THE PANAMA TERMINALS, A GREAT UNDERTAKING

Frank Carpenter Tells How Mighty Works Will Be Built for Ends of the Canal—Big Breakwaters at Balboa and Limon Bay—Immense Storage Plants.

Frank G. Carpenter.

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Culebra, Canal Zone, Panama.—My investigations this week have been devoted to the terminals of our great canal at Panama. What kind of [illegible] are we to have at the Atlantic end of this famous waterway? How shall we [illegible] the ships of the [illegible] to pass through the canal? [illegible] accommodations for passengers over those parts of the canal? [illegible] and other questions of terminal facilities will soon bulk large in the minds of the public. The digging is fast approaching completion and the endless river of earth which is flowing from Culebra down to Balboa will finally shrink and then stop. I have already gone in from the Pacific end of the canal and met the Atlantic waters. The dredges are still working there, but within a few months the channel could be made ready for ships.

The situation on the Atlantic side is rapidly approaching that on the Pacific. The dirt which crowed the canal at Miraflores has been cut through and the salt waters rush and roaring a stone's throw of the Miraflores dam.

The work of laying up the foundations for the terminals of the future is already under way. Docks and break waters are being built on both sides of the isthmus. So far there is much yet to be decided in the plans of the engineers. Little progress has been made, and it will be Congress which lays down the lines upon which the construction will rapidly follow.

A Talk With Rear Admiral Rousseau.

The man who knows more about the terminals is Mr. [illegible], chief of the bureau of docks of the United States navy. He is a young man, but has had experience in work of this character. He was second of Admiral Dewey at Manila Bay, was appointed head of the bureau of docks and has been in charge of the terminals for the Panama canal. He is now one of the commissioners of the canal, and I spent a morning with him in his office in Washington. He was just about to leave for the Isthmus to be gone a few weeks, and he was very busy. He had his hat on when I came in, and he said he could give me but a few minutes, as he was just about to catch a train. I had a long talk with him, however, and he showed me a map of the Isthmus and explained the plans of the government for the terminals. He said:

"We are now ready to construct the first of them through the resources of the Panama railroad. That railroad is one of the best paying enterprises in the world. Since its commercial business it has already earned several million dollars above its net expenses and this money is to be used for dock construction. As it is the present facilities do not accommodate the traffic. This is so as to our own steamers. I mean those belonging to the Panama railroad, and it is also so as to the steamers of the United Fruit Company and of other lines which are now sending their vessels to Colon, but which would gladly change to the Pacific side if we could give them better shelter and better anchorage than we could provide. When our docks are completed our ships will be in United States territory, and the steamers coming to them will be on the same territory."

Warehouses and Repair Shops.

"How about your warehouses and repairing arrangements?"

"We are now planning a type of warehouse to be built here and for combining all sorts of dry storage, cold storage and freight handling appliances. The engineers think that these things should be set up at as early a date as possible, and the matter will soon come before Congress. The reason for this is that the government is using a large amount of machinery in the building of the canal which can be applied to such things in connection with the terminals. We shall have to build ship repair shops, and there is no reason why the government should not make repair contracts here, which would repair any kind of ships. Our machinery is already here and we have to be disposed of when the work is completed. There will be shops for the repair of the machinery, and the repair shops will be in the same place. We have now a repair shop at Pedro Miguel which we have been using for years, and on that side of the isthmus we have a good deal of machinery which will be left when the work is finished. We have also a repair shop at Balboa and a repair shop at Cristobal. We have also a repair shop at Colon, which belongs to the Panama railroad, and it is possible that we may use it for our own purposes. We have also a repair shop at Cristobal and