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SATURDAY, - FEBRUARY 2, 1895

THE WORK AT THE LOCKS NEARING COMPLETION.

The opening of the Columbia river is a matter of the utmost importance, not only to Eastern Oregon, but to a large portion of Idaho, whose products will eventually reach the seaboard by the aid of its noble current. Portland and Astoria are also directly interested in this work, because they will be directly benefited by it. It will prove indeed a large factor in the development of the entire Northwest, and as it assists in opening and settling a territory 600 miles square and containing 250,000,000 acres of agricultural grazing and timber lands, it becomes of national importance. The place to be most benefited, temporarily at least, is The Dalles, and in consequence of this the newspapers of this city have had more to say on the subject than those of the balance of the state. Ever since the first appropriation was made the people of the Inland Empire have looked forward to the day when the last stone would be laid and the obstructions to navigation at the Cascades would be of the past, for they knew that this was a long step towards the solution of the freight problems, and felt that when once the canal is opened and boats can run from Astoria to The Dalles, it will speedily lead to the removal or surmounting of the obstacles to navigation between this point and Celilo, and so open the river and make it available for carrying the vast grain crops of Eastern Oregon and Washington to the seaboard.

That our brethren of the press and the people of the Inland Empire might know just what progress had been made, what condition the work was in, and the probabilities as to the time when the canal and locks would be completed, a CHRONICLE reporter was detailed this week to make a thorough investigation into the matter. Upon stating the object of this visit to the contractors, J. G. and I. N. Day, their bookkeeper was told to furnish any matter pertaining to his department, and through him and from the reports of Lieut. Taylor, the government engineer, under whose immediate direction the work is done, the figures given below were obtained. The first appropriation was made, and others succeeded as follows:

June 14, 1876	\$ 90,000
June 18, 1878	150,000
March 13, 1879	200,000
June 14, 1880	100,000
March 3, 1881	100,000
August 2, 1882	265,000
July 5, 1884	150,000
August 5, 1885	187,500
August 11, 1888	300,000
September 19, 1890	435,000
Total	\$1,977,500

All of these appropriations, except a portion of the last one, which were still available for the contract work, was expended by the government engineers, Major Jones having charge of the work at first, followed by Captain Powell and then by Major Post, who still has supervision, for the government, of the work. For many reasons the expenditure of the money by the government engineers did not produce results commensurate with the amount of money expended. For one reason, and perhaps the principal one, the money was furnished in small sums, and a large portion of it was expended in protecting the work already done and repairing damages after high water. The people, growing tired of what seemed at least the waste of both money and time, became clamorous for a change, and that the work be let by contract. Through the energetic action

of the Oregon delegation (and, by the way, largely through Senator Dolph's influence) this was finally done, and on February 10, 1893, J. G. and I. N. Day took charge of the work. Since that time the work has been prosecuted steadily, until now the end can be seen. The work would have been completed in the time specified in the contract had it not been for the unprecedented flood, which was only prevented from sweeping the whole works away, by almost superhuman efforts, and at great expense. As it is, the completion of the work will not be long delayed.

To give some idea of what has been accomplished, we give a few figures: When the contractors took charge of the work there were 716 cubic yards of granite to be cut, all but 136 of which are now in place, and the balance is cut at the quarries in California. Of basaltic stone there were 5,688 cubic yards to be cut, of which 1,825 remain; of basaltic facing stone but 300 cubic yards remain to be cut out of 3,744, and 634 yards of quarry stone remain to be cut, out of 1,789. There are, in round numbers, remaining to be cut, and including the amounts just stated, 50,000 feet of basalt and granite for the walls, 35,000 feet of coping, 10,000 feet for the power house, and 5,000 feet miscellaneous; or 100,000 feet all together, which can be cut in one hundred days.

Of the four gates required, three are now on the grounds and ready to put together. A train of fourteen cars arrived Wednesday loaded with the sections of one gate, and the other will be delivered within a few weeks. These gates contain 2,239,000 pounds of steel. Of the 216,000 pounds of steel plates, angles, etc., 200,000 pounds are already in place, or on hand. Of 43,900 pounds of steel rods 35,000 pounds are in place, or on hand, and 187,000 pounds of cast steel, besides that enumerated, is in place. There are other large amounts of steel, such as plates, snubs, etc., which in the aggregate run into the hundred thousands of pounds, but which space forbids us to mention in detail.

There is considerable wall to be laid yet, but for this a large portion of the stone is cut, and as the foundations are nearly all laid it can be put in place very rapidly. The contract provides that neither the upper or lower bulkhead shall be removed until the gate next to each is in place, so that there is a break in the continuity of the walls at each bulkhead. The work on the outside of them, however, is being pushed rapidly, the excavations are completed for the walls at each end, and the walls will be completed before the next high water, and all the gates will be in place by that time. As soon as the summer rise is gone the bulkheads will be removed, the gaps in the walls connected and the completion of the work will then require only the dredging out of the channel from the head and foot of the locks respectively, to deep water, and this will be accomplished, if the contractors are left unhampered, before 1895 gives place to 1896.

The total amount of money appropriated for the completion of the locks under the contract system was \$1,239,653, and an unexpended balance besides was available from the appropriation made in 1890. The contractors say there is money enough, not to quite complete the work, but sufficient to put the canal in a condition to be operated. Of this total amount the contractors have earned and been paid up to December 31, 1894, \$731,000, and this does not include the 32 1/2 per cent held back by the government on a large amount of material now on hand.

Such briefly as we can state it, is the condition of the work as shown by the reports of Lieut. Taylor, showing the amounts earned and the amount of work yet to be done. The progress of the work as noted by one who is at all familiar with it, appears exceedingly rapid since the contractors took charge of it, and the contrast between the expenditures under the contractors, and by the government, needs no comment. The work is so widely scattered that the casual observer does not realize the ex-

tent of it, and it takes repeated visits before one begins to realize the enormous amount of earth that has been moved, or the masses of stone and concrete that have been put together. To convey an idea of the latter we give the estimates of masonry that will be in the walls when completed—185,000 cubic yards, or a mass of stone one yard high, one yard wide and 106 miles long. When Senator Dolph visited the locks last fall, he expressed himself as highly gratified with the progress of the work and remarked that "now he expected to live to see the canal an accomplished fact." The high water last June, besides causing unusual delay, caused also considerable damage. The surging waters rushed in an almost resistless torrent over the made earth between the canal and Powder House Point, sweeping everything movable before it. The immense piles of stone, happily placed so as to meet this torrent, alone saved the works from entire destruction. Those were busy days for every body at the Locks. Lieut. Taylor was absent on leave at the time, but he had the right man for the occasion in his place in the person of Mr. William Morris, a young civil engineer, a Portland boy, to whose whose energy and foresight, backed by money and muscle, the success of the fight against the waters was largely due. The water approached the top of the bulkhead and every man that could find a place to work on was employed. It was a gallant fight, brain and muscle, meeting the fierce onslaught of the mad waters and repelling it. Nearly a thousand barrels of cement were used in raising and strengthening the bulkhead, besides cut stone, sacks of sand and everything available that would fill space or hold back the tide. And when on the 6th of June the flood reached its highest and stood still with the bulkhead yet a foot or two above it, it was a proud day for the gallant band who fought the unchained elements, and conquered. It was a great day for Eastern Oregon too, though it did not know it, for if that fight had been lost, there would not be enough of the work left to form a nucleus for an appropriation. The work would either have been delayed for years, or abandoned and the latter would most probably have occurred.

As it is after a thorough and close study of the situation, we believe that the contractors will be easily able to do just what they say they will, and that is, have the canal ready to permit the passage of boats by next New Years day, and if the season is favorable some time sooner than that.

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