

# HOUSE DEBATES THE CANAL BILL

## Measure Appropriating \$16,500,000 Will Be Placed on Its Final Passage To-Day

### COMMISSION CRITICIZED

#### Its Statement of Expenditures and Estimates Regarded as Too Incomplete

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—With an opportunity for unlimited debate on the subject of the Panama canal, the House exhausted its energy in that subject in a session of four and three-quarters hours to-day. The bill appropriating \$16,500,000 for canal work, which was the subject of discussion, will be read for amendment and placed on its final passage to-morrow. The feature of the debate was the criticism indulged in by both Republicans and Democrats regarding the completeness of the statement of expenditures and estimates supplied by the canal commission. Hepburn's charge of the bill, made some effort to show that while detailed estimates might be made satisfactory, at the same time members of the House were not in a position to pass critical judgment on estimates of that nature prepared by expert engineers who held responsible positions and had been selected entirely because of their fitness.

Bourke Cockran of New York took decided exception to this attitude on the part of Hepburn. To express his sentiment, he read the sentiment of the President in his message for economy and scrutiny of appropriations. The so-called "press agent" of the canal commission was criticized by several speakers, and lack of definite information as to the existence of such a position was shown. The place was declared to carry a salary of \$10,000 a year and some curiosity was manifested as to what were its duties.

### ISTHMIAN CANAL IN SIX YEARS

#### Major Gillette's Plan May Be Adopted

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—Congress probably never will be confronted with the duty of passing judgment on a plan for a sea level canal on the Isthmus of Panama. There is certain knowledge to-day that the plan which has attracted scant attention from the board of advisory engineers is engrossing the attention of the Commissioners and that the President is studying it with a mind open to every suggestion. Official attention has been attracted by this plan because it holds out a glittering prospect of a complete canal in six years and at a cost of only about \$120,000,000, an amount smaller than the sum already authorized for canal construction.

When the advisory board let it be known that a majority of its members favored a sea-level waterway, an army engineer was bold enough to say in print that the sea-level canal across the Isthmus of Panama "would be the monumental engineering mistake of the age." This statement, in the face of the opinions of the great engineering nations of Europe, attracted notice because of its daring and it served another purpose, for it set the members of the commission to the task of looking into the plan submitted by the presumptuous one. The report of the advisory board will not be made public in full for some time, but when it comes it will be found that any suggested plan will have a strong rival already in the field. The officer who said plain things about a sea-level canal is Major Cassius E. Gillette, whom the city of Philadelphia wishes to put in charge of its filtration works. Gillette submitted a plan for building a Panama canal, but little was heard of it and it was supposed it was slumbering in canal headquarters. Now there is adequate authority for the statement that there is in the minds of the members of the young engineer's plan and this interest is on the part of those who will have the final word.

### SENATE GETS DOWN TO WORK

#### Several Hundred Bills and Resolutions Introduced

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—The Senate began business in earnest to-day. Several hundred bills and resolutions were introduced and referred to committees.

There were resolutions dealing with the question of the national regulation of insurance companies, the incorporation of interstate railroad companies and the contribution of funds to political parties by national banks.

Foraker presented his railroad rate regulation bill; Gallinger his merchant marine subsidy bill; Lodge a bill providing for the construction of a tariff rate schedule in the interest of reciprocity, and Culberson a bill making it a penal offense to use the money of insurance companies in politics.

The nearest approach to a controversy arose over a resolution presented by Newlands directing the Interstate Commerce Commission to draw a national incorporation act for railroads. Spooner criticized the proceeding as unworthy of the Senate. An objection was made to consideration of a resolution offered by Tillman for investigation of the subject of national bank contributions for campaign purposes, and the resolution went over for a day.

### NEW EXCLUSION BILL TO DIE

#### Great Opposition to Measure Against Japanese and Koreans

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—The Japanese and Korean exclusion bill, introduced in the house with the indorsement of the California delegation, will probably not be heard from again during this Congress. No serious attempt will be made to pass it in view of the general opposition of the Senators and Representatives. It is certain also, that if such a measure were to pass both houses it would probably be vetoed by the President.

### DAMAGES FOR EMPLOYEES

#### Kahn Introduces Bill to Benefit Civilian Employees at Navy Yards

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—Representative Kahn to-day introduced a bill providing for medical care, either at their homes or at the Government hospital, of civilian employees at the navy yards in case of accident in the course of duty, and for the payment to dependent relatives in cases of death of an amount of money equal to six months' salary of such employee.

### Joint Statehood Measure

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6.—A canvass of the Senate to ascertain the sentiment regarding a statehood bill indicates, says Senator Beveridge, chairman of the Committee on Territories, that a bill will be passed at this session with a good majority. He believes the measure will be in the same form as that reported last session, which provided for the admission of Oklahoma and Indian Territory as a State and Arizona and New Mexico as a State.

# SULLIVAN'S SPEECH IS TOPIC OF HOUR

Throughout San Francisco yesterday the topic of conversation heard on every side was the fearless stand taken by Attorney Francis J. Sullivan against the report of Engineer William Barclay Parsons favoring an overhead trolley system for San Francisco. The report was read on Tuesday evening at the banquet of the Merchants' Association at the Palace Hotel. At that time Mr. Sullivan attacked the reasoning of the noted engineer and showed the advantageous possibilities of a conduit system in the downtown districts. In view of the public interest manifested in this reply The Call herewith prints a report of the address of Mr. Sullivan.

## Attorney Criticizes Strongly Report of Parsons.

## His Fearless Stand Pleases Many Citizens.

## Serves to Awaken Great Interest in Matter.

The citizens of San Francisco are manifesting a great interest in the speech made by Attorney Francis J. Sullivan before the members of the Merchants' Association at their banquet at the Palace Hotel on Tuesday evening. It was the popular topic of conversation in every section of the city yesterday. Mr. Sullivan's ringing attack on the report of Engineer William Barclay Parsons and his open assertion that the United Railroad was not working for the benefit of San Francisco have aroused interest in the street railway problem greater than ever before.

The report of Mr. Sullivan's remarks was inadvertently left out of yesterday's Call. He spoke as follows: "Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mayor Phelan, gentlemen and fellow members of the Merchants' Association: I feel it quite an honor to address this body. I do not believe that any other man in the city, except Mr. Ford, that all speeches should be made before people eat. However, I would appeal to my friend, Mayor Phelan, or Mr. John McNaughton of The Call on that point."

"I have heard the report of Mr. Parsons with much interest. You all recall the story of the man who shot at the owl. The question is, did Mr. Parsons hit the owl? Did he treat the transportation problem and us in a fair and legitimate way? "There are two sides to every question, I understand that. The underground system and the overhead trolley system both have their advocates. But the election recently showed that the underground system was favored by a vast majority in San Francisco."

"Has Parsons treated the subject of street transportation in San Francisco fairly and legitimately? It is curious that when the poor citizens of Sutter street are working for an underground electric road, such a plea in favor of the overhead system is given to the public. I do not wish to insinuate anything improper in this connection, but it seems strange to me."

### OVERHEAD SYSTEM IS BAD.

"Unevenness of ground, prejudice against poles, the vote of the people for an underground system on Geary street and its implied verdict against overhead wires are some of the things that reply to the Parsons report that San Francisco will have an underground system for its center, even if it does have the overhead for its suburbs. The objections to the overhead system are the displacement of streets by trolley wires and poles, constant danger to firemen from heavily charged wires, danger of wires causing fires in dwellings, loss of current and interference with telegraph and telephone."

"It seems curious to see a report in praise of the overhead trolley system only without even a reference to the opinion of other distinguished engineers who were fellow-members of the London commission with Mr. Parsons, and who were favorable to the underground electric conduit. We know as a fact that the latter system was adopted by the London County Council, and further, that it proposes to use it on all streets in London."

"The most striking thing about this report is that while the author casts away the cable as old rubbish he insists on the use of the overhead trolley as the only method of transit. The position the people are placed in by its author resembles that of Cromwell's order to the Irish, 'To hell or Connaught.' Either was bad enough, but the witty Celt replied, 'You take hell, I will take Connaught.' That is, our people will stand by the cable because they can't do anything else except to take the cheap and nasty overhead trolley."

### REPORT IS VALUELESS.

"Assuming all the points of this report are true in reference to traction lines, yet the whole argument is based solely on one standard for street railroads; that is the overhead trolley, according to the Parsons report. If there can be no uniform standard, the whole report is without value as a guide in our municipal street-car service."

"Now, uniform overhead trolleys are impossible in San Francisco."

"1.—By the character of the ground; the high hills and consequently steep grade. Tunnels cannot overcome this objection at the present time at least."

"2.—By the fact that all poles in streets are forbidden by ordinance 1889."

"3.—The fact that the municipality is about to construct an underground electric conduit on Geary street with the consent of the majority of the people, and the people will not stand the trolley."

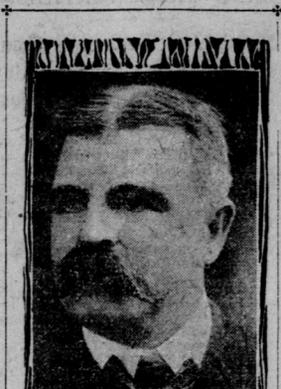
"4.—Because the people at the last election declared in favor of municipal ownership of all traction lines to be operated by the latest method, which means an underground electric conduit."

"5.—The franchises of the cable lines on Sutter and Market and other streets do not allow a change from cable to electric power."

"6.—The overhead electric trolley is besides condemned by the experience of cities of the old and new worlds for various reasons. Among them: "1.—Disfigurement of streets by crossing of wires and by poles."

"2.—Danger of wires falling on firemen and horses."

"3.—Fire to houses. See report of Fire Underwriters in New York during Mayor Low's term of office."



LEADER OF FIGHT AGAINST THE TROLLEY FOR CITY'S STREET-CAR SYSTEM.



NEW YORK HAS UNDERGROUND.

"The New York city there are about 20 miles of underground conduit, which is in use at all seasons of the year. "In Washington all the electric street railways in the city proper, with seventy-five miles of track, are operated by underground electric conduit, not as the Parsons report alleges, by reason of accidental fire, but because Congress so ordained; and, as the Parsons report says, the Federal authorities would not permit the use of overhead wires."

"Mr. Sullivan read letters from Washington, New York and London authorities to the effect that the underground system was giving satisfaction wherever it is in use, and went on to say that he did not know but that it was the United Railroads that had presented this report. Continuing, he said: "Does the United Railroads come to us with clean hands? No. Did Parsons know that the city receives a shamefully small percentage from the franchise fees? Does he know that their franchises were secured through the price of shame of the Supervisors? Perhaps if he knew these things he would not have made a velleid plea for the road."

"The Parsons report is a masterpiece of the United Railroads. They paid \$2,000,000 for the Market street roads. These roads, by a stroke of the pen, were burdened with a further indebtedness of \$18,000,000, and so the citizens of San Francisco have to go down into their pockets. The roads are bonded at the rate of \$320,000 a mile. No legitimate profit can pay the interest on such a valuation. I take it the Parsons report is a masterpiece of the United Railroads. They paid \$2,000,000 for the Market street roads. These roads, by a stroke of the pen, were burdened with a further indebtedness of \$18,000,000, and so the citizens of San Francisco have to go down into their pockets. The roads are bonded at the rate of \$320,000 a mile. No legitimate profit can pay the interest on such a valuation. I take it the Parsons report is a masterpiece of the United Railroads. They paid \$2,000,000 for the Market street roads. 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