

Mexico's New Schemes for the Farmer

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MEXICO CITY.—Any of the plans which were originated by President Madero have been adopted by his successor. This is especially so as to the new movements for building up Mexico. The Department of Public Works and that of Agriculture are being carried on along the same lines, and the gradual subdivision of the lands and the giving them back to the people has been put forth as one of the policies of the Huerta administration.

Lands at a Few Cents an Acre.
A short time before President Madero was killed I called at the Department of Public Works and had a long talk with Senor Rafael Hernandez, who was then a member of the cabinet. He is a relative, by marriage, of the Madero family, is a man of great ability and has largely to do with the originating of the movements here as to the public and other lands. When I called upon him he was making plans for the reclamation of such lands which had been ceded by Mexico to certain foreigners, who had not complied with their concessions. Said he:

"Mexico has awarded 10,000,000 acres of excellent land to outsiders at a few cents per acre. We have given concessions to companies and private parties to survey our public lands and to look into the rights of the squatters. In some cases the reward for this trouble has been one-third of the waste lands. This work has extended over a number of states, and in connection with it, the title to millions of acres has passed from the government. As a consideration for surveying 3,000,000 acres in Lower California, one American company got the title to 3,000,000 acres and it had also the right to buy the remaining 4,000,000 acres at a cost of about 2 cents gold per acre, payable on time without interest. That company now owns something like 4,000,000 acres, which is fitted for colonization. Its lands are some of the best in Mexico. They are already worth a vast sum, and their value will be increased by the completion of the Panama canal, after which the lands will probably be colonized.

"Other concessions of great value have been granted in other localities." Mr. Hernandez continued, "and so much of our best lands have been lost. What we are doing, however, is to go over the concessions and see whether the concessionaires have complied with the terms upon which they were given. If they have not done so, we are able to get the lands back, and we are doing so. We have already been able to recover 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 acres, and we shall probably get back as much more. This will make something like 90,000,000 acres, or considerably more than two states the size of New York or Pennsylvania."

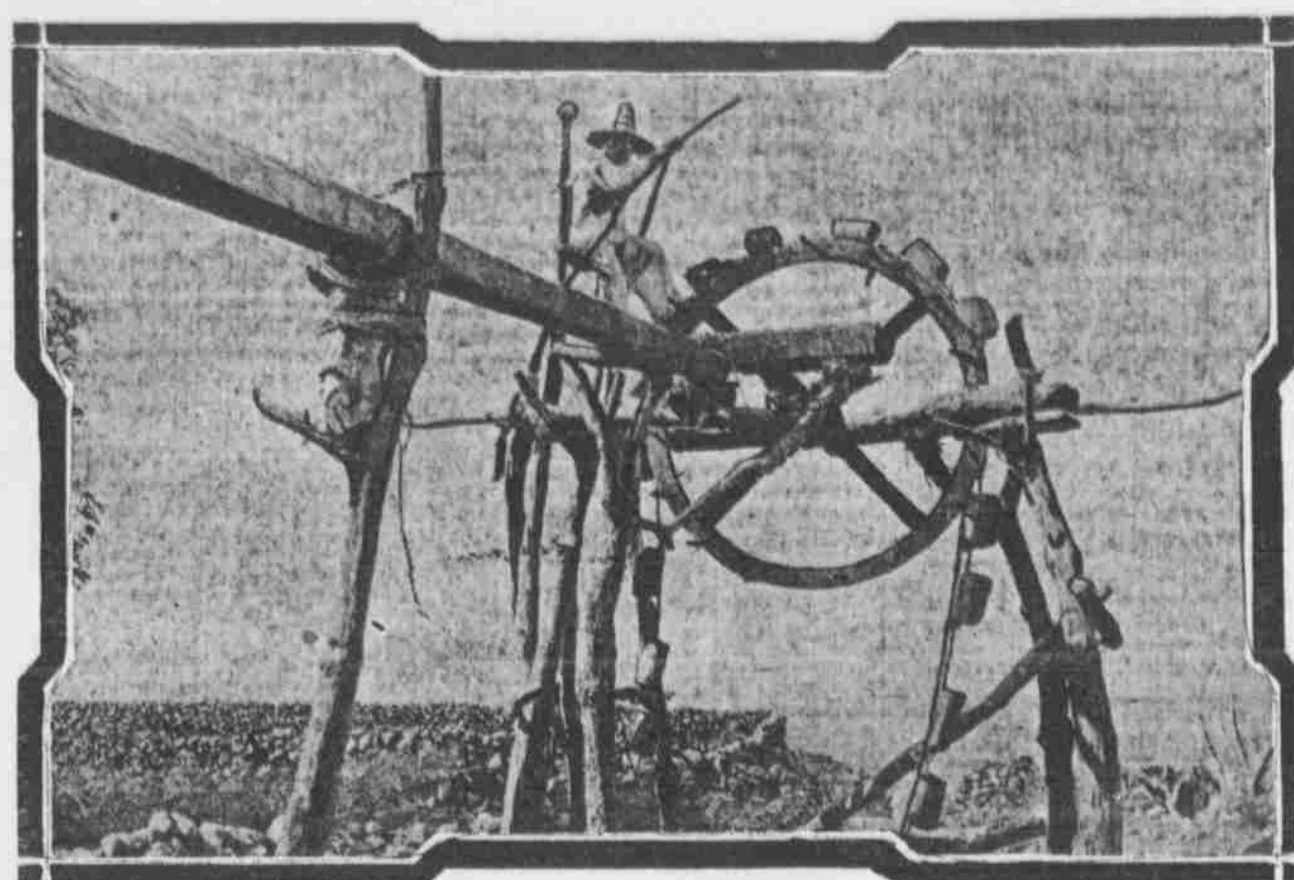
"But that must relate only to the lands forfeited by companies which have not carried out their part of the bargain?"
"Yes," replied Senor Hernandez. "It is only where the companies have not carried out their contracts. Where they have complied with the laws and regulations their property is as safe as it could be anywhere in the world, and we would not have it otherwise. We are ready to stand by our contracts, although they may have been bad ones, at the time they were made."

Millions in Chewing Gum.
"How about other concessions outside lands?"
"Many concessions have been granted for almost nothing covering property which ought to give a great revenue to the government," Senor Hernandez said. "Take, for instance, chicle, the chewing gum which is now working the jaws of millions of United States citizens. That comes from here. It comes out of a tree found in our public forests, and is gathered, based upon a tax assessed on a value of the gum at 25 pesos, or 50 cents. The actual value of the chicle at the seaports is at least \$300 a ton, and when it is landed in New York it is worth at least \$500 in gold. That concession is still in force, but we shall change it as soon as its term has expired.

"Another concession is connected with guayule, a plant which grows up our high plateaus, of which they are now making rubber. According to the terms of the concession, the government should have one-third of the net profits. In some recent returns our share of a sale of 600,000 tons of this stuff was about \$5,000, whereas it should have been \$300,000 or more. It is easy to figure the actual value of a ton of guayule. I should say the stuff is worth \$15 a ton, and that 600,000 tons was probably worth \$9,000,000 in gold, of which the government should have had a full third. Nevertheless, the company sent us in \$7,000 pesos, or \$5,000. We objected, and they finally paid over \$50,000, but they should have paid more."

American Capital in Mexico.
"But does Mexico want American capital?"
"Yes," replied the secretary. "We are glad to have you people come to Mexico, and we think we can show you opportunities to make more money, perhaps, than in any place else on this continent. We want bona fide immigrants, and we want foreign capital to develop our mines, our farms and our industries. As it is now we have already hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of United States money invested here, and when conditions become a little more settled we have no doubt but that we shall have hundreds of millions more. There is no antagonism between Mexican and American interests, and I believe that the relation of the two countries will be closer and more cordial as time goes on."

Big Reclamation Schemes.
The conversation then turned to the big irrigation schemes which the government has under way, and Senor Hernandez said:
"We expect to do a great deal in reclaiming our government lands, and in the introduction of irrigation works which will water not only them, but those of private parties as well. A great part of this country is high and dry, but we have many torrential streams which might be held back by dams in reservoirs, which would give water for irrigation. Such undertakings are costly, and we have arranged that they may be carried on through government loans. We have established here at the capital what might be called 'the bank of the Farmers.' It is really a loan association for irrigation and agriculture. It was organized as a stock company, but it is now operated as an official institution, the government having purchased most of the shares. This bank advances money to farmers at a moderate rate of interest, provided they invest at least 40 per cent of the loans so received in im-



Old Style Irrigation

proving their properties. It has already loaned about \$50,000,000, and during the last seven months it has effected transactions aggregating almost 14,000,000 pesos.

"In this bank, under certain conditions, farmers can have loans up to 40 per cent of the value of their property. For instance, a farmer owning a property worth \$100,000, can get a loan of \$40,000, and if this is invested in irrigation works he can get a second loan of \$50,000 more."

Artesian Wells for Farmers.
"We have also an appropriation from congress of \$250,000 a year to be used in artesian irrigation. This is to be invested much like your own reclamation fund, which has done so much to irrigate tracts in the west. We are using the money to sink wells in different parts of the republic.

"We have three classes of projects. One is the drilling of wells for the small landholder, say the man who owns 1,000 acres or less. If he wishes to have an artesian well, we have our engineers report on the possibility of finding water and if their report warrants it we will sink an artesian well with the understanding that if sufficient water for irrigation is struck the owner of the land will pay the cost of the boring and a small interest thereon. The second class is as to land holdings of medium size, that is, estates of 100,000 acres or so. In this case when the engineers' reports are satisfactory, the government borrows wells, but in this case only on the understanding that the private owner is to have only half of the land that can be irrigated by the water supply and that he must give an equal territory to be irrigated by the other half to the government. The latter part is then government land and as such it is divided up and sold at the high rates that irrigated tracts easily bring.

"The third class deals with the irrigation of the big estates. Take, for instance, a man like Terrazas, who has an estate of 7,000,000 or 8,000,000 acres. If we should bore wells on his estate it would be like a great back to the Mexican coast, and we could strike water sufficient for the irrigation of that land. This tract would then be divided up and sold and Terrazas would expect to make his profit out of the increased value of the surrounding territory.

"In all of these projects the money received by the government for the sale of land goes back to the reclamation fund. This fund will rapidly grow and in time we expect it to result in the adding greatly to our irrigated territory."

Irrigation in Imperial Valley.
I here referred to the Imperial valley of California, and asked Senor Hernandez what would be done with that part of it which extends down into Mexico. He replied:

"Our part of the Imperial valley is quite as valuable as that which lies in the United States. It will be irrigated by the Colorado river, which, as you know, makes a great bend across the Mexican boundary, and then returns to the United States. We have had surveys made there in connection with the United States government, and have made such a water agreement with you that we can reclaim an equal territory with yourselves. I should say there is at least 600,000 acres of that land upon which we can put water, and this will be worth in the neighborhood of \$200 an acre when the water is turned in. There is no soil on the face of the globe richer than that of the Imperial valley, and as the main system of irrigation has already been completed it will take but a small amount of money for us to throw our part of it open to investment and colonization."

Mexico's Cotton Lands.
"How about your cotton plantations? Can these not be increased by irrigation?"
"Yes, we have plans to that effect. We have immense zones that are suitable for cotton, and we have one concern which is making final arrangements to cultivate making final arrangements to cultivate about a quarter of a million acres. This will give us all the raw cotton we need, and leave something for export. As it is now, our plantations are turning out an annual yield of about 75,000,000 pounds, nearly all of which is used in our factories."

"How much cotton can you raise per acre?"
"We have tracts which produce 600 pounds, or almost a bale and one-third to the acre, and we have other plantations which do not yield more than 300 or 200 pounds per acre. Our best cotton region is the Laguna district, lying in the central states not far from Torreon. The soil there is exceedingly rich, but it must have irrigation. There are schemes for dams in that vicinity which will increase the irrigated area. Then we are growing cotton along the coasts of the states of Guerrero and Oaxaca, and near the coasts in Vera Cruz and Tamaulipas. The climate of the Pacific coast is especially favorable for cotton and the cultivation will increase there as the transportation facilities are developed. Indeed, the construction of the railroads already projected, will greatly enlarge our cotton belt, and we shall soon figure as one of the first-class producers in the world's cotton markets."

"How about your stock ranches? Will



How They Plow in Mexico

you be able to supply the United States with beef in the future?"

"I do not see but that we may be able to do so," said the Mexican secretary of agriculture. "You people are growing so fast that you will soon be unable to feed yourselves, and we are so situated geographically that no other country can compete with us in supplying your needs. We have something like 125,000,000 acres of pasture lands and 5,000,000 or 6,000,000 head of cattle grazing upon them. We have several million sheep, and we are now exporting something like 300,000 head of cattle a year.

"The stock industry is one which we could greatly increase with additional capital and better farming. Our cattle are not improved animals, and it is a question whether we can maintain fine breeds of stock without bettering our pastures. As it is now, the beasts must be hardy to feed on the sparse grasses of the dry season and to travel the long distances that are necessary to reach water. Some of our big haciendas are importing Shorthorns, Herefords and other breeds, but we all know that we must improve our pastures, increase the number of drinking places and build the necessary sheds and barns before we can radically improve our stock."

Government and the Farmer.

"What is the government doing to teach the farmer?"
"It is just beginning its work along agricultural lines," said the minister. "The chief trouble we have here is the poor machinery, the nonuse of fertilizers and, in addition, the backwardness of our farming class. The government is trying to show the farmers the advantages of machinery and modern farm tools. We have now stations where such machinery is shown and where it is loaned to the farmer. As to fertilizers, we are trying to encourage the use of them, and have obtained from the railroads low rates for their transportation. We are also prohibiting the exportation of fertilizers from Mexico, and we will put heavy export duties on all such goods.

"As to the education of the farming class we have a national school of agriculture here in Mexico City, which is attended by 500 students, and we have established experiment stations and demonstration farms in different parts of the republic. We have also a staff of traveling instructors who visit the farmers on their estates and teach them the better processes of cultivation. We hope to advance steadily along such lines, and the prospect is that we shall greatly increase our crops and better our stock."

Farming in the Tropics.

I asked the secretary of agriculture what Mexico was doing as to the tropical parts of the country. Senor Hernandez replied:
"There is a steady increase in our plantations in the lowlands along the coasts. This is especially so of coffee, which has been added by the high prices of recent times. We have many new banana plantations, the output of which goes to the United States, but which will have a market in Europe as well. Our present production of bananas is about 100,000,000 pounds. The state of Tabasco alone annually sends to your country more than a million bunches.
"And then there is our rubber," continued Senor Hernandez. "Heavy sums have been invested in that industry, and not always judiciously. We have some forests of wild rubber trees which are producing abundantly and also some good plantations, but a number of companies have been organized in the United States and in other foreign countries which seem to have had no other purpose in

mind than to secure cash stock subscriptions and to misappropriate them. These have done us great injury, and we hope there will be no more in the future.
"Our exports of India rubber last year amounted to about 10,000,000 pounds, with a value of over \$10,000,000 and we sold also guayule rubber to the amount of about \$6,000,000. We sold coffee during that time which brought in between \$4,000,000 and \$5,000,000 and our exports of vegetable products were worth \$45,000,000. In addition to this we are exporting fiber plants which will bring us in this year about \$30,000,000 in gold. So you see that we are still doing business notwithstanding the reports concerning our disordered conditions and turbulent state." FRANK G. CARPENTER.

Opening Day of the Transmississippi Exposition at Omaha

(Continued from Page One.)

weather conditions are perfect. During the early morning there was a slight shower, but with the rising of the sun the clouds dispersed and the bright sun of June shone balmy and warm. It was a cosmopolitan crowd that came to Omaha that day, for almost every state and almost every nation on earth was represented. There were governors here from more than a dozen states, many of them being accompanied by their uniformed staffs; there were officers of the federal government, ambassadors from foreign countries and chiefs from the islands of the Pacific; Indian chiefs who had fought in many a battle and cowboys from the plains of Montana and Wyoming.

By 8 o'clock in the morning the downtown streets of the city presented a gay appearance. The walks were jammed with people; hands in gay uniforms paraded back and forth, clamoring for positions in the parade that soon was to proceed to the exposition grounds to be present at the formal opening, while constantly the crowds kept growing more dense. It had been announced that the parade would leave the downtown portion of the city for the exposition grounds promptly at 10 o'clock, but this parade, like all others, was a bit slow in starting and it was nearly an hour later before the signal to start was given and the procession, which was the most memorable in the history of Omaha, started on its march of two miles, passing between lines of people crowding the sidewalks on either side of the streets the entire distance.

The parade formed on Douglas street, with the head of the column resting at Sixteenth and the right and left on intersecting streets east. From Sixteenth and Douglas it proceeded north on Sixteenth to Chicago, thence west to Nineteenth, north to Ohio, west on Ohio to Twentieth and north on Twentieth to the Arch of States, the main entrance to the exposition grounds. The parade was made up of four divisions and contained from 5,000 to 6,000 people and was in charge of Major T. S. Clarkson, grand marshal. The way was cleared by a platoon of mounted police and behind them rode the Transmississippi troopers, 800 strong, resplendent in bright uniforms.
At the head of the first division rode T. C. Ebbly, George W. Holbrook and W. H. Thomas, aides to the grand marshal. Behind marched the University of Nebraska cadets, Major Charles H. Thrice commanding; the Council Bluffs High school cadets, Lieutenant Campbell com-

manding; Webster souaves, Captain Sues commanding, and the Clarkson Sons of Veterans, South Omaha, Captain Eber in charge. Military organizations other than these were missing because of the absence of soldiers, who were at the front engaged in the war with Spain. Later on Colonel Bryan's regiment paraded through the exposition grounds on its way to war and still later the returning soldiers were welcomed there.

The second division was under command of Assistant Marshal W. G. Shriver and J. A. Eubank, A. B. Smith, D. M. Haverly and R. W. Richardson, aides. Behind them in carriages rode the officers of the exposition, speakers and invited guests to the number of 300, including government, state, county and city officials.

The third division was officered by Assistant Marshal Dudley Smith and George S. Wright, aide, behind them marching the Omaha and visiting Elks, the Travelers' Protective association, camp No. 128, Modern Woodmen of America; camp No. 1454, Modern Woodmen of America; and numerous other civic societies, all members being uniformed.

The fourth division was under command of R. S. Wilson, assistant grand marshal. This division was made up entirely of mounted men, in the ranks being members of the Board of Governors of the Knights of Ak-Sar-Ten and the South Omaha Equestrian club, nearly 500 men.
In the parade there were many bands from Omaha, Council Bluffs and other cities in the state. There was music skirting the lagoon on either side and with their hundreds of flags waving from the staffs helped to form a picture that will always be remembered by those who gazed upon it that beautiful June day, fifteen years ago.

Nature had done her best. In nooks and corners on the Grand court, in angles of the portico, the landscape gardener had located beds of choice flowers and plants and at this time and upon this particular day in June, many of the varieties were in full bloom, their fragrance and beauty adding to the grandeur of the occasion.

Inside the exposition walls, Chief Marshal Clarkson turned his column to the right and it commenced its march around the lagoon, the exposition officials and invited guests dropping out at the east end of the Court of Honor, where the exercises were to be held and from which point they reviewed the parade as it passed. Marching entirely around the lagoon, a distance of about one mile, the head of the parade again reached the Court of honor, where the order to disband was given. Thousands gathered at the speakers' stand, where below and in front of the viaduct over Sherman avenue, seats had been provided for 10,000, or more, all conveniently located in a semi-circle, with the right and left arms extending along the flank of the semi-circular verdure that flanked the parking of the lagoon.

It was almost noon when the United States Marine band, brought here from Washington, at a signal from President Wattles of the exposition, commenced to play. Leader Santelmann raised his baton, waved it in graceful curves above his head and the next instant the first strains of the Jubilee overture, composed especially for the occasion, floated out through the soft, mellow air. The crowds were quickly seated and a hush fell over the scene as Rev. Samuel J. Nicolls, of St. Louis arose to invoke a divine blessing upon the exposition and the many present, together with those who had worked and made the undertaking such a pronounced success.

Address by Wattles.
Following the prayer came the address of President Wattles, who briefly recited the history of the exposition from the day of its inception. He detailed what had been done by the citizens of Omaha, those of Douglas county and the state

of Nebraska, commenting upon the generosity of outside states in making appropriations to assist in showing to the world the possibilities of the central portion of the United States and what had been accomplished in the few short years since it had been developed from a wilderness, the home of the Indian and the cowboy.

The address of President Wattles was greeted with prolonged applause and at its conclusion the "Song of Welcome" was sung by the Transmississippi Exposition chorus, a body of 150 trained singers of Omaha, Council Bluffs and cities of Nebraska. The words for this song were by Henry W. Blossom, Jr., of St. Louis and the music by Mrs. H. A. Boehm of Boston, the accompaniment being played by the Marine band.

Addresses were next in order, there being one by John L. Webster of Omaha and another by the late John L. Baldwin of Council Bluffs. The Marine band rendered a selection, "The Voice of Our National," after which Silas A. Holcomb, then governor of Nebraska, made the address in behalf of the state, welcoming the thousands of visitors to Omaha and the fertile Antelope state.

McKinley Starts Machinery.
The important announcement was yet to come. Far away in Washington and in the executive mansion of the United States sat President McKinley and upon this occasion, about and around him sat the members of his official family and the senators and representatives from Nebraska, together with a dozen or more of the persons who claimed Nebraska as their home, but who, on account of business, were unable to be present in Omaha at the opening of the exposition. On the table in front of the president was a telegraph instrument. To this

was attached a wire, the other end of which had been connected up with the largest of the immense dynamos in Machinery hall. At each end there was an operator, each keyed to a high tension, for he realized that it was a question of but minutes when he would announce to the entire world the opening of one of the grandest expositions in the history of modern civilization.

Sitting at his desk at the Omaha end of the wire, the operator received from President Wattles the one word, "Ready." The key was pressed and the symbols of the telegraph code flew out into the executive mansion at Washington, when the ticking of the instrument there spelled out, "Ready," and as it did so President McKinley pressed a key that released the great engines of the exposition and they commenced their task of turning the thousands of wheels that set the machinery in motion.

The exposition was officially opened to continue on for five months of grand and uninterrupted success.
While the crowds dispersed through the buildings and upon the plaza and wandered up and down the Grand Court of Honor, there were official duties yet to be performed. President Wattles, in behalf of the exposition management, wired congratulations and thanks to President McKinley and the members of the Nebraska delegation in Washington and they in turn wired congratulations to Omaha, hoping that the fondest dreams of the body of men who had for months given their time and money to the building of the exposition would be realized.

These official and semi-official duties having been performed, the exposition was turned over to the public to become an educator and a place for amusement and enjoyment.

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