could Invade England With Ease.

GENERAL'S REMARKABLE TALK

It Caused a Sensation in the Paris Senate, Which the President Officer Was Forced to Suppress.

PARIS, Dec. 4.—General Mercier caused a deep sensation in the Senate today during the debate on the Naval bill, pointing out the ease with which England could be invaded. He demanded that the Government introduce into the plans for mobilization of the army and navy methods for the rapid embarkation and disembarkation of an expeditionary corps. The general's intervention, declaring that such proposals were out of order. In the course of an extraordinary speech, General Mercier said:

"In view of the possibility of war with Great Britain, the use of the army is not sufficiently taken into account. The times are not the same as they were 10 years ago. The navy, the telegraph and the railroad have rendered the problem of invasion of England much easier of solution. Moreover, England herself is no longer the same. The Transvaal has shown that the British army, although brave, is not equal to the task which England expected it to perform. The British Navy is powerful, but it has many costs to defend. France, therefore, is numerically England's equal at certain points, and is even her superior in the instruments of destruction. History furnishes many instances of military in the English Navy at the moment of battle. A landing in England is, therefore, not beyond realization. This is not only my opinion, but that also of high naval officers. The British Premier recently expressed significant fears, and if the principle of landing is admitted, the practical means of execution will be decided. I venture to think that the work I prepared, while commanding an army corps, could serve as a basis for such a project which would not be expensive."

At this point protests were raised and M. Fallieres asked General Mercier not to enter into the details of the scheme. General Mercier replied that the scheme would be "the sword of Damocles," and he proposed a resolution that the Senate should invite the Government to complete immediately preparations for the mobilization of the army and navy by preparing everything necessary to embark and disembark as rapidly as possible an expeditionary corps. Protests were raised from various benches, and M. de Lescaux, Minister of Marine, followed the president's ruling that the motion was out of order in the present debate by declaring, amid cheers, that the Government could not passably accept it.

Caused No Alarm in England.
LONDON, Dec. 5.—The Morning Post seizes the occasion of General Mercier's speech in the French Senate yesterday to criticize the weakness of British defenses, which it says must be attributed to red tape, but the papers generally greet Mercier's outburst in a spirit of banter.

"It is an idea worthy of the courageous soldier who perjured Dreyfus into a living grave and who, as Minister of War, set shivering with terror during the whole night at the Elysee seat Germany should declare war against France," says the Daily Chronicle, and most of the morning papers comment in a similar strain.

The Daily Graphic says: "We trust that General Mercier's harangue will awaken sober public opinion in France to the dangers the Republic is courting by allowing Nationalist firebrands so much license."

The Standard says: "The incident is rather encouraging to Englishmen, who esteem and respect France, because it proves that responsible French statesmen are not disposed to deal equivocally with proposals having a tendency to disturb the good relations between the powers."

CREED REVISION.
Presbyterian Committee Takes Up the Question in Washington.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4.—The committee of clergymen and laymen appointed by the last general assembly of the Presbyterian Church, to make a recommendation to the next general assembly, which meets in May, on the question of whether there shall be a revision of the confession of faith, assembled here tonight, and will continue in session until its work is completed. Dr. Roberts laid before the committee a tabulation showing the vote of the presbyteries on the questions submitted by the general assembly's committee on revision. It made the following showing:

For revision of the confession of faith, 44 presbyteries; for an explanatory statement, 19; for a supplemental statement of the doctrine, 12; for a revision and a supplemental statement, 14; for a substitute creed, 15. Forty-five presbyteries voted to dismise the whole subject, while 43 bodies in this and foreign lands made no response. The total number of bodies reporting aggregated 232.

No definite action was taken by the committee tonight. Three hours were spent in discussion of the results shown by the responses, received by the committee and in an exchange of views as to the recommendation to be made to the general assembly.

The Porto Rican Legislature.
SAN JUAN, P. R., Dec. 4.—The Porto Rican House of Delegates met today in joint session with the executive council. The two bodies adopted a resolution to cable greetings to President McKinley. Governor Allen's message points out that the finances of the island are in a satisfactory condition, showing a balance of \$1,835,500. The receipts from May to October, inclusive, were \$1,841,800. Governor Allen suggests improvements in the revenue laws and recommends the establishment of more schools and the reorganization of the judiciary.

Hard to Find a Candidate.
MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 4.—Governor Lind, who is a Democrat, has informally offered the appointment as United States Senator at interim to succeed Senator Davis to C. A. Smith, a wealthy Swedish-American lumber man of this city and a Republican. Mr. Smith, however, declined the proffer. The Governor's appointee would serve only until the Legislature, which meets next month, elects a successor.

REAR-ADMIRAL JOHN G. WALKER.

CHAIRMAN OF THE ISTHMIAN CANAL COMMISSION, WHOSE REPORT WAS SENT TO CONGRESS YESTERDAY.

addressed the Senate for more than an hour and a half. He had no conclusion when the Senate adjourned. The great crowds of yesterday were absent, and business on the floor proceeded during the day precisely as it would in mid-session. As soon as the session opened, the credentials of Senator-elect Dilliver, of Iowa, were presented, and he was sworn in. Dilliver, the new Senator from Vermont, was proposed to membership on the following committees: Civil service, engrossed bills, territories, transportation routes to the seaboard, additional recommendations for the library of Congress and Indian appropriations, and Dilliver to Pacific railroads, agricultural, education and labor, interstate commerce, post-offices and post roads, and improvements of the Mississippi River.

Bills on the calendar were passed as follows: To authorize the use of depositions before naval courts in certain cases with an amendment restricting its operation to depositions taken at the instance of the accused; to authorize Captain A. N. Brooks, superintendent of the Red Eagle of the third class from the Emperor of Germany; to authorize George D. Melkikh to accept a decoration of Chevalier of the first class from the Government of Sweden and Norway; to encourage the holding of an interstate and West Indian exposition in Charleston, S. C., in 1901, which measure appropriates \$250,000 and admits exhibits free of duty.

The resolution offered by Chandler (Rep. N. H.) May 15 last to refer the credentials of William A. Clark and Martin Maginnis, Senators from Montana, to the committee on privileges and elections was called up by Carter (Rep. Mont.), but went over until tomorrow.

When the unfinished business known as the Spooner Philippine Bill was laid before the Senate at 2 o'clock, Frye, having previously yielded the gavel to Senator Gallinger, moved that the Senate proceed to the consideration of the bill "to promote the commerce and increase the foreign trade of the United States, and to provide auxiliary cruisers, transports and seamen for Government use when necessary, better known as the ship subsidy bill." The effect of the motion was to make the subsidy bill the unfinished business. Jones (Dem. Ark.) demanded the yeas and nays. The motion prevailed, 35 to 23, as follows:

AYES.
Aldrich, Gallinger, Penrose, Bailey, Hale, Platt (Conn.), Burton, Hanabrough, Tamm, Clark, Hawley, Quayles, Hoar, Keen, Scott, Jones (Ark.), McCumber, Stewart, McKim, Thurston, McMillan, Wetmore, Foster, Wolcott, Frye, Nelson.

NOES.
Bacon, Bennett, Burton, Chandler, Cullum, Dilliver, Dyer, Eustis, Gurnea, Harbo, Hendon, Jones (Calif.), Kenney, Lindsay, Morgan, Vest, Cockrell, Pettigrew, Wellington, Barry, Pettigrew, Wellington.

Frye, the sponsor of the bill, addressed the Senate in explanation of it. His statement was elaborate and at times eloquent. This great maritime Nation, he said, was placed in a position humiliating beyond expression by the present condition of our merchant marine. With a boundless seacoast unparalleled and unapproachable, natural resources, shipbuilders the equal of any in the world, the greatest exporter in the world, and

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