

# UNCLE SAM TO OPEN PANAMA CUT YEAR BEFORE TIME SET

## Report of Isthmian Commission Says Tolls Must Be Fixed at Once as Canal Will Be Ready in 1914.

(Special to The Journal.)

Washington, Nov. 1.—The annual report of the Isthmian canal commission for 1911 contains many interesting facts covering the work of digging the Panama cut, and other general improvements in the canal zone.

One fact that has interested the people of the United States is that the report shows that the number of vessels transiting the canal has increased to such an extent that already additional docking facilities have been ordered.

The discovery that it would probably be possible to pass vessels through the canal at least a year earlier than the date set for the completion of the canal has brought the question of rates before the commission. The report says in this regard:

"The estimated date for the completion of the canal was based on the report of the international board of engineers submitted in 1904, and was fixed at January 1, 1915. In the meantime, the work advanced more rapidly than had been anticipated, and it became apparent that it would be possible to pass vessels through the canal at least a year earlier than this date.

"Attention was called to the fact that at least 18 months' notice of the rates should be given in order that steps might be taken in time to change rates that would follow if the canal were used. If rates are such as to warrant the adoption of the new rates, commensurate will adjust itself to the utilization as soon as possible; if not, the old channels will continue to be followed. Inquiry not only confirmed this statement, but developed the fact that the organization of new companies for use of the canal was actively being carried on, the established rates being sufficiently attractive. It was developed, also, that two years' advance notice was desired in order to permit the building of the necessary ships.

**Board Was Convened.**

"To determine, then, the approximate date when the canal would be ready for use, and to report what steps, if any, should be taken to expedite the work, a board was convened, composed of those charged with the work in progress and contemplated. Based upon the report of this board, announcement was made that all the concrete in the locks at Casita would be laid by June 1, 1912, and in the locks on the Pacific side by October 1, 1912; that, assuming the same were completed by June 1, 1912, as stipulated by the contract, the locks would be ready for use on this date if the operating machinery were installed. That the work on the cuttings at Casita would be completed by the expiration of 30 days by April 1, 1912, and the entire dam would be finished by the close of the dry season of 1912-13; that the excavation through Casita cut would be completed by July 1, 1912, if no more material due to slides had to be removed than was estimated at that time; and that the entire channel would be sufficiently advanced to pass the shipping that would use the canal.

"It was desirable, therefore, that legislation should be provided without delay for the establishment of rates, and should be sufficiently flexible in regard to ready change should conditions arise to warrant it.

**Dependence on Question.**

"Another matter needing attention is the organization for the operation of the canal and for the government of the canal zone. These two are intimately connected. Existing law provides for the construction of the canal; also for the exercise of the military, and political powers necessary for the government of the canal zone during a period which has already elapsed.

"It is difficult to foresee the uses to which the land in the zone may be put. There are, all told, within the limits of the zone 424 square miles, of which about 17 square miles are in private ownership and 355 square miles owned by the government (i. e., either by the commission or the Panama Railroad company); of the latter, 24 square miles are occupied by the canal. A large part of the government land will be required for military and naval purposes, and it is not unlikely that additional lands will be required by other departments of the government. The position of the Republic of Panama and its two cities with respect to the zone makes it necessary to the interest of harmony that the Spanish laws now in force shall obtain. Under existing law, lands may be

leased for a period not exceeding 25 years, with the understanding that the cost of such improvements shall be reimbursed in the lease; in case the lands are needed for other purposes, it is generally the rule that lands taken for governmental purposes be never sold, and most always be restored, and from experience gained in the process served upon for lands taken for canal purposes, the improvements are always retained. For the most part, the cost of such improvements should be met by the state; and the Spanish system of taxation must be continued to avoid friction on account of unfair competition with the Panamanians.

The improvements offered are not likely to attract Americans. Other countries are not desirable. The territories already established are populated by laborers, a class which should be repatriated after work can no longer be given them, and the growth of such a class should be discouraged. The extent of the amount of land owned and the number of townships established and occupied, the greater will be the cost of sanitation and civil government. For several years in some at least, it is believed that all lands for governmental purposes. Whatever military force is located on the isthmus will be charged with its own sanitation. The reservation of all lands for governmental use will result in a minimum cost for these two items.

**Complete Unique Position.**

"The canal zone occupies a unique position among the outlying possessions of the United States and on this account requires special treatment. The construction of the canal is the original purpose for which it was obtained and to this purpose everything within the zone is made subordinate. In the same way, after its completion everything must be subordinated to the operation of the canal. Assuming that the canal is being built for the benefit of the commerce of the world, it nevertheless is a military asset to the United States and conditions may arise in which the military necessities of the nation will become paramount. It is essential, therefore, that an entity should be established or created and so organized that any contingency can be promptly met as soon as it arises.

In other words, while during certain periods the operation of the canal is for commercial purposes, entirely separate and distinct from the military, there are times when the military necessities must predominate.

"Every known precaution has been taken to insure the safety of the locks. Accidents to locks have in nearly every case resulted from misunderstood signals in the engine room. To avoid any possibility of accident which might render the canal useless, the authorities should assume charge of all vessels entering their transit of the locks; under such conditions any damage that may result to the vessels should be assumed by the government and legislation looking to this end is necessary.

"The revenue of the canal should go to pay not only the operating expenses, but to repay the capital in-

vested. Every legitimate means for increasing the revenue should therefore be adopted.

**BRITONS NOT WORRIED OVER NAVAL POST TALE**

(United Press Special Wire.)

London, Nov. 1.—Sir Edward Grey, in the House of Commons yesterday, after replying to the negative of Lord Hone's question whether his majesty's government was aware that the United States was making a naval station on Lake Michigan, and whether this was a breach of the Rush-Bagot treaty, and whether he had had any communication from the Canadian government concerning the fact that the United States was continuing to break through the Bagot treaty, said:

"I hope to leave to the Canadian government the initiative in matters which concern directly their own interests and to show our regard for our desire to act in harmony, sympathy and cooperation with them by not making statements about what they may or may not wish."

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