

# FROM WHERE I SIT

By A. E. CAHLAN

"Well, I'm just another of the great army of the unemployed, looking for a job. Don't know of anybody who has a dam they want built do you?"

It was Frank T. Crowe speaking. Frank T. Crowe who landed here some five years ago this spring an unknown (comparatively speaking) construction super and in that short space of time got himself acclaimed as one of the greatest construction men of all times, and deservedly so. If you don't believe it, drop down in Boulder canyon sometime and figure out just how tough a job it was to do all that's been done down there since the government finally decided to tame the mighty Colorado river.

To the splendid corps of engineers in Uncle Sam's reclamation bureau go all the orchids for designing the project. It was the greatest job they ever did and it was well done. To the contractors, however, goes the bouquet for building the dam—and HOW to get the job done was as tough if not a tougher problem than figuring out the design.

Frank Crowe sat down there in the canyon months before the contract was awarded and figured THAT out to the last minute detail. Knew just where railroads would be required, how he'd handle the concrete, where and how cable-ways would be built and all that. And that imaginative, constructive brain of his that conjured all these things well in advance, is the reason why the job was finished two years ahead of schedule and without a SINGLE SERIOUS HITCH.

Some folks say Six Companies was lucky—got all the breaks—had no serious obstacles to face that might have been in the way. The same people say the same thing about winning football teams. It's all in the breaks. Well, maybe so. If they WERE lucky, however, their luck began when they hired Frank Crowe to run the job. If they DID get any unusual breaks, it was because he made them as any successful man makes his breaks as he goes along.

Of course there are other men who could have built this dam. It would be foolish to suggest otherwise. But—I have always had a hunch that this was HIS job. That he did it just a little better than anyone else could have. That someone else might not have been as lucky—might not have gotten all the breaks. To me, Frank T. Crowe has demonstrated, down there in that canyon, that he's the greatest construction man of the age. Not entirely because he built Boulder dam, but because of the flawless way he did the job. He was its

master from beginning to end. His handling and organization of his crews had the mark of genius. His mistakes were few—not one of them costly.

I don't believe there ever will be another job like it—one of such great magnitude that was run with such little friction, trouble and error. Don't get the idea I'm belittling the part anyone else played in this magnificent work—I wouldn't do it for the world, and besides, there's plenty of glory to go all the way way around, now that it's nearly finished.

How does one feel after achieving such a mighty success? I asked Crowe that question not so many weeks ago. He looked at me a minute as if wondering whether or not I would understand and then answered: "Al, I feel like hell."

I did understand, all too well, because I believe we all feel in a small way just as he does. It isn't the same old dam now. Go down there in the canyon and it's just a mass of concrete—all finished, the teeming activity we once knew is there no more. It's almost like an old soldier returning to a great battlefield where once he fought and conquered or a football hero returning to the scene of former glories years after graduating. All that's left are happy memories—memories of the greatest struggle of a lifetime, successfully won.

To the builder of Boulder dam, it will always represent his supreme achievement. He loves to build dams. He is happiest when he's building dams. The best days of his life were spent down there in that canyon making the muck fly and breaking all known records for pouring concrete. Things from now on will be sort of anticlimax.

"You said one time I'd probably retire when the dam was finished—well you were all wet. I'm looking for a job and want to go right on building dams as long as I live. Somehow I can't imagine myself with an office in a big city sky-scraper, acting as a consulting engineer. Listen, I'm going to keep my feet in the dirt some way—that's where I'm happiest. I'd be the most discontented person in the world doing any thing else. I've got to find a dam to build somewhere," he says.

Crowe plans to make his home in Nevada. Has bought a house in Boulder City and that will be home for some time to come.

"I like Nevada. Finest bunch of people here I ever knew any where. I like your laws and your spirit. Nevada's a great state and I'm going to stay here. It will always be home to me."