

and whose delegates will represent 1,000,000 people, will hold its fifth congress in the city of Washington in May, 1897. The United States may be said to have taken the initiative which led to the first meeting of this congress at Bern in 1874, and the formation of the Universal Postal union, which brings the postal service of all countries to every man's neighborhood and has wrought marvels in cheapening postal rates and securing absolutely safe mail communication throughout the world. Previous congresses have met in Bern, Paris, Lisbon and Vienna, and the respective countries in which they have assembled have made generous provision for their accommodation and for the reception and entertainment of the delegates and of the honor and hospitality accorded to our representatives by other countries. Since that time, however, I earnestly hope that such an appropriation will be made for the expenses necessarily attendant upon the coming meeting in our capital city as will be worthy of our national hospitality and indicative of our appreciation of the event.

THE NAVY.

Growth of That Department—No More Speed Premiums.

The work of the navy department and its present condition are fully exhibited in the report of the secretary. The construction of vessels for our navy has been energetically prosecuted by the present administration upon the general lines previously adopted, the department having seen no necessity for radical changes in prior methods, in which the work was found to be progressing in a manner highly satisfactory. It has been decided, however, to provide in every ship building contract that the builder should pay all trial expenses, and it has also been determined to pay no speed premiums in future contracts. The premiums recently earned and some yet to be decided are features of the contracts made before this conclusion was reached.

THE NAVY'S GROWTH.

On March 4, 1893, there were in commission but two armored vessels, the double turreted monitors Miantonomah and Monitor. Since that date, eight new unarmored cruisers and two new gunboats have also been commissioned. The Iowa, another battleship, will be completed about March 1, and at least four more gunboats will be ready for sea in the early spring. It is gratifying to state that our ships and their armaments are believed to be equal to the best that can be manufactured elsewhere, and that such notable reductions have been made in their cost as to justify the statement that quite a number of vessels are now being constructed at rates as low as those that prevail in European shipyards.

AMPLE FACILITIES.

Our manufacturing facilities are at this time ample for all possible naval contingencies. Three of our government navy yards, those at Mare Island, Cal., Norfolk, Va., and Brooklyn, N. Y., are equipped for ship building, ordnance plant in Washington is equal to any in the world, and the torpedo station we are successfully making the highest grades of smokeless powder. Three first-class private shipyards, at Newport News, Philadelphia and San Francisco, are building battle ships; eleven contractors, situated in the states of Maine, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Virginia and the state of Washington are constructing gunboats or torpedo boats. Two plants are manufacturing large quantities of first-class armor, and American factories are producing automobile torpedo and powder projectiles, rapid fire guns and everything else necessary for the complete outfit of naval vessels.

VESSELS NOW BUILDING.

There have been authorized by congress since March, 1893, five battleships, six light-draft gunboats, sixteen torpedo boats and the submarine torpedo boat. Contracts for the building of all of them have been let. The secretary expresses the opinion that we have for the present sufficient supply of cruisers and gunboats, and that hereafter the construction of battleships and torpedo boats will supply our needs.

Much attention has been given to the methods of carrying on departmental business. Important modifications in the regulations have been made, tending to unify the control of ship building, as far as may be under the bureau of construction and repair, and also to improve the mode of purchasing supplies for the navy by the bureau of supplies and accounts. The establishment, under recent acts of congress, of a supply fund, with which to purchase these supplies in large quantities, and other modifications of methods, have tended materially to their cheapening and better quality.

THE WAR COLLEGE.

The War college has developed into an institution which is believed to be of great value to the navy in teaching the science of war as well as in stimulating professional zeal in the navy; and it will be especially useful in the devising of plans for the utilization, in case of necessity, of all the navy resources of the United States. The secretary has persistently adhered to the plan he found in operation for securing labor at navy yards through boards of labor employment, and has done much to make it more complete and efficient. The naval officers who are familiar with this system and its operation express the decided opinion that its results have been to vastly improve the character of the work done at our yards and greatly reduce its cost.

MORE AMERICANS.

Discipline among the officers and men of the navy has been maintained to a high standard, and the percentage of American citizens enlisted has been very much increased. The secretary is considering, and will formulate during the coming winter, a plan for laying up ships in reserve, thereby largely reducing the cost of maintaining our vessels afloat. This plan contemplated that battleships, torpedo boats and such of the cruisers as are not needed for active service at sea shall be kept in reserve, with skeleton crews on board, to keep them in condition, cruising only enough to insure the efficiency of the ships and their crews in time of activity. The economy to result from this system is too obvious to need comment. The naval militia, which was authorized a few years ago as an experiment, has now developed into a body of enterprising young men, active and energetic, and promising great usefulness. This establishment has nearly the same relation to our navy as the national guard in the different states bears to our army; and it constitutes a source of supply for our naval forces, the importance of which is immediately apparent.

THE INTERIOR.

Advocates an Indian Commission With Three Members.

The report of the secretary of the interior presents a comprehensive and in-

teresting exhibit of the numerous and important affairs committed to his supervision. It is impossible in this communication to do more than briefly refer to a few of the subjects concerning which the secretary gives full and instructive information. The money appropriated on account of this department for its disbursement for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1896, amounted to more than \$157,000,000, or a greater sum than was appropriated for the entire maintenance of the government for the two fiscal years ended June 30, 1891. Our public lands, originally amounting to 1,840,000,000 acres, have been so reduced that only about 800,000,000 acres still remain in government control, excluding Alaska. The balance, being by far the most valuable portion, has been given away to settlers, to new states and to railroads, or sold at a comparatively nominal sum. The patenting of land in execution of railroad grants has progressed rapidly during the year, and since the 4th day of March, 1893, about 25,000,000 acres have thus been conveyed to these corporations. I agree with the secretary that the remainder of our public lands should be more carefully dealt with and their alienation guarded by better economy and greater vigilance. The commission appointed from the membership of the National Academy of Science, provided for by an act of congress, to formulate plans for a national forestry system, will, it is hoped, be ready to present to the president the result of a thorough and intelligent examination of this important subject.

THE INDIAN.

The total Indian population of the United States is 177,235 according to a census made in 1895, exclusive of those within the state of New York and those comprising the five civilized tribes. Of these, there are approximately 88,000 children of school age. During the year 23,333 of these were enrolled in schools. The progress which has attended recent efforts to extend Indian school facilities, and the anticipation of continued liberal appropriations to that end, cannot fail to afford the utmost satisfaction to those who believe that the education of Indian children is a prime factor in the accomplishment of Indian civilization.

It may be said in general terms that in every particular the improvement of the Indians under government control has been most marked and encouraging. The secretary, the commissioner of Indian affairs and the agents having charge of Indians to whom allotments have been made, strongly urge the passage of a law prohibiting the sale of liquor to allottees who have taken their lands in severalty. I earnestly join in this recommendation and venture to express the hope that the Indian may be speedily protected against this the greatest of all obstacles to his well-being and advancement.

THE CIVILIZED TRIBES.

The condition of affairs among the five civilized tribes, who occupy large tracts of land in the Indian territory, and who have governments of their own, has assumed such an aspect as to render it almost indispensable that there should be an entire change in the relations of these Indians to the general government. This seems to be necessary in furtherance of their own interests, as well as for the protection of non-Indian residents in their territory. A commission, created and empowered under several recent laws is now negotiating with these Indians for the relinquishment of their courts and the division of their common lands in severalty, and are aiding in the settlement of the troublesome question of tribal membership. The reception of their first proposals of negotiation was not encouraging, but through patience and such conduct on their part as demonstrated that their intentions were friendly and in the interest of the tribes, the prospect of success has become more promising. The effort should be to save these Indians from the consequences of their own mistakes and improvidence, and to secure to the real Indian his rights as against intruders and professed friends who profit by his retrogression.

POOR LO'S FRIEND.

A change is also needed to protect life and property through the operations of courts conducted according to strict justice and strong enough to enforce their mandates. As a sincere friend of the Indian, I am exceedingly anxious that these reforms should be accomplished with the consent and aid of the tribes, and that no necessity may be presented for radical or drastic legislation. I hope, therefore, that the commission now conducting negotiations will soon be able to report that progress has been made towards a friendly adjustment of existing difficulties.

It appears that a very valuable deposit of gilsonite or asphaltum has been found on the reservation in Utah occupied by the Uncompahgre Indians. Every consideration of care for the public interest and every sensible business reason dictate such management or disposal of this important source of public revenue as will except it from the general rules and incidents attending the ordinary disposition of public lands, and secure to the government a fair share, at least, of its advantages in place of its transfer for a nominal sum to interested individuals.

NEW INDIAN COMMISSION.

I endorse the recommendation made by the present secretary of the interior as well as his predecessor that a permanent commission, consisting of three members, one of whom shall be an army officer, be created to perform the duties now devolving upon the commissioner and assistant commissioner of Indian affairs. The management of the bureau involves such numerous and diverse details and the advantages of an uninterrupted policy are so apparent that the change suggested will meet the approval of the congress.

PENSIONS.

Frauds Demoralize Our People and Undermine Our Citizenship.

The diminution of our enormous pension roll and the decrease of pension expenditures, which have been so often confidently foretold, still fail in material realization. The number of pensioners on the rolls at the close of the fiscal year ended June 30, 1896, was 970,678. This is the largest number ever reported. The amount paid exclusively for the pensions during the year was \$138,214,761.94, a slight decrease from that of the preceding year, while the total expenditures on account of pensions, including the cost of maintaining the department and expenses attending the pension distributions amounted to \$142,206,550.59, or within a very small fraction of one-third of the entire expense of supporting the government during the same year. The number of new pension certificates issued was 90,640. Of these 40,374 represent original allowances of claims and 15,878 increase of existing pensions. The number of persons receiving pensions from the United States, but residing in foreign countries, at the close of the last fiscal year was 3,781, and the amount paid to them during the year was \$582,725.33. The sum appropriated for the payment of pensions for the current year fiscal year ending June 30, 1897, is \$140,000,000, and for the succeeding year it is estimated that the same amount will be necessary.

SOME PENSION FRAUDS.

The commissioner of pensions reports that during the last fiscal year 339 indictments were found against violators of the pension laws. Upon these indictments 107 convictions resulted. In my opinion, based upon such statements as these and much other information and observation, the abuses which have been allowed to creep into our pension department have done incalculable harm in demoralizing our people and undermining good citizenship. I have endeavored within my sphere of official duty to protect our pension and make it what it should be, a roll of honor, containing the names of those disabled in their country's service and worthy of their country's affectionate remembrance.

When I have seen those who pose as the soldiers' friends active and alert in urging greater laxity and more reckless pension expenditure, while nursing selfish schemes, I have deprecated the approach of a situation when necessary retrenchment and enforced economy may lead to an attack upon pension abuses so determined as to overlook the discrimination due to those who, worthy of a nation's care, ought to live and die under the protection of a nation's gratitude.

THE PACIFIC ROADS.

Government Must Soon Pay Millions Due On Them.

The secretary calls attention to the public interests involved in an adjustment of the obligations of the Pacific railroads to the government. I deem it to be an important duty to especially present this subject to the consideration of the congress.

On January 1, 1897, with the amount already matured, more than \$13,000,000 of the principal of the subsidy bonds issued by the United States in aid of the construction of the Union Pacific railway, including its Kansas line, and more than \$6,000,000 of like bonds issued in aid of the Central Pacific railroad, including those issued to the Western Pacific Railroad company, will have fallen due, and been paid, or must on that day be paid, by the government. Without any reference to the application of the sinking fund now in the treasury, this will create such a default on the part of these companies to the government as will give the right to the mortgage holders to foreclose its mortgage on the line. In addition to this indebtedness that will be due January 1, 1897, there will mature between that date and January 1, 1898, the remaining principal of such subsidy bonds, which must also be met by the government. These amount to more than \$20,000,000 on account of the Union Pacific line, and exceed \$21,000,000 on account of the Central Pacific lines.

TERMINATE OR REVISE.

The situation of these roads and the condition of their indebtedness to the government have been fully set forth in the reports of various committees to the present and prior congresses; and as early as 1887 they were thoroughly examined by a special commission appointed pursuant to an act of congress. The consideration requiring an adjustment of the government's relations to the companies have been clearly presented, and no conclusion reached with practical uniformity. The relations are not terminated that should be revised upon a basis securing their safe continuance.

Under a section of the act of congress passed March 3, 1887, the president is charged with the duty, in the event that any mortgage or other incumbrance amount to the interest of the United States in the property of the Pacific railroads shall exist and be lawfully liable to be enforced, to direct the action of the departments of treasury and of justice in the protection of the interest of the United States by redemption through judicial proceedings, including foreclosures of the government liens. In view of the fact that the congress has for a number of years almost constantly had under consideration various plans for dealing with the conditions existing between these roads and the government, I have thus far felt justified in withholding action under the statute above mentioned.

AFTER THE UNION PACIFIC.

In the case of the Union Pacific company, however, the situation has become especially and immediately urgent. Proceedings have been instituted to foreclose a first mortgage upon those aided parts of the main line upon which the government holds a second and subordinate mortgage lien. In connection with these proceedings, no increasing complications, added to the default occurring on the 1st day of January, 1897, a condition will be presented at that date, so far as this company is concerned, that must emphasize the mandate of the act of 1887 and give to executive duty, under its provisions, a more imperative aspect. Therefore, unless congress shall otherwise direct, or shall have previously determined upon a different solution of the problem, there will hardly appear to exist any reason for delaying beyond the date of the default above mentioned, such executive action as will promise to subserve the public interests and save the government from the loss threatened by further inaction.

AGRICULTURE.

Secretary Morton Given Great Praise for His Work.

The department of agriculture is so intimately related to the welfare of our people and the prosperity of our nation, that it should constantly receive the care and encouragement of the government. From small beginnings it has grown to be the center of agricultural intelligence and the source of aid and encouragement to agricultural efforts. Large sums of money are annually appropriated for the maintenance of this department and it must be confessed that the legislation relating to it has not always been directly in the interest of practical farming or properly guarded against waste and extravagance. So far, however, the public money has been appropriated fairly and sensibly to help those who actually till the soil. No expenditure has been more profitably made or more generally approved by the people.

ECONOMY ENFORCED.

Under the present management of the department its usefulness has been enhanced in every direction and at the same time strict economy has been enforced to the utmost extent permitted by congressional action. From the report of the secretary it appears that through careful and prudent financial management he has annually saved a large sum from his appropriations, aggregating during his incumbency and up to the close of the fiscal year nearly one-fifth of the entire amount appropriated. These results have been accomplished by a conscientious study of the real needs of the farmer and such a regard for economy as the genuine farmer ought to appreciate, supplemented by a rigid adherence to civil service methods in a department which should be conducted in the interest of agriculture instead of partisan politics.

EXPORTS INCREASED.

The secretary reports that the value of our exports of farm products during the last fiscal year amounted to \$570,000,000, an increase of \$17,000,000 over those

of the year immediately preceding. This statement is not the less welcome because of the fact that, notwithstanding such increase, the proportion of exported agricultural products to our total exports of all descriptions fell off during the year. The benefits of an increase in agricultural exports being assured, the decrease in its proportion to our total exports is the more gratifying when we consider that it is owing to the fact that such total exports for the year increased more than \$75,000,000. The large and increasing exportation of our agricultural products suggests the great usefulness of the organization lately established in the department for the purpose of giving to those engaged in farming pursuits reliable information concerning the condition, needs and advantages of different foreign markets. Inasmuch as the success of the farmer depends upon the advantageous sale of his products, and inasmuch as foreign markets must largely be the destination of such products, it is quite apparent that a knowledge of the conditions and wants that affect those markets ought to result in sowing more intelligently and reaping with a better promise of profit.

AGAINST FREE SEEDS.

Such information points out the way to a prudent foresight in the selection and cultivation of crops, and to a release from the bondage of unreasoning monotony of production, a glutted and depressed market, and constantly recurring unprofitable toil. In my opinion the gratuitous distribution of seeds by the department as at present conducted ought to be discontinued. No one can read the statement of the secretary on this subject and doubt the extravagance and questionable results of this practice. The professed friends of the farmer, and certainly the farmers themselves, are naturally expected to be willing to rid a department devoted to the promotion of farming interests of a feature which tends so much to its discredit.

The weather bureau, now attached to the department of agriculture, has continued to extend its sphere of usefulness and by an uninterrupted improvement in the accuracy of its forecasts has greatly increased its efficiency as an aid and protection to all whose occupations are related to weather conditions.

Omitting further reference to the operations of the department, I commend the secretary's report and the suggestions it contains to the careful consideration of the congress.

(Concluded next week.)

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