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**FROM OCEAN TO OCEAN.**

PROJECT FOR FREIGHT TRAFFIC ACROSS CENTRAL AMERICA.

The Inter-oceanic Ship Railway Scheme of Capt. Eads Which is Just Now Engaging the Attention of Congress—Steamships to Be Carried Over the Land.

WASHINGTON, March 30.—The problem of how best to transport vessels across Central America seems to be as far from settlement as ever. De Lesseps' canal project is being prosecuted as rapidly as the climate and nature of the work will permit, and capable engineers here claim it will still require a quarter century before it is complete, providing funds are supplied steadily and no further obstacles are encountered. Its estimated cost was originally about \$150,000,000.

The Nicaragua canal scheme is the next project to be considered, but it has only just the introductory stage of having been surveyed and estimated upon. It is to be a lifting lock canal, containing about eighteen large locks. A government commission estimated the cost of constructing this canal at \$1,000,000.

The youngest of the transisthmian schemes is still only on paper, but it promises to be the liveliest of the lot. It is the inter-oceanic railway plan projected by Capt. Eads, of jolly fame.

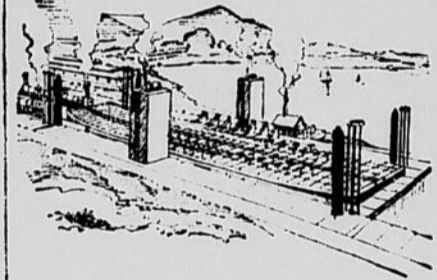


A STEAMER ON THE PROPOSED RAILWAY.

This scheme is just now attracting the attention of congress, and has been reported on favorably by the committee having the matter under investigation. Herewith are presented sketches of the means proposed to be used and the reader can be his own judge in regard to the feasibility of the plan.

Its projectors claim that it is simply a combination of the dry dock and marine railway now in use in shipyards. At the terminals of this proposed railway are to be constructed pontoons or dry docks, with sufficient buoyancy, when filled with air, to sustain the weight of the largest steamer afloat.

These drydocks will be similar to those in use only that they will have a cradle supported by some 500 carwheels, and these in turn rest on three tracks laid on the pontoon. When the pontoon is sunk the vessel floats over this cradle, the water is pumped out of the pontoon until the vessel is raised completely out of the water. The bearings on which the vessel rests are then adjusted, after which several powerful locomotives are attached to the cradle and it and its novel freight is drawn some 140 miles over a triple track railroad whose summit is about 750 feet above the sea level from which the railroad begins and ends. An illustration shows a steamer in transit.



THE PROPOSED DRY DOCK AND CRADLE.

The company supporting Capt. Eads in this scheme contains some of the most practical men in the country. They seem to be thoroughly in earnest.

They have secured a concession from the Mexican government which extends over a period of ninety-nine years from 1881. It authorizes the construction of this railway, guarantees protection to the property of the company and besides grants them 1,000,000 acres of public land. On the whole, the scheme is an enchanting one and fully equal to any of Jules Verne's flights of fancy.

PERRY BARTON.

Speaking in Congress.

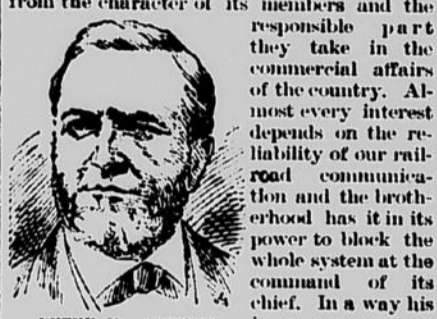
The most nervous moment for a new member of congress is just before he is to make a speech. Many of the old members, even, are seized with "stage fright." The idea that the official reporters have ears for the whole country gives every speaker an uncomfortable large audience. Each man has his peculiar way of going about it. You can't tell when Randall or Morrison are going to speak until they are pretty well on toward their remarks. Morrison always stands for a moment half way down the second aisle on the Democratic side, with hands on the desks on either side. Then he speaks with deliberation, always taking two or three steps toward the speaker when much in earnest. He is always soon through. Randall always speaks from behind his own desk, and makes no preliminary movement. Hewitt is probably the only other who speaks entirely without warning. He goes off like powder—all in an instant. Some members load their desks for a speech; some lead themselves. Some times three or four desks give warning of speeches. They are piled up with Congressional Records, revised statutes, official reports, newspaper clippings, and on top of all huge rolls of manuscript. These are always threatening.

Some members of experience put all this material inside their desks, and look very innocent, as if they were not going to say much. Then they take a little at a time. There is a great difference in the bearing of a man when he is loaded with a speech. Butterworth, of Ohio, is one of those who limbers up to a speech. For a few moments before he begins he seems to be engaged in unlacing himself and limbering his joints, as an athlete who is about to make a wonderful leap. He

crouches low in his desk and waits his chance. His face brightens up, the part gets out of his hair, and one lock falls down on his forehead. He stretches out his arms and legs, works his shoulders to see that every joint is free, and when he gets up to speak he is like a willow. Some members walk two or three times past the speaker's desk before they try to catch his eye. Some stand up in their places, clear their throats several times, pull up their sleeves, button their cuffs, feel their tie, open and shut their desks two or three times, and then walk down the aisle a little way and say, "Mr. Speaker." Some sit and rub their hands. Others do nothing in particular, but you can tell they are going to speak by the nervous glances they throw up at the speaker. —Washington Star.

With Power as Great as the President.

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers was organized in 1863 as a benevolent society by a few engineers. Since then it has grown to be one of the most powerful, as well as one of the most intelligent of labor organizations in the country. Its intelligence and power comes from the character of its members and the responsible part they take in the commercial affairs of the country. Almost every interest depends on the reliability of our railroad communication and the brotherhood has it in its power to block the whole system at the command of its chief. In a way his is a power over business affairs even greater than the president himself. But from the past course of the grand chief of the brotherhood, Mr. Peter M. Arthur, of Cleveland, O., little danger may be feared of his misusing his authority. By a wise rule of this organization the engineers of a railroad who consider themselves imposed upon cannot strike without first submitting their grievances to him. These he coolly and deliberately examines and if, in his judgment, the difficulty cannot be settled in any other way, he gives the order for a strike; otherwise no strike can take place.



PETER M. ARTHUR.

A Celebrated Humorist's Ugliness. In and out of season I know Bill Nye. He is the homeliest man in seven states. Not many months ago Bill and I and another went on a trip west together. William was lecturing. The more I traveled with him and saw him in the primitive state, the more I became convinced of his ugliness. I became really ashamed of him. At the hotels where we stopped Bill's homeliness actually took away my appetite. His face will stop the hands of a clock any day. Yet with all these strongly developed physical phenomena Bill is vain, positively vain, and loves to pose before the ladies. He does it, too, with tact and diplomacy, that wins admiration and makes the fair creatures forget that he has a face. Nye is bald. He is painfully bald. Out of one hundred bald heads his would be the man you would pick as the mark for particular baldness. He is tall and loose jointed, and wherever he goes he is attired in a claw-hammer coat. He stands with his hands behind his and his toes turned in. At Waukegan, Wis., his family tailor resides. I didn't know that he had a game eye until recently. He is totally blind in his left eye and has a cast in it. His full name is Edgar William Nye. He knows how to talk sweetly and sprightly to ladies, and it goes without saying that he is very popular, not only with them, but with men. —Eugene Field.

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