

Writers Swarm to Panama Zone

Special "Investigators" Get Material for Books in Few Days.

Wild Stories are Told

Canal Literature Grows to Alarming Proportions—Authors are Shown Every Courtesy by Officials in Charge.

BY GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM. Away down South in the Torrid Zone North latitude nearly nine, Where the eight months pour once past and...

PANAMA, R. F., Dec. 3.—(Special correspondence).—Probably, excluding ancient Greece, there has been more written about the Panama Canal zone, the "Land of the Coconut-Tree," than about any other extremely small piece of terra firma extant.

An exception to this sweeping statement is to be found, and in a land of quite different temperature, for when Dr. Cook took up its publicity work, the North Pole really did overshadow poor Panama. He that set it may, Panama has prospered remarkably, from a reader's point of view. It has had its Cooks, too, since the very beginning of the canal work.

In the early days, when plans and methods were uncertain, and it was possible to get the people and Congress excited enough to upset everything that had been done almost overnight, wild-cat canal stories came to be a drug on the newspaper market. With Poultony Bigelow in the van, "investigators" followed from six to ten hours "investigating" the entire work, at regular intervals exploded wild yarns concerning the impracticability of the plans, the graft, the sickness, or something else, of the much-maligned canal region.

Goethals' Sway Diminished. With the appointment of Colonel Goethals came the end of uncertainty and glad-charming stories could no longer make trouble, beyond the possible appointment of an investigating committee of two from Congress. And as the Isthmian trip makes a delightful winter outing for a debilitated Representative in Congress, this really was a practice not to be frowned upon too severely.

Today, here at Panama, the publicity side of the canal building operations is far from being the least interesting of its many phases. Joseph Bucklin Bishop, formerly managing editor of a New York newspaper, is at the head of the publicity work. No, it is not called "publicity work," nor should it be. It is simply that in connection with the publication of the "Canal Record," the official official bulletin of the canal life and construction progress, a bureau of information is maintained. To this the writers who want accurate information naturally go.

I have heard it said that if you want to meet any American writing man all that is necessary is to wait long enough in the room of Mr. Bishop's office. But this is not quite accurate, for there are some authors who have written upon the canal and its workers who would never dare to return to Panama!

Canal Literature Proliferates. The growth of canal literature is phenomenal. One does not appreciate it until one gets a quantity of material sent with the fountain from which it all emanates. And this year, the last of heavy construction work, there will be a bigger literary crop than ever before.

I was fortunate in arriving in what was scheduled to be the "rainy season," which was as a matter of fact, not fully dry. The weather, I say, because they told me that the Isthmus will be literally swarming with writers next month, when the official dry season gets into operation. Some of the United States has an interest in the canal, and every one has the right to ask at least the courtesy of a name for that's what the canal is costing each and every American. It is the way they put it, in the offices of the canal executives.

So when they see another writer coming, while they may sigh inwardly, outwardly they extend the broadest smile of welcome, and make the newcomer into Mr. Bishop's office. Immediately you are advised to go out and see the work, and then come back and ask questions about it.

Motor. If you have a few days only, a couple of them are passed at Culebra Cut and at one of the locks. For this sight-seeing the commission courteously provides comfortable motor cars, which take the visitors over the construction tracks, affording an excellent hazy glimpse of the chief features of the canal under the guidance of an expert whose sole duty is to answer questions. Then back to the office of the Commission's secretary you are taken, and there provided with answers, verbal and printed, to every query which your imagination can conceive, or, apparently, to every one that ever has been asked by your thousands of predecessors.

It is a splendid way to handle the matter. Everything is absolutely open and above board. There are no secrets which may not be learned and printed, no information which is withheld; every record, every statistic, may be obtained. The American people surely may never have cause to say that it did not know, or does not know, how its money is being spent.

upon the Isthmus. He came here commissioned by a well-known New York publisher, and got most of his material into shape coming down on the steamer. The book will be well illustrated, and is expected to be a good seller. Why did he come here at all? Oh, I suppose to get local color; they all do that.

A very fair example, that. A short time ago another man wrote a sort of catch-as-catch-can Panama book, one of whose most vivid chapters contained a detailed and hair-raising account of an alligator hunt on the Chagres River, in which the author was pictured as having killed a number of alligators, after desperate encounters.

The facts of the matter are that the author was sent out under the guidance of a certain ex-police officer, and that when they actually came to the alligators the writer so painfully demonstrated the fact that he didn't know one end of an alligator from the other, that his weapon was taken away from him to insure the safety of the others of the party.

The ex-police officer told me the story. Joke on Writer Told. An amusing incident illustrating how much some Panama writers don't know about their subject is told by one of the leading officials on the zone. A young woman came to him bearing a series of letters upon the Canal for a middle Western syndicate, one of which she had already written. The official pointed out to the woman some Royal Palms, explaining that they had been brought to Panama by De Lesseps.

"Oh, he is the man who discovered the Pacific, isn't he?" she said, looking fully unamused that Balboa, discoverer of the Pacific, came to Panama some 200 years before De Lesseps even thought of Panama. Then she went back to the hotel and wrote about the Canal's history.

On the Isthmus itself there has been written a lot, much of it purely for local consumption. Some that I saw, notably the verse, was scarcely adapted to publication; the local color was a bit too lurid. The best of the home-made poetry is the one called "Tell it to the Colonel." A few characteristic stanzas read as follows:

"Dear Mr. the commissary here," writes Mrs. Percy Jones, "I enclose herewith a sample, just as small." Mrs. Hobbs and Mrs. Dobbs are neighbors. And Mrs. Hobbs calls Mrs. Dobbs a dirty thing and that; then Mrs. Dobbs reciprocates, and maybe both are right. But in the end the Colonel has to arbitrate. Don't hesitate to state your case, the boss will hear you; but be sure you state it true; he's sometimes busy and has other things to do; but come on Monday morning, and line up with the rest. You'll maybe feel some better with that grace-off your chest.

See Colonel Goethals, tell Colonel Goethals, it's the only right and proper thing to do. Arrange a little Sunday interview, just write a letter, or even better, see him.

LUMBERMEN DENY CHARGE Northwestern Association Answers Government's Suit. MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 30.—In a report filed with the clerk of the Federal Court the Northwestern Lumbermen's Association answered the complaint of the Government that the association was guilty of acts in restraint of interstate trade in lumber products. The answer is a general denial of all charges. A specific denial also is made of the charge that the organization tried to bring about a classification in the lumber business that in any way would prevent manufacturers and wholesale dealers from doing business directly with consumers.

\$3 PIANO RENT. All money paid as rent can apply on purchase price if desired. Kohler & Chase, 375 Washington street. Inside block wood #4, Main 1224.

AUTOPIANO \$5. Rental. Free music roll, free cartage. All money paid as rental can apply on purchase price if desired. Kohler & Chase, 375 Washington street.

Man Who Twice Must Pay

Judge Tells E. B. Hopkinson He Cannot Expect to Get Luxuries Without Cost.

DOUBLE ALIMONY IRKSOME

California Manager of Portland Steel Concern Says Second Wife Broken Up First Home, but Gets No Sympathy.

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 30.—(Special).—When a divorced man marries a second wife he takes unto himself a luxury and must be willing to stand all of the consequences. This is a judgment given in the Superior Court by Judge Morgan in an order directing E. B. Hopkinson, general agent in California for the Willamette Iron & Steel Works, of Portland, residing at 424 Ellis street, to pay \$75 a month temporary alimony to his wife, Mrs. Maud L. Hopkinson, during the pendency of her action for divorce. The suit was recently transferred from Oakland to this county, and in opposing the wife's motion for maintenance, Hopkinson set up a novel plea, which brought rebuke from the court. The steel man told the court that his wife was responsible for the breaking up of his home with his first wife, who divorced him and gained custody of their two children. He declared that with one alimony judgment against him it would be impossible for him to meet two of a kind.

"You cannot enjoy the luxuries of this life," replied the court, "and then come here and play the baby act. You married your second wife knowing you must pay for the support of your first wife, and now the law provides that you shall take care of the luxury. You have had two wives and it is right that you should contribute financially to the support of both unless you can show by proper evidence that one or both have lost their right to such aid." The wife testified that Hopkinson was in receipt of \$400 a month in salary and commissions, and on this showing the \$75 a month was allowed her, to continue at least until the cause is finally determined.

ROSEBURG IS LOSER

STATE TAX COMMISSION DENIES REQUEST OF CITY.

Old Mileage Basis of Valuation of Counties Will Be Retained. Other Questions Arise.

SALEM, Or., Dec. 30.—(Special).—While no definite conclusion was reached at practically an all-day meeting of the State Tax Commission today, it is almost assured that one problem was solved which will mean that apportionment of public utilities will see an increase or decreased valuation as the spirit moves, while, on the other hand, the old mileage basis of valuation of counties will be retained. This means that the petition of Mayor McGill, of Roseburg, and other citizens of that municipality is denied flatly. If the State Tax Commission decides to remain by its present idea it means that the entire system of taxation under the State Tax Commission will be reversed in the past. The Tax Commission was created to place assessed values on public utilities. Under the law it arrived at these values through a theory in which unit valuation was reached as to the respective utilities and this valuation was arrived at through a division of the mileage pro rata among the counties. Whether the Commission will accede to the request that a ratio as to the value of stock and bonds be used, or whether the Commission will remain by its old standard, has not been fully decided. This question will be answered hereafter the state levy is finally made up.

WILLAMINA SHOWS FIGHT

With Only One Mail Service After January 1, Was Is On.

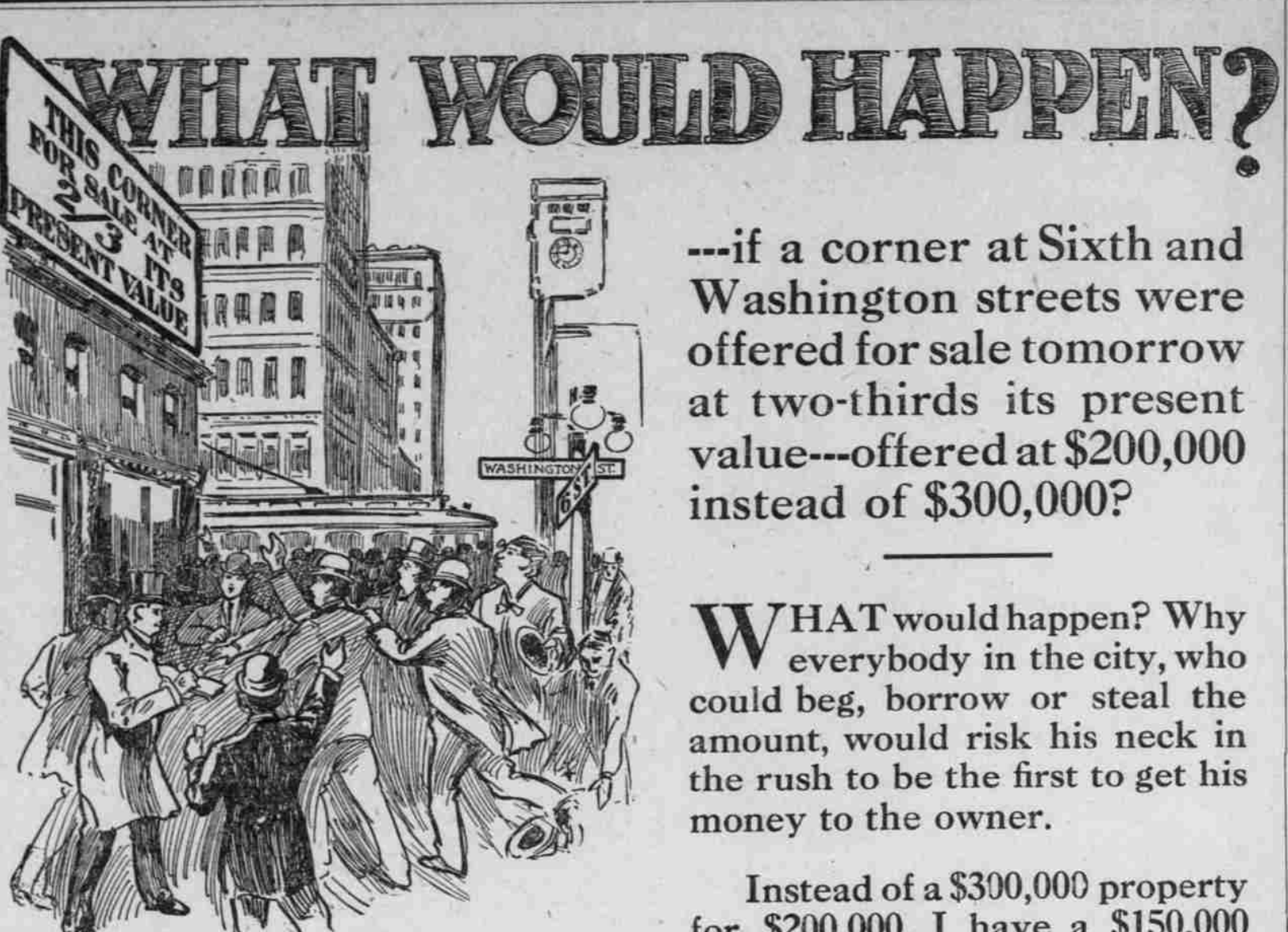
WILLAMINA, Or., Dec. 29.—(Special).—This town will have only one mail a day here after January 1. This is due to the fact that the Sheridan & Willamina Railway Company will pull off its night train to this place, leaving only noon mail arrival.

This turn of affairs is the result of the City Council a short time ago demanding that the S. & W. Railway build a depot here for the protection of passengers and freight. Mr. Edwards, manager of the road, ignored the Council as an official body by refusing to reply to it in a written or verbal statement, but he says he will not comply with the demand. The chief reason he gives for his refusal to erect a depot is the poverty of the town, alleging lack of patronage and general support on the part of the town. Nevertheless, according to the official report of the railroad commission of this state, shows that the particular line has been operated at a profit.

The fight is now on for earnest. Many contend that the railroad, in its present condition, is a detriment to the town. Livery vehicles will meet the night train at Sheridan to bring passengers to Willamina, and steps will be taken to get a resumption of the night mail service.

NOW IS THE BEST TIME

to secure extra value in slightly used pianos that are taken in exchange during our Christmas season. Nearly all makes are represented, the variety and quality is exceptional. You will buy here if you wish to save money. Sherman, Clay & Co., Morrison at Sixth.



WHAT WOULD HAPPEN? ---if a corner at Sixth and Washington streets were offered for sale tomorrow at two-thirds its present value---offered at \$200,000 instead of \$300,000?

WHAT would happen? Why everybody in the city, who could beg, borrow or steal the amount, would risk his neck in the rush to be the first to get his money to the owner. Instead of a \$300,000 property for \$200,000, I have a \$150,000 property—appraised by three well known real estate firms at \$176,600—and until January 10, I am authorized to sell it for \$100,000! And better still, you don't have to take it all to get it at this price—you can take your pick of the 25 largest and best sites in the list for \$4000!

And the property itself—why there is nothing like it or to be compared with it in this or any other city. You have likely seen it—above Nob Hill—at the head of Lovejoy street and Cornell road where the big hydraulic giants cut down Goldsmith Hill and formed the LEVEL terraces—Westover Terraces.

It's 18 months now since they began the work up there and many people have kept tab on the progress—they wanted to buy. Now it's ready, and now's the time, and until January 10 it's \$4000 to the first 25 purchasers for sites ranging from \$5000 to \$6750.

But mind you, the early buyers are sure to get the largest and best sites. Come out then, today. Take 23d street or W car and see Westover Terraces, the greatest close-in heights property at the most remarkable price ever offered the people of Portland.

Phone My Office or Drop a Line and I'll Send You Plats and Full Information F. N. CLARK Selling Agent Westover Terraces and Eastmoreland 818-823 Spalding Bldg. Main 2113, A 7617

RAILROAD LINES LONG

WASHINGTON MILEAGE NOW TOTALS OVER 4500. Approximately 10 Per Cent of Taxes of State Paid by Transportation Companies—Statistics Out.

OLYMPIA, Wash., Dec. 30.—(Special).—Reports completed by the State Tax Commission show that the railroads of Washington are paying approximately 10 per cent of the taxes of the state, that they pay 12.25 per cent of their net earnings from operation for taxes and 5.65 per cent of their gross earnings, and that there has been an increase amounting to more than 40 per cent in the mileage of the steam railroads, considering main lines only, since 1904.

The total railroad mileage in the state is now 4625, as compared with 3134 miles in 1904; the assessed value of these properties in 1904 was \$28,228,919, and in 1911 \$182,458,414, or \$90,731 per mile in 1904 and \$26,639.66 per mile in 1911. In 1904 the railroads paid \$62,736.68, or 7.8 per cent of all taxes in the state, while other property paid \$9,717,092.25, or 34.2 per cent of the assessed value. In 1910 the assessments levied against the railroads was \$2,658,322.19, or 9.23 per cent of all taxes, which then aggregated \$27,905,979.94. The highest percentage was paid in 1909 and was 10.29 per cent of all taxes. Out of a total of \$24,995,876.33 the railroads paid \$2,746,732.23. In 1910, when the gross earnings of the steam roads were \$46,992,018, they paid \$2,658,322, or 5.65 per cent of their earnings in taxes. Their net income and the percentage that went for taxes was 21.25. The gross earnings of the street railways were \$9,882,955, and they paid 4.68 per cent, or \$462,038. The net income was \$2,527,411, and of this \$422 went for taxes to the state.

POISON BERRIES MARKED

Aurora Resident Says Glossy Coat is Nature's Danger Signal. FARMERS REJOICE at Snow Fall. KLAMATH FALLS, Or., Dec. 30.—(Special).—The recent cold spell brought with it a fine fall of snow, which reached a maximum of about six inches, and is regarded with great rejoicing by the farmers in this territory, who will need moisture during the coming irrigating season. There was not a great quantity of rainfall during the past season, and the farmers are anxious that there be plenty of snow this winter. This fall of snow is the second of consequence this season.

Better Pianos for Rent at Sherman, Clay & Co., Morrison at Sixth. Coal \$8 up. Edlefsen Fuel Co.

BAKER MAY CHANGE RULE

Movement Started to Drop Commission Plan for Former System.

BAKER, Or., Dec. 30.—(Special).—A long-threatened movement to try to return Baker from the commission form of government to the old Alderman rule was started Thursday when E. T. Beers, ex-Alderman, started a petition asking the present City Commissioners to call a special election March 11 to give the voters a chance to decide whether the old or present form of government shall prevail. Mr. Beers and Attorney Joseph Helmer, who drafted the revision of the old charter, refuse to say who started the movement, but deny that the saloonkeepers, who are credited with being dissatisfied with the commission plan, have anything to do with the movement.

In the plea for a return to the old style of government many material changes to the old charter are suggested, including the election of a Mayor and Treasurer with salaries of \$50 a month each and election of Aldermen, two from each ward, with salaries of \$10 a month, but not to exceed \$20 a month. All other officials are to be appointed by the Mayor with consent of the Aldermen, salaries to be fixed by the Aldermen and removal being in their hands. The initiative, referendum and recall will stand on a 10 per cent basis. Remonstrances against street improvements shall require the signatures of two-thirds of the property holders, instead of the present three-fourths, and trial by jury before police magistrates will be allowed subject to the approval of the Circuit Court. Mr. Beers is confident that he will easily have the required number of names.

HYPNOTIC CRAFT DENIED

HOWELL SAYS WIFE'S SUIT IS DUE TO RELATIVES. Mining Operator Will Resist Effort to Annul Marriage, Saying It Was Love Match.

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 30.—(Special).—George Howell, the Spokane mining operator, took steps today to prevent the annulment of his marriage with Miss Margaret Armstrong. She announced yesterday that she purported such action, but Howell, declaring that he is influenced by relatives and that eventually she will return to him, said the patient was distracted over his wife's actions. Steps were taken to secure the affidavit of the minister who performed the marriage ceremony in San Diego, to show the state of Mrs. Howell's mind at the time of the wedding. Howell said today that letters written by him during their courtship will refute the charge that he hypnotized her into accepting him as a husband. The letters voiced strong love for him, he said. Howell broke down today and Dr. T. Floyd Brown, who attended him, said the patient was distracted over his wife's actions.

RENT A NEW PIANO.

New pianos to rent at \$4 per month; rent allowed on purchase. The Wilby B. Allen Co., cor. 7th and Morrison.

"77"

Humphreys' Seventy-Seven Breaks up Grip and COLDS. Gonesness.

HOG RAISING BIG PAYER

Aurora Farmers Realize Good Profits From Animals. AURORA, Or., Dec. 30.—(Special).—In the past two weeks a large number of hogs have been shipped to Portland markets or sold here at Canby, at Barlow and at Hubbard. These have shown an increase in weight from 125 to 450 pounds, and the prices from 7 cents to 8 1/2 cents. Prices have been as high as 9 1/2 cents, but have been lower for the past month.

STOPS Toothache

Instantly. Does not dry up. Cleanses the cavity. Destroys bad odor. Dent's Toothache Gum. All Drugists 15c.

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