

RED TAPE AT PANAMA

How Uncle Sam Loses \$20,000 a Day While Congress Haggles Over the Prices of Waffle Irons and Muffin Tins.

(Special Correspondence of the Desert News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

PANAMA, April 8.—Uncle Sam is likely to lose millions through the canal. Congress before the canal is completed. They have already begun their investigations of the petty emergency purchases made by the canal commission, and they insist that everything shall be done by government methods backed by congressional action. Such methods are all right in ordinary government business but in this case they are like great iron balls chained to the legs of the engineers regarding their work at an enormous cost in money and time. I might say, in life or in war, that the delay in the letter I shall show how such delays have affected the hospitals and how they are retarding the actual work on the canal. At this initial stage the government has no right to be penny-wise and pound-foolish. The work is already started, and the high-priced men are on the ground. There is an immediate need for all sorts of supplies, including the money we have already given the French, about \$200,000, and it is estimated that it will take from 10 to 12 years to build it. At 2 per cent the sum will be equal to \$4,000,000, but as the money will be gradually invested the interest should be averaged from beginning to end, and it will be only half the above sum or \$2,000,000 a year. The engineers tell me that the cost of the engineering, administration, sanitation and general expenses, which will be about the same throughout the work, will approximate \$2,000,000 a year, which, added to the \$4,000,000, makes \$6,000,000 for these two elements, for each year it is building. This is the time value of the work. The moment the canal is done this expense stops and the canal becomes a live account instead of a dead one on our national ledger.

A LOSS OF \$20,000 A DAY.
The parents who have been on the hospital will be interested in the matter of health. The taxpayers are interested in pushing the work on the canal; for every day of delay will cost them at least \$20,000. We are to spend on the canal, including the money we have already given the French, about \$200,000, and it is estimated that it will take from 10 to 12 years to build it. At 2 per cent the sum will be equal to \$4,000,000, but as the money will be gradually invested the interest should be averaged from beginning to end, and it will be only half the above sum or \$2,000,000 a year. The engineers tell me that the cost of the engineering, administration, sanitation and general expenses, which will be about the same throughout the work, will approximate \$2,000,000 a year, which, added to the \$4,000,000, makes \$6,000,000 for these two elements, for each year it is building. This is the time value of the work. The moment the canal is done this expense stops and the canal becomes a live account instead of a dead one on our national ledger.

Now \$6,000,000, divided by 300, means \$20,000 for each working day, and that is what the delay will cost us year in and year out. For every day that Congress haggles over the prices we shall have to spend \$20,000. Every working hour will cost us \$2,000, and every working minute means a loss of more than \$30, that loss color on the rate of 10 cents per second at every watch tick the working day through.

Is this the time to haggle about the cost of waffle irons, muffin tins, hospital supplies and blue print paper for the use of the engineers?
I want to know.

Indeed, Congress is making such a fuss about the petty items of expense at Panama that both the commission and the engineers are afraid to buy the actual necessities without a lot of red tape that makes their actual cost 10 times as great as though they were bought at double prices. We are building and repairing something like 3,000

houses here. The other day an order was sent to Washington for 12,000 doors to be furnished immediately. The Panama department of material and supplies advised that they be purchased in the open market, but one of the commissioners told me that they would not do so, for Congress would surely investigate such an outrageous act. Other orders have been made for picks and shovels, others for water pipes, machinery, large and small, and for a hundred other things which the work immediately needs, but ships come and ships go, and the supplies are not in the market, and the work is delayed. All drawing and engineering reports are copied on this paper, and it is almost a necessity to the furtherance of the work. I suppose it will come in time.

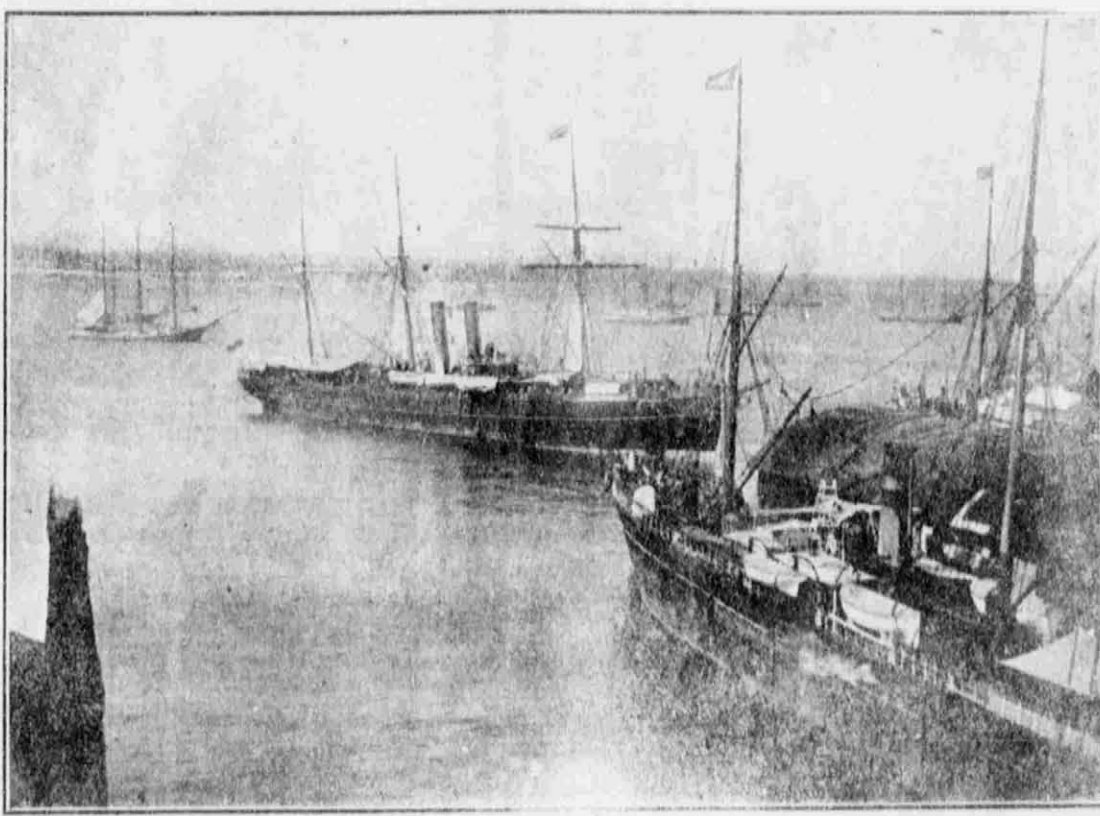
As for the waffle irons and muffin tins, made much of in one congressional incident, they were probably the part of a furniture order. The United States gives orders to its American employees. It has already bought 400 or more sets of furniture for this purpose. It will need all sorts of ranges and kitchen supplies, and I suppose the Miss Nanyes at Congress will demand that each stove lid and stove holder be duly advertised for competitive bids, while in the meantime our good American laborers may do their cooking on stoves.

As far as I can see there is no extraordinary here. The chief kick among the men at the ten are not on account of personal discomfort, but from the delay which occurs in the lack of tools for extending their work. Indeed all sorts of stories are told here at Panama as to how the tape works in the government service. A very pertinent one, which, however, I do not believe, is the story of the 12 whitewash brushes. According to this one of the sanitary officers in the middle of the zone had sent in an order for 12 men to come to his station to do some whitewashing. He made the place sanitary, and at the same time he sent in a requisition for 12 whitewash brushes. The men came all right, but the order for the whitewash brushes had to pass through the government office and the clerks in charge first mailed a query to the sanitary agent as to whether nine whitewash brushes would not do quite as well. His reply that they would not, and in the course of two days the extra three brushes arrived. Meanwhile three men had been waiting for a chance to get in their work and their wages had been paid many times the cost of the brushes.

I might also tell the story of a feather duster upon which bids are alleged to have been gotten at the Panama shops and other stores, but such things are only illustrative of government methods which are better understood in Washington than here. The truth is the men at Panama use every means possible to get what they want for their work. Some of the employees even take money out of their own pockets and buy at the stores, trusting to be paid back in the future. The French supplies and machinery on hand have been of enormous value, and the French warehouses are ransacked to supply many deficiencies.

A BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION.
Indeed the enormous interest and working cost of building the canal demand that it should be pushed to completion as rapidly as possible. We need men who will handle the commercial side of every proposition, as well as

The Time Element of the Canal Problem and Some of Its Features—The Story of the Twelve Thousand Doors and the Twelve Whitewash Brushes—A Business Administration Needed—Lack of Hospital Supplies or the Risk of a Trained Nurse—Jamaica Negroes as Patients—More Money for Sanitation, Etc., Etc.



HARBOR AT COLON, PANAMA, WHERE OUR SUPPLIES ARE LAND ED.

(Photographed for the Desert News by Frank G. Carpenter.)

the technical and political sides.

In order to shorten the time we should first adopt a careful, well considered and comprehensive general scheme of work and then have an administration which will see that the labor, material and machinery necessary are vigorously prosecuted that work are promptly furnished.

This means that we must have a man in power at the head of all things connected with the construction of the canal, and that this person must be on the ground with ability to meet emergencies and with authority to act without delay in making reports to some other authority 2,000 miles away and without waiting one or two months of waiting before any important individual move can be made.

It means that the ordinary restrictions of our routine government work should be modified, and that those which prevail in our great railroads and other business institutions should take their place. It means the abolition of the red tape and that everything should be done to

hurry on the completion of the canal at the earliest possible moment. It means that we should have the best and the most improved machinery that no time should be wasted in experimenting, and that only machinery which has been in actual use and has stood the test of actual service should be employed. This is the idea of the engineers here, and as I have shown in describing the handling of the Clubraut, it will make possible the completion of the canal in a comparatively short time.

It seems to me that if a man like the chief engineer were given entire charge of the work at Panama, with a large enough contingent fund to meet every possible emergency and with the authority to act in emergencies, as far as the isthmus is concerned, and if at the same time a man of similar ability and training could be placed under the secretary of war and the president at the Washington end of the line the canal would go jumping from now on to the finish. This, of course, means consulting and advisory engineers for Mr.

Wellness, and it also means plenty of assistance for the men at the other end, with the president at the head as the man of the whole.

A KICK FROM A TRAINED NURSE.
Some of the most serious delays caused, I suppose, by administrative failures, have been in supplying the hospitals. Several of the doctors have told me that they have been out of important drugs for a considerable time, but it was not until this morning that I had a detailed statement as to the lack of medical and surgical necessities. My informant is one of the American trained nurses who has been employed at Ancon for several months. Said she: "We have had great trouble in getting things of all kinds on time. When the Americans took hold supplies were sent down for a hospital of 100 beds. We have now 200 beds in use and no preparation for an increase of supplies. This means a lack of basins, rubber sheets, lamps and lanterns. We have had only a few thermometers. In my

ward I had 23 patients and in order to get a thermometer to take their temperature I had to go to another ward to borrow one. This was the same in other wards, and it so resulted that in one ward no temperature was taken from 1 p. m. until 3 a. m. the next day. The nurse in charge of that ward would have had to go out in the dark, down the hill, through the trees to another ward to borrow a thermometer. She was afraid and did not go, and I don't blame her. Such circumstances cannot last more than 30 days before at Ancon.

Another nurse who said that she could not get a thermometer said: "We also cannot get our 200 beds. We ordered them from the United States. We had a month to get an ordinary purchase through, and for a week we looked this morning to dress 100 beds and dress them. We need an immediate solution for a time, and also bought cheap cloth of the Panama stores and used that. The cheap cloth contained starch and when it became dry it would make a two-fold over the wanted starching from it. I do not know that any injury resulted from this, but it was certainly a most unpropitious to the doctors and nurses."

"How about dress gowns?" I asked. "We have been short of a number of imports of medicines at times. We have been entirely out of arsenic, strychnine, pituitary and Adrenaline. We have also been out of that for weeks and it was the same with Fowler's solution of arsenic."

NURSES AT PANAMA.
"What kind of a position is that of trained nurses at Panama?"

"It is not an easy one and it is poorly paid," was the reply. "We nurses came here on the temporary basis that we should have all our expenses and \$50 a month. We did not do that, but we had to make do with what we were given. We live at Ancon and have to have a cab every time we go to Panama to work. This costs us about 10 a time, and the result is from 8 to 10 a month more in cab fares. And then the washing. Only the uniforms can be done up at the hospital laundry, and all the small articles that a woman nurse must have such as handkerchiefs, hosiery, the dresses, must be washed outside. This costs on the average about \$5 per month. In addition there are many other expenses, so that all told, one makes much less here than at home."

"The truth is, the salary of a trained nurse at Panama, should be \$75 or \$100 per month, everything included. I think the nurses would be satisfied with \$75, but considering the work, the risk to health and the distance from home, \$100 a month is little enough. Such a salary would raise the standard of the nurses here, and would bring the best. As it is now we are paid too little. Indeed, we get \$25 per week when we nurse in private families in the United States, and that usually in rich families where the comforts are far greater than here."

"How many nurses are there at Panama?"

"I should say about 40, and of these 200 beds are American and the rest Canadian. They are all fairly good, but it is claimed that the salary is so low that the very best American trained nurses will not come. We have no nurses from Johns Hopkins, the University of Pennsylvania or the Blockley Training school of Philadelphia. We have some from Bellevue hospital, New York, that came from the other large and well known hospitals of that city."

Washington. Some of our nurses have served in Cuba and the Philippines, and we have one who went with Dr. Anita Maceo to Japan and nursed in the hospitals there. The nurses are all conscientious, and they all earn their salaries, several times over."

JAMAICA NEGROES AS PATIENTS.
"Give me some idea of the character of your patients."

"I don't like to speak about that," said the nurse. "That is a sore subject with me. I am a southern woman, and while I might possibly not object to eating dinner with Doctor T. Washington, I would object to nursing the black servant who dug ditches in Doctor T. Washington's back yard. Most of the wards here are filled with the ordinary casual laborers, men who receive from 25 cents to \$1 a day. They are largely Jamaican negroes, as black as a stove, and native Panamanians, many of whom are mulattoes. We have 10 wards here, and of these only one is devoted to the American employes on the canal. The other nine are occupied by the people I have described. They are of a lower class than can be found in the charity wards of our city hospitals. Some of them have diseases, which are both more to an extent. The patients are almost all men, and many of them are such that a woman should not be asked to touch them."

I understand that more money is needed here for sanitation. The sanitary officers asked for \$2,000,000 to clean up the isthmus, but they were given only one-fourth that amount. They estimated that it would take \$75,000 to clean Panama, and about one-third that sum was allowed. The supplies needed have been promptly ordered, but the process for advertising for bids has caused a delay in the orders being filled, and in the meantime the hospitals have gotten along as well as they could, maintaining to some extent the Panama drive stars at considerably higher prices than similar orders would have cost in the United States.

It seems to me that the sanitary force here is excellent. The corps of doctors embraces some of the best men of their profession, and both doctors and nurses are doing earnest and conscientious work.

As to the matter of supplies, one of the doctors recommends that a medical purveyor be put at the head of the medical supply department for Panama at New York, and that he be paid \$5,000 a year. This man would be in close connection with the hospitals here, and would keep in touch with the markets at home. He would see that Panama has always a full month's hospital supplies in advance, and a large enough reserve supply to meet any emergency. Indeed, some such provision would seem to be almost a necessity in the present condition of the isthmus.

Since writing the above, the news has come that President Roosevelt has reorganized the canal commission, and that the chief engineer will be given full authority at this end of the line, while Commissioner Shonts, a practical railroad man, will have charge of ordering supplies and all other work in the United States. This means a business administration throughout, and that the canal building will from now on be practically relieved of the red tape which has so clogged the undertaking up to this time. If Congress will now but do its duty, the work of canal digging will soon be in full swing and we shall have a union of the oceans in advance of the wildest dreams of the French engineers.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

SPRING "NO PROFIT" SALE

Some time the best way to lose money when you've got to lose it, is to lose it all at once and not prolong the agony. We don't want to be like the man who cut the dog's tail off a little at a time so it wouldn't hurt much.

The Reason:

stop expenses, so we have cut everything in stock way below cost, and when we say A NO PROFIT SALE, we

just so much a month for rent, and as we are GOING OUT OF BUSINESS we are anxious to get out at once and

MEAN JUST WHAT WE SAY

Garden Tools.

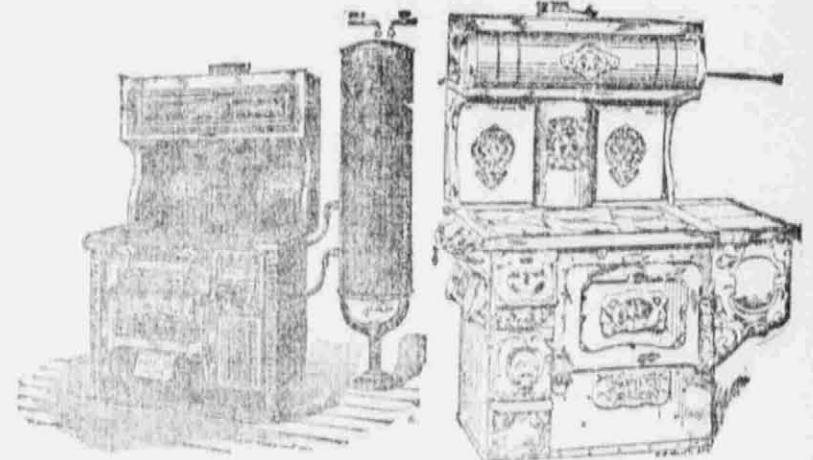
- 11 tooth steel rakes, regular price 60c, sale price 31c
- 11 tooth malleable rakes, regular price 45c, sale price 21c
- 3 line manure forks, regular price 80c, sale price 45c
- 3 line steel forks, regular price 50c, sale price 26c
- Steel garden hoses, regular price 50c, sale price 26c
- Cotton hoses, 3/4 size, guaranteed for one season, regular price 15c per foot, sale price 12c
- Rubber hose, 1/2 ply, guaranteed 1 season, regular price 20c, sale price 14c
- Rubber hose, 3/4 ply, guaranteed 1 season, regular price 24c, sale price 18c
- Hose nozzles, regular price 30c, sale price 23c
- Fan sprinklers, regular price 25c, sale price 19c
- Hose clamps, for mending hose, regular price 10c, sale price 4c
- Hose couplings, regular price 15c, sale price 9c



Kitchen Utensils.

- Home fire, all kinds, regular price 60c to 75c, sale price 13c
- All sizes of stoves, regular price 30c, sale price 3c
- All sizes of electric ranges, regular price 10c, sale price 1c
- Johnson tubular rivets, 100 in box, regular price 20c, sale price 9c
- Brass tubular rivets, 50 in box, regular price 10c, sale price 4c
- Brass tubular rivets, 100 in box, regular price 20c, sale price 9c
- Riveting machines, regular price \$2.75, sale price 95c
- Window springs bolts, regular price 10c, sale price 1c
- All sizes of tanks, regular price 5c, sale price 1c
- Carpenter's shims, regular price 25c, sale price 12c
- House steel sticks, regular price 10c, sale price 10c
- All sizes wood chopping bowls, 8c, 10c, 12c, sale price 1c

RANGES!



Domestic Ranges, 4-hole, with reservoir, regular price \$29.75, sale price \$19.00

Charter Oak ranges, 4 and 6-hole, with reservoir, regular price \$29.00, sale price \$19.00

Cutlery.

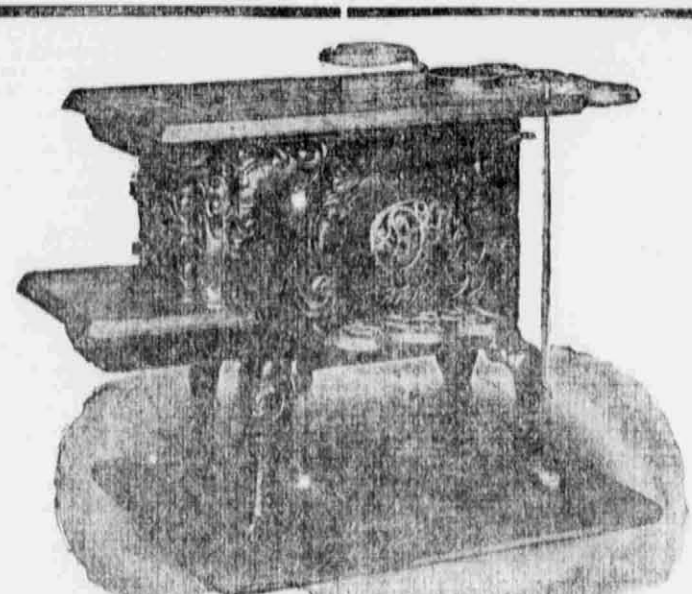
- Red Devil Razors, regular price \$2.50, sale price 96c
- Red Devil razors, guaranteed, made in Sweden, regular price \$4.00, sale price 1.26
- Oxford razors, regular price \$2.00, sale price 68c
- Case Brothers' guaranteed safety razors, regular price \$4.50, sale price 1.36
- Conqueror razors, guaranteed, regular price \$1.00, sale price 1.00
- Pocket knives, hand handled, regular price \$1.25, sale price 42c
- Pocket knives, hand handled, regular price 90c, sale price 32c
- Case Brothers' pocket knives, guaranteed, regular price \$1.50, sale price 82c
- Tin knives, regular price 5c, sale price 2c

Cutlery.

- Crystal Steel Shears, regular price 75c, sale price 21c
- Crystal Steel shears, 8 inch, regular price 90c, sale price 26c
- Butcher knives, 6 inch, regular price 20c, sale price 12c
- Butcher knives, 8 inch, regular price 30c, sale price 12c
- Ice Picks, regular price 50c, sale price 14c
- Ice chisels, regular price 80c, sale price 21c
- Knives and forks, No. 2400, regular price \$2.00, sale price 1.08
- Knives and forks, No. 2500, regular price \$1.50, sale price 1.00
- Knives and forks, No. 2100, regular price \$1.25, sale price .87c
- Knives and forks, No. 3100, regular price \$1.00, sale price .70c
- Razor Hones, regular price 75c, sale price 24c
- Razor straps, regular price 50c, sale price 25c

Going Out of Business!

34-36 E. First South Street.



OUR LEADER COOK STOVES.

- 4 hole square top Charter Oak Cook Stove, regular price \$21.20, sale price \$12.00
- 4 hole Steel Cook stove, manufactured by Charter Oak Stove & Range Company, oven 18 inch, regular price \$23.00, sale price \$27.70
- 4 hole res. No. 570 and 770. Our Leader Cook Stove, regular price \$25.50, sale price \$13.00
- 4 hole Square Top Steel Cook Stove, manufactured by Charter Oak Stove & Range Co., oven 18 inch, regular price \$23.00, sale price \$24.70

Tinware.

- 8 inch milk strainers, with rim, regular price 15c, sale price 7c
- Tin basting spoons, 10-12-14-16 inch, regular price 3c, sale price 2c
- 2 qt graduated measures with the marks pts. and qts., regular price 15c, sale price 9c
- No 8 range tea kettle, tin, reg. price 50c, sale price 26c
- 2 quart scrubbing brushes, regular price 10c, sale price 6c
- All bristle stove brushes, regular price 35c, sale price 14c
- Wood potato mashers, regular price 10c, sale price 6c
- All sizes retined open scoops, regular price 20c to 50c, sale price 17c

Tinware.

- Tin cups, painted, reg. price 15c, sale price 7c
- Cake doughnut, biscuit cutters, regular price 25c, sale price 5c
- 1/2 sheet graters, regular price 5c, sale price 3c
- 4 cts
- No. 67 RANGE TEA KETTLE, regular price 25c, sale price 18 cts.
- 4 quart square DINNER PAILS, regular price 60c, sale price 36 cts.
- Crowd City COFFEE POTS, with copper bottom, 2 and 3 qt., regular price 40c, sale price 21 cts.

Utah Stove & Hardware Co.