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PANAMA CANAL IS HUGE JOB

BIG DITCH CONSTRUCTION DESCRIBED

Locks, Lakes, Dams and Cuts are Remarkable Engineering Feats—
New Water Way 50 Miles Long
Will Accommodate any Vessel

By GEORGE PALMER PUTNAM.

This, the second letter of The Bulletin series, is scheduled to tell somewhat of "Constructing the Big Ditch." Perhaps the best way to get at the matter is to give a brief description of just what the "big ditch" is.

In the first place, remember that though the Panama Canal is often talked of as being the "biggest job on earth" it is far from that. For instance, as far as money expenditure is concerned, the Great Northern Railroad system cost about as much as the Canal, and the Harriman system infinitely more.

Uncle Sam will have paid out nearly \$400,000,000 when the ditch is done. That sum includes the \$40,000,000 paid the French company for their property and \$10,000,000 given Panama for the Canal Zone territory. This means, approximately, that every person living in the United States has contributed about \$4 toward building the Canal. A later letter in this series will deal with what we Oregonians may expect to get for our \$4.

Description of the Canal.

The length of the Canal from deep water in one ocean to deep water in the other, will be about 50 miles. Think of a fifty-mile ditch large enough to let the biggest vessels built pass each other, and with locks and dams and wonderful mechanical devices of all kinds, constructed under most adverse conditions in a tropical climate 2000 miles from the base of supplies! Makes a little old Cello Canal look like a street gutter, doesn't it?

In passing through from the Atlantic to the Pacific a vessel will enter the approach channel in Limon Bay, which will have a bottom width

of 500 feet and extend to Gatun, a distance of about seven miles. At Gatun it will enter a series of three locks and be lifted 85 feet to Gatun Lake.

There the steamer will be in a great inland sea, for this artificial lake covers 164 square miles. It is formed by the biggest dam ever attempted; Gatun Dam is a mile and a half long, nearly half a mile wide at its base, its top will be at an elevation 115 feet above sea level, and it will contain about 21,000,000 yards of material.

Through Gatun Lake the vessel may steam at full speed for some 24 miles, to Bas Obispo, where it will enter Culebra Cut, the deepest and most difficult portion of the excavation work, where the steam shovels have burrowed through the backbone of the continent. For the nine miles through the Cut the bottom width of the Canal will be 300 feet, until Pedro Miguel lock is reached, where the vessel is lowered 30 feet to a small lake, through which it will pass for a mile and a half to Miraflores. There it will be lowered to sea level, and pass out to the Pacific through a channel eight and a half miles long and 500 feet wide at bottom.

The depth will vary from 45 to 85 feet. An interesting fact in connection with the construction is that the tide on the Atlantic side has a maximum rise of 1 1/2 feet, while on the Pacific there is a rise of 21 feet.

It is estimated that a vessel will require between 10 and 12 hours to make the passage through the Canal. Excavation on the Canal will total more than 182,500,000 cubic yards.

Equipment is Enormous.

Perhaps as good a way as any to get an idea of the enormity of the construction operations on the Isthmus is to note the amount of equipment used in the work. And remember that every bit of it is used to capacity, for on the Zone there is no loafing, either for men or machinery; everyone is at the job without let-up, for several years ago the "soft snaps" were abolished and now the only ones who can hold jobs are the men who make good, for whatever can be said of Government work elsewhere, at Panama it assuredly is on a business basis.

In the first place, there are about 5000 Americans working for the Canal Commission, and some 30,000 Jamaican negroes, Spaniards and other foreigners.

Some of the bigger items of equipment are as follows:

Steam shovels	100
Locomotives	315
Drills	560
Cars	4,346
Dredges	20

And that is but the beginning of

the list, for to it may be added lighters, tug boats, pile drivers, rock breakers, concrete mixers, cranes and a hundred other expensive contrivances, not to mention such additional items of huge cost as power stations, railroad equipment, wharves and so forth.

Points of Compass Mixed.

One of the things about the Canal which sadly confuses those not entirely familiar with its geographical peculiarities is the fact that the Pacific entrance is east of the Atlantic entrance. In other words, when you make the trip through the ditch after 1914, from the Pacific to the Atlantic you will be sailing westward.

The explanation to this phenomenon is that the Isthmus takes a big loop, and where the Canal is cut through it is running practically northeast and southwest, instead of due south, as we generally suppose it does.

Another freak in connection with the geography of the western hemisphere with which many of us are unfamiliar is that all of South America lies east of a north-and-south line dropped down from New York. That is, South America might better be called "South-East America."

See Me

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TURN LIGHT ON LAND BUSINESS

HAWLEY SAYS ABANDON SECRET METHODS

Oregon Representative Has Bill to End Star Chamber Decisions in Land Office—Wants Settlers Heard as Well as Agents.

WASHINGTON, D. C., March 4.—Representative Hawley of Oregon has vigorously assailed the land office method of cancelling homestead entries, condemned the system of confidential reports from special agents, and made a plea for the passage of a bill which he has introduced, prohibiting the Department from using any report or any protest against an entry unless the entrymen accused is furnished a copy of the charges, and an opportunity to reply is given him.

Subordinates Prepare Decisions.

At the outset Mr. Hawley said that most of the decisions of the General Land Office and Interior Department are prepared by subordinate clerks and law officers and signed by the hundreds, without examination, by the Commissioner and the Secretary. Cases that are appealed are passed upon often by the same subordinates who rendered the original adverse decision and naturally they sustain themselves.

"Frequently reports from special agents or others are regarded as secret," said Mr. Hawley, "and neither the entryman nor anyone in his behalf is allowed to read them. What they contain of truth or error cannot be determined. They appear to be regarded as of more value than the known and sworn evidence of competent witnesses. The entryman is held not to have answered certain charges, so made. How can he answer an unknown charge, especially a charge he never suspected anyone would make, because not founded upon fact?"

"Too many contests are allowed against homestead and other entries. An entryman files on a parcel of land. He builds a house, barn, fences and clears some of the land. The place begins to look like a home. Some envious or covetous person sees so much accomplished and begins a contest against the entryman, alleging non-residence, lack of cultivation, etc. The case drags its weary way. The plan is to wear out the original homesteader, and then by preference right as the contestant, to take the fruits of another man's toil practically by force.

Secret Process Opposed.

"Before a court no witness is given special credence by reason of any special service he is in. Every witness must submit what he knows, how he knows it, and prove his credibility upon cross-examination. A court would examine into the facts, would ascertain from witnesses what the settler had actually done; would admit no secret papers; would give no special credit to any special agent, and would decide upon the preponderance of evidence. That should be the rule with public land procedure.

Agents Same as Settlers

"By reason of a man's employment by the Government, he has no excess of judgment, honesty or wisdom. He is no better in his public capacity than he was in his private station; his statements are no more worthy of credence or trust than before, or than the statements of any good citizen who is informed upon the matter."

Mr. Hawley then showed that last year, out of 26,505 entries examined by special agents 16,483 were reported upon favorably and 10,022 adversely.

Mr. Hawley also contended that agricultural lands in forest reservations ought to be listed by a commission of experts, the listing to begin with lands most accessible, and for which there is an actual demand.

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