

The Great Trans-Mississippi Exposition

ORIGIN AND STORY OF THE EXPOSITION

INCEPTION OF A COLOSSAL ENTERPRISE

Plan is First Proposed to the Transmississippi Congress.

UNANIMOUSLY ENDORSED BY DELEGATES

Omaha Chosen as the Most Central Mid-Continent Location.

RECOGNITION ACCORDED BY CONGRESS

Steps Taken to Secure Participation of Nation and States.

PROSPECTS BRILLIANT FOR SUCCESS

Record in Detail of the Preparations for the Great Exposition to be Held in Omaha in 1898.

The Transmississippi and International Exposition will be held at Omaha, beginning in June and ending in November, 1898.

The original suggestion out of which the exposition assumed tangible form was contained in an editorial which appeared in The Omaha Sunday Bee of November 25, 1895.

This article was as follows:

A TRANSMISSISSIPPI EXPOSITION.

The construction of the transcontinental railroads gave the first powerful impetus to the development of the transmississippi country. Twenty-five years ago the population of the states and territories west of the Mississippi was 6,435,167, and the states and territories west of the Missouri were credited by the national census with a population of 1,492,886.

In 1890 the population of the states and territories west of the Missouri aggregated 5,917,212. In 1890 there were only twenty-one miles of railroad in the country west of the Mississippi. Today the railroad mileage in the same region exceeds 65,000 miles, of which 37,000 miles are boasted by the country west of the Missouri.

The marvelous resources of this vast empire were only in a measure displayed at the World's Columbian exposition. In fact the exhibits of the western states and territories were to a great extent overshadowed by the international exhibits made at Chicago. Of the hundreds of thousands of people who viewed the World's fair comparatively few carried away with them a distinct impression of the productive industries of the transmississippi states. Even people who live in this section and who have contributed to its growth do not grasp their extent and magnitude.

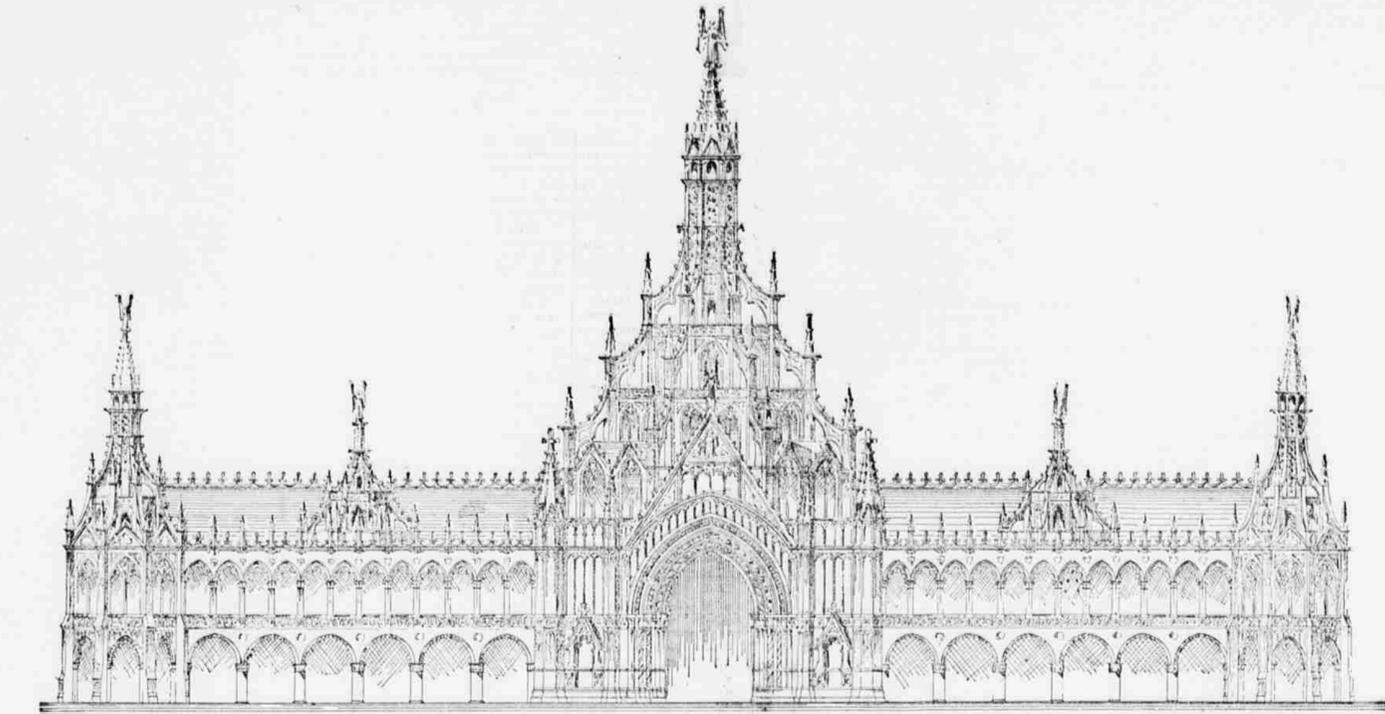
"The inspiration for the Cotton States exposition here in the south Atlanta doubtless lay in the conviction that an interstate exposition would go further toward promoting the development of the south than any other single agency. That the judgment of the projectors of the Cotton States' exposition was eminently sound is attested by the success that has attended this great undertaking as regards both the number and variety of the exhibits and the financial management of the venture. Not only have the people of the cotton states displayed commendable zeal in contributing toward its success with their displays, but several of the Atlantic states, notably New York and Pennsylvania, are creditably represented. The Atlanta exposition has drawn hundreds of thousands of visitors from every section of the country and will be the agency by which a vast amount of the capital will be transplanted into the south.

IMPETUS TO THE WEST.

"What has been accomplished for the south by the Atlanta exposition can be accomplished for the west by a Transmississippi Exposition. With a population of 15,000,000 to draw on and a country prolific in material wealth, a Transmississippi Exposition would be an assured success from its very inception. Such an exposition would give the impetus to the westward trend of population and capital for which the people of this section have been striving. It would make known to all the world the capabilities of the great west and revive activity in every branch of industry and production.

"The Transmississippi congress, which convenes in this city during the present week, is the proper body to take the initiative in formulating the plan for a Transmississippi Exposition. Its recommendation in this matter would have great weight with both the state and national legislatures. Without disparaging any other city ambitious to secure the location of such an interstate exposition, the Bee believes that the claims of Omaha are far superior to those of all other transmississippi points. Its location in the heart of the continent, midway between New York and San Francisco, makes it alike accessible to people east and west. Its railroad facilities in every direction are as perfect as those of any city in the Mississippi valley north of St. Louis. It is the center of the great agricultural belt and within a day's reach by rail of the mining region of Colorado, Wyoming and South Dakota, and within two days' reach of the great mining states west of the Rockies. Omaha is as near to the Puget sound country as is St. Paul, and nearer by 500 miles to San Francisco and southern California.

"It is hardly necessary to add that what ever is required of Omaha or pledged for



Proposed "Silver Palace" for Central Feature of Eldorado.

The most imposing feature of the exposition of 1898 is to be the mineral exhibit. It is proposed to set apart a portion of the grounds for this purpose under the designation of Eldorado, in which a silver palace is to be the central structure. The accompanying illustration is a sketch made by Mr. S. S. Beman of Chicago, one of the architects of the World's Fair buildings. The building, as proposed, is to be about 450 feet square, and its title, "Silver Palace," signifies the character of the exhibit to be made in it. It is to be built of metal and silver plated.

It seems very appropriate to select a highly ornate Gothic style of architecture for this building, as this style lends itself readily, with its pinnacles, arches, flying buttresses and graceful and delicate forms, to the idea usually associated with silver art work. Milan cathedral has been referred to by a poet as "Frozen Music," and the sentiment is fully justified by the exquisite grace and lace-like effect of its forest of pinnacles, flying buttresses and statuary. It is from this architectural fountain that the inspiration for the Silver Palace design was drawn.

If one can picture in his mind the fairy-like effect of silvered pinnacles, crockets and points presenting a forest of spires to the silver moon or the golden sun for their reflecting and dancing scintillations, a faint idea of the character and novelty of the possibilities of this beautiful idea can be had. It lies only in the province of the poet to adequately describe the bewitching beauties and glories of this Fairy Palace. Truly the possibilities of effects to be here realized are illimitable.

Generally speaking the plan of the building may be described as a perfect square, surrounded by open galleries and loggias at each story similar to the Venetian palaces. The corners are marked by octagonal towers, terminating with spires and pinnacles. These lower towers will each be 140 feet high.

The crowning glory of the palace will be the central lantern or spire, which will be 250 feet high and octagonal in form, and 100 feet in diameter. This lantern is located in the center of the palace, and is to be roofed with glass. Wide avenues will traverse the floor, at the intersection of which will be placed this lantern, access to which will be had by means of elevators. These avenues will be lofty and beautiful in their cathedral-like proportions and lightness. They are to be covered with glass. In the center of each of the four square courts will be a lantern, or dome covered with glass.

The possibilities of the electrical illuminations are inexhaustible, and colored and flickering lights may top the pinnacles and illuminate the crockets, and outline the graceful curves of the flying buttresses. It is proposed to house the various silver interests in this palace fully illustrating the silver idea from the mining and smelting to the illimitable ramifications of the arts, the industries and finance.

Omaha to make the Transmississippi Exposition a success, the business men of this city will carry out to the letter."

CONSIDERED BY DELEGATES.

This article appeared in The Bee at a time when the city was entertaining the delegates in attendance upon the session of the Transmississippi Commercial congress. For a long time previous to this an indefinite conception of a plan for a permanent mid-continent fair and exposition had existed in the mind of Edward Rosewater, the editor of The Bee. This idea had been discussed by Mr. Rosewater with prominent citizens and it was concluded that the opportunity offered by the Transmississippi congress should be taken advantage of and an effort made to secure the endorsement of the congress to the proposed plan.

The matter was laid before the delegates to the congress and it instantly met with favor. Wednesday, November 27, Hon. W. J. Bryan, the president of the congress, left the chair and asked unanimous consent to introduce the following resolution:

Resolved, That an exposition of all the products, industries and civilization of all the states west of the Mississippi river, made at some central gateway where the world can behold the wonderful capabilities of these great wealth-producing states, would be of great value, not only to the transmississippi states, but to all the home-seekers in the world; therefore,

Resolved, That the United States congress be requested to take such steps as may be necessary to hold a transmississippi exposition at Omaha during the months of August, September and October, 1898, and that the representatives of such states and territories in congress be requested to favor such an appropriation as is usual in such cases to assist in carrying out this enterprise.

RECEIVED WITH APPLAUSE.

The reading of the resolution was listened to with marked attention and the conclusion was followed by a burst of applause. Mr. Bryan briefly recounted the benefits which would accrue to the west by reason of the exposition and indicated the numerous reasons why Omaha was the most favorable location. Colonel John Doniphan of St. Joseph, Mo., made a stirring speech in favor of the resolution in which he eloquently portrayed the effect the enterprise would have in calling attention to the boundless possibilities of the great west and in building up its interests. He was followed by H. G. Whitmore of St. Louis, George C. Cannon of Utah and Howell Jones of Kansas. Not a voice was raised against the resolution, and when it was adopted by a rising vote the delegates united in a volley of cheers and applause that continued for several minutes.

Nothing could be more gratifying than the enthusiastic unanimity with which the project had been approved by the transmississippi delegates, and with this favorable beginning the citizens of Omaha were encouraged to go forward. The Transmississippi and International Exposition association was formally organized at a meeting held at the Commercial club rooms on the evening of January 18. Z. T. Lindsey was made chairman and Judge L. H. Bradley presented the articles of incorporation which had been previously drawn up. They fixed the capital stock at \$1,000,000 in shares of \$10 each and the association was authorized to transact business as soon as \$10,000 had been subscribed. A board of eleven directors was provided for and also twenty-five vice presidents, of whom one should be from Omaha and one from each of the twenty-four transmississippi states.

ORIGINAL STOCK SUBSCRIBERS.

On the suggestion of Mr. Rosewater, who

contended that ninety days was too short a time in which to hold such an exposition as was contemplated, the articles were amended to provide that the exposition should be opened in June and closed in November, 1898. They were adopted as amended and the necessary subscriptions of stock were immediately taken. These original subscriptions were: E. Rosewater, \$500; W. J. Connell, \$500; J. H. Evans, \$500; Dan Farrell, Jr., \$500; Lee-Clarke-Anderson Hardware company, \$500; W. R. Bennett, \$500; J. E. Markel, \$500; Thompson, Belden & Co., \$500; William Kraus, \$500; Oscar Pichard, \$500; Metz Bros. Brewing company, \$500; Frank H. Hibbard, \$500; Dudley Smith, \$500; Kelley, Stiger & Co., \$500; John A. Weaver, \$400; A. Clemons, \$300; G. S. Ambler, \$300; Z. T. Lindsey, \$250; Lyman Richardson, \$250; C. S. Montgomery, \$200; L. H. Bradley, \$200; I. W. Carpenter, R. W. Richardson, W. H. Robertson, George N. Hicks, M. H. DeLong, Euclid Martin, J. J. Gibson, J. E. Ut, Holin & Thompson, W. C. Bullard, O. C. Holmes, C. S. Hayward and Johnson Bros., \$100 each, and Fisher & Lavie, G. W. Watters, J. A. Wakefield, G. H. Payne, G. A. Rathburn and I. E. Burdick, \$50 each; total, \$10,520.

The stockholders then met and elected the board of directors, consisting of H. A. Thompson, J. E. Markel, J. H. Evans, G. W. Watters, G. H. Payne, C. S. Montgomery, W. R. Bennett, I. W. Carpenter, Dan Farrell, Jr., Dudley Smith and Charles Metz.

The board of directors met at the Millard hotel on the following Monday and elected as officers G. W. Watters, president; J. E. Markel, vice president; John A. Wakefield, secretary; Herman Kountze, treasurer.

The next step confronting the promoters of the enterprise was the necessity of securing congressional recognition. A number of usually public spirited citizens were disposed to regard the whole thing as visionary, and they said Omaha could not hope to carry the matter to a successful issue until after a bill making an appropriation had actually passed congress and received the signature of the president. The supporters of the exposition conceded the difficulty of getting an appropriation through congress in a season of great financial depression and economy, but they expressed the belief that it could be accomplished by united and continued effort, and events have justified their confidence.

BILL BEFORE CONGRESS.

Previous to this work of preliminary organization Senator William V. Allen, who has been an earnest supporter of the exposition project, had introduced a bill in the national senate granting the exposition recognition by the national government, providing for the admission of foreign exhibits free of duty and pledging the United States government to expend not less than \$250,000 for a government exhibit from the executive departments, the Smithsonian institute, the United States Fish commission and the National museum of such articles and materials as would illustrate the functions and administrative faculty of the government in time of peace and its resources as a war power. A similar bill was introduced in the house by Congressman Mercer. After a stormy passage the senate bill was passed, after the appropriation had been reduced to \$200,000, the amount appropriated for the Atlanta exposition, and a clause had been inserted which provided that the appropriation should only be available when \$250,000 had been raised by the people of Omaha. This bill was signed by the president June 10, 1896.

This action on the part of congress gave an additional impetus to the movement. A grand jubilee celebration was held by the

people living in Omaha and vicinity, at which time it was decided to push the enterprise with redoubled zeal. Public meetings were held and the people put their heads together to evolve a plan to push the exposition to a successful issue. As a result of careful study the articles of incorporation of the exposition association were amended to provide for a board of fifty directors to be elected after shares of stock aggregating \$300,000 should have been subscribed. This amount was \$50,000 more than the limit fixed by congress, and once more the "doubting Thomases" were in evidence. They ridiculed the idea of raising such a large sum during a hotly contested presidential campaign and in the face of great financial depression. These aspersions had no effect upon the supporters of the exposition, however, and aiding committees by the score were appointed. The thoroughness with which these committees did their work was shown when it was announced to the public, early in November, that \$330,000 had been subscribed.

ELECTION OF DIRECTORS.

A meeting of the stockholders to elect fifty directors was called to be held December 1 and this meeting resulted in the election of the following fifty men to serve as directors:

William N. Babcock, general manager of the Union Stock Yards company, South Omaha.

George F. Bidwell, general manager of the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley railway.

Jones L. Brandeis, senior member of the firm of J. L. Brandeis & Sons.

James J. Brown, vice president Omaha Loan and Trust company.

Edward E. Bruce, president of the firm of E. E. Bruce & Co., wholesale druggists.

Isaac Carpenter, president of the Carpenter Paper company, wholesale dealers in paper and stationery.

John A. Creighton, capitalist, vice president First National bank.

Edward Dickinson, general manager of the Union Pacific railway.

John H. Evans, president of the National Bank of Commerce, president of the City Steam laundry.

Dan Farrell, Jr., senior member of the firm of Farrell & Co., syrup refiners.

Frank H. Hibbard, one of the representative farmers of Douglas county.

Gilbert M. Hitchcock, president of the World Publishing company and editor of the Omaha World-Herald.

the Burlington & Missouri River railroad.

Jacob E. Markel, proprietor of the Millard hotel.

Charles Metz, general manager of the Metz Bros. Brewing company.

J. H. Millard, president of the Omaha National bank.

C. S. Montgomery, senior member of the firm of Montgomery & Hall, attorneys-at-law.

Frank Murphy, president Merchants' National bank, president of the Omaha Street Railway company and the Omaha Gas Manufacturing company.

Alfred H. Noyes, manager for the G. H. Hammond Packing company, South Omaha.

George H. Payne, president of the Fidelity Trust company.

William A. Paxton, president of the firm of Paxton & Gallagher, wholesale grocers, and president of the Paxton & Vierling Iron works.

Edwin C. Price, purchasing agent for Swift & Co., meat packers, South Omaha.

Allen T. Rector, treasurer of the Rector-Wilhelm company, wholesale dealers in hardware.

Abraham L. Reed, president of the Byron Reed company, dealers in real estate.

Edward Rosewater, president of The Bee Publishing company, The Bee Building company, and editor of The Omaha Bee.

Alvin Saunders, president of the Omaha Real Estate and Trust company.

Arthur C. Smith, member of the firm of M. E. Smith & Co., wholesale dealers in dry goods.

Dudley Smith, general manager of the Steele-Smith Grocery company, wholesalers.

Henry A. Thompson, member of the firm of Thompson, Belden & Co., retail dealers in dry goods.

Gurdon W. Watters, vice president of the Union National bank.

John L. Webster, attorney-at-law.

have responded and the vice presidents named are as follows:

Iowa, Hon. George F. Wright, Council Bluffs; South Dakota, Hon. Thomas H. Wells, Hot Springs; Nebraska, Hon. William Neville, North Platte; Missouri, Hon. John Doniphan, St. Joseph; Kansas, Hon. C. A. Fellows, Topeka; Arizona, Hon. Charles R. Drake, Tucson; California, Hon. George W. Parsons, Los Angeles; Texas, Hon. Gus R. Merchoffer, Galveston; Oklahoma, Hon. Eugene Wallace, Oklahoma City; Idaho, Hon. B. P. Shewan, Payette; Nevada, Hon. William J. Westerfield, Reno; Utah, Hon. Lewis W. Shurtliff, Ogden City; Colorado, Hon. Henry P. Steele, Denver; New Mexico, Hon. L. Bradford Prince, Santa Fe; Oregon, Hon. B. S. Cook, Salem; Alaska, Governor James S. G. Shockey, Sitka.

The subscription list having passed the \$300,000 mark, the officers of the association were instructed to notify the Treasury department that the conditions in the act of congress making provision for a government exhibit had been complied with. A certificate was accordingly prepared, setting forth that bona fide subscriptions to stock had been made by solvent persons, firms and corporations to the amount of \$320,000. The document was passed on by the secretary of the treasury and the secretary of state promptly took steps to invite foreign nations to participate with the government in the international exposition.

CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE AID.

About this time a bill was introduced in congress by Congressman Mercer which amended the former act and provided for an appropriation of \$200,000 for a building for the government exhibit and an additional appropriation of \$300,000 for the transportation and proper arrangement of the exhibit. This measure is now before congress and many of the senators and congressmen representing the transmississippi states have pledged their support to the bill, so that its ultimate passage at this session of congress may be considered as assured.

In the meantime the promoters of the exposition have established a new mark and have determined to increase the stock subscription list to \$1,000,000, the limit authorized by the articles of incorporation.

There are enough subscriptions now in sight to increase the list to nearly \$600,000, and great efforts are to be put forth at once to increase the amount to the limit. In view of the comparative ease with which the first half-million was raised no great difficulty is anticipated in doubling the amount.

The legislatures of many of the transmississippi states are now in session and have recommended liberal appropriations for the purpose of enabling their states to make creditable exhibits.

The legislatures of but two states met in 1895—Iowa and Louisiana. The Iowa legislature made an appropriation of \$100,000 for preliminary work and promises were made of a liberal additional appropriation to be made at the special session of the legislature now in progress.

The Louisiana legislature was not approached until the time for introducing bills had passed, but the proper authorities were instructed by resolution to prepare a creditable exhibit and a liberal appropriation for that purpose was pledged.

Bills are being prepared by friends and supporters of the exposition in all of the transmississippi states providing for state exhibits, and these will be introduced in due time. On January 13 a bill was introduced by Hon. Dudley Smith in the house of representatives of the Nebraska legislature, appropriating \$350,000 for the exposition. On January 14 a bill was introduced in the Illinois legislature for an appropriation of \$100,000 for an exhibit by that state.

RESOURCES OF TRANSMISSISSIPPI REGION

STATES REPRESENTED IN THE EXPOSITION

Hidden Wealth Yet to Be Brought Into the World's Markets.

VAST COUNTRY BUT PARTLY DEVELOPED

Character of the Products that Will Be Exhibited.

UNEXCELLED INDUCEMENTS FOR SETTLERS

What the Transmississippi Exposition Will Stand For.

LATEST AND MOST RELIABLE STATISTICS

Descriptive Account of the Wealth and Resources of the Great Transmississippi States and Territories.

The nineteenth century, and more especially the latter half of it, has witnessed a marvelous development of material resources and colossal increase in wealth in the United States. This unparalleled material progress is most notable in that portion of the continent lying west of the Mississippi. In this domain agriculture finds a most prolific soil, which, when fully developed, can feed the population of the world, while upon its cattle ranges countless herds are nurtured on natural grasses. The rice plantations of the gulf states, the wheat fields of Minnesota and the Dakotas, and the corn belt of the Missouri valley, furnish abundance for the teeming millions. The granite-ribbed mountains of Missouri, Wyoming and Colorado vie with Pennsylvania in deposits of coal and iron, which are destined at no distant day to shift the center of industrial production from the Alleghenies to the Rockies. The petroleum fields of Wyoming will supplant the oil fields of Ohio. And who can compute the mineral wealth of the transmississippi states, with their mountains of gold and silver and inexhaustible deposits of copper, lead, zinc and other valuable products of the mine? All these natural products of the mountain, forest, orchard and farm, together with the handwork of the artisan and artist, and the educational advancement made by the people of the west, are to be placed before the world in the great Transmississippi and International Exposition of 1898.

From this region comes nearly all the gold and silver produced in the United States, and nearly every mineral known to commerce is dug from its mountains. Between the Mississippi river and the Rocky mountains lies the granary of America. Cereals of almost every description are produced in great abundance. The production of sugar in the United States is confined almost exclusively to the states of Louisiana, Nebraska, Utah and California. The cotton of Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Indian territory constitutes one-half of the cotton raised in the United States, and its annual value is computed to be \$161,000,000. The timber of the Pacific coast states, Missouri, Arkansas, Minnesota and Texas is almost limitless in extent and variety.

This magnificent empire, with its boundless resources, which are scarcely begun to be developed, already has 47,000,000 acres under cultivation, with agricultural products valued at \$933,331,920 a year.

THE GREAT CORN BELT.

The states and territories west of the Mississippi contain the great wheat and corn belts, which in 1895 are credited with raising 1,100,000,000 bushels of corn, valued at \$235,000,000, and 390,000,000 bushels of wheat, valued at \$335,000,000. The transmississippi hay crop for 1895 aggregated 27,000,000 tons, valued at \$150,000,000. The Transmississippi country is par excellence the great cattle raising ground of America.

Perhaps the most striking proof of the wealth and resources of the country west of the Mississippi is afforded by the statistics of live stock. The number of horses and mules in the states and territories west of the Mississippi was computed to be 8,455,809, and their value is estimated at \$42,639,621. The number of cattle is computed 30,370,616, and their value is estimated to be \$461,993,265. The number of sheep and hogs is computed at 50,811,590, and their value \$168,158,975. In other words, the aggregate value of the live stock and horses west of the Mississippi in round numbers is \$1,091,890,962.

The mineral wealth of the transmississippi states includes practically all the precious metals and the bulk of other valuable minerals produced in the United States. The annual value of the gold and silver mined in the transmississippi states exceeds \$100,000,000. The production of copper and other minerals exceeds in value the gold and silver produced. The vast coal beds which for the most part are lying dormant produce an aggregate of 20,000,000 tons a year, valued at from \$25,000,000 to \$30,000,000.

The country west of the Mississippi is rapidly extending its manufacturing capacity. According to the most conservative estimates, the number of operatives in mills and factories exceeds 200,000, earning in wages over \$75,000,000 a year. The value of the product of these factories and mills is computed at \$1,367,835,987.

With an assessed valuation of real and personal property aggregating over \$6,000,000,000, which represents less than one-fourth of actual property values, the lowest estimate