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***Enemies of The Canal Fail And Are Left Sadly Lamenting***

***Favorable Reports on Hepburn's Nicaragua Waterway Bill in Congress Are the Country's Answer to the Impudent and Disingenuous Proposal of the Conspirators Who Would Block the Scheme***

***Only Obstacle to the Speedy Construction of the Canal Is the Clayton-Bulwer Treaty, Which Provides That Britain Must First Give Consent, but Uncle Sam May Arrange for Its Abrogation***

The several sorts of disreputables that have been antagonizing the Nicaragua Canal project appear to have played the last effective card which they have dealt themselves from the bottom of the pack. By deciding to report the Hepburn bill, the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce has assured its consideration early enough in the session to bring it to a vote, which is all that can be asked by any supporter generously willing to give the devil a chance. In this vale of tears, nothing but Senator Stewart of Nevada is absolutely inevitable, but to the bright band of gentlemen interested in the Straits of Magellan I commend an affirmative vote in both Houses on the Hepburn bill, as a fairly good example of the foregone conclusion without a visible string to it. It is pretty well known who these persons are.

By a remarkable coincidence most of them are connected with transcontinental and trans-isthmian railroading. Quite recently, however, their quickened consciences persuaded them to atone for their sins against the Nicaragua Canal by promoting the one at Panama. They arranged a deal with the French stockholders by which the scheme was to be "Americanized," and then patriotically asked that it be given a "hearing" by the government. The "hearing," they figured, would last a matter of five years, and by due diligence might be prolonged to ten. During that period the overland railways would strive to please by handling their traffic between east and west, as at present. The favorable report on the Hepburn bill is the country's answer to this impudent and disingenuous proposal and the conspirators are left lamenting. The venerable C. P. Huntington, I am told, is of the solemn conviction that it serves them right. This great and good man finds nothing so little to his taste as any kind of badness. It was he who wrote the glowing lines:

"Am I a soldier of the cross, a follower of the Lamb?"

Over wide regions accessible to the contagion of his own belief it is thought that he is.

Defeat of the domestic obstructionaries does not, unfortunately, assure immediate construction of the canal on the passage of the bill. There is still a lion in the path—and it happens to be the British lion. The beast is dispositioned rather amicably toward us just now, and somewhat pre-occupied with matters elsewhere; but he will have to be reckoned with. Under the Hepburn bill the canal is to be constructed, owned, controlled and defended by the United States;

under the Clayton-Bulwer treaty the United States are pledged not to construct, own, control and defend any such canal without the consent of Great Britain. Great Britain has not consented. She once intimated her willingness to abrogate the treaty if we would neutralize the canal, but the fact remains that the treaty is not abrogated, nor would neutralization of the canal abrogate it. Its validity has been recognized by every administration since its ratification. Congress cannot expunge it by ignoring it, as the Senate—a part of the treaty-making power—has once actually done by passing this very bill. There is no hope of a president of the United States signing the Hepburn bill, or any bill like it, until the Clayton-Bulwer treaty has been formally abrogated by mutual assent.

Divided among a multitude of men in Congress, responsibility is to each a light affliction, and does not always deter from folly; centered upon the shoulders of one man in the White House, it makes itself felt. This was illustrated in the days immediately preceding the Spanish war. Under two administrations Congress was “ready” a long time before the army and navy were. It would have begun the fighting with a light heart and without other equipment—when we had neither powder nor shot enough to fight with. Two presidents of different policies and characters strained their authority to the breaking stress to keep the merry gentlemen at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue from cutting the throat of their country. If it be urged against these incidents that they are an imperfect foundation for an argument against the dreaded One-Man Power, I confess in all humility that they are open to that serious objection: but at the same time I crave leave to explain that I had nothing to do with the causes that brought them about.

If the Hepburn bill force the hand of the administration in securing abrogation of the inhibiting treaty, it will have accomplished something good which, it is to be feared, its authors and advocates have not in mind. Its advocacy by men believed to be in the administration’s confidence seems indeed to indicate that abrogation is already assured. Let us hope so, for certainly the American people will never consent to forego the advantage of controlling any trans-isthmian canal that may exist, even if it should happen to have been “made in France.”