

CANAL WELL BEGUN

America's Task in Panama
Will Not Be So Great.

NATURE OF WORK TO BE DONE

French Company, Before the Grafters
Came in Control, Did Conscientious
Work on the Project, and Little
or None Will Be Lost.

MERRILL A. TRAGUE.

Staff Correspondent of The Oregonian.

PANAMA, R. P., December 24, 1903.—When the French, under the leadership of Ferdinand de Lesseps, began the work of cutting a canal across the isthmus their intentions were undoubtedly honest. That the whole enterprise should have been converted into a highway and a harvest of the most conscienceless lot of grafters that ever infested execution of a great project is due to a process of evolution. The mistake of too much haste was made in the beginning, to develop afterwards into a cue of which the thieves were not slow to avail themselves; but at that same beginning there was done some most excellent work. This work will not have to be done over again, and it greatly simplifies the task the United States is now called upon to perform, and at the same time gives to the Panama route for an inter-oceanic canal almost insuperable advantages over any other projected or agitated.

This work—except that on the great Culabra cut, where much of great advantage has been accomplished—is of a preliminary character. Thieves did not infest the whole undertaking, but in spite of their industry, the French company held out long enough to enable the foundation to be laid for a completed canal. It is that foundation which constitutes the one-fifth part of the whole work which is deemed to have been actually done. That one-fifth part is of a varied nature. The Panama Canal Company, with De Lesseps at its head, achieved most significantly when it subjugated the route of the canal. That it did this there is no doubt.

When it came upon the scene the line it was proposed the canal should follow had been untouched by dredge or dredge and cleared. Fourteen years of inactivity have enabled the jungle to once more encroach upon that line; but France paid the bill in blood and treasure for the first overthrow of the jungle. Reaching from one side of the isthmus to the other, there is a ditch actually excavated. It is not deep enough for any practical use, nor is it wide enough to admit of commercial demands require the United States to make; but it is there. Its presence attests to the fact that the immense mass first required to clear the jungle and make an unobstructed path across the narrow neck of land will not again have to be expended. Neither will men by the thousands be called upon to lay down their lives in the effort to actually do the work which the French company has done. That one-fifth part is of a varied nature. The Panama Canal Company, with De Lesseps at its head, achieved most significantly when it subjugated the route of the canal. That it did this there is no doubt.

Nature of the Work Done. That work has been done, and the excavation was carried deep enough by the French to now enable the United States to begin at once the work of digging in comparatively solid soil, where as the French had to dig through the soft, spongy mud of the jungle. The flow of the rivers, which are unrestricted, and the currents of the Mendi and Gatun Rivers on the northern side, have carried into the channels deposits of silt that make them now almost impassable. The banks are once more overgrown with the dense vegetation common to the country, and the channels are too narrow, even if they were deep enough, to prevent the passage of a ship. A rowboat may go up from La Boca end, at low tide, as far as the excavation was carried, and at high tide a heavy launch might make the trip. On the Colon side there are places where not even a rowboat can navigate, a launch will ground, and the two or three miles from the entrance have been covered, and the way is open to Colon only for the lightest draft tugboats.

Cost Offsets Gain. It is true that we are to pay the Panama Canal Company, present owners of the line, \$40,000,000 in hard cash for the franchise, and an additional \$10,000,000 to the Republic of Panama for the transfer to the United States of the company's rights in the canal. But the value of what we shall receive is most amply attested. The amount to be paid to the French concern is the amount fixed by the Walker commission, and the French rights on the isthmus, a canal one-fifth completed, that one-fifth representing the most deadly of all the work to be done, the French company has done it, and an almost insuperable amount of machinery. The latter we get practically without payment, for the Walker Commission refused to accord it any value, holding that it will cost as much to overhaul, modernize and make it serviceable as it is worth.

The item of machinery on the ground is not a small one, however, and we shall probably discover before we are through with the job of making it serviceable that in getting it for the expense of overhauling we have driven a good bargain value for the French owners. The part of this machinery which now lies in the water of the excavated portion of the sea-level sections of the canal will be the most valuable, for it has lain in its present position for 14 years, settling slowly in the silt that has filled these portions of the proposed waterway, rusting and rotting until to repair it would be almost impossible. Of this machinery there are lining the canal on either side of the isthmus countless dredges, monster machines that originally cost hundreds of thousands of dollars each; steam, self-navigating scows that came from the yards of their builders under their own power; steam launches and barges, holding large quantities of which have been sunk to preserve them. In their day these vessels composed as fine and perfect floating equipment as could be procured—certainly there was more of it than could possibly have been required had the French plans been wholly intelligent and the management entirely honest.

Of other machinery there is an infinite variety. From Colon to Panama the land is literally encumbered with it; the railroad runs through an avenue of frame and corrugated iron magazines where it is stored. On Cristobal Colon Point there are millions of tons of it that have never been taken from the crates and packing cases; along the line of the canal, even in the most remote and inaccessible places, are acres and acres of it that was unloaded from the cars and left to stand idle and neglected, no attempt having been made to preserve it beyond coating the exposed bearing parts with white lead.

This material includes drainage pipe of the largest diameter ever rolled, the piles of which cover acres in the vicinity of Colon; hundreds of locomotives, Belgian type; pumps and all their appliances; portable and stationary engines; hoisting derricks; tripods, and all the accessories for cable ways; steam shovels and other monster excavating devices; thousands of dumping cars; hulls and machinery for dredges and scows; in short, a more than adequate supply of every necessary and superfluous device that the mind of a gang of grafters, bent on realizing commissions on contracts placed at exorbitant prices, could think to purchase. This machinery—none of it is less than 15 years old—is far from being available, even after its restoration. Much of it will

be found obsolete in the light of the recent gigantic strides made in mechanical devices. Great quantities of it will, however, be eagerly sought by the contractors who will do the actual canal work, for portions of it can certainly be used to almost as good advantage as could newer and more modern tools. The locomotives, for instance, need only overhauling to be made serviceable, although they are antiquated in style and of a foreign pattern. The dumping cars, too, need only to be pulled out of the tangle of reeds and vines in which they are now imbedded to be turned to serviceable account. Out of the masses of dredging machinery now on the ground efficient dredges may be constructed by assembling unimpaired and serviceable parts. The portable and stationary engines are ready for use, and the portable hoisting derricks require little save new cars for platforms.

From this it follows that, besides the saving in time the United States will realize from the completion of one-fifth of the work required, there will be a marked saving in the cash outlay resulting from our ability to turn available parts of this immense stock of machinery over to the contractors, thereby enabling them to hasten execution of their contracts. These are advantages possessed by the Panama route that influenced the Walker Commission to prefer this route over any other, after the New Panama Company consented to part with all its properties for \$40,000,000. I am not at all tempted to show in any detail the su-

periority of Panama over Nicaragua as a canal route. My purpose is merely to present conditions here, where the work is well on the way and much material on the ground. These conditions are in themselves a mighty argument in Panama's favor, for surely it is simpler and will be quicker for us to complete a work already one-fifth done than it would be for us to begin at the very beginning, as we should have to do at Nicaragua. Work the enterprises here in its present state, American ingenuity, energy, honesty and determination can complete the canal and open it to commerce in a shorter time than it took the French to establish the Nicaragua route. In Nicaragua there is not in existence one item of what I have detailed as existing at Panama. In Nicaragua we should have to begin just where the French began on this side, and that is a score of years ago. All of that enormous task of clearing the jungle and removing the overlying mold of decayed vegetation—at a cost of \$40,000,000 in hard cash—has already done here we should have to do in Nicaragua. Besides this, we should have to build at Nicaragua the railway feeder, safe harbors at either end, and deliver to the work every tool and every pound of timber supplies and machinery needed.

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TWO LONGSHOTS WIN

Sir Preston and Antolee Reward Backers at Oakland.

NOSE DECIDES EACH TIME

McGregor II, Favorite in the First Race, Pulls Up Lame—Rockaway Easily Lands the Six-Furlong Handicap.

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 19.—Close finishes and the success of two long shots were features of the racing at Oakland today. Sir Preston, at 12 to 1, took the first race by a nose from Lady Kent. McGregor II, the odds-on favorite, led for a time, but pulled up lame. Antolee, a 15 to 1 chance, gained a nose victory over Siurian in the fifth race. Rockaway won

the six-furlong handicap easily. J. Martin, rider of Nigrette, said Rockaway interfered with his mount, and the judges fined him \$25. Results: Futurity course, selling—Sir Preston won, Lady Kent second, Jodge third; time, 1:24. Six furlongs, selling—Kleinwood won, Scherz second, Quaker Girl third; time, 1:11. Futurity course, selling—Quix II won, Flyer second, Modest third; time, 1:13. Mile and 70 yards, selling—Antolee won, Siurian second, Mr. Dingle third; time, 1:24. Six furlongs, handicap—Rockaway won, Mildred Schults second, Nigrette third; time, 1:19. Mile and 70 yards, selling—Ben McNeil won, Avenger second, Harry Thatcher third; time, 1:16.

At New Orleans. NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 19.—The Crescent City results: Six furlongs—Ostrich won, Karl Kahler second, Bounding third; time, 1:14. Six furlongs, selling—Little Jack Horner won, Allegretto second, Prekness third; time, 1:24. Seven furlongs—J. P. Mayberry won, Lady Lavish second, Sweet Nell third; time, 1:27. Handicap, one mile—Tribes Hill won, DeReke second, Levi Dorsey third; time, 1:39. Mile and eighth, selling—Boster won, Kitty Clyde second, Baronet third; time, 1:34.

FIFTEEN-TO-ONE SHOT LANDS. Books and the Talent at Ascot, However, Quit Even. LOS ANGELES, Jan. 19.—The talent and the books split even on the day, three favorites out of six coming in first. Celebration, at 15 to 1, was the longest chance that got first money. The weather was chilly and the track fast. Results: Stakes course, selling—Winnifred A won, Rio Chico second, Andrus third; time, 1:12. Three furlongs—Tim Hurst won, De Gramont second, Hillona third; time, 0:37. Stakes course, selling—Celebration won, Lady Fonso second, Madame Bishop third; time, 1:12. Six and a half furlongs—Paul Whaley won, Montana Peeres second, Mexicana third; time, 1:22. Six furlongs—Sals won, Lady Belair second, Susie Christ third; time, 1:04. Mile, selling—Buccelluch won, Merwan second, Invictus third; time, 1:01.

COMING TO TALK IT OVER. Dugdale Will Discuss Proposal to Manage Portland Team. SEATTLE, Jan. 19.—(Special)—D. E. Dugdale went to Portland tonight to talk things over with the Portland baseball directors. They want Dugdale to manage the team this season. Before leaving himself aboard the Pullman, Dugdale said he had promised his wife to stay out of baseball for the present and he may turn the offer down. "It is my intention to take a rest," said he, "and you may put it as strong as you please, that I will not tie myself up with the Portland people or anyone else, for the present at least."

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Choyinski was out nearly four minutes and appeared in a dazed condition. The men matched to fight 15 rounds. Late tonight Carter and Choyinski were arrested charged with mutual assault. Eight other men, including second and referee and the managers of the club, were also arrested on the charge of aiding and abetting a prizefight. Each was bailed in the sum of \$200.

New York Bowlers for Peace. NEW YORK, Jan. 19.—After a long discussion the New York Bowling Association has resolved that a committee of three shall be appointed to go to the American Bowling Congress at Cleveland, with full power to become affiliated with that organization if it meets all the requirements of the New York association, such as the submission of the league ball and the appointment of an executive committee, the members of which will not be identified with the trade.

Baker City Wins at Pendleton. PENDLETON, Or., Jan. 19.—(Special)—The Baker City team, ball team, won from the Pendleton High School girls tonight by a score of 6 to 4. The game was closely contested throughout. There was a large attendance.

WILL ASK RECOGNITION. Representative of Dominican Government En Route to Washington. SAN JUAN, Porto Rico, Jan. 19.—Juan Franco Sanchez, special representative of the Morales government, has arrived here on his way to Washington, whither he goes with the object of soliciting the recognition by the United States of the Morales government. Santo Domingo advisers from trustworthy sources which have reached here are to the effect that Germany is quietly buying control of certain Belgian claims against Santo Domingo, with the intention of ultimately selling Samana Bay to Germany and the track fast. Results: Stakes course, selling—Winnifred A won, Rio Chico second, Andrus third; time, 1:12. Three furlongs—Tim Hurst won, De Gramont second, Hillona third; time, 0:37. Stakes course, selling—Celebration won, Lady Fonso second, Madame Bishop third; time, 1:12. Six and a half furlongs—Paul Whaley won, Montana Peeres second, Mexicana third; time, 1:22. Six furlongs—Sals won, Lady Belair second, Susie Christ third; time, 1:04. Mile, selling—Buccelluch won, Merwan second, Invictus third; time, 1:01.

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