

WASHINGTON

From our Regular Correspondent.

Washington, D. C. Mar. 2, 1907.

Once more the kaleidoscope has changed on the Panama Canal. What is there about the job that prevents any engineer or reputation from holding it more than a few months? Of course, every man who has been on the job as a chief engineer or a chairman has been a man of international engineering reputation. And all of them have gone from the canal to positions that paid more money. Even at that, the pay they were receiving on the canal work was enormous for government pay, and more by far than will be paid if the work is turned over to the engineer corps. There seems to be some sinister influence behind the inability of the government to keep any good man at work in high position on the canal. Now the resignation of John F. Stevens as chief engineer is announced. He is going to take some big engineering position, the exact nature of which is not yet specified.

This is the more remarkable as the government has just decided against doing the very thing that Mr. Stevens threatened to resign for. It has thrown out all of the bids of the O'iver-Bangs and the McArthur-Gillispie combinations to which Mr. Stevens was said to be opposed, and yet Mr. Stevens resigns from a position of world wide prominence the work of which he seemed so well fitted to do, and where the salary was certainly large enough to enable a man to keep his family in comfort and smoke any brand of cigars he pleased.

There is said to be more than the climate against keeping a competent man on the work. The big railroad interests of the country are loth to see the canal pushed to completion, and there are all the huge corporate interests of the country bound up in the railroad opposition. It is more than possible that there is some connection between the covert opposition to the canal and the fact that every able engineer gets offered a better job as soon as he gets settled in the canal saddle.

Now it appears there is to be another scheme tried for the handling of the work. The Army Engineer-Corps is to be drafted on the work. Maj. Geo. W. Goethals, assisted by Maj. Galliard and Maj. Seibert, are to be put on the work. It has not yet been announced whether these officers are to get anything for the canal appointment beyond their regular service pay. If the government does as it frequently does when it has the chance, the law will be so strictly construed as to prevent their receiving additional compensation. But there is one thing to be said, and that is that the officers of the engineer corps are among the most skillful engineers in the world. They are loyal, and with the single exception on record of Capt. Oberlin Carter, they are strictly honest. Even in this case, the people of Savannah today say that the work he did on the harbor improvements there was strictly first class, and there are many who refuse to believe that he was crooked, despite the fact that he went to jail for his part in the job.

However, the officers of the engineer corps have been put in charge of the canal work. It is highly improbable that any of them will resign, and their position is almost a guarantee that the government will get the work done well and honestly. Some of the work probably will be done by contract. But there is no question that it will get done, for the canal has gone too far for the genius of the American people ever to allow it to be a failure.

There is already a rattling of dry bones in the Postoffice on the eve of a change in the administration from Geo. B. Cortelyou to Geo.

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von L. Myer as Postmaster General. Second Assistant Postmaster General Shallenberger, he in charge of the railway mail service, has already resigned, and his place has been given to former representative McCleary of Minnesota, whose term in Congress expires this year. Third Assistant Postmaster General Madden has also resigned, and no successor has yet been named. Without saving anything against Mr. Shallenberger, who for aught I know to the contrary may be a very estimable gentleman, it will not be a bad thing if the whole of the railway mail division of the Postoffice is given a good house cleaning. This division was not touched in the recent post office scandals, and it is possible that there may be nothing technically criminal about anybody in it. But the fact remains that all the big railroad systems of the country have men in the division who were put there by the roads, some of them regularly retained and paid by the roads each month, simply for the influence they can exercise and the information as to inside office doings they can impart. This is not a declamation against any particular road. If one road gets a mail contract that another is fighting for, it is merely because the successful road had a better man on the job than the unsuccessful one. But the general condition is tolerably scandalous and would be well worth revising.

The trial of Binger Hermann, one time commissioner of the Land Office, is dragging along in the Washington courts and furnishing more or less local sensation. In fact, there was a decided sensation sprung this week when correspondence was read in court, showing that some well meaning farmer out in Oregon had notified the then commissioner of land and timber frauds being committed in his vicinity, about all of which the commissioner of course knew perfectly well before hand. This well intended information was promptly retransmitted to the representatives of the timber company who were committing the frauds, and they swooped down on the informer and threatened to make the country too hot to hold him. Anyone who has known how the Land Office was running for years will not be surprised at this bit of revelation. But it does sound rather bad coming out in court. However, it is a part of the general house cleaning that is going on in the Interior Department particularly, but in most of the departments to some extent. The revelations are unsavory, but it is a case of not being able to sweep without making a dust.

All of the big appropriation bills are now practically in shape and will be passed by the end of the session without difficulty. The general deficiency bill has been smaller than usual but this session will go into history as a billion dollar Congress.

Johnson Must Hang. In the Supreme Court at Philadelphia an opinion was handed down by Justice Brown confirming the conviction of Charles Johnson, in the Court of Bradford county, in the murder of the first degree. The facts were that Maggie B. Johnson was separated from her husband, Bigler Johnson, who was compelled by order of court to pay her \$6 per month. To free Bigler Johnson from the payment of this money, she was murdered on September 18, 1904, and to conceal the crime the house she lived in was burned. For this murder, Bigler Johnson was tried, convicted and hanged. His brother, Chas. Johnson was also tried for participating in the murder and was convicted and also sentenced to be hanged. An appeal was taken to the Supreme Court.

The Wall Street Octopus.

Wall Street! What an alluring sound! What never-faltering hope it brings to the man of little money. Even the 14-year-old office boy who gets a job in an office south of City Hall Park in New York immediately throws out his chest and informs his friends that he is in Wall Street. That narrow canyon of sky-scrapers, extending from Broadway to the East River, over which the majestic spire of Old Trinity stands like a sentinel for those who fill her poor box on Sundays with the money they have won from gambling on week days, is Wall Street. But all the "surrounding country" is really Wall Street. Like a huge octopus with far-reaching tentacles, even the unsophisticated but money-mad youth, the hardened and successful business man, the farmer the manufacturer, the miner, and even the experienced bankers and brokers themselves. They are money-mad. Its in the papers of the millions that are won in Wall Street. They think over the question and decide that its Wall Street for them. No more drudgery. Riches and ease for the rest of their days. "Others become rich," they say, "why not I?" They don't stop to figure that the men who are making all the money are the ones who have the capital to work with. Important interests are at stake in Wall Street. Big financial undertakings are keeping the men of millions busy. Wall Street seldom hurts these men. They may lose at times, but they are not the real sufferers from this craze for gambling. The ones who lose are those who cannot afford to play. So when the big men begin hurling "bombshells" at one another for the control of certain stocks something painfully sad usually happens to the little fellow who jumps between the two firing lines to get some of the spoils. He is caught between two fires. In the excitement of the stock-exchange battle the little fellow is seldom noticed and is usually killed or wounded. When everything is over and he regains his senses, he finds his little pile of life-long savings has not been forgotten when the loot was gathered in by the fighters. He is broke. - Cent Per Cent for February.

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A Failing Industry.

The remarkable growth of the California fruit industry has caused a corresponding marked decline in the exportation of fruit from Italy to the United States. This is especially marked in the trade in lemons and oranges. With the American markets practically closed Italian producers tried to introduce their products into Russia, where there was a good demand for citrus fruits at profitable prices. Italy has a "most favored nation" commercial treaty with Russia, but it has been discovered that Russian customs authorities are imposing the highest rates of duties on productions of Italy. The Italian Government has instructed the Embassy at St. Petersburg to protest, but thus far no relief has come. Should Russian markets be also closed to her Italy will probably lose one of her most prosperous industries.

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Say Shad Will Run Late This Season.

Believe That No Large Catches Can Be Made Before Middle of April.

Shad fishermen of Gloucester, N. J., the shad fishing headquarters, have made no effort thus far to prepare their nets for the coming season, which opens with the gillers the latter part of this month, and on April 1 with the big fisheries, nor will they until they learn what success the fishermen in the Delaware Bay are having.

Indications point to a late season, according to experienced fishermen, who say that the ice will keep the favorite toothsome shad in the bay, and that it will likely be the middle of April before any number of fish are caught.

Many gillers say that they will not fish this season unless there is a good run, as they have lost money the last four years. The big net at Washington Park will not be hauled out of the fish cabin for its annual overhauling until the first of April. No reports have been received from the fishermen who went South three weeks ago.

How Judge Harlan Got a Drink.

This is a story to make our temperance friends sigh. A party of bold and more or less bad commercial travelers were sitting up all night in the smoking compartment of a railroad train from Louisville to Washington. One of them had a bottle, and the bottle contained whiskey. He got the glass from under the water cooler, and they all took a nip. Just as the glass had been returned to its proper place in stode Mr. Justice Harlan of the United States Supreme Court. He had left his private compartment to get a drink—of water. He picked up the glass and sniffed, disdainfully. Turning upon the drummers, and in his most dignified and awful "learned judge," manner he thundered "Who has been using this glass for whiskey?" Somewhat shamefacedly a drummer from Pittsburg spoke up: "I am the culprit, Judge." The justice bent his eagle eye upon him, looked through and through, approached and in his most authoritative voice asked a second question: "And why are you hiding the bottle?" The bottle was found and when the judge went back to his own apartments the glass smelled just like it did when he entered the smoker. - Ex.

February Was Coldest in Years.

The February just closed was certainly the coldest experienced for some years, contrasting strongly with the earlier part of the winter when it was feared there would be no ice. What the month of March, which has just begun, is going to be is a matter of interest. R. E. Demain, the Harrisburg weather man, during an observation of eighteen years, has noted that the month has maintained a normal temperature of thirty-nine degrees and has had an average of eight clear days, with nine partly cloudy and fourteen cloudy.

The warmest March was in 1903 when the mercury averaged forty-seven degrees. In 1896 the average on the other hand dropped down to thirty-three degrees. The warmest March day was the twenty-ninth when the mercury rose up to seventy-nine and the coldest day, March 18, 1900, when five above zero was recorded.

Forty Miles an Hour.

To limit the average speed of railroad passenger trains to forty miles an hour and have two engineers in the cab of "through trains" are the objects of a bill which Representative Blaklee, of Mauch Chunk, will introduce at Harrisburg.

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PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD. LACKAWANNA RAILROAD.

SCHEDULE IN EFFECT FEBRUARY 25, 1906. Table with columns for Stations, A.M., P.M., and F.M. for various routes including Northumberland, York, and Harrisburg.

PHILADELPHIA & READING RAILWAY.

Table with columns for Stations, A.M., P.M., and F.M. for routes including Schuylkill, Berks, and Lancaster.

Bloomsburg & Sullivan Railroad.

Table with columns for Stations, A.M., P.M., and F.M. for routes including Northward and Southward directions.

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