

of a rival canal. There were also speculators who tried from time to time to influence the Bourse against you. The speculators know well what your resistance has cost them. Unable to do anything against the shareholders, certain persons then turned against the company, and, by newspapers started for the streets, or by letters and pamphlets, an actual campaign of extortion has been organized. We need not say that these speculators of a peculiar kind will find the Panama Canal Company as disdainful and immovable as the shareholders have been."

After a still more pointed passage on this subject, which seems to foreshadow legal proceedings against the offenders, the report explains certain petty attempts at imposition by contractors— attempts promptly repressed; and it goes on to say,—

"Considering that the first excavations are the most difficult to extract, and that our general manager makes a point of attacking the difficult ones first, there is reason to be satisfied with the progression of the amount of the monthly excavations since the beginning of the year. In January this amount was 550,000 cubic mètres; in February, 590,000m.; in March, 627,000m.; in April, 775,000m.; and in May, 798,000m. We had thought that the monthly figure would speedily reach a million mètres. We had included in our calculation the product of the large American dredgers, which on the Colon and Panama sides were to work in land generally soft. We shall explain later on how the American contractors have been delayed. The part to be executed by them being the easiest, this delay will in no way hinder the completion of the canal. On the Colon sides these contractors are already in a position to accomplish their task.

"We must now refer to the political troubles which occurred at Colon and Panama last May. If, owing to a misunderstanding, our building-yard had not suffered some loss, we should not have had occasion to speak of these unfortunate events, now at an end; the people in our employment and our building-yards along the whole line having been kept entirely free from all connection with the conflict. To such an extent was this the case that at Panama throughout the period of hostilities our treasuries remained open, and our pecuniary operations were continued with the most perfect regularity. The fire at Colon destroyed some buildings which we had on the site of the old town, and a dredging-machine which was on the stocks was injured. The destruction of our buildings at Colon caused us only a very limited material injury, a decision being taken to transfer for some months all our operations to the new town called into existence by us at the entrance of the canal—Christophe Colomb. We shall be able to save some parts of the burnt dredging-machine. At Culebra the injury done falls on the contractors. Their workmen, panic-struck, had left the yard. Those in charge having remained steady at their post, the labourers, reassured, have now returned to their work. But these incidents, unfortunate as they have been, have proved how much the neutral enterprise of the universal maritime canal is respected by all.

"And yet these incidents have furnished our adversaries with subjects of accusation which at least are singular. In America it was asserted that the disturbances had been fomented by persons connected with the company to give France a pretext for taking possession of the Isthmus of Panama; while in Europe it was stated that the Americans of the United States would take advantage of the disturbances and of the fire at Colon to take possession of Colombia. The truth is that in the execution of existing treaties the Government of the United States of America was bound to intervene to re-establish order. Our industrial society is and will remain completely foreign to all politics. The respect shown for the agents and the operations of the company during the events of May prove how much we ourselves respect this neutrality.

"The fire at Colon, which has only caused us comparatively unimportant material injury, has, however, by the almost complete destruction of the means of landing and repairing materials, caused difficulties of which we shall note the effects during the second half-year of 1885. With the utmost energy and ready decision our agents at once made up for the insufficiency of the wharves by the employment of floating material. It has been possible to carry out our landing operations in a sufficient manner. We have formed near Panama and Boca del Rio Grande a small tidal harbour, where the work of disembarkment will be carried on by means of lighters. The sending of articles to Panama by Cape Horn will cost more for freight, but transit by railway will be avoided, and the conveyance will be more sure and more expeditious. Provided with three great building-yards—at Christophe Colomb, at La Boca, and at Bas Matachin—we shall hasten our operations in proportion to our requirements. We are preparing barracks for the accommodation of thirty thousand workmen.

"If you remember the alarming telegrams published on the subject of the disturbances in Panama, if you have read the telegrams announcing our complete desertion by the workmen, the entire suspension of the works, and the collapse of the enterprise, and if you compare the reality of the facts now known with the false news published, you will judge of the good faith of our adversaries, and of the means which they have ventured to employ to procure a temporary satisfaction. But for the temporary incident at Culebra, not one of our building-yards would have been stopped for an instant."

The report then enters in detail into the progress of the works. It points out that the length of the canal is only 75 kilomètres, whereas that of the Suez Canal is 160, and that no widening will be necessary, however great the traffic; it shows that the estimated cost is not being exceeded; and it states, in conclusion, that the French Government has been asked to sanction an issue of 600,000,000*f.* in lottery bonds, as was done in the case of the Suez Canal.

[Extracts from the *Times*, Thursday, 30th July, 1885.]

THE PANAMA CANAL.

Paris, 29th July.

The annual meeting of the Panama Canal Company was held to-day at the Horticultural Society's rooms, and was numerously attended. M. de Lesseps read the report already summarized in the *Times*, and, with his amazing octogenarian juvenility, showed no symptom of exhaustion at the end of an hour's task. The passage stigmatizing newspaper attempts to depreciate the shares or