

Built for Whom: The Truth Behind Paarsdam's Involvement in the Construction of the Shire Canal System, and the Political Scandal of the Demmatrodine Canals

by William Groenstein for The Republic Observer

(Translated by Ana Kefin)

Paarsdam, 9:18am 2/17/19: The recent political crises in the Shire are impossible to ignore and even more improbable to avoid conversation about. The Caffan legislators rushed to Laurelian in the dead of night, the Riverwood president shot dead in the streets of an New Sammichian colony, and the Western Canal System scandal. While the former two actions are far away and insignificant to the Republic of Oranje and Paars, which has denied any and all involvement in both actions, further information on the canal crisis has come to our investigators, built into the very creation of the canals themselves. Information which implies the Republic had more of a scandalous role in the construction of the Shire Canal System, and is considerably responsible for the drop in relations between the NSE and Sol.

In late 2016 contractors from the Republic of Oranje and Paars began work on several sites in the Shire, building high-volume canals to connect waterways across the Shire. Inland seas that were once without dredged, high volume water connections to the rest of the Shire, such as the Sea of Valashu, the Western Sea, the Sea of Vakrefell, and rivers between the Seas of Phobia, Clementine, and Havana. As a result of the canals' construction, freedom of trade has increased exponentially, and seaborne traffic tenfold. No more portages and overland transport are necessary in many locations throughout the Shire, and entire overland routes where freight traffic once clogged the STA's railways are now freed up for uninterrupted high speed travel. The canal-building operation was a total success, and Prime Minister Wuggeh used the boost in approval to secure his party's re-election in the 2016 generals. But as of today in 2019, we're beginning to understand that not all of the Prime Minister's canals were adequately authorized, and one in particular is causing an uproar in the international community.

An insider source from Clementine University who worked on authorizing the canal between Clementine and Phobia told the Observer that, "There was no authorization given to Wuggeh's contractors to build the canal until the canal was almost finished. Once the government in Paarsdam was ensured of its completion, they reached out to us asking for permission. Some of us in the economic oversight committee gave it a blind eye, but many in the Clementine and Lost communities are appalled at what they see as an aggressive act of mercantilism." Upon digging up the archives in Paarsdam's Public Library, as well as in Clementine's Town Hall, we can confirm that construction of the canal began much earlier than authorized. In fact, Prime Minister Wuggeh stated weeks before, "If it's for the canal, take the three million and begin next week. Don't worry about the folks in Clementine and Lost, they'll agree when they see its worth." Wuggeh knew about the canals well before asking for approval, and clearly had no intention of gaining that approval in the early stages of construction. Even now, when asked about it, few citizens are aware of the Clementine-Phobian canal's existence, as it was paved over in the recent expansion of Lost, and replaced by a canal of their own.

The records of construction found in Paarsdam's Government Archives tell an eerily similar tale. For the Phobian-Havanese Canal, no authorization was sought, and the river it was built on was widened and dredged to the point of "total habitat destruction", SEA officials say. While the canal was built on unclaimed land and thus carry no diplomatic effect, its environmental effects were irreversible. The same criticism can be made about the Valashu Canal. While built on unclaimed land, the canal massively increased shipping flow between the Shire, Valashu, Exton, and Leuton. Oil spills and marine habitat destruction have increased by 200% since the canal was built, experts say, and although the vast majority of Shirelings from the Vallachian Continent approve of the increase in capital, the environment may take a long time to adjust.

Not all of the canals were illegally built or unauthorized, and not all of them carry major environmental nor regional consequences with them, but there is one more canal to talk about, and it's the one that threatens the very stability and safety of all Shirelings. One that currently lies at the heart of the rising international tensions between Sol and the Fulfwotz, and stands as a heated and bitter political topic in both empires. This canal is officially named the Demmatrodine Corridor Canal, and it decisively connects the all the ports of Demmatrodine, Vakrefell, Malesius, and Ankut to the rest of the Shire.

According to the documented history of the canal, the international authorization for its construction was shady. Prime Minister Wuggeh brought up the subject of a lack of seaborne connections between the Western and Southern Shire to several international figures, with it being dismissed by many, considered as a passive thought. As part of the Prime Minister's 2016 campaign promise, he stated he would bring Paarsdam to the forefront of Shire politics, and increase naval authority thrice over. Without permission from the SUN nor Parliament, he contracted workers to begin construction of the "Groot Westenkanaal" (or the "Grand Western Canal" in common Shireling) directly northeast of Sol on September 13th, 2016. The existing river there was dredged and widened to make way for the expected volume of merchant ships, but documents also suggest that the specifications for the canal should be "not too wide" for the colossal Solurian frigates to pass through.

The Grand Western Canal consisted of the river Dust, widened and deepened from the Solurian Sea to Lake Dust in Demmatrodine, and then turned north, where workers constructed the Locks of Lake Paris to separate the higher tides of the northern Shire Ocean to the lower ones of the southern. Across Lake Paris was the last canal and the most difficult to construct (costing the Republic \$200,000,000 in bonds, mind you). This canal bulldozed a shallow jungle river in Sammarck, requiring a drawbridge to be built and hundreds of acres of ancient Rainforest to be uprooted. Upon completion, the flag of the Republic of Oranje and Paars was lifted above the drawbridge. An assertion of the Prime Minister's campaign promise of "naval dominance" and "global legitimacy".

At first, little notice was made of the canal, as the workers were ordered to maintain a high level of confidentiality until the final touches were completed, but the Solurians soon caught word of its creation, after workers disturbed an ancient build near the canal's entrance. Documents state that after the initial confusion regarding the blunder, the canal was allowed to open under the condition that "no sovereignty would hold primary control, as the Canal should remain a sovereign in and of itself". The order was easy enough to follow, but a loophole in the

treaty was discovered, that while no nation could seize the canal's sovereignty, the structures of the canal themselves "must still be controlled by whatever nation holds the greatest share of their maintenance, protection, and operation," which, at the time, meant the Republic.

Enter Emperor Sammus Ich II, whose spies had delivered information that the canal was nearing completion. At the time, (July 2017) the Caffan referendum crisis and the PM's declaration of war blunder was freshly damaging for the Republic's international image, and NSE-Republic relations were at a historic low. The Emperor unpromptedly surprised PM Wuggeh during one of the latter's final visits to the Lake Paris Locks. Records of the visit from the Sammichian perspective are kept top secret for obvious security reasons, but the Prime Minister's former secretary, Lela Ardene, recorded the encounter in her personal journal (which for some reason she threw at us when we asked her). She wrote,

"August 2nd, 2017: Met the Emperor face to face today while PM was observing the opening of the Paris Locks. I've seen him before at international gatherings but I have to say his horn is much shorter when no one is looking, and surprisingly less gold-speckled without that weird helmet they always make him wear. Also, he wears a lot less red than people think, and one of his capes got caught in the sand, but no one noticed except me and [Minister of Foreign Affairs Betis Recklesch]. We had a laugh, because he and his staff really were a mess. His helicopter broke down in Paris, and apparently his car a well, a fifteen minute hike from the Locks."

Yikes. Sounds like his highness was a bit impromptu and ill-prepared. She describes the following encounter as thus:

"[The Emperor] and Wuggeh walked for some time by the shores of the lake, at first quite stoic, but later opening up and enjoying themselves, taking in the sights, and admiring the machinery of the Locks. At one point, Wuggeh tried to hold the Emperor's hand, but was immediately suckerpunched by one of the Imperial guards."

Ouch. Big time rejected. According to Ardene, after about twenty minutes of conversation, the two returned to their respective entourages, and Wuggeh immediately called for Ardene, Recklesch, and his attorney, Robert "Bobby" Mort. "His Britannian is ****ing terrible, but he wants to make a deal for the canal," Ardene writes, "and in light of our current predicament, I think this might be our chance to redeem ourselves." Witnessed by only a handful of select government officials from both sides, Prime Minister Wuggeh and Emperor Sammus Ich II signed a treaty giving the Sammichians full control over all facilities on the Grand Western Canal, renaming them to the "Demmatrodine Corridor Canal", the "Samark Canal" and the "Imperial Passage Canal". In return, an unknown payment was made to the Prime Minister's bank account (perhaps to pay off his brief stint with the Holy Knights), and another payment of 1.2 billion Shire Dollars directly to the treasury of the Republic of Oranje and Paars. Additional clauses included a treatise granting the Republic complete control of the Westensee Canal, and another giving full freedom of trade for all nations on any canals built by the Republic, including the Demmatrodine canal.

The diplomatic and economic consequences of this treaty are, without a doubt, substantial. Since the treaty was signed, the stocks of the Paarsdam East Shire Company have increased ten times over, and the Republic has secured complete control over the shipping lanes between the Western Sea and the rest of the Shire. The Sammichian canals are tightly

regulated, and have spawned an arms race and volatile diplomatic tension between Sol and the NSE. Control over the canal has become a top priority for both nations, and although many foresee a possible easing of tensions, this Cold War could boil over and erupt into a Shirewide hot conflict any day. While trade in the last year has become more free, more vast, and more lucrative than ever before, it is at the cost of the peace that the Shire has afforded itself.

In these last thoughts I must express, I, personally, am disappointed that Prime Minister Wuggeh has sold peace out for the sake of covering the costs of his own foolish (and often illegal) ventures, and for using our taxpayer money to fulfill an impossible campaign promise of greatness on the world stage. Shame on you, Prime Minister Wuggeh, on all of our ancestors and the very history of the Republic. Many in Paarsdam and the surrounding provinces may support your actions, but I stand firmly in opposition. May this article wreak havoc on your plans, and return a semblance of transparency to our government, and the Shire.

Comments

Boris Gecko 2/17/19 2:45pm - South Paarsdam

F*** YOU F*** YOU F*** YOU! YOU WHINY LITTLE LEFTIES WITH YOUR LITTLE CRYBABY POLITICS OF PEACE. GIVE US A F***ING WAR FOR ONCE IN OUR G****MN LIVES. LET THE REAL PATRIOTS WORK. LANG LEVE DE REPUBLIEK!

Vomitrax Septemus 2/17/19 10:52am - Floffwym

I may not agree with the Emperor's power grab in this case, but does anyone else feel like this was an attempt by Paarsdam to check the power of Sol? I feel like there's some missing information on that for a reason.

Why else would they specifically choose the NSE to purchase the canal? Sol has the money, too.

Muriel Crisp 2/17/19 9:18am - Riverwood

First!

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