

The Dalles Daily Chronicle.

The only Republican Daily Newspaper in Wasco County.

EASTERN OFFICE—230 to 234 Temple Court, N. Y. City. E. KATZ, Agent.

SATURDAY, - - - MAY 1, 1897

THE RESERVOIR SYSTEM.

Colonel Charles Ellett, a distinguished American engineer, suggests that instead of levees along the Mississippi, a series of storage reservoirs be provided by damming the tributaries of that stream. This would not only provide against excessive floods, but would, by discharging the surplus water during periods of drought, prove of inestimable benefit.

The theory is a good one, but the question of its practicability is a different matter. It hardly seems possible that natural reservoirs can be found; that is, places where quantities of water that would materially affect such a flood as has poured down the Mississippi could be held. When one considers the amount of water that would have to be held in check to decrease the rise in the Mississippi even by one foot, the amount of reservoir space required seems clearly unattainable. Such reservoirs must necessarily be largely natural, such as lakes that can be dammed at their outlets. Otherwise the reservoirs would in flood time become sources of additional danger. But does such a lake area exist? We think not.

Our own grand Columbia furnishes a notable example in this line, and were it not that Nature has provided the most magnificent reservoir system for it, there would be no living anywhere within 300 feet of low water mark. The floods of the Columbia are for this reason of steady rise and fall, extending through two or three months time. And yet, in spite of this protection, unusual circumstances, such as we had in 1894, when after a winter of severe snows came continuous and unusually warm weather, the flood went sweeping up ten feet higher than ever before known. Where it would have gone without Nature's grand reservoir system, no one could even hazard a guess. The Spokane river then swept everything before it, yet to its source the distance was less than 200 miles, and the Coeur d'Alene lake, at low water thirty miles by fifteen, and at high water double that area, had to be filled by the rush of waters from the Coeur d'Alene and St. Joe rivers, while the Spokane was steadily carrying off the flood. The Missoula sent its flood down the same year, but before it passed into the Kootenai it had to fill lake Pend O'Reille, sixty miles long and twenty broad. So with the Columbia itself in the Kootenai and Little Arrow-bow lakes, where an inland sea was created by that flood which could only drain off slowly.

Every tributary of the Columbia is provided with such storage reservoirs as could never be hoped for on the tributaries of the Mississippi, and yet were the lands along its banks as low as those along the Mississippi, the damage would be as great, or greater, for the reason that without the reservoirs the floods would be expected, while with them other precautions would have to be taken.

It is hard to get an idea of the amount of water carried by a stream under flood conditions, but to give an idea of the reservoir that would be required to control the surplus waters of the Columbia, let alone those of the Mississippi, we can make a crude, yet not exaggerated, estimate. Most of us have been down the river to the Cascades and understand what a body of water it is. Yet the extra amount of water carried by the Columbia at its high stage would, if the bed of the Columbia were dry, fill the channel the entire distance in four hours. In other words, it would take a lake forty

miles long, ten miles wide and twenty feet deep to hold the surplus for twenty-four hours.

Some things are too large to be controlled, and the Mississippi seems to be one of them.

Those who expected the Dingley tariff bill was to be allowed to slip through the senate without opposition by the white-metal people were badly mistaken. The CHRONICLE pointed out some time ago that the most dangerous opposition the bill was likely to meet was from the old source of senatorial tie-ups, the free silverites. That opposition has developed. Senator Jones, who holds the balance of power, has joined hands with the Democrats of the finance committee in objecting to reporting the bill as framed direct to the senate. The Republicans are, of course, disappointed, and President McKinley keenly so. The chances are now that the bill will not reach the president before August, and then the brands and ear-marks on it will prevent its author from recognizing it. Mr. Jones may not be as picturesque as Mr. Gorman, but he will prove as great a thorn in the side of President McKinley as the gentleman from Maryland did in Cleveland's case.



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NOTICE.
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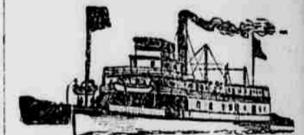
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