

# The Panama Canal

## ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY

### Chapter 20, Section 4

**Directions:** Read the following newspaper excerpt of how the decision to build a canal in Panama was made and study the cartoon. Then answer the questions.

Sometime around 1900 [Philippe] Bunau-Varilla and [William Nelson] Cromwell formed an alliance. Their purpose was to get the United States, which was inclined toward a canal through Nicaragua, to change its mind, opt for the Panamanian isthmus[,] and in the process buy out the worthless French claim for a large amount of money.

Bunau-Varilla went to see Senator Mark Hanna, the most powerful Republican politician of his age, and abruptly convinced him to favor a Panamanian route. At the same time, Cromwell made a \$60,000 contribution to the GOP [Grand Old Party, referring to the Republicans]. [President Theodore] Roosevelt decided Panama was a bully [good] route also.

The only obstacle was Colombia, because in 1903 Panama wasn't an independent nation. It was a province of Colombia. A treaty had to be drawn up, and was one which gave Colombia \$10 million, and the stockholders of the French company \$40 million.

The treaty also stipulated that the Colombian government give up all rights to sue for any portion of the \$40 million as well as all police powers in the contemplated canal zone. The Colombians rejected the treaty. . . .

From Panama, Bunau-Varilla summoned Dr. Manuel Amador, a physician who worked for Cromwell's railroad. . . . He presented the doctor with \$100,000 supplied by J. P. Morgan, a secret code, a declaration of independence, a draft of the new nation's constitution, and the soon-to-be-born republic's flag, thoughtfully designed and sewn by Madame Bunau-Varilla.

Thus equipped, the doctor was sent back to Panama, where the workers from the railroad were recruited into the revolutionary army.

With the arrival of the United States cruiser *Nashville* in Panamanian waters, the flag of liberty was run up, and when Colombian soldiers arrived in the province to put down the insurrection, the railroad refused to transport them. The new republic was immediately recognized [,] and its ambassador plenipotentiary [with full authority], who was, surprise, surprise, the enterprising Bunau-Varilla, had the treaty signed within ten days.

#### Summarizing Main Ideas

1. According to the writer, how was the United States persuaded to choose Panama as the site of the canal?

#### Building the Panama Canal



2. What was the obstacle preventing the canal from being built in Panama?

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3. When the Colombian soldiers arrived to put down the insurrection, what happened?

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#### Interpreting Cartoons

4. What is Roosevelt doing in the cartoon?

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5. What is the message of the cartoon?

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#### Comparing and Contrasting

6. Are the messages of the cartoon and of the news article similar or different? Explain.

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