

The Panama Canal by Contract.

The decision of the United States to build the Panama Canal by contract is applauded in almost every quarter, and seems sound.

The Government has no equipment nor experience nor permanent body of fit men for construction work of this kind. It ought to be done under proper contracts with companies that have all these.

One of the strongest points in favour of this plan is the more probable withdrawal of the Canal from politics during the work of construction. Of course, the awarding of the contracts will be watched with vigilance by the people. But the awarding of large contracts even to a syndicate will meet no opposition, of course, if its bid be the best.

Under one contract, the work, including the profits of the contractors and of the syndicate, if there be one, will probably cost £40,000,000. If the work be well done for that sum and done honestly, the United

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States will have the worth of their money. Financially, it is not a gigantic undertaking for that government. They have eighty millions of people, most of them prosperous. In America they are well accustomed to a big way of doing things. Canada with its six millions, has within the past year placed contracts for the building of a railroad to cost about £16,000,000, for which the Government may ultimately be alone responsible.

These are, by the way, inspiring spectacles for us in the Old World—the use of Government money, not for battleships and armies, but for the extension of commerce and industry

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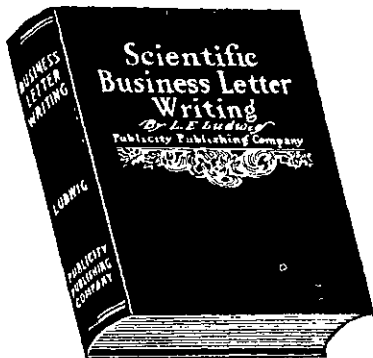
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