

LARGE INCREASE IN CANAL TOLLS

Panama Traffic Shows Gain of 82.65 Per Cent.

Commercial traffic through the Panama canal in 1923 showed an increase over 1922 of 88.07 per cent in the number of transits, 80.38 per cent in net tonnage, Panama canal measurement, and 82.65 per cent in tolls collected. Vessels of United States registry exceeded those of all other nationalities combined, with vessels of British, Norwegian, Japanese, German, and Dutch registry in the order named. Vessels of these six nationalities made up more than 90 per cent of the total canal traffic.

The tonnage and number of ships in the different nationalities were: British, 5,456,887 tons in 1,148 ships; Chile, 227,847 tons in 86 ships; Colombia, 10,973 tons in 86 ships; Danish, 241,728 tons in 66 ships; Holland, 595,090 tons in 117 ships; Ecuador, 36 tons in one ship; Finland, 4,798 tons in three ships; France, 327,708 tons in 124 ships; Germany, 508,703 tons in 124 ships; Greece, 16,188 tons in four ships; Italy, 152,083 tons in 39 ships; Japan, 753,440 tons in 158 ships; Yugoslavia, 15,400 tons in four ships; Mexico, 102 tons in one ship; Norway, 652,175 tons in 160 ships; Panama, 40,854 tons in 29 ships; Peru, 202,803 tons in 75 ships; Spain, 118,454 tons in 34 ships; Sweden, 141,726 tons in 34 ships and the United States, 15,270,218 tons in 2,838 ships.

Heavy Intercoastal Trade. A comparison of traffic statistics for the second half of 1923 with those of the same period of the year before indicates a healthy growth of the United States intercoastal trade and of the trade of South America with both the United States and Europe. Exports from Europe to the west coast of North America have increased, but cargo movements over this route in the opposite direction have fallen off, due mainly to light grain shipments in the autumn of 1923. Exports from the United States to the Far East and to Australasia have increased, while imports have declined. There is the same situation in the case of the traffic between Europe and Australasia.

As indicating at what rate and in what direction traffic through the canal is developing, the Canal Record points out that the cargo in transit from Atlantic to Pacific from July to December, 1923, totaled 8,980,290 tons, against 8,193,880 tons from July to December, 1922. The increase is equivalent to 28 per cent. The cargo from Pacific to Atlantic in the same periods was 9,585,443 tons and 4,729,183 tons, or an increase of 102 per cent. If California crude oil is deducted from the last totals, then the 1923 cargo tonnage from Pacific to Atlantic figures out at 4,618,289 tons, and the 1922 tonnage at 4,274,856 tons, and the increase amounts to 8 per cent.

"The grand totals," says the Record, "prove that trade through the canal is growing at a fairly rapid rate, and there is no reason to believe that this growth will be retarded during the coming year. On Nov. 1, 1923, a circular letter was addressed to all the principal steamship companies using the canal, requesting them to furnish a rough estimate of the tonnage they would dispatch via Panama in 1924. The replies were generally optimistic. While none of the lines anticipated any sensational increase of business, nearly all replied that they expected to find employment for the same tonnage as in 1923, or possibly a little more.

Oil Trade Transient. The only direction in which a sharp decline is likely to be in the California oil trade. Oil shipments are still holding up well. They totaled 804,847 tons in December, as compared with the September peak of 909,870 tons, but this business is still regarded as transient.

"The most important recent development in the intercoastal trade has been the announcement of the American-Hawaiian line that its services would be curtailed by the withdrawal of six steamers. The statement issued by the company late in December, reads:

"The outlook for 1924 in coast-to-coast trade is not bright. We feel that the time has come to concentrate our fleet and organization on the best possible service to the shippers and consignees from fewer ports of call. We have accordingly revised our schedules to give weekly sailing between Philadelphia, Boston and New York and our Pacific Coast ports of call both westbound and eastbound. Charleston will be served with a regular call every three weeks eastbound. We will not longer call at Savannah or Baltimore. Our regular express service from Boston and New York westbound will be unimpaired by these changes, and we will give Philadelphia

a weekly service in both directions as against the present two-weekly sailings. A regularity in schedules and dependability of service will be maintained as in the past. Steamers not essential to the service will be laid up, but they will be available to augment the frequency of the service if and when cargo offerings warrant."

"It is reported that the United American lines have also reduced the frequency of their intercoastal service, and the Garland line recently withdrew altogether from the intercoastal trade. In its issue for January 5, the San Francisco Shipping Register, comments editorially on these withdrawals and continues: "We would be surprised if one or two of the smaller lines would be forced to terminate their services in entirety. If not, the only possible solution seems to be voluntary, and, if possible, proportionate reduction in the tonnage of the bigger companies."

"While the intercoastal situation is undoubtedly serious as viewed by individual steamship companies, the revenue of the Panama canal from this trade is assured as long as the cargo moving in both directions continues to increase. The statistics prove that it has increased materially during the past year, quite apart from the oil trade.

"The intercoastal movement of lumber shows only a slight falling off. The tonnage of lumber from the west coast of the United States (mostly intercoastal, but including some foreign shipments) totaled 105,284 tons in December, as compared with a monthly average of 111,477 for the period from July to December. The total for this six-months' period in 1923 was 668,883 tons, as against 690,648 tons during the corresponding period in 1922.

"The commercial interests of British Columbia have been successful in their efforts to secure the appointment of a Canadian customs officer at New York for the inspection of Canadian products routed via that port for shipment through the Panama canal to Vancouver, and reports indicate that several new lines are to be established in the spring for service between Montreal, Halifax and Canadian west coast ports.

"Grain shipments from the Pacific northwest to Europe are still far below the figures for the previous season. Wheat cargoes from July to December, 1923, totaled 458,700 tons as compared with 454,467 tons in 1922. The loss has been in shipments from United States ports. Shipments from Canada increased from 110,070 tons to 102,255 tons. It is reported that there was very heavy chartering for the loading of wheat at Vancouver for Europe in January, February and March, and the totals for the grain year therefore equal or exceed the figures for 1922-23.

"The inauguration of the Dollar line around-the-world freight and passenger service should help stimulate American exports to the Far East. It may also, have some effect on the intercoastal situation.

"Nitrate shipments from Chile totaled 272,714 tons in December. This is the heaviest nitrate tonnage for any month, since January, 1921, when detailed commodity statistics were started, although it may have been exceeded during the war. The unusually heavy December tonnage probably represents delayed shipments which were held up by a stevedores' strike in the loading ports from September to November. The outlook for nitrate, copper and South American products in general appears bright."

Statue of Pioneer of West to Be Erected

Ezra Meeker, pioneer of the Oregon Trail, whose travels in the East with an ox team, especially down Michigan avenue, in a parade, commemorated the exodus of Americans to the Oregon territory, is to have a statue. The statue of Mr. Meeker in bronze is to be placed in Pioneer park at Puyallup, Wash. The park includes a homestead that he settled when he came to the country from Iowa with his bride about the middle of the last century. Alonzo Victor Lewis, a Seattle sculptor, is making the monument.

Mr. Meeker celebrated his ninety-third birthday December 30 last.

Years Don't Stop Her

Mrs. Mary French Sheldon, writer, explorer, globe-trotter, artist, big game hunter, linguist and physician, is still active on the lecture platform at the age of seventy-eight. Mrs. Sheldon has the distinction of being the first woman ever made a fellow of the Royal Geographical society.

No Free Admissions

New Domestic from Ireland (presenting a visiting card to her mistress)—There's two of 'em—one in the drawing room and one waiting at the door, mum.

Mistress—Why didn't you invite them in?

"Sure, mum, an' you didn't want two to come in w' one ticket, did you?"

France Should Restore Her Mulberry Trees

Some years before the war, if you wandered through the vineyards and fields of Indian corn in the lower Rhone valley, you could see that between the vines and between the corn there were mulberry trees. These trees were never allowed to bear fruit and they were grown exclusively for their young leaves, which served to nourish millions of silkworms for the looms of Lyons.

Today almost all these mulberry trees have disappeared. They had begun to go before 1914, for it was found that cocoons could be imported cheaper from abroad than the worm could make them in France, and the trade gradually disappeared. The cost of transport and the fall of the franc have now combined to make it a very profitable business to breed silkworms once more, but the mulberry trees have been cut down and it will be a year or two before they will bear enough leaves to enable the country to reduce its imports of silk.

They certainly added a charming note of green to the rather arid provincial landscape, and on esthetic grounds the decision of the government to encourage their replanting by a subsidy would be welcomed. Mistral, it will be remembered, has some charming pages in "Mirelle" where he described the silkworm culture—London Observer.

Tests Show How Much Good Horses Can Pull

That a horse may develop as much as 21-horse power in an emergency has been demonstrated in a series of experiments conducted by the Horse Association of America. The object was to find out just how much a horse or mule could pull.

The tests showed that a team of good horses can exert a tractive pull of 2,000 pounds, or enough to lift a ton vertically. Such pulls as these are not needed on ordinary roads. It was shown that on a concrete road surface the amount of pull required to start a farm wagon, weighing with its load more than 7,700 pounds, was only 126 pounds, says London Tit-Bits.

The influence of the road surface was demonstrated by additional experiments, which showed that to start the same load on a good brick road required a pull of 200 pounds, while 300 pounds were required on an asphalt surface and 520 pounds on a good dirt and cinder surface. In other words, the same team can pull four times as much on a concrete road as it can on the best-surfaced dirt road.

The new tests emphasized the value of breeding and of training in horses. While the value of weight in draft animals was demonstrated, a result of the tests was that gameness counted almost as much.

In Wrong Both Times

Before the dinner began a young man with an eyeglass and a drawl said to somebody standing near him: "Beastly nuisance, isn't it? Spoke to that fellow over there—took him for a gentleman, and found he had a ribbon on his coat. The confounded head waiter, I suppose!"

"Oh, no," replied the other, "that is the guest of the evening."

"Hang it all, is it?" said the other.

"Look here, old chap, would you mind sitting next to me at dinner, and telling me who's who?"

"Sorry I can't, sir," was the reply.

"You see, I'm the confounded head waiter."

Light Bread

"Good morning!" said an old lady, entering a baker's shop. "Permit me to compliment you on the lightness of your bread!"

The baker rubbed his hands and smiled benignly.

"Thank you, madam!" he said. "It is my aim to bake the lightest bread in this town."

"And you do it," said the old lady. "If it gets much lighter it will take two of your pound loaves to weigh sixteen ounces!"

Whistler Slighted

American artists are incensed at what appears to be discrimination on the part of the French who have relegated to a Paris museum Whistler's famous painting, "Arrangement in Gray and Black," a portrait of his mother. According to established custom, a decade after the death of the artist his best paintings are removed to the Louvre. Whistler has been dead two decades.

Kitten No Longer

"What became of that little kitten you had?" asked a visitor of a small boy.

"Why, haven't you heard?"

"No. Was it drowned?"

"No."

"Lost?"

"No."

"Poisoned?"

"No."

"Then what did become of it?" asked the visitor.

"It grew up into a cat."

BILL BOOSTER SAYS

ONLY BE A SCISSORBILL! HE'S A STIFFNECKED OLD WHO SAYS, 'WHAT WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR MY OLD GRANDFATHER IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME!' PROGRESS WAS STEAM-ROLLING OVER THE NECK OF THE SCISSORBILL FOR YEARS, WHICH IS WHAT MAKES HIS NECK STIFF!



Use Blighted Trees

Feet, poles and ties cut from blighted chestnut trees are just as serviceable as those cut from healthy trees, according to the United States forest service. This is looked upon as an important announcement because it will aid in the conservation of timber and many experiments and tests have been made to prove the assertion. The only provision is that the pieces must be cut from trees within reasonable time after the blight has started.

Important Lightship

The most important lightship in the world is the Nantuxet lightship. A new vessel has just replaced the old ship. This one has a radio fog signal, and two other fog signals, a powerful steam whistle, a submarine bell and full radio equipment. The light will have 8,000 candlepower. Water-tanks and fuel oil tanks are large enough to supply the vessel for a year.

Firewood in France

Over in France they save every little chip and twig for firewood. Timber is scarce in France. Here our chips and twigs are usually left on the ground to rot. Timber is plentiful with us, though not so much as it used to be. Some day it will be scarce in this country and our descendants will be glad to save chips and twigs.

Rumanian Bride Cries

The Rumanian peasant bride must always cry during the marriage proceedings; it would be regarded as particularly unlucky if she did not do so, particularly as she is having her hairdressing prepared for the "coronation," which is so important a part of the ceremony.

His Compliment

At a dinner party held in a hall adorned with many paintings a speaker, wishing to pay a compliment to the ladies present, pointed to the paintings on the wall and said: "What need is there for all these painted beauties when we have so many of them at the table?"

Albino Are Delicate

Albino, whether in the human or animal world, are delicate and often defective. Pure white dogs are frequently stone deaf. White cats, white poultry and white rats and mice are very subject to disease.

Quite an Order

Customer—"I want one of your mousetraps, and hurry up, please. I want to catch a train." Salesman—"I'm sorry, madam, but our mousetraps won't catch anything that big."—Grain Growers' Guide.

Bre'er Williams

"Some folks run ter meet Trouble Halfway, but what Trouble can't understand is why dey howls lak a harricane when dey gets what dey want after."

Los Angeles' Battering Ram

A torpedo-shaped piece of cast steel, weighing 150 pounds with two handles welded to its sides, is used by the Los Angeles police department to break "into lottery dens and gambling clubs. Four men swing the heavy metal bar against the door and whether wood or metal it soon gives way.

Lucky Samoan Natives

The possession of American Samoa is guaranteed to the natives forever by the government of the United States. Opium, alcohol, patent medicines and commercialized drugs are prohibited and medical service is supplied free.

Astronomer of Vermont Has Telescope in Cave

Going underground to look at the heavens may seem like a strange anomaly; yet that is the method used by James Hartness, former governor of Vermont, noted inventor and manufacturer and amateur astronomer.

On his hillside estate at Springfield, Vt., Mr. Hartness has constructed the strangest astronomical observatory in the world—a subterranean cave of concrete, containing rooms fitted up as a laboratory, office, study and retiring and storage rooms, says the Kansas City Times. Connecting with his home by a 200-foot tunnel, the cave ends with the observation chamber, a concrete structure from which juts a cast-iron revolving turret that holds the telescope.

This observatory, says Popular Science Monthly, is little short of revolutionary from the standpoint of the orthodox astronomer. In fact, astronomers and makers of astronomical instruments, when they saw Mr. Hartness' plans, assured him that his observatory would be a failure, that air currents rising from his heated turret would obscure the skies from the eye of the telescope. But Mr. Hartness, father of more than one hundred important inventions, built the observatory as he planned and it has proved successful.

"When I first took up astronomy," says Mr. Hartness, "I found there were certain inconveniences connected with looking through the telescope I had mounted on my lawn. In the warm weather there were mosquitoes. In the fall and winter the cold winds chilled me to the bones. So I built my underground laboratory for self-protection, and I found I was helped rather than hampered by my lack of technical knowledge of approved methods."

Mah Jong Dermatitis Is the Newest Disease

Mah jong dermatitis is the latest thing in diseases. Devotees of the oriental game are given some facts concerning the disease—an irritation of the skin, according to Hygiea.

Mah jong cases are varnished freely with Japanese lacquer, says the health journal, and in some instances the lacquer is soft and sticky. It has been scientifically proved that this improperly dried lacquer causes the skin disease which has been afflicting some of the players of the game.

Hundreds of thousands of mah jong sets are now in use in the United States, and only a few cases of the disease have been reported, but now that physicians are on the lookout for the disease others will probably be brought to light.

To prevent any possibility of the disease it will be necessary to see that the lacquer has been well applied and thoroughly dried before the boxes are shipped.

Not all, of course, are sensitive to the disease in an equal degree. Treatment for it is not difficult.

Those who are especially sensitive to the lacquer will have to be content with dominoes, rummy or auction bridge, says the article.

Making Largest Carillon

What will be the world's largest carillon is being made in England for New York, where it will be installed in the tower of Park Avenue church by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in memory of his mother. It is a tribute to British skill and workmanship that, in spite of keen international competition, the contract for this carillon was secured by a well-known firm of Croydon bellmakers. The carillon will number fifty-three bells whose total weight, without the framework, will be over fifty tons. The largest carillon up to now has been that at Malines, in Belgium.

Scarcely Flattering

They had just renewed their acquaintance after he had been abroad for some years.

"Upon my word, Miss Hawkins," he said, "I should hardly have known you, you have altered so much."

"For better or worse?" she asked.

"Ah, my dear girl," he replied, gallantly, "you could only change for the better."

No Picnic for Her

A woman with five children entered a car. She busied herself seating them. A benevolent old gentleman rose and gave her his seat.

"Are those all your children, madam?" he asked, "or is it a picnic?"

"They're all mine," snapped the woman, "and it's no picnic."

That Ended It

Two women were quarreling about ages. At last, as if to end the dispute, one of them turned away and said in a very conciliatory tone:

"Let us not quarrel any more. I, at least, have not the heart to do it. I never knew who my mother was! She deserted me when I was a baby, and who knows but that you may have been that heartless parent?"

Might Go Either Way

Anxious Old Lady (on river steamer)—I say, my good-man, is this boat going up or down?

Surly Deckhand—Well, she's a leaky old tub, ma'am, so I shouldn't wonder if she was going down. Then, again, her bilers ain't none too good, so she might go up.

Tagged Wild Goose Is Occasion for Revival

Jack Miner, of Kingsville, Ont., who has become noted for his ability to tame wild geese, made the experiment of fastening metal tags to a large number of them before turning them loose to resume their migrations. Thereby hangs an amusing tale.

A gray goose bearing one of his tags had been shot by some negroes in Mississippi. The negro who acquired this particular bird, it appears, was an illiterate preacher, possessed of great powers of speech. He insisted that the message came from heaven and made its receipt the occasion for a revival declaring to his credulous flock: "This am the message of the Lord, and now am the judgment coming." Some of the Indian hunters who have shot the tagged geese in the Far North have had a strange superstition about them, insisting that they belonged to the evil one, who had marked them as his own.

The result of Miner's experiments and observations may be summarized thus: He has definitely proved that birds do return to the same haunt year after year; that kindness will overcome fear even in the wildest of feathered folk; that geese travel over the same route in migration at a speed of about sixty miles an hour.—Albert F. Gilmore in the Christian Science Monitor.

Tibet Women Rule and Have Several Husbands

"In some of the principalities in eastern Tibet," said Dr. William Montgomerie McGovern, the latest and best authority upon the only real hermit kingdom remaining on the face of the earth, "the rulers are women, and polyandry, which is practiced throughout the country, reaches its greatest heights, for some of them have their harems, as it were, but with a reverse English, because the inmates are men, who are never permitted to leave the place."

The doctor visited Detroit recently to lecture on his experiences in reaching the forbidden city of Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, the forbidden country.

"Polyandry in the practice, and wives have as many husbands as they apparently want. The country, curiously, is run by these married women, and the unmarried monks, for most of the worth while men join the religious order. The dominance of women has apparently not caused any perceptible lowering of the moral or social standards, but naturally there is little, if any, of the home life spirit found in occidental countries."—Jackson D. Haug in the Detroit News.

Horseshoes Sold for Gaming

Hardware dealers throughout the country are finding a ready sale for new horseshoes owing to the revival of the old game of pitching horseshoes. Since the automobile came into such popular use fewer old horseshoes were available for this popular pastime, and the result has been that the demand for shoes caused hardware and sporting goods dealers to stock new ones. A new magazine, the Horseshoes World, has nothing whatever to do with shoeing horses, and is devoted exclusively to the game.

Floor of Pacific Still Rocks

Disturbances at the bottom of the northern end of the Pacific ocean have not come to an end, according to Captain John Newland, master of the steamer Latouche. These agitations have been evidenced in the past by the appearance and disappearance of islands. At a point 26 miles southeast of Cape St. Elias, where the chart said there should be a depth of 1,100 fathoms, Captain Newland recently found only 15 fathoms. Cape St. Elias is the southern end of Kayak Island, 150 miles east of Seward.

Birthmarks Yield Radium

Birthmarks, even the dark-red "strawberry" blotches which disfigure so many countenances, may be eradicated by radium, according to Dr. Lawrence R. Tausig of the University of California. The eradication requires a long and is not painful. Doctor Tausig asserts.—Popular Science Monthly.

Biggest Electric Light Bulb

The largest electric light bulb in the world was recently exhibited in East Orange, N. J., at the plant of the General Electric company. It is 22 inches high with a diameter of 15 inches at the top. Thirty thousand watts were required to heat it.

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Pretty Face on Money

In the reorganization of their finances the Hungarians have decided upon some new banknotes. Usually in such cases a call is sent out for artists and engravers to present designs and the forthcoming designs are architectural and symbolical. We have, usually, variations of the sunset motif or sowers and reapers or a man with a plow or a fat woman in veils wearing a phrygian cap.

Not so the Hungarians. They are more elegant. This very young republic has decided to reproduce upon its paper money the portrait of the Baroness Szegedy, who is the most beautiful woman in Hungary.

And why not? Why shouldn't we do the same thing? We have no lack of pretty women.—Le Petit Parisien.

Shakespeare

Four portraits of Shakespeare are sufficiently diverse to add piquancy to the question, "What did Shakespeare really look like?" The painting called the Felton portrait, first discovered in a broker's shop in the Minorities in 1788, by "a gentleman of fashion," shows him beardless except for a slight tuft of hair under the lower lip and a small fair mustache. The Lumley portrait, which was originally in possession of Lord Lumley, a contemporary of the poet, is more in keeping with the generally accepted fancy of Shakespeare's appearance. He is shown with a florid complexion, a close-cropped beard and small brown mustache.

Darby and Joan

Darby and Joan were an old-fashioned, conservative married couple, famous for their long life and domestic felicity. They are said to have lived, more than a century ago, in Heald-nough, a village in the West Riding of Yorkshire. Darby and Joan are the hero and heroine of a ballad called "The Happy Old Couple," of uncertain authorship, although sometimes ascribed to Prior. According to Timberley, however, the author was Henry Woodfall, and the originals, John Darby (printer of Bartholomew Close, who died in 1730) and his wife, Joan, Woodfall was an apprentice in the service of Darby.

Literary Conflagration

Two tourists, on passing a farm, saw a hay shed on fire, and the first man said, "John, of what three writers does that remind you?"

"I don't know."

"Dickens, Howitt, Burns."

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