

# ASK ROOSEVELT FOR PERMANENT RIGHTS

## Subway Officials Seek President's Influence to Secure Small Portion of Land Under Post Office.

WE have arranged to build the Broadway section of the Brooklyn tunnel so far below the surface that the pipes and conduits will not have to be shifted except in isolated instances," said Chief Engineer William Barclay Parsons last week, in answer to a question about the difficulties he expected in the work below the Post Office. "We'll simply have to support these conduits temporarily. As regards trouble in holding up high buildings, there is nothing extraordinary to be done. I'd rather have a dozen Trinity Church steeples to take care of than one NEW YORK TIMES Building."

Mr. Parsons explained that the most difficult problem in tunneling under a skyscraper had been experienced below THE NEW YORK TIMES Building, at Spruce Street and Park Row, where the sub-contractors for the City Hall loop had to put in steel supports to take the place of the stone they extracted from the foundations. Sewer changes along Broadway, according to Mr. Parsons, will not give much trouble. There are only two branch drains to be lowered, one of them running west in Fulton Street and the other east under Malden Lane. Under certain blocks in Broadway a single sewer line now runs down the centre of the street. This is to be replaced by two lines, one on each side, just as they replaced the trunk line of Elm Street by two smaller ones. Below Rector Street, however, Broadway has no sewers at all.

"There never was much reason to build sewers under Broadway," explained the engineer, "for that thoroughfare has its course along a ridge. It was easier for the buildings, many of which stretched through to the parallel streets, to be drained into those streets, which are on a lower level than Broadway."

Mr. Parsons and the other officials who are interested in the pipe gallery project have not relaxed their efforts to secure the galleries, at least for lower Broadway. President Cantor's committee of experts is still at work on plans. It is hoped that the proper legislative sanction will be forthcoming in time to land the Broadway conduits in chambers where they may be repaired, moved, or renewed without the surface disturbances which have hitherto marked even the slightest alterations in underground pipe lines everywhere in the city.

### FIGHT FOR PERMANENT RIGHTS.

Once more the subway officials fight for permanent rights under a corner of the Post Office is to be made in Washington. Having failed to obtain a lasting grant for the few feet of ground they wanted during the last session of Congress, the Rapid Transit Commissioners are trying to hatch a plan whereby they will be more successful this year.

The condition under which the tunnel builders have torn up part of one vault under the Federal Building is that the Secretary of the Treasury may revoke at any time his permission to use the space. Acting under that temporary permission, they have already torn open the vault wall, filled in the breach, and finished that portion of the subway. As the tunnel stands to-day, the Federal Government owns about a hundred or so cubic feet of it. If some future Secretary of the Treasury should say, "Get out," then the subway's operation company would have to close the line at that place, and the City Hall loop would fall into disuse, at least for a time.

At every recent meeting of the commission this subject has come up for discussion. Edward M. Shepard, counsel for the board, has expressed the opinion that every effort should be made to secure a permanent grant of the ground taken, although, as he said, "There is little likelihood that any Secretary will ever revoke the permit."

Still, he thought a city owning a great tunnel railroad ought not even to take a long chance of future interference, but ought to see that every obstacle, however remote, shall be removed. Engineer Parsons suggested that the New York Senators and Congressmen be asked to try their hands again.

### MEMORIAL TO PRESIDENT.

Mayor Low, after he heard the conditions described, moved that the board send a memorial to President Roosevelt, and the counsel were instructed to draw up such a memorial. They were also told to draw up one for Mayor Low's personal signature, as he said he was willing to make an appeal to the President as the city's representative.

Last year Senators Platt and Depew, Congressman George B. McClellan, and many others tried to get the permanent permit. They introduced bills in Congress; and the bills, in accordance with custom, were referred to the Secretary of the Treasury. The Secretary said he would not favor them. Congress, again following custom, forgot them altogether. Then the Senators and Congressmen talked with the Secretary, but that official was firm. His predecessor had declined the grant, and therefore he would not approve it.

It is argued by the Rapid Transit Commissioners that the Government would not be harmed in the slightest degree by giving up the few feet of land permanently, and that it ought to be especially willing to make the grant, inasmuch as it originally received the site of the Post Office from the city, which now wants just a little of it returned.