

REVIVING A GREAT CANAL PROJECT

A National Water Highway From the Mississippi to the Atlantic.

Omaha, January 15, 1893. SENATOR JOHN M. THURSTON says he has a proposition to make for the disposal of the postal savings fund if a postal bank bill should go through congress.

SENATOR THURSTON'S PLAN.

It is Proposed to Invest Postal Savings Bank Funds in Interest-Bearing Canal Bonds.

The senator in conversation with me a few days ago, "that the government has got to undertake some day a scheme of internal improvements which will give work to the unemployed."

to a reasonable figure. The canals of New York have done a wonderful work in the regulation of transportation rates in that state.

"Do you think this an opportune time for carrying out such a plan?" I asked. "In view of the condition of our finances, perhaps not, unless the postal bank law should be passed."

"I have no doubt that it could. But suppose that it did not prove directly profitable. If we spent \$50,000,000 on a waterway system which will save the people of the whole country one-half of what they are paying for transportation, it would be a good investment if it never paid directly a cent."

I suggested that one-half the amount paid for transportation by the people of the United States, according to the interstate commerce report, was about \$90,000,000.



THE CANAL ROUTE WEST OF CHICAGO.

has not been very much said about canals in recent years because the railroads in competition with them have got their rates so low that they shut the canals out. Suppose that result followed the building of a great ship canal from the Mississippi by way of the great lakes to the Atlantic.

"As to the stockholders, I stated some time ago in congress the belief that railroad stockholders would be better protected if the government undertook absolutely the regulation of rates. Some people said they thought that a remarkable position to be taken by a man who had been for so long a time the solicitor for a great railroad."



THE WATERWAY EAST OF CHICAGO.

The use of this canal would be the cheapening of transportation rates on the farm and range products of the West to the East, and on the manufactures and imports of the East to the Western states.

Every idle man is a tax on the man who is working. And lack of work creates discontent, which stirs up a revolutionary feeling.

"Of course I don't mean literally one-half," said the senator. "Suppose it saved 10 per cent. of the amount. That would be 16 per cent. on the amount invested in the waterways system. There

the interests of railroad stockholders are affected. New inventions are constantly making manufacturing cheaper; but we can't stop to take into account the man who owns the old machinery, who may be ruined by the new. Railroad interests would suffer from the building of a great ship canal, but there must be in time a

accustomed route is to the Atlantic seaboard. "What particular route do you favor for the great canal?" "I should say that in the east the best route, for safety, would be the one farthest from the Canadian line. In the west I am disposed to favor the route which reaches the Mississippi most directly from Chicago."



Senator John M. Thurston.

protect the city of New Orleans were three times as high as they used to be; but the river was brimming, and I saw the water trickling in over the floor of a house at the end of the levee, so they had to get sandbags and protect it from without. I could not undertake to propose or approve of any new scheme of

improvement for the river, but certainly the present system is a failure." Mr. Thurston has eminent authority for his advocacy of the canal system. John C. Calhoun in 1845 presided over a waterways convention which declared that "the project of connecting the Mississippi river with the lakes of the North by a canal, and this with the Atlantic ocean, is a measure worthy of the enlightened consideration of congress."

"The consequences" at the present time Mr. Thurston estimates at \$80,000,000 a year—that is, possibly two-fifths of the present cost of running the whole government. "The Hennepin canal project received serious consideration several times at the hands of congress. More than ten years ago the act of congress offered to the government the \$3,000,000 state canal between Lake Michigan and the Illinois river (in condition that it should be widened and connected by way of the Illinois river with the Mississippi. The distance from Hennepin to the Mississippi by the proposed canal was sixty-four miles, while by the route through the Illinois the same point on the Mississippi was 663 miles away. But congress, after having elaborate surveys and estimates made, let the water trickling in over the floor of a house at the end of the levee, so they had to get sandbags and protect it from without. I could not undertake to propose or approve of any new scheme of

"BEHIND THE SCENES" IN A GREAT HOTEL

It is pretty well known that the new Waldorf-Astoria hotel in New York is the biggest and most expensive hostelry in the world. That which can be seen from the front of the hotel by the guests has been described more or less, but little is known of the marvelous and stupendous organization of human and mechanical forces "behind the scenes."

The "help" of the Waldorf-Astoria numbers between 1,300 and 1,400. The pay-roll aggregates not far from \$50,000 a month, or \$600,000 a year. This does not, however, represent the total outlay for help, since every employee is fed on the premises three times a day, food of first quality, especially cooked, being furnished. Terrapin, crane, champagne and the like are not included, but the beef is as prime, the bread as light, the vegetables as fresh as those furnished to the guests, and there is plenty.

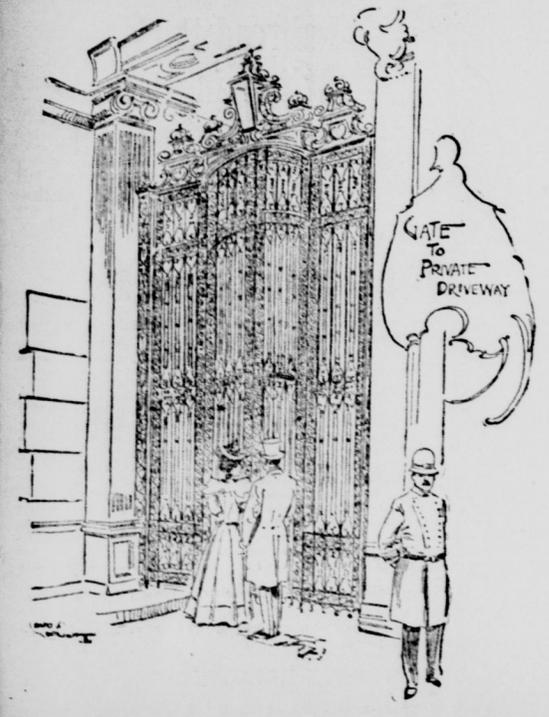
At the lowest estimate the management furnishes 3,500 hearty meals a day, or 135,000 every year, to employes, and the dining rooms of the help are among a number of the basement story. One of these rooms is reserved for the regular waiters, and the fact that there is a corps of waiters waiters is worthy of note. In addition to the minimum of 3,500 a day for the employes, the daily capacity of the kitchen is at least 8,000 meals for guests, that number having been served repeatedly. Bearing this in mind, the statements that the yearly meat bills of the Waldorf-Astoria will probably amount

to \$1,000,000, the pounds of coffee are used daily, that the average daily consumption of tomatoes is 200 pounds and that other items are of proportionate magnitude need not be thought surprising. The "stock" for soups—to take one item in detail—has hitherto been prepared in a sixty-gallon steam boiler, but since the opening of the Astoria this has been found too small, and another soup boiler of 100 gallons capacity has been put in. It is expected that the average daily consumption will nearly equal the combined capacity of both.

In the busiest times the force in the kitchen numbers seventy-five. Horse show week 104 men and women were employed. The chef who captains this big cooking force receives \$5,000 a year, and from that wages grade down to \$25 a month, the rate paid the men who constantly clean the floor and may be termed kitchen laborers. Women are employed only at such work as peeling potatoes, shelling beans and peas and the like-work that men will not do.

Men wash the dishes and are able to cleanse a hundred pieces in less time than Bricket in your kitchen can wash and dry a half dozen of teacups. The dishes are put into a wire basket that hangs from a trolley running on elevated rails. Then the basket is quickly immersed in a tank of intensely hot water mechanically kept in violent swirling motion. All greases and adhering food are removed by this process almost literally as quick as you can wink your eye. When the dishes come out they are perfectly clean. Moreover, they are dry. Every household will understand that this is because the water is so hot.

These are only a few among a hundred novel points about the big kitchen. The part played by electricity's mystic current is still more interesting. It not only carries guests, freight, food and drink from floor to floor, conveys intelligence over telephones, telegraph and plain push button wires and lights the combined houses from sub-cellar to roof, but it ventilates every room and corridor with blowers and exhaust fans. There are nineteen freight and passenger elevators, a dozen or so dumb waiters, nearly 30,000



Incandescent bulbs, telephones by the score and bells by the thousand. The installation is modeled more on the "central" than the "isolated plant" plan and is worked in two divisions, one for light and power and the other for the telephone and signaling systems. The dynamo are of 2,500 horsepower, and the complicated switchboard is fifty feet long. Everything is in duplicate. Engines break down and dynamo burn out without any one "in front" knowing of the trouble save in the practically impossible contingency of everything giving out at the same time. Even then, unless the repairs required two days or more, there would be no break in the electrical service since the dynamo are reinforced by a gigantic storage battery in which a forty-eight hours' supply of energy is constantly kept in reserve. The storage battery current is used also as an equalizer, and that is why the lights of the Astoria never flicker and the elevators never jerk.

This water is taken from the city mains, but is filtered and disinfected before used. The furnaces under the steam boilers are automatically fed, and the stokers work in an atmosphere of perfect comfort. The heating of the house is done with exhaust steam, and the coal consumption therefore is no greater in winter than in summer. While there must be more or less waste about such a great hotel, and stinginess in anything would be fatal, economy is as potent a watchword as organization. Almost but not quite all the buying, from lace curtains to beef and cabbage, is done by the superintendent. Each "chief officer," as department heads are termed, can recommend, but only one besides the superintendent can buy. This single exception is one of the hotel's four stewards. He goes to the big city markets at

5.30 every morning to see what is offered, especially in the way of novelties. He can buy, but only in small quantities. Food supplies are regularly secured from the same dealers, but never from individual producers, as then the quality might vary. Top wholesale prices are paid, and if the quality falls below the best a change is made at once. The managers of the Waldorf-Astoria say they have no time to listen to explanations.

The vast wine cellars, where innumerable jugs are bottled up for future use, the perfect organization of the bell-boy, hall-boy and porter forces, the almost exhaustless amusement resources of the house, the sumptuous furnishings, the noble and public rooms, the almost priceless china, the ballrooms, the banquet halls, the well-furnished "club" floor, where a number of swell social organizations have headquarters, and a hundred other equally interesting features can only be briefly hinted at.

There are six housekeepers, paid from \$8 to \$15 monthly each. All the women "help" sleep in the hotel. All the men sleep out. Fifty-six men do nothing but clean windows at \$5 a month and board. Waiters get \$30 and foot. The highest salary is paid the chief engineer. Contrary to many statements that the Astors are really proprietors, that Proprietor Boldt is only a hired manager and that the hotel is run at a loss, it is positively stated that the business already yields a handsome profit. Mr. Boldt's right-hand man, who superintends all the details of the "back of the house" and much of the front, is Superintendent T. L. Hilliard.

