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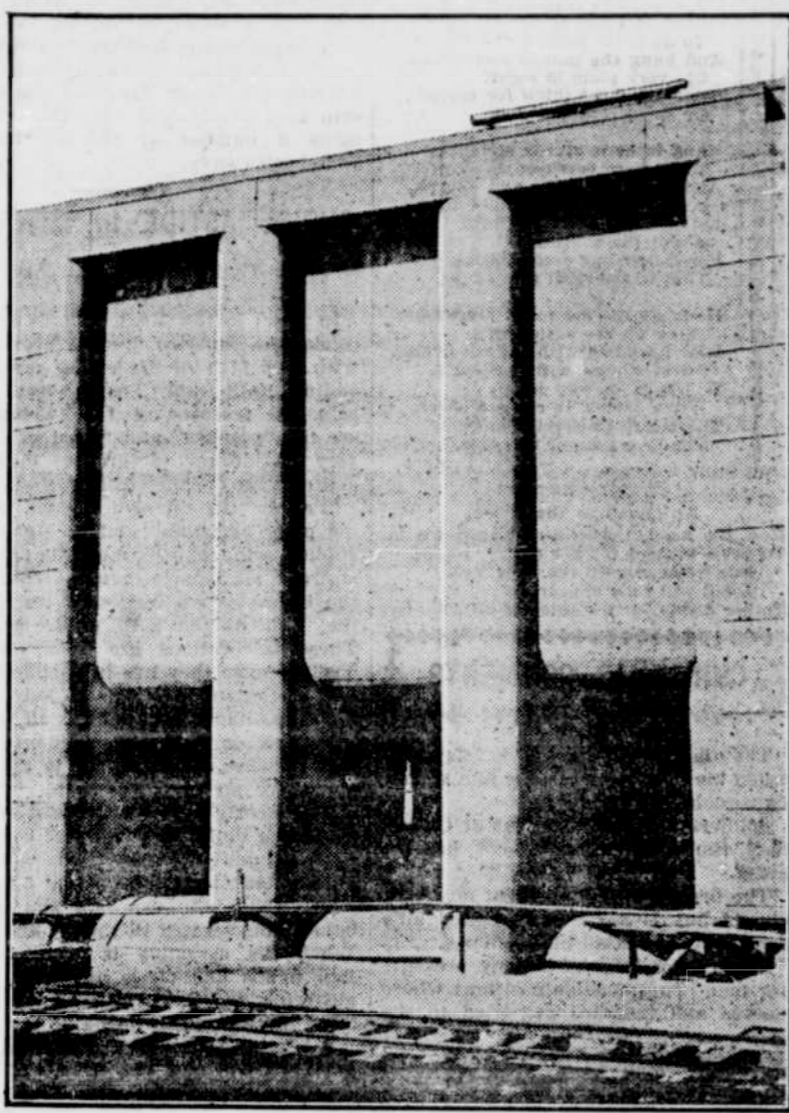
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By Wm. R. Scott.

(Continued from last week.)

on the ground that they failed to meet the requirements of the government. The real reason for rejecting the bids was that both the country and the administration had undergone a change of heart as to the wisdom of the contract plan.

Another epoch in the life of the canal project was marked by the president's action in definitely committing the enterprise to direct government supervision. Chairman Shonts resigned, effective March 4, 1907. An executive order then consolidated the offices of chairman and chief engineer in Mr. Stevens. On March 16 the remainder of the commission, except Colonel Gorgas, resigned, to be followed on April 1 by the resignation of Chief Engineer Stevens. His resignation came like a sickening accident to the canal employees. "The chief," as he was called familiarly, had established himself firmly in their minds and hearts as a thoroughly competent engineer and just administrator.

**CHAPTER IX.  
The Canal Under Goethals.**

**P**RESIDENT ROOSEVELT had at last found public sentiment educated to the point where the canal could be put exclusively in the hands of the government engineers. The personnel of the third commission he appointed on April 1, 1907, was as follows:

Lieutenant Colonel George W. Goethals, chairman and chief engineer; Major D. D. Galliard, U. S. A.; Major William L. Sibert, U. S. A.; H. H. Rousseau, U. S. N.; Colonel W. C. Gorgas, U. S. A., medical corps; J. C. S. Blackburn, Jackson Smith, Joseph Bucklin Bishop, secretary.

The president also took advantage of the reorganization of the commission to further consolidate power in the chairman. Not only was Colonel Goethals made chairman of the isthmian canal commission and chief engineer of the Panama canal, but the executive power in the canal zone, formerly exercised by the governor, was vested in him, as well as the presidency of the Panama Railroad company, thus making every official and employee and the members of the commission subordinate to him.

Colonel Goethals appreciated the feelings the employees had over the prospect of army engineers for directors of the enterprise and in his first speech in the canal zone dispelled the idea of militarism in the canal management. He promised a fair hearing to every man with a grievance, the manner in which he carried out this promise being one of the distinctively great qualities he later revealed as an administrator. Few persons in the canal zone had heard of Colonel Goethals before his appointment as chief engineer. Yet his previous ex-

perience had qualified him ideally for the important work now in hand. He had been building locks and dams, had been chief of engineers in the Spanish-American war, was a graduate of and had taught in West Point and had seen other construction experience that made him at home in any kind of work the canal should require.

Contrast for a moment the situation as faced by Colonel Goethals with that faced by Mr. Stevens in 1905. In 1907 fire was under the boiler and steam was up. When Mr. Stevens relinquished the throttle the army of workers had begun to come close to the million mark in monthly excavations in the Culebra cut. There were sixty-three steam shovels at work on the canal. The Panama railroad had been double tracked throughout and the mileage in the Culebra cut and elsewhere brought up to 106.78 miles; the machine shops at Gorgona and Empire were equipped for any kind of repair work or original construction.

There were approximately 30,000 employees, and the recruiting agencies in Europe, the West Indies and the United States constantly were sending additions. Quarters for employees, office buildings and all other structures consisted of 2,000 buildings of American design and 1,536 remodeled French buildings. The commissary for supplying food, clothing and general merchandise to employees was organized and had branches in seven canal zone towns. There were fifteen hotels in operation for bachelor employees, and four recreation clubhouses had been constructed, besides church and lodge buildings. Twenty-four public schools afforded educational facilities to the canal zone children. The police system, the courts, postoffices and fire departments were thoroughly organized. In short, the preparatory stage of the canal had passed and the constructive stage had begun.

Necessarily all the basic work accomplished under Wallace and Stevens is lost sight of in view of the magnificent superstructure erected under Colonel Goethals. The modern sightseer has nothing to remind him of the wretched conditions of the first two years, the battle with disease, the arduous labor of creating in the jungle a duplicate American civilization, the taxalizing struggle with government red tape before a stick of timber, a pound of iron, a shipment of food or an efficient workman could be secured. Colonel Goethals deserves the admiration that his service on the canal has evoked, but the generality of writers, looking at what exists today and heedless of the beginnings of the task, lose their perspective and commonly fall into the error of ignoring the very remarkable and wholly vital preparatory work under John F. Stevens.

President Roosevelt had selected in Messrs. Galliard, Sibert, Rousseau and, later, Hodges engineers of exceptional ability, who, with S. B. Williamson, picked by Colonel Goethals, demonstrated capacities which in a large

measure account for the splendid progress of the Goethals administration.

It would be erroneous to assume that Colonel Goethals had nothing to do but sit back and watch the signals on the main line of canal construction, as indicated by his predecessors. The decks, indeed, had been cleared for action and the blueprints nicely finished and tied with ribbon, but the real struggle was just beginning.

The first annual report of the commission, to be written as of June 30, the end of the government's fiscal year, was issued by Colonel Goethals in 1907, three months after Mr. Stevens resigned. The president had asked Colonel Goethals to report on the contract plan after an inspection of the canal, and this masterly argument against turning it over to private contractors is the report's most notable feature, aside from its unusual comprehensiveness.

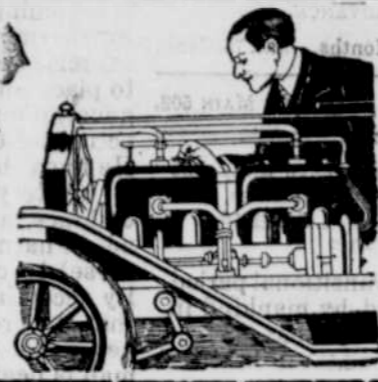
Taking a survey of the conditions when he took charge, Colonel Goethals found that 80 per cent of the plant for finishing the canal was on the ground or ordered. The preliminary work for relocating the Panama railroad had been done, and actual construction of the new line was begun in June, 1907, shortly after his arrival. Excavations in the lock sites were uncompleted, and it was two years later, in 1909, before any concrete was laid. In April, the month he arrived nearly 900,000 yards were removed from the Culebra cut, the best month's work to that date. Dredging in the Atlantic and Pacific entrances of the canal had gone ahead steadily, though not extensively. Less than 6,000,000 yards had been removed from the Culebra cut by both Wallace and Stevens.

The fall of 1907 and the month of October presented a new problem in the canal construction which ever since has been one of the most formidable and uncertain factors in the project. A slide began at Cucaracha on the east side of the cut near the town of Culebra and suddenly filled the cut, closing it for transportation. In 1884 the French had noted this earth movement, and during Colonel Goethals' first years on the canal it involved an area of forty-seven acres. Before dirt trains could move through the cut steam shovels had to work night and day for several weeks, and from that

(Continued next week)

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