

Systematic Selection of Cooks for New Army

Under Leadership of a New York Hotel Proprietor They Are Being Put Through Searching Tests by Competent City Chefs

SOMEBODY once said that the surest way to a man's heart was through his stomach. Seemingly appreciative of this, and greatly desirous of having the men at Yaphank,

L. I., the training cantonment known as Camp Upton, hold it in high esteem and favor, the Government of the United States is straining every effort to assure the coming soldiers of three well-cooked, well-nourishing meals a day. The right-hand man of Uncle Sam in this work is Lucius M. Boomer, Directing Manager of the Hotel McAlpin. He has been appointed Chairman of the district by the National Committee for Furnishing Cooks for the United States Army.

Just as soon as the different Chairmen were advised of the immediate need of furnishing cooks for the cantonments, Mr. Boomer wrote letters to every hotel, restaurant, and club in the city, told them of the dilemma of the Government, and asked them to give up a certain quota of their entire kitchen staff. Not satisfied with this, he called together the Presidents of all cooks' associations of New York. M. Auguste Gay, chef of the Yale Club, and President of the Chefs de Cuisine, presided and told the men that the honor of the profession was at stake, that the crux of the situation was in their hands. He explained at length what an ill-fed army meant, how the health of the soldiers could not be trusted to raw recruits who had never come nearer the kitchen than to inquire whether dinner was ready.

The action of the chefs and their employers can be appreciated when one takes into consideration that the labor situation in the cooking field is extremely below par. More cooks are needed than can be got. But the District Chairman said he would furnish 300 cooks for

Yaphank somehow. According to calculations, the camp is to have 40,000 men, or more than 100 for each cook. In addition, the work of these men will not be cooking alone, but also teaching the recruits assigned to the cook tents. Be it understood that the men who are responding are not the men who are bound for France to cook for the troops there. They are enlisting here only for



Training Army Cooks at Pratt Institute. (By Bain News Service.)

a period of from six to eight weeks for the twofold purpose of starting the initial movement of feeding the great mass of humanity to be stationed at Yaphank and of acting as instructors to the men who are to be chosen for cooking "over there."

While the selection committee has been at work there have been established many schools for army cooks, including one at Pratt Institute, Brooklyn.

Applications sent to the different clubs, hotels, and societies were of two kinds: one asking for cooks of Class A,

men who had held responsible positions, commanding good salaries, and who were capable of speaking enough English to give instruction in their art; the other asking for cooks of Class B, who had held secondary positions and could fry, roast, and make stews, pies, and simple puddings. The pay for the first class is \$125 per month, while that of the second is \$90. Both classes get free board,

present himself before the Examining Board, composed of the best known chefs in the city. They pass upon the qualifications of the men and assign them to either class A or B, as the case demands. The Examining Committee consists of M. Auguste Gay, Henri Ribordi, President of the Société Culinaire Philanthropique; Otto Gentch, President of the International Cooks and Pastry Association; Signor Sormani, President of the Italo-Suisse Cooks' Association; M. La Manna of the Culinary Club, M. Moulin Fernand of the Alimentary Society, and M. Denzier of the Union Helvétique. They have made out a printed list of questions, as follows:

- Are you a cook?
- Do you speak English?
- Have you had any experience in army cooking?
- Where have you been employed, where last, how long, and in what capacity?
- Do you know how to cut meat?
- Describe how to make stew, soup, cook roast, pot roast, cook vegetables, cook cereals, puddings, stewed fruit, pies, make coffee.
- Are you competent of taking charge of a group of men?
- Have you had any experience in handling men and how many?

After a man has passed he is assigned for examination by the medical board, which consists of the regular staff physicians assembled at the recruiting office, Thirty-ninth Street and Sixth Avenue. Special attention is paid to the condition of blood and skin, rather than to the physical fitness necessary for ordinary military work. Every effort is made to weed out men who have any signs of contagious or communicable disease. When a candidate passes the medical board he gets a card and is told to hold himself ready for service before the end of the month. The cooks are expected to go to the cantonments several days before the first group of soldiers.