

initiative and that steps will be taken by a conference of all the powers to discuss reduction of the heavy cost of the army and navy.

GOVERNMENT ARMOR PLATE FACTORY

"In recommending that an appropriation be made for constructing a government armor plate factory and increasing the gun factory, the powder factory and the torpedo works, Secretary Daniels says that the time has come when the navy department should be freed from excessive prices charged by private manufacturers for armor, guns and ammunition.

"As for the armor situation, it is 'intolerable,' he holds. He tells of his recent efforts to obtain real competition and reasonable prices. The Bethlehem Steel company in particular is accused of having utilized armor improvements and designs worked out by United States naval officers in the armor it furnished to a foreign government, and all three companies are charged with selling armor to foreign navies at a lower price than to their own country. The other concerns attacked by Mr. Daniels are the Carnegie Steel company and the Midvale Steel company.

"The secretary asserts that, without its own plant, the government would be at the mercy of three manufacturers in time of war. History does not warrant an assumption, he adds, that the patriotism of these companies will prove superior to their desire for profits.

"In recommending legislation 'that will enable the department to refine its own oil from its own wells and thus relieve itself of the necessity of purchasing what seems fair to become the principal fuel of the navy at exorbitant and ever increasing prices, from the private companies that now completely control the supply,' Mr. Daniels points out that Winston Churchill, first lord of the admiralty, is advocating a similar policy for Great Britain.

"An interesting recommendation is that a 'welfare secretary,' to lead in religious work, be placed on every warship that has no chaplain, and that, in establishing schools for enlisted men, he says, 'it is my ambition to make the navy a great university with college extensions afloat and ashore.'"

INTERIOR DEPARTMENT

The department of the interior is developing a new meat supply for the United States. Before many years we may expect reindeer meat to be a common article of diet in the western half of the United States. A partial shipload that was brought down from Alaska last year sold readily as a luxury in the Seattle markets. With each year there will doubtless be an increasing supply of this meat, which is a substitute for beef. It is twenty years this year since congress made its first appropriation of \$6,000 for the importation of reindeer from Siberia to Alaska. Altogether during the nine succeeding seasons 1,280 reindeer were brought over from Siberia to Port Clarence, which became the base of supply from which, winter after winter, herds were sent over the frozen northland to establish new centers of the reindeer industry.

From this starting point the reindeer enterprise gradually extended until at the present time it includes fifty-four herds, distributed over the vast untimbered grazing grounds along the coast from Point Barrow to the Alaska peninsula, a region approximating in length the distance from Maine to South Carolina.

In June, 1912, there were in Alaska 38,476 reindeer, of which number 24,068 (representing, at an average value of \$25 per head, a capital of \$601,700) were the property of 633 natives. The total income of the natives from the reindeer industry during the fiscal year 1911-1912, inclusive of the value of meat and hides used by the natives themselves, was \$44,885.04.

The object of the importation of reindeer into Alaska was originally to furnish a source of supply for food and clothing to the Eskimos in the vicinity of Bering Strait. In twenty years, the reindeer industry has elevated the Eskimos on the vast untimbered grazing lands of the Arctic and Bering Sea from nomadic hunters and fishermen, eking out a precarious existence upon the rapidly disappearing game animals and fish, to thrifty men, having in their herds of reindeer assured support for themselves and opportunity to acquire wealth by the sale of meat and skins to the white men in those regions. In addition to providing support for the natives, the reindeer herds furnish an assured food supply to the mining and trading settlements in Arctic

and sub-Arctic Alaska in case of disaster during the long period of each year when those regions are icebound and inaccessible.

Experience has shown that the total number of reindeer in Alaska doubles every four years. Assuming that this rate of increase continues, in 1920 there will probably be in Alaska about 150,000 reindeer.

The reindeer industry at present affects only the coastal regions of Bering Sea and the Arctic Ocean. It is estimated that in northern and western Alaska there are, approximately, 200,000 square miles of treeless regions, suitable grazing land for reindeer, of which one square mile would afford adequate pasturage for twenty reindeer. Accordingly, it is possible that the untimbered grazing lands of Alaska might support 4,000,000 reindeer, of which 1,000,000 might probably annually furnish a meat supply for exportation to the states, their hides and horns also furnish a valuable article of commerce. Throughout Norway and Sweden smoked reindeer tongues are found for sale in the markets, the meat being worth about 10 cents a pound and the tongues 10 cents each. There are wealthy merchants in Stockholm whose specialty is these Lapland products. Reindeer skins are sold extensively in Europe, being worth in their raw condition from \$1.50 to \$1.75 each, and the tanned skins at from \$2 to \$2.75 each.

INDIAN AFFAIRS

Preliminary to the appointment of attorneys to give their full time to probate matters as they effect the Indian minors of Oklahoma, Commissioner Cato Sells has recently been in conference with the governors and principal chiefs of the five civilized tribes and their tribal attorneys. This conference dealt only with conditions and not with prospective appointments. The Indian minors of Oklahoma average the richest children in the United States, but it is a lamentable fact that as compared with other states they have the least protection to their property rights. It is estimated that while the approximate cost is three per cent to settle a white minor's estate, the expense of administering the estate of an Indian minor is at least twenty per cent. Guardians' fees, attorneys' fees and other expenditures largely against the interests of these minors are very common. Misappropriations of their funds have been so frequent that it is not an uncommon thing for minors to reach their majority and find that their entire property has been consumed, many times their guardians absconding from the state and very frequently their bondsmen insolvent.

Minors' lands have been sold with grossly low appraisement and generally without consideration of the minors' best interests. All sorts of scheming has been resorted to looking toward the ravishment of these properties and it is for the purpose of fully ascertaining the facts as they exist and developing a plan for radical reform in these respects that conferences with Commissioner Sells have been held.

It is understood that a perfectly organized system has been agreed upon and that prompt and vigorous action will be taken in its execution.

It is the purpose of Commissioner Sells that these proceedings shall be in full cooperation with the state authorities and particularly with the probate judges.

After the several meetings had been held, the conferees called upon Secretary Lane when Commissioner Sells reviewed his plans which were heartily approved and commended by the secretary, who made some pertinent suggestions. Where misappropriation of funds is apparent such cases, he said, should be called to the attention of the grand juries and criminal prosecutions instituted.

On the whole this conference is said to have been one of the most earnest and effective discussions of Indian affairs ever held in Washington and that it promises great good for the welfare of the Indian minors in Oklahoma.

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The discovery that the disease of the Irish potato known as the powdery scab is widely prevalent in certain foreign countries has led the secretary, in accordance with section 7 of the act of August 20, 1912, to call a public hearing at the department, Washington, D. C., December 18, at 10 a. m., to determine whether or not importations of potatoes from the Dominion of Canada, Newfoundland, Great Britain, Ireland

and Continental Europe should be prohibited in order to prevent the introduction of this disease. The secretary has also called a meeting at the same time and place, in accordance with section 5 of this act, to consider a new proposition under which foreign potatoes may be regarded the same as nursery stock, and the entry of potatoes which have been inspected and pronounced free from infestation by foreign experts be permitted. The order of September 20, 1912, forbidding the importation into the United States of potatoes, on account of the existence of the disease known as potato wart, from Great Britain, Ireland, Germany, Austria Hungary, Newfoundland, and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, is not affected by the new call for the quarantine.

During the month, the department issued a warning to the public to beware of the little-known but dangerous drug called heroin. Sales of this drug lately increased greatly, particularly in states which have rigid laws preventing the indiscriminate sale of morphine and cocaine. Many drug victims who formerly used these other drugs have begun using heroin, which is as yet comparatively easy to obtain. The public has been warned to scrutinize labels of proprietary medicines and regard the presence of heroin as a danger signal. Another warning dealt with a common form of advertising whereby makers of proprietary medicines offer to supply free a prescription for curing various ailments. These prescriptions, it is pointed out, include some preparation, under a fancy name, which is practically a proprietary article. The result is those receiving the prescriptions have to pay a high price to get them filled at a drug store, and get really the equivalent of ordinary proprietary preparations.

A third warning directed to farmers notified them that two widely-advertised beans, for which extravagant claims were made, one being advertised as the Shanon pea and the other as the Giant Stock Pod bean or the Wataka bean are nothing more than the Asparagus or Yard-long bean and the Jack bean.

Warnings were also issued to farmers to be on the lookout for adulteration or misbranding of Grimm alfalfa seed, and against paying an excessive price for Sudan grass seed, which, because of the excessive drouth, has been advanced in price to \$1 and \$1.50 per pound. The farmer has been informed that he is not justified in paying this price for large quantities and that he should buy only small quantities to be used in growing his seed supply another year.

Housewives were warned against the practice of some poultry dealers of feeding chickens with sand just before killing in order to increase their weight.

Information was issued with the idea of getting the rural families to can more vegetables and eat them during the winter as a substitute for laxatives.

As a result of requests from editors and editorial associations in many states, the department has extended, during the crop reporting season, its telegraphic service to newspapers in all states through the central weather station located in each of the states. Under this plan newspapers in thirty-nine additional states will receive full details of the state crops more quickly than would be possible if these state crop details were mailed in Washington.

To consider means of bringing about uniformity between the federal and state food and drug laws and promote cooperation in their enforcement, the secretary invited the state officials to attend a conference. Thirty-one states, Porto Rico and the District of Columbia were represented by officials, and many representatives of the department attended the hearing. There was unanimous agreement that greater uniformity was needed and that better results could be obtained through increased cooperation. Various committees were appointed by the state officials to draft suggestions for changes in legislation that will tend to consistent food and drug regulation. To aid in this cooperative work, the department has established an office which is to act as a clearing house for information between the states and the department and among the different states. This will go far toward preventing needless duplication of research and will make common to all the findings of any of the state or government laboratories.

During the month the secretary granted hearings to representatives of California, Virginia, Ohio and Missouri grape growers and wine makers to discuss the proper designation of