

THE REVOLUTION IN NICARAGUA

Dismissal of Mena by President Diaz Started It.

GENERAL CAUSE OF TROUBLE.

He Has Been in Control of the Troops, and a Former President Had to Leave the Country For Commanding Him to Lay Down His Power.

The present Nicaraguan revolt was directly brought about by the dismissal of the minister of war, General Luis Mena, by President Adolfo Diaz. This action resulted in the shelling of the capital by Mena and the landing of American marines to protect the property and lives of foreigners.

The president is the nominal ruler of the republic, but General Mena has been in control of the troops. His son and other relatives have commanded the garrison at Granada and the semi-military police force of the capital, Managua, and General Mena himself has lived a stone's throw from the undefended palace of the president in the semafortress, where Zelaya, surrounded by bayonets and with machine guns at the angles of the high walls, sent forth his barbarous decrees of confiscation, torture and death. It required a high degree of courage for President Diaz to send a summons to such a minister to lay down his power. A former president tried it with Mena and had to leave the country.

For a long time Mena and Diaz were boon companions. Diaz is in almost every particular the opposite of Mena, who has a large infusion of negro blood. He stands more than six feet high, is the idol of his soldiers and possesses a breadth of view and a grace of manner rare in one whose educational advantages have been so limited.

Diaz Described.
Diaz is of white blood, moderate stature, with the polish acquired by a long career on the east coast. He is the sort of man who lets others do most of the talking while he does the thinking. Knowing English well, he prefers to conduct an interview through an interpreter, his critics say, because it gives him time to consider his reply while the interpreter is translating. He took part in the war of liberation, but it was chiefly as financier and commissioner general rather than as a fighter. He has made no attempt to tear the laurels of military success from the brow of Mena or Emiliano Chamorro, the two heroes of the war.

Diaz sits at his desk, thinking, planning, studying the most practicable solutions of his many hard problems. If he decided that he must dismiss Mena from the ministry of war it was no hasty and immature decision, it is believed, but was turned over in his mind for many months and adopted finally because it was the only escape he saw from a situation growing daily more difficult.

The third chief actor in the drama, General Emiliano Chamorro, now in command of the government forces, differs essentially from the others. General Chamorro's field of creation, however, is the battlefield. He does not lay claim to be a profound student of economics or statesmanship.

Function of the United States.

It is between these three men—Emiliano Chamorro, the lion hearted; General Mena, in command of the revolutionary army and the strong places, and Adolfo Diaz, now in possession of executive authority—that the future of Nicaragua has lain. In the meantime it has been the function of the United States to guard against the return of the old conditions of bloodshed, revolution and anarchy. The United States had already intervened soon after Zelaya fell. When trouble first threatened between the successful leaders of the revolution the late Thomas C. Dawson, the special representative of the state department, persuaded the five principal chieftains to sign an agreement by which they were to be bound by the choice of the five as to the conservative candidate for president as soon as a constitution had been formed and it became possible to hold free elections.

In the meantime the new national assembly of April, 1911, had begun the formation of a constitution. Into that constitution was put an article which is the crux of the present difficulties in Nicaragua. This provision is that the decrees of the constituent assembly on the appointment of the president and vice president and of the magistrates of the courts shall remain in force for the periods respectively set forth. Then the assembly a few days before the approval of the loan in October, 1911, elected General Mena as president of the republic for the term beginning in 1913 without providing for any popular ratification of this action.

This promised trouble for the United States, but no definite action was taken until the beginning of the present year, when a request was submitted by the American chargé d'affaires that the constitution should not be promulgated until the arrival of the new American minister. Violent resentment was shown against this request. Secretary Knox visited Nicaragua in March of this year, but he took no decisive action which has been revealed to the public.

GEOLOGIST OF PANAMA CANAL TELLS ABOUT

They Gave Much Trouble, But Never Imperiled the Great Work.

In an article contributed to the Engineering Record Donald F. MacDonald, geologist to the isthmian canal commission, says that the great slides which have occurred in the Culebra cut have never for a moment caused the engineering staff to doubt the ultimate success of the great undertaking. He concludes that when the slopes shall have been reduced to the proper angle, which will of course vary with the strength of the rock from almost perpendicular in the case of strong lavas to one in five in the case of the much sheared clay rocks, the slide problem will be practically solved.

For a time the great masses of earth and rock which broke from the steep, high slopes of Culebra cut and slid into the excavation were, to those who relied on the newspaper reports, a serious menace to the successful completion of the canal, says Mr. MacDonald. As a matter of fact, however, the slides, vast though they were and rare, never really complicated the engineering problems of the work, never hindered the yardage output and never threatened the success of the canal. It is true that the slides have added much to the necessary excavation and therefore to the total cost, but it is a mistake to think that they have in the past or will in the future put in jeopardy the successful completion and operation of the canal.

The slides are due in large part to the geological conditions. The oldest rocks are exposed along the canal between Obispo and Empire. Faulting, shearing and weathering have mixed this already complex mass so that it is difficult to analyze it. From Empire southward younger rocks are found in a formation estimated to be 250 feet thick. These grade upward into light gray lenses of sandstone from three inches to three feet thick, separated from each other by thin beds of shale. Both series of beds show remains of marine fauna which indicate that they were originally laid down as sediment in the bottom of shallow estuaries of the sea, and as the same fossil relations are found all across the isthmus, it is evident that the Atlantic and Pacific oceans were joined at that time.

Four Types of Slide.

There are four distinct types of slide, each clearly distinguishable from the others, yet each aiding and abetting the others and all working together to pull down material from the high slopes into Culebra cut to squeeze material up in the bottom of the cut or to do both.

These are structural breaks and deformations resulting in slides, normal or gravity slides, fault zone slides and weathering and surface erosion. The first class is by far the most important and troublesome. Fortunately they scarcely occur outside of the Culebra district. The first manifestation of these slides is the appearance of cracks or fissures parallel or somewhat oblique to the trend of the edge of the steep slope of Culebra cut. They extend from a few yards to a hundred yards or more back from it and from each other.

They are usually traceable on the surface of the ground for several hundred yards and gradually widen out to form perpendicular crevasses several inches wide. Locally one or more of these cracks may appear, and they may develop into the second stage in a few weeks or in a year or two, depending on the surrounding conditions. The second stage of this type of slide consists of a canalward tilting of these blocks, usually accompanied by a deformation or bulging up of the rocks in the bottom of the canal opposite them. There is a downward and a canalward movement of all the blocks which reaches a maximum of, say, five feet to ten feet, at the edge of the cut. There is also a tilting forward toward the cut on its own axis of each block.

Takes Year or More to Settle.

These settling, tilting and formative movements go on for from a few weeks to a year or more before the third and last stage of these slides is reached. The last stage consists in the dropping downward of one or more blocks, due to the failure and squashing out of its base. Then the whole block disintegrates and soon becomes a normal gravity earth rock slide, piling up in the bottom of the cut.

This type of slide is due to the unstable geological condition of the rock formations through which the cut passes, attributable only to nature and to the oversteepness and height of the slopes, blasting and other work attributable only to man. Any excavation removes support from one side of the column of earth or rock which forms the slopes or walls of that excavation. In an excavation through granite the slopes or walls may be made perpendicular for depths of several thousand feet without their crushing in, but if such excavation were carried down for a depth of, say, three miles, perpendicular walls could not be maintained even in granite, for the unbalanced pressure at the foot of such walls would exceed the crushing strength of

PANAMA CANAL CULEBRA SLIDES

No Reason Why the Vast Valley Should Not Endure For Ages.

the rock, and crushing in of the lower part of the excavation would result.

The weaker the rock the less deep need be the excavation and less steep the walls in order to cause crushing and deformation, and the critical depth and steepness for the rocks involved have locally been exceeded in the cut near Culebra. In the first estimate of excavation for Culebra cut this weak rock factor was not sufficiently considered. The earth vibrations set up by deep, heavy blasting near slopes already under a great strain have had a considerable tendency to develop slides.

Only One Known Remedy.

For this type of slide there is only one remedy and that is now being applied—namely, to make the slopes less steep by removing material from their upper portions so that the unbalanced pressure toward the floor of the steep, high cut banks shall be less than the crushing strength of the rocks involved. To do this several steam shovels have been put up on top of the banks on each side of the cut, and these are now terracing the upper part of the slopes, making them less steep and relieving somewhat their strained condition.

Also each block as it crushes down generally leaves behind it not a gradual slope, but the nearly perpendicular face of another block, so that when the first slide is shoveled out the tendency for the next block to crush down is not removed and in most cases is but little lessened. Another factor which enters into the cause of these large slides and deformations is time. Some of these movements run their course in a few weeks or months, but others have shown cracks for many months or even years and have not yet slid.

These cracks and fissures are sources of weakness which sooner or later, especially after the cut shall have been deepened, will give trouble unless remedied by reduction of slopes. These slides also involve the additional expense and trouble of keeping the cut drainage open and of shifting and adjusting the railroad tracks in the cut so that the dirt trains may not be interrupted.

It is fortunate that of the highest and steepest parts of Culebra cut—namely, Gold hill and Contractors' hill—will not deform and crush into the cut. This is due to the fact that their foundations are relatively strong rocks of volcanic origin, which extend down more than 1,000 feet into the earth. Locally, especially in the upper portions, these masses in their formative stage had mushroomed out somewhat. Rock, loosened by jointing, by weathering and by former heavy blasting or by all three causes, will from time to time drop from these steep places, even to the extent of what might be called good sized rock slides, but the hill masses themselves will stand immovable.

Another Large Erosion Remedy.

Another large erosion problem is that which will result along the water's edge from the wash of steamers going through the canal. The wash from the many steamers that will pass through Culebra cut will certainly be sufficient to very considerably erode the softer rocks along the water's edge unless they be protected.

The turning of the water into the canal will remedy the slides only in so far as it will provide cheaper methods of excavation and removal of them by dredging. The counterbalancing effect of the water against the slopes of the canal will be an almost negligible quantity, so far as the slides are concerned, for the following reasons: The maximum depth of water in Culebra cut will be forty-five feet, and the height of the slopes where sliding might occur is from 75 to 300 feet. The sliding material has an average specific gravity of almost two and a half; hence forty-five feet of water would balance only about eighteen feet of slide if the pressure were evenly distributed.

Considering the more or less wedge shaped fronts and the back pressures of many of the slides, it is estimated that the forty-five feet of water would be equivalent to only about ten feet of slide. Other considerations are that, though the water will protect the lower part of the canal from oxidation and weathering, thus removing a small source of weakness, it will cause water to permeate the cracks and interstices at the foot of the slope and thus be an added source of weakness, though not a serious one, to the slides. On the whole, the water in the canal will slightly increase the tendency to slide, but this will be more than offset by the cheaper methods of excavation and transportation which can then be used.

With the slopes reduced to the proper angle the slide problem will be solved. With slope pressures thus finally adjusted and a protective mantle of vegetation minimizing erosion on the banks, Mr. MacDonald says there is no reason why this new and mighty man-made valley shall not be as stable and as enduring as other great valleys wrought long ages by Nature's sculptor's hand.

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In accordance with the above resolution a meeting of the stockholders is called to convene at the bank on Thursday, the 10th day of October, 1912, between the hours of 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon of the

said day, to take action on the approval or disapproval of the proposed increase.

Note: In the event of the stockholders approving the increase as recommended, the Board of Directors will fix the price for which the said stock shall be sold at \$200 per share.

BENJ. F. HAINES,

Secretary.
Honesdale, Pa., Aug. 5, 1912.
62w9.

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