

PHILIPPINE RAILWAYS
Last of the Contracts Soon Will Be Signed.
THIRTY MILLIONS INVOLVED
Most Important Step in the Development of the Islands.
RESOURCES MADE AVAILABLE
Should Contribute Largely to the Prosperity of the Archipelago—
Engineers on Their Way.

BY WILLIAM E. CURTIS.
Written for The Star and the Chicago Record-Herald.

The arrangements for carrying out the plans of the government for a system of railways in the Philippines are about completed, and the last of the contracts will be signed in a few days. They involve the construction of several hundred miles of track and the expenditure of about \$30,000,000, most of it within the limits of the islands. The project recommended by a commission of engineers while Secretary Taft was governor general will be followed very closely with a view to the development of the great natural resources that are now inaccessible, as well as providing suitable transportation facilities for those sections which are most thoroughly settled and cultivated.

Contracts for about 400 miles of track in the island of Luzon have been agreed upon by Secretary Taft and John G. Milburn, attorney for James Speyer & Co., the well-known bankers of New York, the terms have been approved by the Philippine commission at Manila, and the papers will be signed as soon as they are received. Contracts for 300 miles of track in the islands of Negros and Cebu have already been signed by J. G. White & Co. of New York, representing a syndicate incorporated under the title of the Philippine Railway Company, and composed of that firm, Chas. M. Swift of Detroit, Cornelius Vanderbilt of New York, W. H. Woodruff of the Lincoln Trust Company, New York; Heilbach, Kehlmeier & Co. and the International Banking Corporation.

The Speyer contract carries no subsidy, but a perpetual franchise. The Philippine Railway Company also has a perpetual franchise, and the government of the islands guarantees 6 per cent interest upon 95 per cent of the actual cost of construction for a term of thirty years.

Engineer Beard's Surveying Project.
The government will be represented in the construction by General Inspector F. A. Mollitor, formerly chief engineer of the Choctaw railway in Oklahoma and Indian Territory. Speyer & Co. have not yet announced the personnel of their organization. The chief engineer for J. G. White & Co. will be Mr. Edward J. Beard, who has had twenty-five years' experience in the location of important railways throughout the west and south. He was at one time a contracting engineer, and built the street and suburban railways of Meriden, Miss., in 1890, then became chief engineer of the New Orleans and Northwestern road, and in 1894 was engaged in the construction of the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf railroad. In 1898 he built the Gila Valley, the Arizona railroad of Arizona, and in 1897 the railroads of the Boston and Montana Copper company in Arizona. In 1902 he was appointed assistant chief engineer of the Rock Island system, and held that position until a few weeks ago, when he resigned to take charge of the construction of the new roads in the Philippines.

On the 25th of April Mr. Beard started with fifty engineers and surveyors, chosen mostly from his former employments in the west, in special cars for Seattle, where he sailed for Manila by the steamship Minnesota. The party will be divided into three groups, and commence a preliminary survey immediately upon their arrival. They have six months to select their route. The engineering staff, and the men in charge of special provisions have been men of long experience in the tropics, and will be made up of native Filipinos, who will be advanced to more responsible positions where they show sufficient aptitude. The railways in these islands will be narrow-gauge.

Must Send Timber to Manila.
All the material will be shipped from the United States, and it is a significant comment upon conditions in the islands that with the greatest forests in the world almost within sight, it is necessary to carry building timber across the Pacific ocean. J. G. White & Co. are now engaged upon several important contracts in the Philippines, and are using nothing but Oregon pine, carried across the Pacific ocean because it is more economical than to buy timber on the spot. The reason for this is the lack of saw mills and transportation facilities. One purpose of the new railroad is to enable this abundant supply of timber to be brought to market. The island of Negros has one of the finest forests in the world, and the archipelago sugar-producing territory of the archipelago is a source of abundant production of sugar and contains extensive coal deposits, which have been the cause of the States navy with good results, and when developed will influence the whole commerce of the Pacific ocean. Panny can produce sugar and rice in the construction of the railroads in Cebu, Panay and Negros Mr. Beard will be assisted by Mr. Lawrence E. Bennett, general superintendent of the famous Oroya railroad in Peru and built a division of the same in the mountains of the most elevated piece of railroad construction in the world, crossing the Andes at a height of more than 15,000 feet. Mr. Bennett has also been in charge of the building of the Korat railway and was consulting engineer for that government in the Philippines. In 1901 he went to the Philippines to act in a similar capacity for Gov. Taft and outlined the scheme of transportation which is now being carried out.

The railroads to be built in the Philippines by J. G. White & Co. will involve an investment of something like \$11,000,000.

town of Lucena, a distance of thirty-five miles, making a total of 130 miles. They also agree to build a line from Pasacao through Nueva Caceres to the town of Laguna, a distance of 100 miles, and thence to Laorap, the main line and branch being approximately 160 miles. Speyer & Co. will be given additional franchises to build a dozen more lines of road already constructed, and to those which they propose to build, and which are not included in the original project of the government.

Speyer & Co., however, receive no subsidies. They have sufficient confidence in the success of the proposed roads to contract to build them without any subsidies. They demanded a guarantee from Secretary Taft that no franchises will be granted to any other person or corporation to build any of the lines which they propose to build, but that condition was refused. The government of the United States does not grant monopolies, but Secretary Taft perfectly willing to give Speyer & Co. an assurance that their interests would be protected from unfair competition as long as the management of their road received the approval of the government and was satisfactory to the people. Furthermore, Speyer & Co. have been assured that additional franchises will be granted them for roads in other parts of the island of Luzon without subsidies or guarantees whenever they are ready to build them.

A FIERCE FOREST FIRE
200 MILES SQUARE BURNED IN NORTHERN MICHIGAN.
Reports from Escanaba and Gladstone, Mich., via Detroit, state that a disastrous forest fire is raging in the Upper Peninsula in the neighborhood of the two cities mentioned. It is reported that three towns have been destroyed, that thirty square miles of territory have been devastated and that several persons have been burned to death. The reports of the loss of life by the forest fires are very vague and may prove ungrounded. During the evening persistent efforts were made by the Detroit newspapers to get into telegraphic communication with Escanaba via St. Ignace, but without success, the telegraph lines having evidently been badly crippled by the fire. The Detroit News, however, received several brief dispatches from Marquette and Marquette via Milwaukee and Chicago.

According to dispatches fires have been burning northward along the Chicago and Northern railway, which runs due north from Menominee. The village of Talbot, twenty-eight miles north of Menominee, is thought to be totally destroyed. Dagget and Powers are in the direct path of the flames and can hardly escape destruction. The latter village is located at the junction of the Chicago and Northern western branches eastward and westward, the eastward branch running to Escanaba, and the westward branch to Marquette. A dozen farmers have been burned out in what is known as the Chocoma district, south of Marquette. Great quantities of timber have been destroyed, many of the burning parties, with the woods are fled at this season, narrowly escaped disaster.

Villages and Farm Houses Doomed.
The village of Saunders is reported wiped out of existence. Quinnesa, a village of 1,000 population, about six miles from Menominee, is burning. Reports from Menominee estimate that half a dozen villages and hundreds of farm buildings will be entirely destroyed. The Menominee fire department is holding itself in readiness for an expected appeal to try to save the village of Dagget.

A dispatch from Marinette, Wis., last night says: The best information obtainable at this hour is that the forest fire which is sweeping the county north of here has reached Iron county, north of Dickinson. This makes four counties which are suffering from fire. The area is 200 square miles.

Fire Area 200 Miles Square.
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Six Blocks Burned.
A dispatch from Stanley, Wis., last night says: Fire, started by a spark from a sawmill, this afternoon burned 100 residences and a dozen business buildings, entailing a loss of \$200,000. Six blocks were burned out. The flames were blown by a high wind from the west, and so rapid was the progress of the fire that little was saved from the houses. The public library was on fire several times, but the walls of the building and most of the books were saved. Engines and firemen from Thorpe, Eau Claire, and Chippewa Falls kept the flames out of the main business quarter.

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THE ROOSEVELT PROGRAM
In tomorrow's big paper there will appear an interesting article by Arthur Wallace Dunn setting forth the position of the President in his administration.

A Study in Sociology
A strong, forcible story, full of the intense action of a Latin race, written by Arthur Train.

The Sage Brush Parson
The second installment of A. B. Ward's thrilling new serial story which begins in today's paper.

Cotton and the Chorus Girl
This is a tale by Walter Prichard Eaton, of a certain phase of city life that, like the kaleidoscope, is ever showing fresh combinations.

Mystery of the Mary Celeste
An unexplainable, but true, sea story that is stranger than fiction, written by John Ball Osborne.

The announcement of prize winners in The Sunday Star's amateur photographic contest will appear in tomorrow's big paper.

OTHER NOTABLE FEATURES

The Wandering Joke
By John A. Macy.

Some Remarkable Elephants
Illustrated.

Counterfeiting the Enemies' Money
By Alex. Del Mar.

When King Alfonso Weds Princess Ena
Illustrated.

American Cotton Trade Abroad
Illustrated.

Sophy of Kravonia
By Anthony Hope.

Making A Successful Husband
Illustrated.

A Rock in the Baltic
By Robert Barr.

The Girl You Would Like To Be
Illustrated.

Read THE SUNDAY STAR

ROCKVILLE AND VICINITY.
General and Personal News of Montgomery County.
Special Correspondence of The Star.
ROCKVILLE, Md., May 19, 1906.

The bids received by the county commissioners for the construction, under the Spoonmaker law, of a mile of pike in Rockville, Md., beginning at the corporation limits of Rockville and extending along the Frederick road toward Gaithersburg, were about the estimate of the state highway commissioner. Messrs. Charles A. Claggett and Daniel Kraft bid \$7,005.50 for the work, and J. F. Killen of Washington bid \$7,576. The estimate of the highway commissioner is understood to have been about \$8,800.

At a meeting of the orphans' court for this county the last will and testament of James K. Groves was admitted to probate, and record and letters testamentary were granted to Walter H. Groomes without bond; letters of administration on the personal estate of Edward Leim were granted to Malinda S. Helm, bond, \$2,500, and the last will and testament of Lewis H. Jackson was admitted to probate, and record and letters testamentary were granted to Hatton A. Waters, bond, \$1,500.