

notch of the Culebra cut the prism is now as wide as it will be; all told, the canal bed at this point has now been sunk about 200 feet below what it originally was and it will have to be sunk about 130 feet farther.

Referring to railroad management in the zone the president says that the most advanced methods have been adopted. He found that some of the departments had become "over-developed" and could now be reduced or subordinated without impairment of efficiency and of the saving of cost. He adds that Mr. Shonts, chairman of the commission, has all these things in hand and will attend to them properly. The president says that at present 25,000 men are engaged in the canal work and that "after a while" the number will be doubled. "In such a multitude," says the president, "it is inevitable that there should be here and there a scoundrel" and that the work of improvement should be necessarily slow, but he says: "After the most painstaking inquiry I have been unable to find a single reputable person who had so much as heard of any serious accusations affecting the honesty of the commission or of any responsible officers under it."

The president devotes one chapter of his message to "reckless slanderers." He says that where the slanderers are foreigners he has no concern with them, but where they are Americans he feels for them "heartiest contempt and indignation." He says that "the outrageous accusations of these slanderers constitute a gross libel upon a body of public servants who for trained intelligence, expert ability, high character and devotion to duty have never been excelled anywhere." He adds that each man directing the work on the isthmus has obtained his position through merit and that not one has used his position in any way for his own personal or pecuniary advantage. The president says:

"After most careful consideration we have decided to let out most of the work by contract, if we can come to satisfactory terms with the contractors. The whole work is of a kind suited to the peculiar genius of our people; and our people have developed the type of contractor best fitted to grapple with it. It is of course much better to do the work in large part by contract than to do it all by the government, provided it is possible on the one hand to secure to the contractor a sufficient remuneration to make it worth while for responsible contractors of the best kind to undertake the work; and provided on the other hand it can be done on terms which will not give an excessive profit to the contractor at the expense of the government. After much consideration the plan already promulgated by the secretary of war was adopted. This plan in its essential features was drafted, after careful and thorough

study and consideration, by the chief engineer, Mr. Stevens, who, while in the employment of Mr. Hill, the president of the Great Northern railroad, had personal experience of this very type of contract. Mr. Stevens then submitted the plan to the chairman of the commission, Mr. Shonts, who went carefully over it with Mr. Rogers, the legal adviser of the commission, to see that all legal difficulties were met. He then submitted copies of the plan to both Secretary Taft and myself. Secretary Taft submitted it to some of the best counsel at the New York bar, and afterwards I went over it very carefully with Mr. Taft and Mr. Shonts, and we laid the plan in its general features before Mr. Root. My conclusion is that it combines the maximum of advantage with the minimum of disadvantage. Under it a premium will be put upon the speedy and economical construction of the canal, and a penalty imposed on delay and waste. The plan as promulgated is tentative; doubtless it will have to be changed in some respects before we can come to a satisfactory agreement with responsible contractors—perhaps even after the bids have been received; and of course it is possible that we can not come to an agreement, in which case the government will do the work itself. Meanwhile the work on the isthmus is progressing steadily and without any let-up."

The president says that a seven-headed commission is a clumsy instrument and he thinks that there should be but one commissioner with such heads of departments and other officers under him "as we may find necessary."

The president says: "I accompany this paper with a map showing substantially what the canal will be like when it is finished. When the Culebra cut has been made and the dams built (if they are built as at present proposed) there will then be at both the Pacific and Atlantic ends of the canal, two great fresh water lakes, connected by a broad channel running at the bottom of a ravine, across the backbone of the Western Hemisphere. Those best informed believe that the work will be completed in about eight years; but it is never safe to prophecy about such a work as this, especially in the tropics."

He says he is glad to know that representatives of the commercial clubs of Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati and St. Louis expect to visit the isthmus and concludes his message by expressing his confidence in the success of the canal enterprise, saying that "under Mr. Shonts and Mr. Stevens and Dr. Gorgas this work is started with every omen of good fortune." He says that a badge is to be given to each American citizen who for a specified time has taken part in this work. He explains: "For participation in it will hereafter be held to reflect honor upon the men participating just as it reflects honor upon a soldier to have belonged to a mighty army in a great war for righteousness."

THEY HAD RETIRED

The members of the local debating society were discussing the evils of gambling. Naturally, the opinions expressed leaned much to one side. But one young fellow obstinately refused to accept the general view.

"Betting isn't half a bad thing for some folks," he said. "Why, I know two or three men in the town who have retired as the result of betting."

"Name them," shouted a dozen.

"Where do they live?" demanded one prominent member.

"No. 10 X street," was the quiet reply.

When the prominent member reached home he turned to a directory, which informed him that No. 10 street was the local workhouse.—Tit-Bits.



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