

# The Work of the President's Cabinet

## INTERIOR DEPARTMENT

Hon. G. M. Saltzgaber, commissioner of pensions, declared that statements being widely published to the effect that certain persons are assailing a recent order of the commissioner of pensions in regard to furnishing proof of the dates of birth of soldiers in connection with claims for pension, is based upon an entire misapprehension of the facts.

There has been no order issued of the character mentioned in such reports. The erroneous statements are based solely on the fact that a circular letter sent to pension claimants names the various ways in which the date of birth may be proved in order to meet the requirements of the law in such matters.

Such circular letter is not now in its important features, but is a modification of that which has been in use ever since the act of May 11, 1912, has been in effect. The modification in such letter is only made solely in the interests of the soldier claimants themselves with a view to aiding them to ascertain the correct date of birth in cases where they find it difficult to secure a public record or Bible record. This consists of a request that a soldier state where and with whom he was living in the year 1850 and the year 1860, in order that if it may become necessary to seek additional information as to his exact age the records of the census bureau for the years 1850 and 1860 may be searched without trouble or expense to the claimant himself to ascertain the age given to the census enumerators at that time, and thus to determine the soldier's present age.

Mr. Saltzgaber states that there is no foundation whatever for the statement that soldiers are required to furnish proofs as to their employment for the ten years preceding 1860, and the only purpose in inquiring as to the soldier's residence in 1850 or 1860 is to aid him in meeting the requirements of the law, which render it absolutely necessary that the date of his birth should be fixed in order that the increased rates of pension may be allowed beginning on the date that he attains the age of sixty-five, seventy and seventy-five respectively.

The necessity of fixing such date is imposed by the acts of congress approved May 11, 1912, and March 4, 1913, and is not the result of any ruling or holding of the bureau of pensions, whose sole duty is to execute the laws as enacted.

The commissioner further states that this order has no application whatever to, nor does it affect the claims of colored soldiers. It goes without saying that ordinarily they were not listed in the census of 1850 or 1860, and no such information is required of them, nor is there any purpose in any manner to discriminate against them. The inferences and insinuations from the article which is widely quoted are entirely wrong and do injustice both to the old soldiers and to the pension bureau, which is doing everything it can under the law in their interest.

## THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

The plan of telegraphing the figures of the crop report for individual states to the central weather bureau in that state and having that bureau duplicate the figures and mail them to state editors has proved so successful that instructions were given to extend the plan to the entire forty-eight states. Under this plan the newspapers and agricultural publications in every state get without delay the monthly crop statistics for their special territory. Heretofore these figures have been printed in the Agricultural Outlook which was mailed from Washington to the several states and in the case of the more distant states in the west did not reach them until after several days' journey in the mails. Under the new plan the figures for a single state are telegraphed, at a cost of about seventy-five cents, to the central weather station of that state and placed in the mails at a central point in that state on the day that the crop figures are completed in Washington. In this way practically every editor gets these figures the next morning or during the next day in time for immediate publication. This information is furnished only to regular publications and is not supplied to individuals by the central stations.

The regular edition of the Agricultural Outlook was extended to twenty-nine pages, and thirteen pages of this publication were devoted

to a serious discussion of the outlook for meat production in the United States. This followed an introduction which made it clear that the present situation need not occasion alarm and that the country is well able to meet present deficiencies which are due largely to important changes in our system of cattle raising. There were carefully prepared papers by specialists on the general meat situation, the need for local markets for live stock, the future meat supply of the United States, and the influence of the average farmer on the meat supply. After pointing out that the number of beef cattle in the country has apparently fallen over 30 per cent while the population has increased, which means a decrease in beef cattle of over fifteen and a half millions, the specialists deal in a practical way with the next steps and subsequent steps to increase the meat supply. The conclusion in general was that the hope of an increased meat supply, in the face of the cutting up of the large ranges into tilled farms, rested with an increase in the production of meat cattle on the farms in the more settled areas. This makes the question of economical feeding of meat cattle, which was interfered with by the increase in the value of corn, an essential feature of the problem. It is pointed out that the methods of feeding dairy cattle are not necessarily profitable in the raising of meat animals. This involves the question of the successful use of large areas of land not now put to pasture. It is also pointed out that the change from the time when the meat raiser had a local market to the present time when meat cattle, to be handled profitably, have to be shipped in carload lots has made it more difficult for the small farmer to market his meat cattle, and that this makes necessary a new method of distribution, cooperative or otherwise, or the establishment of local abattoirs. According to one writer, "Public abattoirs, with public sale of the meats of animals slaughtered at them, have become a crying need in this country." The specialists also dealt with the increased raising of sheep and poultry, and the bearing of the Southern cattle tick and hog cholera on the production of meat animals.

Several important hearings and conferences were held during the month. Representatives of the grain exchanges and corn growers appeared on October 29 to discuss the tentative standards for the grading of corn previously published by the Department. Representatives of the Arkwright Club of Boston appeared to confer on methods of promoting the growth of long staple cotton. A committee representing various cotton exchanges appeared and asked that the Government revise the cotton standards so as to establish a universal standard for cotton. During the coming month there will be public hearings on the labeling of certain wines, and the determination of what can properly be called "chocolate."

The first number of the newly established Journal of Agricultural Research was issued on October 10. It consists of eighty-seven pages of letterpress and line drawings and five plates, including one colored plate.

The introduction was written by Dr. B. T. Galloway, Assistant Secretary. This journal is limited to the publication of technical and scientific papers and its circulation will be limited to certain colleges, experiment stations and scientific bodies making suitable exchanges, and scientists. At present the journal will publish only papers by the Department's staff, but later an extension may be made to include papers prepared in the state agricultural colleges and experiment stations, in which case its editorial board will be extended to include representatives from this class of institutions.

A number of important warnings dealing with the Southern and Western corn rootworm, the eel-worm which attacks onions, and various diseases affecting Irish and sweet potatoes, the cottony maple scale, hog cholera, and parasites affecting meat, and methods of combating these dangerous to crops or consumers were given wide popular circulation. The South was given special information about the cotton bollworm which often is confused with the boll weevil. California avocado growers were urged to plant only varieties that have proved their commercial utility and not to be tempted to experiment with untried kinds. The discovery of the boll weevil in Arizona where it was found breeding on the seed pods of a wild cotton-like plant was made

public and the importance to the prospective cotton industry of Arizona of destroying native plants which support the boll weevil was emphasized. Among the visitors at the Department were two Australian scientists who had been making a world-wide search for an insect that will prove destructive to the prickly pear cactus which is a devastating pest in the antipodes. The Bureau of Entomology recommends that they experiment with the Longicorn Beetle and with the *Chelindea Vittigera*.

An order freeing the balance of the state of Missouri from quarantine for Texas fever among cattle, and also lifting the quarantine from the parish of Madison, Louisiana and from Boone county and portions of the counties of Marion, Baxter, Jackson and Sharp, Arkansas, was issued during the month.

The work of the Bureau of Chemistry enforcing the food and drugs acts was carried on vigorously during the month. Among the notices of judgment made public were several for dirty or adulterated milk; tomato catsup containing decomposed or putrid vegetable substances and having a high bacterial count or being offered for sale under misstatement of actual contents; sparkling ale made from products other than malt; butter that was rancid and moldy that was offered for shipment to Porto Rico; lemon and orange extracts and olive oil misbranded or adulterated; cheese in which butter fat had been taken out; many wines and liquors made with imitation flavoring or otherwise adulterated; confectionery containing arsenic; adulterated feed meal; a headache remedy which improperly stated the proportion of acetanilid; and a large number of prosecutions against misbranders and adulterators of insecticides and fungicides against whom the government had maintained successful prosecutions.

Among the seizures recommended during the month were the following: Seizure of wines held to be adulterated and misbranded; flour alleged to be putrid; stock feed said to contain sand; beer and vinegar alleged to be adulterated; canned tomatoes and raisins containing filthy and decomposed vegetable matter; chestnuts suspected of being filthy or decomposed; tomato pulp deemed unfit for human consumption; phosphate of lime suspected of containing matter deleterious to human health; an onion product suspected of containing saccharin.

There were also five cases of seizures of oil of birch and oil of wintergreen in which the product was suspected of containing artificially added methyl salicylate instead of being wholly a natural product.

Following is a partial list of publications issued by the Department during October:

Bulletins of the Department of Agriculture (a new series):

No. 4. The Reseeding of Depleted Grazing Lands to Cultivated Forage Plants.

No. 7. Agricultural Training Courses for Employed Teachers; with a Suggested Reading Course in Agriculture Based on Farmers' Bulletins.

No. 10. Progress Report of Cooperative Irrigation Experiments at California University Farm, Davis, Cal., 1909-1912.

No. 12. Uses of Commercial Woods of the United States, Beech, Birches, and Maples.

No. 16. The Culture of Flue-Cured Tobacco.

No. 22. Game Laws for 1913. (Includes revised regulations for the protection of migratory birds, as proclaimed by the President.)

Farmers' Bulletins:

No. 555. Cotton Anthracnose and How to Control It.

No. 556. The Making and Feeding of Silage.

No. 557. The Potato-Tuber Moth.

No. 559. Use of Corn, Kafir, and Cowpeas in the Home. (Contains cookery recipes.)

Monthly list of publications, September, 1913: List of Free and Available Publications of the United States Department of Agriculture of Interest to Farm Women.

Promising New Fruits. Yearbook Separate 589.

Truck Soils of the Atlantic Coast Region. Yearbook Separate 603.

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE.

Dr. William J. Harris, Director of Census, recently appointed Hon. William E. Merriam, Ex-Governor of Minnesota, and Hon. S. N. D. North, former director of the Census, Professor Walter F. Willcox, of Cornell University and Mr. W. S.