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The Honorable,
The Secretary of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

Sir:

I have the honor to report the progress of work and conditions in Platt National Park, for the month of February, 1909, as follows:

ROCK ARCH FOOT-BRIDGE.

As the Department has already been advised, this bridge was completed on the 11th of February and the accounts for the work certified for payment.

In the main the undertaking was completed in a satisfactory manner, and the structure will doubtless stand for ages. As the work progressed I discovered that the large latitude which the Supervising Engineer had reserved to himself in the preparation of the specifications was being used to the advantage of the contractors. I at once protested, and even found it necessary to serve notice on both parties that I should be compelled to stop the work and refer the matters involved to the Department, if the apparent collusion between them was not dissolved. This had the effect to better the conditions, although it was at the expense of amicable relations for a time. Thereafter I found it advisable to watch every detail, trusting no one fully.

In this connection, I beg to suggest that when any considerable amount of permanent building is to be done in the Park, it will be

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On February 12, 1909, the opening of the bridge was celebrated by a concourse of the citizens of Sulphur and visitors to the Park. The exercises consisted of the singing of patriotic airs, reading of Lincoln's Gettysburg oration by Comrade Harrod of the G. A. R.; and addresses by Mayor Kendall for the Confederate veterans; Rev. Clark on the life and times of Lincoln; and the Superintendent on personal reminiscences of Lincoln as a neighbor and friend. In conclusion Mrs. Lucy M. Bennett wearing a dress made of materials bought of Lincoln when a storekeeper in Salem, and patterned after the style of that period, climbed to the top of a turret and broke a wine bottle of medicinal water from the Park on the wall, christening the structure "THE LINCOLN BRIDGE".

DAVIS AVENUE BRIDGE.

Since my last report the earth filling at the approaches has been brought up to within two feet of the completed roadway and the masonry of the retaining walls to a height equal to the top of the abutments. The forms for the concrete bridge rests are completed and the placing of the concrete in these will have immediate attention, so as to have them fully hardened and ready for the bridge when it arrives. This concrete will be sprinkled five times daily for ten days to prevent its cracking by hardening too rapidly. As soon as the iron work is in place I shall build the parapet and retaining walls and complete the approaches.

Advices from the contractors are to the effect that the shipment of the materials, will be made about April 1st.

FILLING EXCAVATION AT ROCK ARCH FOOT-BRIDGE.

The unsightly excavation at the side of the south end of the Lincoln Bridge has been completed and the surface covered with Ber-

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muda sod in a neat and workmanlike manner.

REPAIR OF PAVILIONS AND STORM DAMAGES.

Repairs on the two old pavilions at Pavilion and Hillside Springs, have been completed and the greater part of the fallen timber and obstructions in the creek, caused by the storm, removed. Upon examination it was found that the pavilion at Pavilion Springs could be restored to its proper place and made safe without great expense, and accordingly it was raised up by jack screws and righted, after which strong braces were spiked on the supports, which it is believed will hold the structure in place until such time as money is available to replace it with a substantial building. I had thought to provide new and suitable columns for the pavilion at Hillside Spring and lower the roof to these, and thereby secure a reasonably sufficient pavilion for a year or two. When the workman came to examine the roof, however, it was found to be rotten and too far gone to admit of repair. Accordingly the supports were braced as well as might be and the building protected from falling, in its present warped and leaning condition. One of the first improvements when money is available, should be for a permanent covering for this important spring, in place of the present hideous shed. It is in one of the most frequented portions of the Park and is the object of much unfavorable comment.

DOMESTIC WATER WORKS SYSTEM.

The "air chamber" system of pressure for the water works which provides a supply of water for the residence and office of the Superintendent, continues to be unsatisfactory and requires frequent attention and outlay. The windmill power is sufficient and that part

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of the machinery is a success. If a tank or reservoir of sufficient capacity should be built on an elevation like that a few rods back of the office, I believe a gravity system could be installed that would prove a success. This could be done without much expense and the "air chamber" abandoned, or possibly this device could be used for the reservoir. This should receive attention as soon as money is available for the purpose of permanent improvement.

MAIN ENTRANCE.

No work has been done on the grading of the Main Entrance and roads leading thereto, since my last report, for the reason that more urgent matters have intervened to occupy all the time of the force as well as my own. I shall hope to resume work on this improvement during the next month.

FIREGUARDS.

The weather since my last report has been very unfavorable for burning fireguards, owing to the prevalence of high winds for the most of the time, which rendered it unsafe to set fires. Some progress has been made, however, and the Park is protected in the more exposed places. The closest watch is kept daily and nightly, and the men are instructed to maintain prompt telephone communication with each other and go at once to any fire that may appear, without waiting for orders. The Rangers carry fire fighting appliances on their saddles all the time, and are instructed to call in any assistance that may be necessary, in case of a bad fire being discovered. If we can have two still nights, the entire Park will be surrounded with a sufficient protection and the work completed.

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PLOWING AND SEEDING.

Nothing was done in February in the way of plowing the old fields, with the exception of about three acres near the residence of Ranger Earl. This tract has been placed in prime condition without expense to the Government, and can be seeded at a trifling cost. At the date of this report other plowing and seeding is going forward rapidly. I shall hope to show good progress in the matter of providing a supply of grain and forage for the Park animals in my next report.

CONTINGENT ACCOUNT.

Considerable of the "Contingent Fund" has been used this month for repairs of the water system and for repairs of roads and the construction of small foot-bridges at the crossings of Travertine Creek near the residence of Ranger Earl and at Sycamore Falls. These latter were to accommodate school children living on the south-east side of the Park, who had no other means of crossing the stream. Out of old materials- lumber and nails- and at a trifling expense for carpenter's services, I secured safe and slightly foot-bridges for the purpose.

Another unusual charge on this account, was for the services of an Engineer for half a day to run the levels on Rock Creek between Coney Island Ford and the Rock Ford below Bromide Springs, with a view to ascertain the fall and whether the navigation of the stream by a system of slack water, would be practicable. A Mr. Twombly urged me to secure a concession for him to operate a line of boats on this creek and insisted that the slope of the stream was not an insurmountable obstacle. To set the matter at rest, and for the purpose of obtaining valuable data, I employed Engineer Hinckley for

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half a day to make a survey of that part of the stream. His findings are that there is a fall of 19-1/2 feet between the points named. This makes the scheme of navigation impracticable, for the present at least, and the proposition of Mr. Twombly has not been pressed.

RENFRO TRACT.

Mr. I. C. Renfro, who has been granted permission to cultivate a small tract of land adjoining his vineyard, has been notified of the action of the Department and supplied with a copy of Department letter of February 20, 1909 in regard thereto. I shall see that a strict compliance is had with the terms and conditions imposed upon him.

BOURLAND'S RESTAURANT.

The restaurant building of Dr. Bourland has been removed to a new site near the Vendome and he has been furnished with a copy of Department letter of January 19, 1909, which was modified by your telegram of January 30, 1909.

LIMITING FISHING PRIVILEGES.

As a protection to the fish in the Park during the spawning season, I have posted notices suspending the privilege of fishing between April 15 and June 15 of the present year. During this time high waters usually prevail and great numbers of fish come up from the Washita and Red Rivers, which will maintain the supply if proper steps therefor are taken. A copy of the notice referred to is inclosed.

BIRDS AND SQUIRRELS.

Gradually the rule against hunting in the Park is receiving respect. The arrest and disarming of hunters is having a wholesome

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effect. The worst danger to the birds, especially the quail is, that owners of bird dogs haunt the outer boundaries of the Park and by sending their dogs inside, flush the coveys which not unfrequently fly to the outside, where they are unmercifully slaughtered. This, while an infraction of the spirit of the law, may not be such an offense as to render the hunters liable to prosecution, and I have hesitated to proceed against them. About the best, and perhaps the only remedy is, as I see it, to place two additional wires on the fence, below the present lower wire, and so make it difficult ^{for dogs} to enter the Park. This would require the alteration of the turnstiles so as to make them dog-tight, leaving the stiles as the only ingress for these animals, which would minimize the evil. This expedient may also be necessary to prevent the incursion of loose hogs, many of which roam at will in the streets of Sulphur. I have had some trouble from this source, and the Bermuda grass has suffered in consequence. The pet squirrels in West Central Park are not multiplying to any appreciable extent, but visitors and mischievous boys from the town are becoming less troublesome to them.

CITY WATER SUPPLY FROM THE PARK.

Immediately upon receipt of Department letter of February 15, 1909, I served a copy on the President of the City Council in person, and urged him to take prompt action. He promised to take the matter up at the next meeting. The date of that meeting has now passed more than a week, and still nothing has been done. I shall make another effort to get some action in this matter.

ARRESTS.

The season for visitors, with its attendant wave of crime, has

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not fairly commenced. So far no arrests for immorality have been made, and it is hoped that the warning signs throughout the Park may have a salutary effect in this regard.

VISITORS.

Every indication points to a large number of visitors the coming season. The hotels report an unusual number of out-of-town guests at the present time, and the number is daily increasing. On Sunday, February 21st, there were 1028 visitors at Bromide Springs. This establishes a new record for Sunday since these springs have been open for the public.

Very respectfully,

A. R. Lewis
SUPERINTENDENT.

1 Inclosure.