

The Work of the President's Cabinet

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FARMERS' COOPERATIVE LAUNDRY

The United States department of agriculture announced during the month that the first farmers' cooperative laundry in the United States is now in successful operation at Chatfield, Minn. Chatfield is only a small village and the patrons of the laundry come almost entirely from the open country around.

Coarse clothing of all sorts, overalls, rugs, bed clothing, and fine fabrics as well are handled at a uniform price of 5 cents a pound for washing and ironing. An extra charge is made for such articles as need to be ironed by hand. The laundry is managed in connection with a cooperative creamery, paying to the creamery a reasonable rental for the use of a part of its building. Modern machinery was installed at the beginning, and an experienced laundryman engaged as superintendent. For the first year of operation, which has just closed, the receipts were \$5,403, 70 per cent of which was paid out for wages.

A BIRD CENSUS OF THE UNITED STATES

Bird lovers have been invited to send data to the department to aid in game preservation. A census of all the birds in the United States is planned for this summer, the object being to determine how many birds of each species breed within definite areas. By comparing the figures of the new census with those of subsequent ones it will be possible to ascertain whether the present state and federal laws are effective and whether game and insectivorous birds are increasing or diminishing. Voluntary observers are relied upon to furnish most of the data. May 30 is about the proper date to begin the census in the latitude of Washington, which should be completed about a month later. Inquiries about this census and others to follow should be addressed to the Biological Survey, Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

WARNING AGAINST DANGEROUS PRESERVATIVES

The attention of the department has recently been called to the widespread use, especially in rural communities, of salicylic acid in putting up preserves. This practice is not confined to salicylic acid under its own name only, but large quantities of this acid and of boric acid as well are sold under fanciful names as preserving powders or canning compounds at prices which are much in excess of their real value.

In the directions for use the housewife is told to fill the jar with the fruit or vegetables, cover with water, and add a teaspoonful of the powder. It is true that these powders may prevent the decay of the fruit or vegetable, but they also encourage uncleanly or careless work, and their excessive use may be attended with very serious effects upon the health. Salicylic acid is a medicine of the greatest value in acute articular rheumatism and certain other diseases. It is well known as a poisonous substance, and one of the evils which may accompany its use is derangement of the digestion. It is therefore plain that its extensive use in food may lead to disturbance of digestion and health.

It is entirely practicable to put up both fruits and vegetables in such a manner that, if not opened, they will keep indefinitely, by sterilizing the products by means of heat, and there is no excuse for running any risk by using preserving powders. The department of agriculture has issued the following Farmers' Bulletins on canning and preserving:

F. B. 203. Canned Fruit, Preserves and Jellies;

F. B. 359. Canning Vegetables in the Home.

F. B. 521. Canning Tomatoes at Home and in Club Work.

These bulletins, which may be obtained without cost by applying to the division of publications of the department, give exact directions for preserving and canning foods without the use of powders or canning compounds.

ABOLITION OF GUARANTY LEGEND ON FOOD AND DRUGS.

The legend "Guaranteed under the Food and Drugs Act" has been held to be misleading and deceptive and the use of a serial number on food and drugs is prohibitive after May 1, 1916, by a food inspection decision, signed by the secretary of the treasury, agriculture and commerce, as to

products packed and labeled prior to May 1, 1916, in compliance with law and with the present regulations, the date will be postponed until November 1, 1916.

Many people have been induced to believe that all articles labeled with the legend have been examined and approved by the government. The facts are that putting the legend on labels by manufacturers is entirely voluntary and that the government never guarantees the wholesomeness or purity of food or drug products. Certain manufacturers have employed this legend in such a way as to lead the public to believe their product had been passed upon and certified by the department of agriculture. The widespread deception necessitated the abolition of the practice of accepting guaranties for filing and issuing serial numbers.

PACKAGES MUST TELL THE TRUTH

The secretaries of the treasury, agriculture and commerce during the past month also signed regulations for the carrying out of the so-called "net-weight law." This law compels manufacturers to make a clear statement of the weight, volume, or contents of their packages of food. These regulations apply to foods shipped in interstate commerce or sold in the District of Columbia or the territories. The regulations as signed become effective at once, although the law passed March 3, 1913, as an amendment to the food and drugs act, defers the exacting of penalties for violations until September 3, 1914.

TO PUT SMITH-LEVER AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION LAW INTO EFFECT

The secretary of agriculture has written to the governors of all the states asking that they designate the college or colleges to which the funds provided by the Smith-Lever cooperative agricultural extension law are to go. This is the first step in putting into effect this act, approved by the president May 8, which provides for the granting of federal funds to the state agricultural colleges to aid in diffusing among the people useful and practical information on subjects relating to agricultural and home economics and to encourage the application of the same.

The conditions of the act are that each state must duplicate the money above \$10,000 a year appropriated to it by the federal government. The money raised by the state may come from the state, county, college, local authority, or individual contributions from within the state, for the maintenance of cooperative agricultural extension work. The governor of each state, in the interval until the legislature meets, is called upon to designate the agricultural college or colleges to which the federal funds are to be paid.

The act provides that each state in which an agricultural college is designated shall receive as a basic fund from the federal government \$10,000 annually without additional appropriations from the state. The act then makes provision for additional appropriations to be distributed in the proportion which the rural population of each state bears to the total rural population of all the states, as determined by the next preceding census. To share in these additional funds, however, the state, either through state, county, college, or local funds, or from individual contributions from within the state, must duplicate the additional amounts granted by the federal government for the maintenance of the cooperative agricultural extension work provided for in this act.

RAILROADS FINED FOR CRUELTY TO LIVE STOCK

Additional fines for violating the 28-hour law that prohibits the confinement of live stock for more than 28 hours without unloading for feed, water, and rest, have been imposed on a number of railroads. Two of the largest total fines were \$4,700 against the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway Co. and \$1,250 against the Pennsylvania Co.

SHEEP AND WOOL CONFERENCE CALLED

A public conference of persons interested in the sheep and wool industry was called to be held in Washington June 2, 3 and 4. Among the topics suggested by the secretary for discussion were the manufacturing value of American wools; the improvement of farm and ranch methods of handling wool; the possible adaptation of foreign methods to American conditions; the standardization of the wool clip, and the

prevention of damage by dogs and predatory animals.

The animal husbandry division of the bureau of animal industry has made an educational collection of wools and wool fabrics, which shows the advantages of proper preparation of wool for market, and market requirements. This collection was on exhibition during the conference.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

HARVEST HANDS NEEDED

Below will be found copies of telegrams received from the state labor commissioners of Kansas, Oklahoma, and Missouri, asking cooperation in securing men to help in harvesting the wheat crop:

Topeka, Kansas, May 27, 1914.—T. V. Powderly, Chief Division of Information, Washington, D. C.: Kansas will need upward of forty thousand men, beginning June fifteenth, to help in harvesting wheat. Wages will range upward from \$2 a day and board, average probably \$2.50. Men can go direct to towns in wheat belt in central and western Kansas assured of work. Will be distributed to farmers by local organizations or write this department for directions. Large percentage of men will be needed for ninety to one hundred twenty days. W. L. O'Brien, Director State Employment Bureau.

Jefferson City, Mo., May 27, 1914.—T. V. Powderly, Chief Division of Information, Washington, D. C.: It will require thirty thousand hands to handle the wheat crop in Missouri. Early harvest will begin about June 15th. Should the drouth continue harvest will begin earlier. Wages from two dollars to three dollars and a half a day according to experience, class of work and conditions. Period of employment from three to five and six months. The state board of agriculture and my department are cooperating in the matter of supplying and distributing this needed labor. Three free employment offices in my charge are located one each in St. Louis, Kansas City, St. Joseph. Much of the labor will be distributed from these points not alone to Missouri farmers but to those in Kansas, Oklahoma, etc. John T. Fitzpatrick, Labor Commissioner.

Oklahoma City, Okla., May 25, 1914.—Hon. W. B. Wilson, Washington D. C.: Would it be possible for you to communicate the needs of this state by way of men for the wheat harvest through any of the official channels of the state department. We will need from twelve to fifteen thousand men at from two to two and one half dollars per day with board to help harvest our wheat and thresh same and eighty-five per cent of men so employed will be given employment in this state by the farmers in handling the various forage crops which promise a big yield at this time thereby guaranteeing from four to six months steady work. The state will maintain free employment offices at Oklahoma City, Enid, Alva, Woodward, Frederick and other points in the state to help distribute the men and any publication you can give this matter through your department will be greatly appreciated by the citizens of this state.—Chas. L. Daugherty, Labor Commissioner.

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

CONFERENCE ON WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

Following is an address of welcome by Hon. William C. Redfield, secretary of commerce:

Dr. Stratton and Gentlemen of the Conference of Weights and Measures:

It seems a very unnecessary thing for me to say you are welcome here—unnecessary, I mean, because I am sure you all know it, and because we on our part try to make it so obvious in all that we have to do and to say to you that it will speak for itself.

You are a sort of an object of envy to me. This particular place, this particular branch of our department's activity, has always appealed to me in a peculiar way. Years ago, before there was any such thing, as a manufacturer I used to want, and to go in the want of, the information and the accuracy here supplied. In a very small way I had to build up on a private basis that which is now here freely supplied to all the world that needs such knowledge; and this particular bureau of standards, therefore, makes a strong appeal both to my judgment and to my interest. It has in a very marked way the confidence of both congress and the executive, and I need not say to you (now that Dr. Stratton has gone out) that we have in him one of the most useful and