

Luxury Liner's 2000 Guests Huge Catering Task Leaves Chef Unruffled

(Specially Written for the "Radio Record" by Beula Hay.)

WELLINGTON hadn't a chance to go to work with that usual Monday morning feeling last week. Before breakfast, a great white ship sailed into port, and from a thousand hillside windows people craned their necks to catch a glimpse of this great beauty.

In the evening, when the Strathaird sailed away with her 800 tourist passengers, she left in her wake a wave of gay memories which rippled over the business and social life of the capital.

Through the ever-shifting crowds on the wharf I hustled up the gangway with my precious "passport" to see over this glamorous ship.

"I want to see the hostess, please," said I to a young deck steward. "I am very sorry, but there is none," he said, smiling. "Could I direct you to someone else? You'll find an officer at the inquiry bureau."

That was a very sensible suggestion! So along I trotted through a seemingly endless passage that kept on unfolding itself and displaying luxurious bath-rooms. (I couldn't help seeing in, you know, the doors were open a little).

I was told to ask for Major Wall at the inquiry bureau and was quite surprised to find that he wasn't a stout, terse, bewhiskered old gentleman, but a quiet, charming person who obliged by piloting me through the throngs of visitors to the swimming pools, reception rooms, up and down the spacious decks, into the private party room, the ship's store where an extensive range of jewellery was displayed, into the children's delightful caged-in nursery, the dining-rooms and the bar. SOME bar, I should say, for, at the afternoon reception when approximately 800 guests were entertained the "light refreshments" flowed like water.

Visitors who were inspecting the boat were delighted to catch snatches of "Blossom Time," Tauber's glorious talkie, which has not yet been generally released in New Zealand, as they passed through the cinema theatre adjoining the spacious and expensively-furnished library and lounge.

"You are a privileged person to be using the lifts to-day when all these visitors are here," said Major T. B. Wall, as we entered a mirrored lift, and the smart-looking young attendant took us down to the dining saloons. Incidentally, Major Wall is a great sportsman, has travelled extensively, lived in India for many years, and is related to that other well-known sportsman, Sir Frederick Wall.

"Where do the Lascars sleep?" I asked.

"Downstairs, in hammocks."

"Sounds picturesque. Could I see them?"

"Sorry, but it is not possible," said Major Wall.

"Then, could I see the wireless room upstairs? I'm from a radio paper, you know."

"Sorry, but visitors are not allowed," said Major Wall.

"But I'm a reporter. It would make a most interesting story!"

Major Wall laughed, picked up the menu, and said, "I'll take you into the kitchens, where all the nice things are waiting for lunch. Come along, you'll get a more interesting story from the chef than the radio operator."

It was pretty hot behind the scenes in those kitchens, even though the immense ovens were electric. Mr. Valley, the good-natured chef, looking cool and unruffled in his white uniform and tall white hat, smiled, and led the way through pails of peeled carrots, potatoes, and past Lascars seated on benches shelling mountains of peas and broad beans, and oh, the fragrance of mint, parsley, thyme and spices, all around! We entered the butcher's shop (the size of a city butchery) which is refilled with an entire stock of meat, including 70 ducks, chickens, and other such delicacies from the cooler every day. He set the potato-peeling machine in motion which, in a jiffy or so, sent a hundredweight of potatoes whisking around, knocking the skins off themselves. A few minutes later he showed them, perfectly skinned, with only the eyes to be taken out. "We have a machine for mashing the potatoes, too, but the cooks prefer to do it by hand, just as

my wife does," said the chef, as we passed an Indian ladling the cooked potatoes into a novel forcer.

"We use more than a ton of potatoes every day," said the chef. "Eggs? From 2000 to 3000 a day, and we have three bakers making bread all night. Cooks? Thirty-two." The chef led the way into the cake kitchen, and drew out shelf after shelf of scrummy looking delicacies for the afternoon reception, and then opened the coolers and showed cans of whipped cream, jellies, trifles, fruit salads, savouries, and goodness only knows what else. By the time I had glanced at all the labour-saving devices in the way of electrical cream-whipping machines, peeling and slicing ones for fruit and cake, and others too numerous to mention, I scarcely had a wisp of breath left to ask him how many he has to cater for when the ship is full. He said that 1145 is a full list, and they had 1139 when they called at Bombay, so I bowed to him in reverence, and I simply could not understand how he did not get things muddled up for those three big entertainments on board last Monday, when he catered for close on 2000 guests. I am quite certain that old Noah must have had an easier time catering for an ark full of animals.

RICH IN IRON

	0 20 40 60 80	Iron milligrams per kg.
KING OSCAR BRISLING		
Beef		
Eggs		
Graham Bread		
Potatoes		
Milk		

IRON forms the fresh red colour of the blood. King Oscar brisling is rich in iron (look at the diagram)—a rich source, too, of resistance-building vitamin A and sunshine vitamin D. Brisling is the finest of all sardines, and King Oscar is the most delicious of all brisling. Ideal for hikers, picnickers, campers . . . there is no other food so compact and sustaining, or so

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