

# The Work of the President's Cabinet

## DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

### Work of Department of Commerce

There has been prepared especially for distribution at the Panama-Pacific international exposition a revised edition of the pamphlet entitled "The Department of Commerce," which gives a concise history of the origin and organization of the department as well as a brief statement of the various activities under its administration.

The organic act of February 14, 1903, creating the department of commerce and labor was modified by the act of March 4, 1913, creating the department of labor, and with the organization of that department the department of commerce as such came into being.

Under its organic act it is the duty of the department to foster, promote, and develop the foreign and domestic commerce, the mining, manufacturing, shipping, and fishery industries, and the transportation facilities of the United States, and the secretary of commerce is charged with the responsibility of carrying out the purpose of the department as thus broadly outlined.

The bureau of corporations until March 16, 1915, was a part of the department of commerce, but upon the organization on that date of the federal trade commission under authority of the act approved September 26, 1914, the bureau of corporations was absorbed by that commission. The department of commerce, therefore, as at present constituted, is composed of the bureaus of the census, fisheries, foreign and domestic commerce, lighthouses, navigation, and standards, the United States coast and geodetic survey, and the steamboat-inspection service. A separate section of the pamphlet is devoted to each of these bureaus or offices, reciting briefly its origin and history and also the scope of its present activities.

The publication is for free distribution and copies may be obtained by those interested upon application to the department of commerce, Washington, D. C.

## BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE

### Assistance in Relieving Dyestuffs Shortage

The cessation in imports of chemicals, and especially artificial dyestuffs of German origin, threatens widespread disturbance to nearly all American textile branches and to many other lines of industry. Managers of works throughout the country are struggling to adjust themselves to conditions that call in many instances for a revolution in processes of manufacture and in the character of output. The few domestic color factories are putting forth every effort to supply in part the lacking dyes and capital is being embarked in new undertakings, designed to produce some of the simpler staple coal-tar colors, for which there is a heavy demand.

In the midst of this hurried readjustment to meet the exigencies of what threatens to be a temporary "dyestuff famine," and the equally hurried effort to replace foreign dyes by American-made dyes, it is the desire of the bureau of foreign and domestic commerce to lessen in every way feasible the severe strain to which all parties concerned are so suddenly subjected. A clearing house for the mutual exchange of information between productive and consuming factors in this emergency where time is an important element, is evidently needed, and the bureau is endeavoring to fulfill this function. All consumers, in quantity, of foreign dyestuffs and chemicals in general have been requested to communicate promptly in detail the character and extent of their needs. Domestic manufacturers of dyestuffs, and newly started undertakings to place upon the market dyestuffs, coal-tar crudes and intermediates, and chemicals in general, were likewise requested to supply information as to just what products they are able to supply.

### Co-operation with Commercial Organizations.

The department for some time has considered the problem of distributing the information collected by the bureau of foreign and domestic commerce so that the maximum use will be made of it. At the urgent request of commercial organizations, the bureau is now working out with local commercial organizations a definite plan of co-operation which contemplates placing at their

disposal the same information, with certain reservations, which is now sent to the branch offices of the bureau.

There remain many details to be worked out, and many questions will undoubtedly arise from time to time. However, this co-operative arrangement will extend the work of the bureau and will at the same time make more definite and practical and also more valuable to their members the work of local commercial organizations. The Cleveland chamber of commerce, Cleveland, Ohio, is the first commercial organization to enter into such an arrangement. This organization has designated a man to take charge of the work and the plan will be put into operation at once.

Up to the present time only the situation in regard to local commercial organizations has been discussed, but there are many state and national organizations which must be considered. Any such plan necessarily implies mutual obligations, and the plan of co-operation in promoting foreign trade which has been worked out by the bureau is set forth in great detail in a statement showing what each party is expected to do. Commercial organizations interested in this proposition may obtain further particulars by addressing the bureau of foreign and domestic commerce.

### Directory of Commercial Associations

The bureau is busily engaged in compiling a directory of international, national, state, territorial and local commercial associations in the United States which, it is expected, will be ready for distribution at an early date. The directory will contain detailed information as to the number of members, the annual income, date of annual meeting, and primary purpose of each organization and also the principal activities of the leading associations. For local associations information will be given on the subjects of retail trade, wholesale trade, foreign trade, conventions, transportation, grain weighing and inspection, employment, agriculture, charity and social settlement work, affiliations, and publications. For international, national and state organizations information will be shown on the subjects of co-operation, state legislation, arbitration, traffic bureau, foreign service, special relations, and publications.

### Commerce and Navigation of the United States

The annual report on the "Commerce and Navigation of the United States" for 1914 has been issued at an unusually early date. This volume is a comprehensive compendium of American trade containing about 950 pages, and it is at once valuable to business men, importers and exporters, economists, and statesmen. For example, it outlines the inward and outward movements of gold and silver during the last four years, analyzes by industrial groups the imports and exports of merchandise, sets forth our commercial relations with each country of the world during the last five years, and by grand divisions during the last decade, shows the character of our imports from and exports to the foreign countries during a series of years, indicates the nature of the merchandise handled by each customs district, enumerates the articles from which our customs revenues are derived and shows the rates of duty assessed upon each class, contains tables showing the articles exported with benefit or drawback, recapitulates our carrying trade and that of each foreign country so far as relates to merchandise imported into and exported out of this country, and reviews for a series of years the results of our whale fisheries. Complete particulars may be found with respect to the origin of each article comprising the \$1,894,000,000 worth of goods imported and with respect to the destination of the \$2,330,000,000 worth of goods exported.

This report is now on sale by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., and by the commercial agents in charge of the bureau's branch offices at New York, Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, New Orleans, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Seattle, the price being \$1.

### Special Reports

The striking changes and readjustments brought about in many phases of the world's iron and steel trade by the European war will result, it is believed, in a notably enlarged field

for American manufacturers in these lines. The market of the Latin American countries is, of course, the subject of most lively interest, but reports from American consular officers in France, Germany (one report only), Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, demonstrate the possibility of an increase in American sales and the advisability of following up energetically such temporary openings. For the purpose of indicating a number of such opportunities, and also with the much broader idea of bringing together detailed information on certain vital aspects of the industry, the bureau has just issued a monograph entitled "Some Aspects of the Iron and Steel Industry in Europe," which contains facts concerning places of manufacture, character of products, the best foreign markets, distances to most advantageous ports, railway freight rates on the various commodities, cost of handling at ports, and labor conditions.

The output of American fisheries is as valuable as that of any country in the world, the total production in 1908, the latest year for which complete statistics are available, being somewhat in excess of 1,893,000,000 pounds. Considering the excess of imports over exports and allowing for a reasonable increase in the catch since 1908, it is likely that our per capita consumption of fish now exceeds 20 pounds a year. This is not quite half the per capita consumption in Great Britain, but it is much larger than that of most countries. In seasons of unusually heavy catches it is impossible to increase the consumption sufficiently to use up the surplus, and with a view to assisting the exporters of American fish and fish products in their efforts to find an outlet abroad the bureau has published "European Markets for Fish," a report containing detailed import statistics for nearly every country in Europe and thus affording a means of determining the importance of each market and the kind of fish that finds the most favor. These statistics have been compiled from the original sources and are the most valuable feature of the report. There are also complete statistics for the United States, including a very detailed table of American exports. Our exports abroad heretofore have consisted principally of canned salmon—an American product that is favorably known throughout the entire world. The total exports of all kinds average about \$11,000,000 a year, and of this total, canned salmon is valued at \$7,000,000, fresh salmon at something over \$1,500,000, dried, smoked, cured, and pickled fish at \$1,000,000, and shellfish at very nearly \$1,000,000.

The United States is the greatest producer of tobacco in the world, and the greatest exporter, the greatest importer, and the greatest consumer. Our production of leaf of all sorts averages somewhat more than 1,000,000,000 pounds a year, having a value to the producers of about \$100,000,000. An enormous quantity is exported—considerably more than a third of the production in normal years—for the sales of tobacco abroad are exceeded by only seven of the many products America sends to other countries. These tobacco exports exceed in value such items as cotton manufactures, electrical machinery, paper and paper products, and leather and leather manufactures. To assist in promoting the biggest sale possible in foreign countries, the bureau has issued a report, "Tobacco Trade of the World," in which nearly every country is considered in its relative importance as importer, exporter, producer, and consumer of tobacco. Sales methods, the likes and dislikes of the consumer, the conduct of monopolies, and some of the very latest developments in the trade are dealt with.

The supplies of reed used in the manufacture of furniture, baby carriages, etc., formerly came in large part from Hamburg, Germany, but the German government at the beginning of the European war placed an embargo on its export and American manufacturers have been in many cases unable to continue operations because of a lack of raw material. The rattan from which reed is made grows in the East Indies and was formerly imported largely into Hamburg and there cut into cane and reed. The failure of the usual source attracted greater attention toward a supply said to exist in the Philippines and an investigation instituted by the department disclosed extensive supplies of a good grade of rattan there but many difficulties in the way of gathering and preparing and sending it to this country. The whole subject is comprehensively handled by the Manila correspondent of the bureau of foreign and domestic commerce, Mr. John R. Arnold, in "Rattan Supply of the Philippines," just issued. While there are several grades of rattan which are of no value for manufacturing purposes, there are considerable supplies of the