

lecture, and should not outweigh the absolute written and physical examinations of the men.

"I became primarily interested when on reading the report of the board I found that they had placed a man by the name of Foster as eighth on the list, and had given him a mark of 59. Foster was an enlisted man, who had worked his way up, and had prepared himself to take the examination for a commission. I inquired of the board upon what basis the marking of Foster was made, and learned that they had marked him down on 'aptitude and probable efficiency.' I told the board that this would never do; that Foster had served in the ranks with credit, and had risen above his fellows by earnest attention to his duties, and in ambition. Obviously, I contended, he had demonstrated 'aptitude and probable efficiency' as absolutely as it could be demonstrated—namely, by his past record. Moreover, rejecting his mark on this subject, I found that on his written examination he stood second on the list.

"Coming then, to the cases of three men who failed at the naval academy, I found that they had 'bilged,' as you call it, on some one subject like arithmetic. I took the position that, as they had stood fairly well in other subjects at the academy as candidates for commissions in the marine corps, they probably were better equipped than the graduate of some school who had never drilled in his life and knew nothing of naval training.

"Inasmuch then, as they had passed the written examination, but had been marked down on 'aptitude and probable efficiency' simply because they had 'bilged' from the academy, the marking was not fair. I agreed with the board that it would probably be better not to admit men to commissions in the marine corps who had failed at the academy, but that I contend is a stand that should be taken before men are permitted to take the examination. It is not fair, however, after accepting their applications to 'flunk' them solely on this ground. In other words, I have thrown out the back window the test of 'aptitude and probable efficiency.'

"The real point in this matter is that the question of 'efficiency' or 'adaptability' is merely one of opinion. It is not decided by any examination. It opens the door to selection by a test that is not uniform. There has been criticism in the past, that it has been employed to help applicants known to or favored by public officials or boards. Inasmuch as the opinion of men is open to such diverse influences, it can not be contended that it is a test that is always just or fair. I wish examinations that give equal test to all to govern, and to eliminate all chance and varying opinion. As long as the opinion of one man or three men as to 'efficiency' or 'availability' prevails, there is danger of injustice or favoritism or mistake. If selection is made purely upon written examination, there is no element of personal judgment or favoritism, and no danger of either. I am trying to eliminate all temptation and opportunity to favor any man."

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The experiment of issuing a "Weekly News Letter to Crop Correspondents," the first number of which was issued on August 13, has already proved very successful, judging from the many letters of commendation received from the farmers and press of the country. This "Weekly News Letter" gives the department a medium through which it can give to the man on the land prompt warning as to the best methods of dealing with sudden crop pests, and also for the circulation of practical advice which enables the farmer to take advantage of sudden conditions to improve his crop yield and profit.

Following the abolition of the Crop Reporter, there was a strong demand on the part of many farmers that the department continue to supply them with detailed statistical crop information prepared by the bureau of statistics. To meet this demand the department has inaugurated two new measures through which it is believed the farmers will receive valuable crop data far more quickly and in time for them to apply it to the business operation of their own farms. Beginning in September, a new type of farmers' bulletin to be known as the "Agricultural Outlook" will be issued promptly as occasion warrants during the crop season. This bulletin will consist of from sixteen to twenty-one pages and will supply details of the crop reports by individual states and also will give carefully prepared discussions of general crop conditions in a popular form not requiring special statistical ability for their interpretation. It is realized

that to make these data of highest value to the farmers, the bulletin must be placed in the hands of the farm readers with the least possible delay. The present plan calls for the printing and mailing of this farmers' bulletin within two days after the completion of the crop reports. The first number, in addition to the statistical summaries, will contain articles by specialists on the apple crop situation, the potato situation, and the cotton crop, and also a discussion of hog cholera conditions.

During September an experiment also will be inaugurated with the aim of placing the state crop details in the hands of farmers from ten to seventeen days earlier than is possible through the mails. The department, therefore, will try the experiment of telegraphing the state details to the central weather bureaus in Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, Iowa, Kansas and Texas. The weather officials will then duplicate these telegrams without delay to all the papers in the state. In this way the detailed crop report should be in the hands of the small rural papers, as well as the big dailies, in from ten to eighteen hours after the compilation of the figures in Washington. If the experiment proves successful, it will then be extended to all the states so that the newspapers in each state will have the state crop details very promptly. The cost of telegraphing this information will be only seventy-five cents for each state. This telegraphic distribution is judged to be very important, for the reason that the actual crop conditions in his state is found to be more important to the farmer in marketing his product than the statistics of total crops for the United States heretofore supplied to the press associations for telegraphic distribution.

In the administration of the food and drugs act and the insecticide act, the department has adopted the plan of giving much wider publicity to seizures made and judgments rendered in food, drug, and insecticide cases. As rapidly as decisions are handed down by the courts or seizures actually made, the department issues impartial statements of the facts, penalties, and the reasons for the government's action. These are given broadcast circulation to newspapers and trade papers, through the columns of which the consumer now receives immediate warning of adulterations and misbrandings on the part of the manufacturers.

The administration of the food and drugs act in the past has been largely devoted to the economic side of food protection. Major emphasis heretofore has been placed on the prevention of the adulteration and misbranding of labeled foods, and the regulation of the use of preservatives. It is felt that the food and drugs act can be made a far more effective agency for protecting the health of the people if, in addition to preventing misbranding and misuse of preservatives, it could be extended to regulating the interstate traffic in foods largely unlabeled and shipped commonly in packages open to the air. These foods, if contaminated, can become direct carriers of serious contagious and infectious diseases, and the spread of dangerous bacteria. The department, therefore, has planned a wide extension of its work with foods, to take in the regulation of interstate shipment of dangerous milk, meat, fish, shell-fish, vegetables, and other similar products. Special attention will be given to protecting rural communities which because of their nearness to state lines obtain more or less of their food through interstate commerce. These rural communities, save in the states which extend state health protection to the small villages, commonly have no systematic or efficient health protective systems. The federal authorities, of course, can not extend this rural sanitation service to small towns in the centers of the states, as these towns get comparatively little of their food from across state lines, and federal action is limited to interstate commerce traffic. It is believed, however, that by extending its protection to these border communities the department can set an example and so reduce the death rate as to encourage the states to extend such a health protective system, now largely centralized in the big cities, to the safeguarding of the farmers and other dwellers in the country and small communities from the danger of contaminated food and water, and dangerous sewage disposal methods.

The first step in fixing definite grades for grain, as authorized by the agricultural appropriation act, was begun on August 21, when the department announced the fixing of tentative grades for commercial corn. These new grades class corn by color, percentage of moisture, percentage of damaged corn, percentage

of foreign material, and percentage of badly broken corn. It also grades corn by the degree of acidity, which is the most important factor in determining the soundness of corn and its degree of safety for storage and for shipment. Before finally fixing the grades, the department will hold a formal hearing at which grain producers and shippers will be given an opportunity to discuss the tentative standards suggested.

The department is contemplating the use of moving picture machines as an adjunct to the talks and lectures of its demonstration and extension field workers. During September the department will send out two lecturers with such machines on an experimental trip to determine the actual value of the plan and to discover the best method of using moving pictures in agricultural instructions.

The secretary has issued invitations to state food, dairy and drug inspectors to attend a meeting to be held in Washington about November 15, at which methods of co-operation between the federal authorities and the officials of the several states will be fully discussed.

The department has been giving especial attention to the eradication of the cattle tick in the south. As a result of the co-operative work between the counties, the states, and the federal officials, the department was able to release from quarantine for Texas fever, on September 1st, 9,191 square miles of territory in the states of Texas, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Georgia, and South Carolina. During the year, nearly 30,000 square miles have been released from quarantine. Since the campaign was begun in 1906, 196,395 square miles have been freed from the cattle tick. The department's efforts will now be continued with increased activity in the territory not yet released from quarantine.

THE INTERIOR DEPARTMENT

Responding to the sentiment of service to the masses of the people, sought to be promoted by the present administration, the commissioner of pensions, Hon. G. M. Saltzgeber, has arranged to have the bureau of pensions represented at the national encampment of the Grand Army of the Republic, during the week of the 15th to the 20th of September, and is making elaborate preparations to respond to the numerous inquiries of the old comrades who will be at Chattanooga on that memorable occasion.

Commander-in-Chief of the Grand Army of the Republic Beers writes Mr. Saltzgeber that:

"It is a most excellent idea and one that has never been attempted before. I congratulate you upon having presented a new idea and one which will undoubtedly be received with a great deal of pleasure by all of the comrades."

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Allegations having been made to the department of labor as to the quality and condition of the food served to the immigrants and employees at Ellis Island by the contractors, Secretary Wilson with characteristic zeal immediately ordered a complete investigation of the charges preferred. In order that the investigation might be conducted in a thorough and impartial manner by men not connected with the immigration service at Ellis Island, the secretary detailed as investigators, Assistant Commissioner of Immigration James L. Hughes, of Philadelphia, P. L. Prentiss, inspector in charge, Chicago, and Richard Taylor, immigrant inspector in the field service. The investigating commission is now holding hearings in New York and is making a rigid and complete inquiry into the entire feeding privileges at Ellis Island.

Through the good offices of the department of labor, the differences which have existed since December, 1910, between the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad company and the machinists in the shops on its system, extending from Philadelphia to Chicago and St. Louis, have finally been satisfactorily adjusted. Immediately following the great strike that existed on the Baltimore & Ohio in 1910, efforts were made by the machinists to get a conference with the officials of the road, but without success. In March, 1912, representatives of the machinists met with F. H. Clark, superintendent of construction, and presented a set of agreements which were not satisfactory. In February of the present year negotiations were begun anew, but no satisfactory arrangements could be made. On July 15, 1913, Secretary Wilson of the United States department of labor, through a representative, Mr. John A. Moffitt, tendered the good offices of the department in an endeavor to bring about an amicable adjustment of the existing differences,

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