

from the point of view of human life is equal to the British.

The conference will probably conclude its sessions in time to enable the delegates from various nations to return to their homes for Christmas.

If the representatives of the assembled nations should reach an agreement on the many propositions for safety before them the results will be embodied in a treaty or convention which after careful consideration by the president, the secretary of state, and the secretary of commerce will be transmitted to the senate for its consideration early in 1914.

POSTAL DEPARTMENT

In January last, the month in which the parcel post system was inaugurated by the post-office department, 38,730,828 packages of merchandise were carried in the mails. Of this number 4,126,482 were reported by New York city, which now reports for the month of August 8,800,692 parcel post packages. Applying the same rate of increase to the whole country, it is probably safe to assume that the United States mails are now carrying monthly more than eighty million parcels. In spite of this vast increase of business the department has kept step with the heavy demands made upon it, and there is more assurance now of the safe delivery of parcels by mail than at any time heretofore. Information has been laid before Postmaster General Bursleson indicating that the percentage of damage to parcels is less in the mails than in shipments carried by private express companies, and less now than in the opening weeks of the parcel post service, but he believes that it can be still further reduced. To this end a number of important measures have been instituted.

Bulky and fragile packages are no longer permitted to be delivered from moving trains; the protection of all parcels and especially those marked to show that they are fragile or perishable has been secured as far as possible by more comprehensive rules and instructions.

In June a plan was adopted for relieving the congestion on railway mail cars, and the detailed arrangements are now nearing completion. Sixty-three heavy distribution points throughout the country were selected for the location of railway post office terminal stations. Here on "terra firma" and under good conditions of space and light parcel post matter will be prepared for shipment. Every article will be hand-packed, and the contents of each sack will be arranged to the best advantage to be secure and to economize space. The greater portion will be enclosed in sacks for shipment direct to the office of destination. When this is not possible articles addressed to one section of the country will be brought together and shipped to a distant terminal, where they will be redistributed and consolidated with other such shipments arriving at the same time and reshipped to a distant terminal, where they will be redistributed and consolidated with other such shipments arriving at the same time and reshipped in full sacks to the office of destination. Full sacks, carefully packed and few handlings: that is the idea and it is approaching reality.

Twelve of these terminals have already been opened; and the whole 63 will be doing business within the next 30 or 60 days. At New York city 250,000 packages are being prepared for shipment in this way at the new terminal railway post office every day. When the plan is fully inaugurated the saving to the government in railway mail pay alone will be not less than \$2,000,000 annually, and packages will be handled and delivered with more safety and expedition.

Compared with 80,000,000 transactions a month, the number of complaints of loss and damage has been very small. But the postmaster general and his assistants have given careful consideration to the general character of these complaints and find that since the application of the remedial measures instituted in the early weeks of this administration practically every case reported of damage has been due to improper or inadequate wrapping or packing and to lack of information on the part of the public as to the requirements of the regulations. The postmaster general believes that the regulations in force are for the present sufficient and adequate and that a multiplicity of orders is to be avoided. He is undertaking to secure the co-operation of the public and of postmasters in applying to the use of the parcel post a knowledge and understanding of the rules and

of ordinary common-sense precautions. As an important step in this campaign of education circular letters have been sent out within the past month to all postmasters of the presidential grade calling on them for special concerted action in relieving the mails of improperly wrapped and packed parcels, first, by advertising in every way possible the proper manner of preparing different kinds of merchandise for the mails, and second, by instructing their employees to scrutinize all packages offered and to refuse to accept those that are not properly prepared. The postmasters are also directed to give especial attention to the methods followed in their offices in dealing with parcel post mail and to adopt such precautionary measures as will thoroughly safeguard it. A special order has been promulgated to the railway mail service requiring special care in handling parcel post mail.

These measures are in line with the policy of the department of reaching postmasters and other field officers by direct communications, designed to enlist their earnest co-operation and to discourage mere perfunctory performance of official duties.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

The secretary of agriculture issued rules and regulations governing the importation of meat and meat food products to carry out the meat section of the tariff act. The regulations provide for foreign certifications as to ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection in countries in which the animals are slaughtered. In addition, meats will be inspected by the department of agriculture at ports of entry before admission. Attached to the regulations is a full list of veterinary inspectors in foreign countries whose certificates are acceptable to the United States.

The regulations also place foreign meats after entry into the United States on the same basis as domestic meats. Heretofore imported meats have been governed entirely by the food and drugs act and have been excluded from the establishments under the inspection of the bureau of animal industry under the meat inspection act. Under the new regulations imported meats are placed under the meat inspection act after entry and thus are admitted to federally inspected establishments and are governed by the same inspection system as heretofore has surrounded interstate commerce in domestic meats. The general rule is that no meats that are diseased, contain harmful dyes, chemicals, preservatives, or other ingredients which render such meat or meat product unsound, unhealthful, unwholesome, or unfit for human food, will be admitted.

As soon as the president had established regulations for the protection of migratory birds in accordance with the act of March 4, the department set in motion machinery to make these regulations fully effective in every state on November 1, the date specified for the operation of the proclamation. These regulations put under federal protection for the first time a large number of migratory game and insectivorous birds and thus place restrictions on the five million hunters of the United States. These regulations establish two zones, one the breeding zone and the other the wintering zone. The breeding zone comprises twenty-five states wholly or in part north of latitude 40 degrees and the Ohio river, and the latter comprises twenty-three states and the District of Columbia wholly or in part south of latitude 40 degrees and the Ohio river.

To enforce these regulations the states have been grouped into thirteen units or districts, each in charge of an inspector. As far as possible these men will be organized in each district under the immediate direction of a field inspector. The work of organizing will probably be begun in the middle states, the northwest, and the Pacific coast. The department expects to have the assistance of the game commission deputies in the states as well as the public generally and sportsmen in particular who are interested in the success of the new law.

An important notice warning canners of tomatoes that they must not add water to their product was issued. A similar notice was issued to oyster canners telling them the amount of drained oyster meat that must be present in the different sized cans to conform with the regulations of the board of food and drug inspection.

The plan of circulating state crop reports by telegraph to the central weather stations in each state and having them duplicate the telegraphed information and mail it to the papers

within the state proved so satisfactory that the plan next month will be extended to Oklahoma, Idaho and Florida.

The department sent three of its explorers to Brazil to see whether new varieties of navel oranges could be discovered that could profitably be grown in the United States.

The first number of the Agricultural Outlook was well received. The second number, in addition to the figures of the crop reports, will contain several statements by specialists in the department dealing with the subject of increasing meat cattle production in the United States, especially on the farms in the more settled sections.

The first number of the Journal of Agricultural Research is now in press and will shortly appear. This journal will afford a convenient medium of communication between the scientists of the department and others engaged in similar research.

Other publications issued during the month were:

A Normal Day's Work for Various Farm Operations, Department Bulletin No. 3.

The Agricultural Utilization of Acid Lands by Means of Acid-tolerant Crops, Department Bulletin No. 6.

Infectious Abortion of Cattle, and the occurrence of its bacterium in milk, Bureau of Animal Industry Circular No. 216.

Fall Breaking and the Preparation of the Seed Bed, Bureau of Plant Industry, Unnumbered Circular.

Medical Milk Commissions and Certified Milk, Department Bulletin No. 1.

Game Laws for 1913, Department Bulletin No. 22.

Vitrified Brick as a Paving Material for Country Roads, Department Bulletin No. 23.

Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the American Association of Farmers' Institute Workers, Office of Experiment Stations Bulletin No. 256.

The Southern Corn Rootworm, or Budworm, Department Bulletin No. 5.

The Western Corn Rootworm, Department Bulletin No. 8.

Life Zones and Crop Zones of New Mexico, North American Fauna No. 35.

Measles in Cattle, Circular 214, Bureau of Animal Industry.

Kafir as a Grain Crop, Farmers' Bulletin No. 552.

The Potato Tuber Moth, Farmers' Bulletin No. 557.

Pop Corn for the Home, Farmers' Bulletin No. 553.

Pop Corn for the Market, Farmers' Bulletin No. 554.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

During the past five weeks the special investigators appointed by Secretary Wilson have made a thorough inquiry into the quality and condition of the food served to the immigrants at Ellis Island. Allegations that the contractors, Messrs. Hudgins & Dumas, were not supplying the immigrants with food according to the specifications caused the department to order a thorough and searching investigation of the entire matter. The commission sat for five weeks, heard over 150 witnesses, and thoroughly sifted every charge, concluding their investigations on the 3d instant. The findings of the commission, in part, were as follows:

"The commission finds that Hudgins & Dumas, the contractors, are fully complying with the requirements of the specifications under which the contract was awarded; that the acting commissioner was fully justified in sustaining the representatives of that firm in refusing to permit McCann and his associates to make an unauthorized investigation on the island on July 30th last, at the time they appeared, without credentials; that charges to the effect that employees of the government and others stationed at Ellis Island were demoted or dismissed for submitting reports to the effect that bad food was being served at Ellis Island are absolutely contradicted by the testimony—it is shown that Martin Hartvig, the party complained of in this connection, who was an employee of the telegraph company, stationed on Ellis Island, and who, it is alleged, was dismissed because of talking to Alfred W. McCann, resigned of his own accord for the purpose of going into business."

The commission in its report, however, makes several recommendations, some of which are: That the provisions contained in the specifications for inspection of all meats, by a represen-