PRESIDENT ON PANAMA

Sends Special Message to Corgress Giving Results of His Observation; in Canal, Zone--Rep'ies to Critics and Makes Recommendations.

Roosevelt's special message to congress on the subject of the Panama canal: To the Senate and House of Representa-

In the month of November I visited the Isthmus of Panama, going over the Canal Zone with considerable care; and also visited the cities of Panama and Colon, which are not in the zone or under the United States flag, but as to which the United States government, through its agents, exercises control for certain sanitary purposes. I chose the month of November for my visit partly because it is the rainest month of the year, the month in which the work goes forward at the greatest disadvantage, and one of the two months which the medical department of the French Canal company found most unhealthy.

Following the introduction to the message the president gives a resume of his programme during the days he was on

the isthmus, and then says:

At the outset I wish to pay tribute
to the amount of work done by the
French Canal company under very difficult circumstances. Many of the buildings they put up were excellent and are still in use, though, naturally, the houses are now getting out of repair and are being used as dweilings only until other houses can be built, and much of the work they did in the Culebra cut, and some of the work they did in digging has been of direct and real benefit ging has been of direct and real benefit. This country has never made a better investment than the \$40,000,000 which it paid to the French company for work and betterments, including especially the Panama raffroad.

An inspection on the ground at the height of the rainy season served to convince me of the wisdom of congress in refusing to adopt either a high-level or a sea-level canal. There seems to be a universal agreement among all people competent to judge that the Panama route, the one actually chosen, is much superior to both the Nicaragua and

Preliminary Work Being Done.

The wisdom of the canal management has been shown in nothing more clearly than in the way in which the foundations of the work have been laid To have yielded to the natural impatience of ill-informed outsiders and begun all kinds of experiments in work prior to a thorough sanitation of the isthmus, and to a fairly satisfactory working out of the problem of getting and keeping a sufficient labor supply, would have been disastrous. The various preliminary measures had to be taken first; and these could not be taken so as to allow us to begin the real work of construction prior to January 1 of the present That. It then became necessary to have the type of the canal decided, and the only delay has been the necessary delay until the 23th day of June, the date when the congress definitely and wisely settled that we should have an 85-foot hard canal Immediately after that the level canal. Immediately after that the vork began in hard earnest and has been continued with increasing vigor ever since; and it will continue so to progress in the future. When the contracts are let the conditions will be such as to insure a constantly increasing amount of performance.

Successful Sanitation. The first great problem to be solved,

upon the solution of which the success of the rest of the work depended, was the problem of sanitation. This was from the outset under the direction of Dr. C. Gorgas, who is to be made a full member of the commission. It must be remembered that his work was not mere sanitation as the term is understood in our ordinary municipal work. Throughout the zone and in the two cities of Panama and Colon, in addition to the sanitation work proper, he has had to do all the work that the Marine hospital service does as regards the nation, that the health department officers do in the various states and cities, and that Col. Waring did in New York when he cleaned its streets. The results have been astounding. The isthmus had been a byword for deadly unhealthfulness. Now, after two years of our occupation the conditions as regards sickness and the death rate compare favorably with reasonably healthy localities in the United States. Especial care has been devoted to minimizing the risk due to the presence of those species of mosquitoes which have been found to propagate malarial and yellow fevers. In all the settlements, the little temporary towns or cities composed of the white and black employes, which grow up here and there in the tropic jungle as the needs of the work dictate, the utmost care is exercised to keep the conditions healthy. Everywhere are to be seen the drainage ditches which in removing the water have removed the breeding places of the mosquitoes, while the whole jungle is cut away for a considerable space around the habitations, thus destroying the places in which the mosquitoes take shelter. These drainage ditches and clearings are in evidence in every settlement, and, together with the invariable presence of mosquito screens around the plazzas, and of mosquito doors to the houses, not to speak of the careful furnigation that has gone on in all infected houses, doubtless explain the extraordinary absence of mosquitoes. As a matter of fact, but a single mosquito, and this not of the dangerous species, was seen by any member of our party during my three days on the isthmus. Equal care is taken by the inspectors of the health de-partment to secure cleanliness in the houses and proper hygienic conditions of every kind, I inspected between 20 and 80 water-closets, both those used by the white employes and those used by the white employes and those used by the colored laborers. In almost every case I found the conditions perfect. In but one case did I find them really bad. In this case, affecting a settlement of unmarried white employes, I found them very bad indeed, but the buildings were all inherited from the French company and inherited from the French company and there were the company and the control of the were being used temporarily while other buildings were in the course of construction; and right near the defective water closet a new and excellent closet with a good sewer pipe was in process of construction and nearly finished. Nevertheess this did not excuse the fact that the bad condition had been allowed to prevail. Temporary accommodations, even if only such as soldiers use when camped in the field, should have been provided. Orders to this effect were issued. I append the report of Dr. Gorgas on the incident. I was struck, however, by the fact that in this instance, as in almost every other where a complaint was made every other where a complaint was made which proved to have any justification whatever, it appeared that steps had al-ready been taken to remedy the evil complained of, and that the trouble was mainly due to the extreme difficulty, and often impossibility, of providing in every place for the constant increase in the numbers of employes. Generally the provision is made in advance, but it is not possible that this should always be the case; when it is not there ensues a period of time during which the conditions are unsatisfactory, until a remedy can be provided; but I never found a case where the remedy was not being provided as speedily as possible.

Improvements in Cities.

The sanitation work in the cities of Panama and Colon has been just as important as in the zone itself, and in many respects much more difficult, because it was necessary to deal with the already existing population, which particularly had scant symmetry with sirable among the imported laborers,

The following is the text of President | for the good and steady man of course continue at the work. Yet astonishing progress has been made in both In Panama 90 per cent of the streets that are to be paved at all are already paved with an excellent brick pavement laid in heavy concrete, a few of the streets being still in process of paving. The sewer and water services in the city are of the most modern hygienic type, some of the service hav-

ing just been completed.
In Colon the conditions are peculiar. and it is as regards Colon that most of the very bitter complaint has been made. Colon is built on a low coral island, covered at more or less shallow vegetable accumulations or mold, which affords sustenance and strength to many varieties of low-

this honest complaint was typical of what occurred when I investigated most of the other honest complaints made to me. That is, where the complaints were not made wantonly or maliciously, they almost always proved due to failure to appreciate the fact that time was necessary in the creation and completion of this titanic work in a tropic wilderness. It is impossible to avoid some mistakes in building a giant canal through jungle-covered giant canal through jungle-covered mountains and swamps, while at the same time sanitating tropic cities, and providing for the feeding and general care of from 20,000 to 30,000 workers.
The complaints brought to me either The complaints brought to me, either of insufficient provision in caring for some of the laborers, or of failure to finish the pavements of Colon, or of failure to supply water, or of failure to build wooden sidewalks for the use of the laborers in the rainy season. on investigation proved, almost with-out exception, to be due merely to the utter inability of the commission to do everything at once.

Unjust Criticism.

Care and forethought have been exercised by the commission, and nothing has reflected more credit upon them than their refusal either to go ahead too fast or to be deterred by the fear of criticism from not going ahead fast enough. It is curious to note the fact that many of lying tropical plants. One-half of the the most severe critics of the commission surface of the island is covered with criticise them for precisely opposite rea-

water at high tide, the average height | sons, some complaining bitterly that the PRESIDENT ON A STEAM SHOVEL



From stereograph, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y. At Pedro Miguel, Culebra Cut, President Roosevelt was photographed seated on one of the immense steam shovels used in the work of excavating.

of the land being 1½ feet above low tide. The slight undulations furnish tide. The slight undulations furnish shallow, natural reservoirs or freshwater breeding places for every varie-ty of mosquito, and the ground tends to be lowest in the middle. When the town was originally built no attempt was made to fill the low ground, either in the streets or on the building sites, so that the entire surface was prac-tically a quagmire; when the quag-mire became impassable certain of the streets were crudely improved by filling especially bad mud holes with soft rock or other material. In September, 1905, a systematic effort was begun to formulate a general plan for the prop-er sanitation of the city; in February last temporary relief measures were taken, while in July the prosecution of the work was begun in good earnest. The results are already visible in the sewering, draining, guttering and paying of the streets. Some four months will be required before the work of sewerage and street improvement will be completed, but the progress already made is very marked. Ditches have been dug through the town, connecting the salt water on both sides, and into these the ponds, which have served as breeding places for the mosquitoes, are These ditches have answered their purpose, for they are probably the chief cause of the astonishing diminution of mosquitoes. More ditches of the kind are being constructed.

Colon Water Supply.

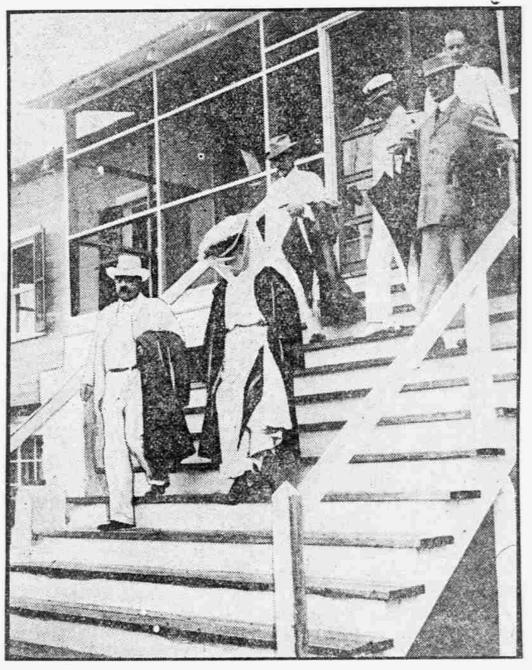
It was not practicable, with the force at the commission's disposal, and view of the need that the force should be used in the larger town of Panama, to begin this work before early last winter. Water mains were then laid in the town and water was furnished to the people early in March from a temporary reservoir. This reservoir proved to be of insufficient capacity before the end of the dry season and the shortage was made up by hauling water over the Panama railroad, so that there was at all times an ample supply of the very best water. Since that time the new reservoir back of Mount Hope has practically completed. I visited this reservoir. It is a lake over a mile long and half a mile broad. It now carries some 500,000,000 gallons of first-class water. I forward herewith a photograph of this lake, together with certain other photographs of what I saw while I was on the isthmus. Nothing but a cataclysm will Nothing but a cataclysm will mus. hereafter render it necessary in the dry season to haul water for the use of Colon and Cristobal.

Colon Pavements.

I rode through the streets of Colon. seeing them at the height of the rainy season, after two days of almost unexampled downpour, when they were at their very worst. Taken as a whole they were undoubtedly very bad; as bad as Pennsylvania avenue in Washington before Grant's administration. Front street is already in thoroughly satisfactory shape, however. Some of the side streets are also in good condition. In others the change in the streets is rapidly going on. Through three-fourths of the town it is now possible to walk, even during the period of tremendous rain. low shoes without wetting one's feet, owing to the rapidity with which the surface water is carried away in the ditches. In the remaining onefourth of the streets the mud is very deep—about as deep as in the ordinary street of a low-lying prairie river town of the same size in the United States during early spring. All men to whom I spoke were a unit in saying that the conditions of the Colon streets were 100 per cent better than a year ago. The most superficial examination of cause it was necessary to deal with the already existing population, which naturally had scant sympathy with revolutionary changes, the value of which they were for a long time not able to perceive. In Colon the population of the population are to the character of some of the material used for repairing certain streets. On investigation the complete laboration generally of colored laboration generally of the health of the employes, it is of course necessary to provide for policiong the zone.

appearances we shall in the main have to rely, for the ordinary unskilled work, partly upon colored laborers from the West Indies, partly upon Chinese labor. It certainly ought to be unnecessary to point out that the

PRESIDENTIAL PARTY LEAVING HOTEL



From stereograph, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood, N. Y.

Photograph of the President and Mrs. Roosevelt and party leaving the Tivoli hotel at Colon taken during the recent inspection of the canal by the chief executive.

work is not in a more advanced condition, while the others complain that it has States has no concern whatever in the been rushed with such haste that there has been insufficient preparation for the warranted delay. The right course to follow was exactly the course which has en followed Every reasonable preparation was made in advance, the hygienic conditions in especial being made as nearly perfect as possible; while on the other hand there has been no timid refusal to push forward the work because of inability to anticipate every possible emergency, for, of course, many defects can only be shown by the working of the

question as to whether the rough work on the isthmus, which is performed by allens in any event, is done by allens from one country with a black skin go quicker than the commission has gone, for such quickness would have meant insufficient preparation. On the other hand, to refuse to do anything until every possible future contingency had l every possible future contingency had to any laborers, and nothing that interferes with the wages of or lowers arranted delay. The right course to the standard of living of our own workmen. Having in view this principle. I have arranged to try several thousand Chinese laborers. This is destrable both because we must try to find out what laborers are most effieient, and, furthermore, because we should not leave ourselves at the mercy of any one type of foreign labor. At present the great bulk of the unskilled labor on the isthmus is done by West India negroes, chiefly

ter class, who are to be found as fore-Philippines, and belonged to the best men, as skilled mechanics, as police-men, are good men; and many of the ordinary day laborers are also good. type of American soldier. Without exception the black polleemen whom I questioned had served either in the British army or in the Jamaica or Barbados police. They were evidently contented, and were doing their work well. Where possible the policemen are used to control people of their own color, but in any converses we bestitation is felt in Work of Construction.

any emergency no hesitation is felt in using them indiscriminately. lnasmuch as so many both of the white

and colored employes have brought their families with them, schools have been established, the school service being un-der Mr. O'Connor. For the white pupils

white American teachers are employed; for the colored pupils there are also some

white American teachers, one Spanish teacher, and one colored American teach-

er, most of them being colored teachers from Jamaica, Barbados and St. Lucia. The schoolrooms were good, and it was

a pleasant thing to see the pride that the teachers were taking in their work and

Care of Employes.

Next in importance to the problem of

sanitation, and indeed now of equal importance, is the problem of securing and caring for the mechanics, laborers and other employes who actually do the work

other employes who actually do the work on the canal and the railroad. This great task has been under the control of Mr. Jackson Smith, and on the whole has been well done. At present there are some 6,000 white employes and some 19,000 colored employes on the isthmus. I went over the different places where

the different kinds of employes were working! I think I saw representatives

of every type both at their work and in

their homes; and I conversed with probably a couple of hundred of them all told, choosing them at random from every class and including those who came

especially to present certain grievances olmost invariably expressed far greater content and satisfaction with the conditions than did those who called to

Nearly 5,000 of the white employes had

come from the United States. No man can see these young, vigorous men energetically doing their duty without a thrill of pride in them as Americans. They represent on the average a high class. Doublets to congress the wages paid them will seem high but as a man

class. Doubtless to congress the wages paid them will seem high, but as a matter of fact the only general complaint which I found had any real basis among the complaints made to me upon the isthmus was that, owing to the peculiar surroundings, the cost of living, and the distance from home, the wages were really not as high as they should be. In fact, almost every man I spoke to felt that he ought to be receiving more money—a view, however, which the average man who stays at home in the United States probably likewise holds as regards himself. I append figures of the wages paid, so that the congress can

the wages paid, so that the congress can judge the matter for itself. Later I shall

confer on the subject with certain repre-

States, as well as going over with Mr. Stevens, the comparative wages paid on the zone and at home; and I may then

communicate my findings to the canal committees of the two houses.

Chinese and Other Labor.

Of the 19,000 or 20,000 day laborers

employed on the canal a few hundred are Spaniards. These do excellent

work. Their foreman told me that they did twice as well as the West Indian laborers. They keep healthy

and no difficulty is experienced with them in any way. Some Italian labor-

ers are also employed in connection with the drilling. As might be ex-

pecially to procure more Spaniards, because of the very satisfactory re-

because of the very satisfactory re-sults that have come from their em-

not proved possible, however, to get them in anything like the numbers needed for the work, and from present appearances we shall in the main have

ployment and their numbers will

sentative labor men here in the

make complaint.

are Spaniards. work. Their f

Indian laborers.

But thousands of those who brought over under contract (at our expense) go off into the jungle to live, or loaf around Colon, or work so badly after the first three or four days as to cause a serious diminution of the amount of labor performed on Friday and Saturday of each week. I day and Saturday of each week. I questioned many of these Jamaica laborers as to the conditions of their work and what, if any changes, they wished. I received many complaints from them, but as regards most of these complaints they themselves contradicted one another. In all cases tradicted one another. In all cases where the complaint was as to their treatment by any individual it proved on examination that this individual was himself a West India man of color. either a policeman a storekeeper, or an assistant storekeeper. Doubtless there must be many complaints against Americans; but those to whom I spoke did not happen to make any such com-The work is now going on with a

vigor and efficiency pleasant to witness. The three big problems of the canal are the La Boca dams, the Gatun dam, and the Culebra cut. The Culebra cut must be made, anyhow; but of course changes as to the dams, or at least as to the locks adjacent to the dams, may still occur. The La Boca dams offer no particular prob-lem, the bottom material being so good that there is a practical certainty, not merely as to what can be achieved, but as to the time of achievement. The Gatun dam offers the most serious problem which we have to solve; and yet the ablest men on the isthmus believe that this problem is certain of solution along the lines proposed; although, of course, it neessitates great toil, energy, and intelligence, and although equally, of course, there will be some little risk in connection with the work. The risk arises from the fact that some of the material near the bottom is not so good as could be desired. If the huge earth dam now contemplated is thrown across from one foothill to the other we will have what is practically low, broad, mountain ridge behind which will rise the inland lake. This artificial mountain will probably show less seepage, that is, will have greater restraining capacity than the average natural mountain range. The exact lo-cality of the locks at this dam—as at the other dams—is now being de-termined. In April next Secretary Taft, with three of the ablest engin-cers of the country—Messrs. Noble, Stearns and Ripley—will visit the isthmus, and the three engineers will make the final and conclusive exami-nations as to the exact site for each lock. Meanwhile the work is going head without a break.

The Culebra cut does not offer such great risks; that is, the damage liable to occur from occasional land slips will not represent what may be called major disasters. The work will merely call for in-telligence, perseverance, and executive capacity. It is, however, the work upon which most labor will have to be spent. The dams will be composed of the earth taken out of the cut and very possibly the building of the locks and dams will take even longer than the cutting in Culebra itself.

In Culebra Cut.

The main work is now being done in the Culebra cut. It was striking and with the drilling. As might be expected, with labor as high priced as at present in the United States, it has not so far proved practicable to get any ordinary laborers from the United States. The American wage-workers on the isthmus are the highly paid skilled mechanics of the types mentioned previously. A steady effort is being made to secure Italians, and especially to procure more Spaniards. mpressive to see the huge steam shovels in full play, the dumping trains carrying away the rock and earth they dislodged, The implements of French excavating machinery, which often stand a little way from the line of work, though of ex-cellent construction, look like the veriest toys when compared with these steam shovels, just as the French dump-ing cars seem like toy cars when compared with the long trains of huge cars, dumped by steam plows, which are now in use. This represents the enormous advance that has been made in machinery during the past quarter of a century. No doubt a quarter of a century hence this new machinery, of which we are now so proud will similarly seem on the government, provided it is possible on the one hand to secure to the contractor a sufficient remnueration 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 are now so proud, will similarly seem out to the contractor at the expense of of date, but it is certainly serving its the government. After much conof date, but it is certainly serving to purpose well now. The old French cars bad to be entirely discarded. We still gated by the secretary of war was adopted. This plan in its essential adopted, the purpose well now a few of the more modern, adopted. have in use a few of the more modern, but not most modern, cars, which hold but 12 yards of earth. They can be employed on certain lines with sharp curves. But the recent cars hold from 25 to 30 yards spiece, and instead of the old clumsy methods of unloading them, a steam plow is drawn from end to end of the whole vestibuled train, thus immensely economizing labor. In the rainy reason the steam shovels can do but little in dirt, but they work steadily in rock and in the harder ground. There were some 25 at work during the time 1 was on the isthmus, and their tremendous power and efficiency were most impres-

New Records for Excavation.

As soon as the type of canal was de-Cided this work began in good earnest. The rainy season will shortly be over and then there will be an immense increase in the amount taken out; but even during the last three months, in the rainy sea son, steady progress is shown by the figures: In August, 242,000 cubic yards; in September, 23,000 cubic yards, and in October, 325,000 cubic yards. In October new records were established for the output of individual shovels as well as for the tonnage haul of individual loco-motives. I hope to see the growth of a healthy spirit of emulation between the different shovel and locomotive crews. different shovel and locomotive crews, just such a spirit as has grown on our battle ships between the different gan crews in matters of marksmanship. Passing through the cut the amount of new work can be seen at a glance. In one place the entire side of a hill had been taken out recently by 27 tons of discounties. dynamite, which were exploded at one blast. At another place I was given a presidential salute of 21 charges of dyna-mite. On the top 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. It will have to be sunk about 130 feet farther. Throughout the cut the drilling, blasting, shovel-ing and hauling are going on with constantly increasing energy, the huge shovels being pressed up, as if they were mountain howitzers, into the most unlikely looking places, where they eat their way into the hillsides.

Railway Improvements.

The most advanced methods, not only in construction, but in railroad management, have been applied in the zone, with corresponding economies in time and cost. This has been shown in the handling of the tomage from ships into cars, and from cars into ships on the Panama railroad, where, thanks largely to the efficiency of General Manager Bierd, the saving in time and cost, has been noteworthy. My examination tended to show that some of the departments had (doubtless necessarily) become over-developed and could now be contended. developed, and could now be reduced or subordinated without impairment of effiency and with a saving of cost. The sairman of the commission, Mr. Shonts, has all matters of this kind constantly in view, and is now reorganizing the government of the zone, so as to make the form of administration both more flexible form of administration both more nextone and less expensive, subordinating every-thing to direct efficiency with a view to the work of the canal commission. From time to time changes of this kind will unistedly have to be made, for it must remembered that in this giant work construction, it is continually neces-y to develop departments or bureaus, ich are vital for the time being, but nich soon become uselesst just as it will continually necessary to put up buildgs, and even to erect towns, which in n years will once more give place t i years will then be at the bottom of e great lakes at the ends of the vanal

Critics and Doubting Thomases.

it is not only natural, but inevitable as been undertaken on the isthmus hould arouse every species of hostility and criticism. The conditions are so new and so trying, and the work so vast, that it would be absolutely out of the ques-tion that mistakes should not be made. primportant as in the zone itself, and important as in the zone itself, and important as in the zone itself, and in many respects much more difficult, because it was necessary to deal with a deep and a selecting made in many respects much more difficult, because it was necessary to deal with a difficult of the streets. Complaint was necessary to population, which and to me by an entirely reputable many respects much more difficult, because it was necessary to deal with a doubt of the town shows the progress that has the town shows the progress that has been made and is being made in many respects much more difficult, because it was necessary to deal with the town shows the progress that has done to me by an entirely reputable of the employes, it is of course necessary to provide for policing the zone will arise. From time to time seeming for Jamalea, Barbados, and the other English possessions. One of the government of the lands in question has shown an unfriedly disposition to our many of the lands in question has shown an unfriedly disposition to our many of the lands in question has shown an unfriedly disposition to our many of the lands in question has shown an unfriedly disposition to our many of the lands in question has shown an unfriedly disposition to our many of the lands in question has shown and the other provide for policing the zone. This is done by a police force which at the seem that the use of the employes, it is of course necessary to provide for policing the zone. This is done by a police force which and the other present numbers over 200 men, under the lands in question has streets. Complain was actual practice.

The difficult has a street the other the other shall have been say to provide for policing the zone will have to be funded. At the saged on the standing necessary to provide for policing the zone will have to be funded that the sum of the task. After askills the sum of the task and a negretal war for the many and the other than the other than a solder to have a sum of the proving t

protected. In a place which has been for ages a byword for unhealthfulness, and with so large a congregation of strangers suddenly put down and set to hard work there will now and then be outbreaks of disease. There will now and then be shortcomings in administra-tion; there will be unlooked-for acci-dents to delay the excavation of the cut dents to delay the excavation of the cut or the building of the dams and locks. Each such incident will be entirely natural, and, even though serious, no one of them will mean more than a little extra delay or trouble. Yet each, when discovered by sensation mongers and retailed to timid folk of little faith, will serve as an excuse for the belief that the whole work is being badly managed. Experiments will continually be tried in Experiments will continually be tried in housing, in hygiene, in street repairing, in dredging and in digging earth and rock. Now and then an experiment will be a failure; and among those who hear of its contraction. of it, a certain proportion of doubting Thomases will at once believe that the whole work is a failure. Doubtless here and there some minor rascality will be uncovered; but as to this, I have to say that 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 of any serious accusations affecting the honesty of the commission or of any responsible officer under it. I append a letter dealing with the most serious charge, that of the ownership of lots in Colon; the charge was not advanced by a reputable man, and is utterly baseless. It is not too much to say that the whole atmosphere of the commission whole atmosphere of the commission breathes honesty as it breathes efficiency and energy. Above all, the work has been kept absolutely clear of politics. I have never heard even a suggestion of spoils politics in connection with it.

I have investigated every complaint brought to me for which there seemed

brought to me for which there seemed to be any shadow of foundation. In two or three cases, all of which I have indicated in the course of this message, I came to the conclusion that there was foundation for the com-plaint, and that the methods of the commission in the respect complained of could be bettered. In the other in-stances the complaints proved abso-lutely baseless, save in two or three instances where they referred to mis-takes which the commission had already found out and corrected.

Slanders and Libelers.

So much for honest criticism. There reckless slander as has ever been pub-lished. Where the slanderers are of foreign origin I have lifshed. foreign origin I have no concern with them. Where they are Americans, I feel for them the heartiest contempt and indignation; because, in a spirit of wanton dishonesty and malice, they are trying to interfere with and hamper the execution of, the greatest work of the kind ever attempted, and are seeking to bring to naught the af-forts of their countrymen to put to the credit of America one of the glant feats of the ages. The outrageous accusations of these slanderers con-The outrageous stitute 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. There is not a man among those directing the work on the isthmus who has obtained his position on any other basis than merit alone, and not one who has used his position in any way for his own personal or pecuniary advantage.

Plan to Build by Contract.

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 contractsatisfactory terms with the contract-ors. The whole work is of a kind suited to the peculiar genius of our people; and our people have devel-oped 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 government, provided it is features was drafted after careful and thorough study and consideration. by the chief engineer, Mr. Stevens, who, while in the employment of Mr. by the chief 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 Secre-tary Taft and myself. Secretary Taft submitted it to some of the best counsel at the New York bar, and after-wards I went over it very carefully with Mr. Taft and Mr. Shonts, and we haid 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 a agreement, in which ase the government will do the work Meanwhile the work on the isthmus is progressing steadily and without any let up.

Single Commissioner Desired. A seven-headed commission is of

course a clumsy executive instrument. We should have but one commissioner, with such heads of departments and other officers under him as we may find necessary. We should be expressly permitted to employ the hest engineers in the country as consulting engineers.

I accompany this paper with a map showing substantially what the canal will be like when it is finished. When 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 takes, 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 in about eight years; but it is never safe to prophesy about such a work as this, especially in the tropics,

Confident of Ultimate Success.

Of the success of the enterprise I Of the success of am as well convinced as one can be am as well convinced as one can be of any enterprise that is human. It is a stupendous work upon which our fellow countrymen are engaged down there on the isthmus, and while we should hold them to a strict accountability for the way in which they per-form it, we should recognize, with form it, we should recognize, with frank generosity, the epic nature of the task upon which they are engaged and its world-wide importance. They are doing something which will redond immeasurably to the credit of the credit of the credit which will benefit all the America, which will benefit all the world, and which will last for ages to come, Under Mr. Shonts and Mr. Stevens and Dr. Gorgas this work has started with every omen of good forfrom the highest to the lowest, are entitled to the same credit that we would give to the picked men of a victorious army: for this conquest of peace will, in its great and far-reaching effect stand as among the very greatest conquests, whether of peace by any of the peoples of mankind. A badge is to be given to every American citizen who for a specified time has taken part in this work; for participation in it will become be less than the specified time has taken part in this work; for participation in it will become the belief ticipation in it will hereafter be held to reflect honor upon the man par-ticipating just as it reflects honor upon ion. THEODORE ROOSEVELT.
The White House, December 17, 1906.