

HOUSTON TRIES TO REDUCE H. C. OF L.

Secretary of Agriculture Reviews Work of His Department on This Line.

PRODUCTION INCREASES

Washington, Dec. 7.—Efforts to reduce the cost of living through increased production and better distribution of the country's foods are detailed in the annual report of Secretary Houston of the Department of Agriculture, made public today. The report also devotes considerable attention to the pure food law and urges on congress the need of strengthening it to permit standardization of foods and drugs and inspection of foods and drug factories.

Records of the department, the report sets forth, show that except for meat and dairy products the per capita production of the leading food commodities in the United States has remained about the same despite the rapid growth of population. Statistics presented cover a period of sixteen years. The population has increased in that time 33 per cent. There is ground for optimism, the report says, as to the ability of the nation not only to supply itself with food, but increasingly to meet the needs of the world.

One of the principle aims of the department has been to increase meat production. The report shows a steady growth since 1913 in the output of beef and an advance in the number of swine every year since 1899. More extensive sheep raising is recommended as a source of food. It is pointed out that only one farm in seven in the United States now supports sheep. Fifty million sheep, it is said, could be added to the country's flocks.

Stabilizing of Production.

Stabilizing of production is recommended as one of the greatest agricultural needs in producing food crops sufficient to meet demands. This can be accomplished best, the report points out, through better adapted or improved crop varieties, more systematic and rational crop rotation and improved agricultural practice generally. In many parts of the country more attention to live stock production is essential to enduring and economical agriculture, the report declares.

It is highly desirable, it is pointed out, that areas for production of staple crops be broadened as far as experience and sound economics may warrant. In this respect the report dwells on the importance of controlling plant diseases and insect pests.

Marketing of farm products, rural finances and rural organization, the report says, have received close attention from the department in the last three years. A four-year program, developed in 1913, has been in a large measure carried out.

Improved Marketing of Stock.

Improved marketing of live stock and meats has been sought by the department as a means of cheapening these products. Already, the report says, arrangements have been made with fifty-eight stock yard companies to secure monthly reports of live stock receipts and shipments. A uniform system of marketing records has been established at the instance of the department by a number of yards. Methods and costs of marketing live stock and meats were investigated. A preliminary investigation of the sources, accuracy and use of market reports on live stock and meats has been made. The results of this study have been utilized in development of plans for the organization of a demonstration market news service for live stock similar to that now conducted for perishable crops.

Other efforts at better distribution methods are described, as follows: "Surveys have been made of the marketing facilities for agricultural products in nine cities and advice has been given regarding the location, establishment and management of municipal retail and wholesale public markets. Detailed studies also have been made of conditions in other cities. Investigation concerning methods of handling and grading perishable products and the practicability of standardization of the products and their containers have progressed rapidly.

The issuance of monthly cold-storage reports on apples has been

continued, and the work has been extended to include butter, eggs and cheese. These reports show the cold-storage holdings throughout the country and include a comparison of the holdings of the current year with those of the previous year. In cooperation with carriers, extensive investigations of the economic waste of foodstuffs in transit have been conducted. The object of these investigations is to secure better co-operation between shippers and carriers and greater efficiency in methods of handling, with a view to eliminate, or at least greatly to reduce, the present waste.

"Well-tested systems of accounts and records for primary grain elevators, for live stock shipping associations, and for co-operative stores have been issued. Systems for country creameries and cotton warehouses have been devised and are being tested under commercial conditions. Systems perfected by the department for farmers' co-operative elevators and for fruit and produce associations already are in extensive use. A plan for adapting farmers' grain-elevator companies to the patronage dividend basis has been worked out and published.

Meat Production Increases.

Meat production has been increased, according to the report, largely through checking of disease and parasites and by better stock raising. More than forty per cent of the original tick infested territory has been cleared, the report says, and the annual loss of \$40,000,000 through this parasite has been greatly reduced. Diseases are being eliminated. The report says of food production:

"The production of food crops adequate to meet the consuming needs of the country and the export demand is a matter of large importance to the American people. Our potential agricultural resources in this respect are so varied and ample that there can be no doubt of our ability abundantly to supply our domestic wants, when climatic conditions are normal and the foreign demand is not excessive. One of the greatest agricultural needs, therefore, is the stabilizing of production.

Systematic Rotation Encouraged.

"Sharp fluctuation of yield and price from season to season tend to stimulate speculative and superficial farming and to discourage the systematic crop rotation and thorough cultural practice which are essential to an enduring and economically sound agriculture. It is obvious that, in large measure, stabilization of production must be brought about through the use of better adapted or improved crop varieties, more systematic and rational crop rotations, and improved agricultural practice generally, including in many sections, larger attention to live stock production.

"As the principles of crop improvement are better understood and more generally applied, larger yields, per acre should result. In addition, a great deal can be accomplished through increase of soil fertility and better cultural methods. Enough has been done in this direction by the state experiment stations and the department, and also by good farmers, to justify the expectation that considerably increased yields gradually will be brought about in a large part of the area adapted to the staple food crops.

"Very destructive climatic conditions never occur in this country with equal severity throughout all the staple-crop regions. It is highly desirable, therefore, to further to broaden the areas for these staples as far as experience and sound economics may warrant."

Food and Drug Acts.

The report reviews at length the administration of the foods and drugs act. Its recommendations for legislation to reinforce the present law are given: "Experience in connection with the administration of the food and drugs act has strikingly empha-

sized the importance of enforceable standards for foods and drugs. Without them it is impossible to carry out completely the purposes of the act. In many instances protection of the consumer—the principal object of the law—cannot be fully accomplished, nor can unfair practices on the part of unscrupulous manufacturers adequately be prevented. In some cases maintenance of prosecution is difficult and expensive, even when the articles involved clearly are adulterated or misbranded. To meet this situation I have recommended in the estimates for the fiscal year 1918 that the secretary of agriculture be authorized to establish standards of strength, quality, or purity for articles of food and for those articles of drugs which are sold under or by a name not recognized in the United States pharmacopoeia or national formulary. The suggestion provides that if any article fails to conform to the established standards it shall be deemed to be misbranded, unless it is labeled so as plainly and conspicuously to show how it differs from the standard. "I have also recommended in the estimates that the department be given authority to inspect establishments producing foods or drugs intended for shipment in interstate or foreign commerce. No specific authority exists at the present time. If the suggested authority be granted, the department should be able to improve the quality of food products, both by bringing to the attention of manufacturers any insanitary conditions that may be discovered and by securing evidence of production under insanitary conditions."

Big Plants Are Sold For Few Thousand

Who would like the opportunity of purchasing a couple of industrial plants like those of the Cudahy Packing company and the Jetter Brewing company for a few thousand dollars? At the county treasurer's tax sale the brewing company's plant was "knocked down" to G. W. Hoyt of Chicago for \$1,500 in taxes; F. H. Wellcome bought the big packing plant for \$9,000 in taxes—but, representatives of both companies hurried to the court house and redeemed the plants within an hour or so after the sales were made. The tax sales were merely in conformance with the law and the companies had two years in which to redeem their plants.

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WITNESS RELATES STORY OF THREAT

Mrs. Alice Willard, at Red Oak, Says Prison Term Held Up Before Her.

A MATTER OF ACCURACY

Red Oak, Ia., Dec. 7.—(Special Telegram.)—The most sensational evidence brought out in the Jones-Willkerson \$60,000 damage suit today was that of Mrs. Alice Willard, who testified that on Monday evening of this week she was taken to Villisca in an automobile with James Atkinson of Stanton and that on the trip Atkinson told her that Senator F. F. Jones had witnesses to prove he was not in the vacant lot north of the Joe Moore home on the night before the Villisca axe murder of 1912 and that unless she had witnesses to substantiate her testimony that she saw Jones there and heard him and three other men plotting the murder of the Joe Moore family, it would get her in bad and that if it could be proven that she did not tell the truth on the stand it would mean a penitentiary offense. Mrs. Willard said in her testimony this afternoon that she told Atkinson that she was sure of what she saw that night before the murder and that she told the truth when she testified. Several witnesses were put on the stand again today to testify for the defense relative to the implement shed in the rear of the Jones store in which J. W. Noell of Villisca testified that he saw Senator Jones, Albert Jones and W. B. McCaull on the night of May 26, 1916, and heard them talking about the murder. Witnesses for the plaintiff have tes-

tified that the shed was filled with implements and there were no cracks in the sides of the shed that could be seen through, but the defendant's witnesses today stated that there was vacant space in the shed where men could stand and converse and that there were cracks in the side of the shed that could be seen through. It is thought that the testimony will all be in tomorrow.

Fifty Thousand Make Applications For Farm Loans

Washington, Dec. 7.—Officials of the farm loan board announced today that more than 50,000 farmers have applied for mortgage loans aggregating approximately \$150,000,000, or more than seventeen times the amount of money which will be immediately available for loans upon the organization of the twelve farm loan banks. Most of the applications have come from the south and west. They still continue to come in by hundreds every day. Requests for application blanks, contemplating requests for loans to 2,000 farmers, have come from Iowa alone. Although the location of the banks

probably will not be announced before December 20, it was said today that almost immediately after organization the banks would find it necessary to issue bonds for virtually their entire capital stock, to meet the demands of borrowers. The rate of interest on bonds is a subject now engaging the board's attention. It is thought that it will not exceed 5 per cent and may not exceed 4½ per cent.

Bee Want Ads Produce Results.

Missouri Bull Wins First Prize

Chicago, Dec. 6.—The grand champion Shorthorn trophy at the International Live Stock exposition today was awarded Village Supreme, a Missouri bull, a 2-year-old, entered by Bellows Bros. of Marysville, Mo., who won over Burnbrae Sullivan, the white Canadian entry of Guelph, Ontario, which had just taken first honors in the senior champion class of 3 years and over. Max Walton, pride of Mansfield, O., took first in class of bulls 2 years old and under 3. Increasing values of well-bred horse flesh were shown in an offer of \$2,000 for a 7 months old Clydesdale filly owned by Robert A. Fairbairn of Westfield, N. J.

Phil Kohl Aspires To "Sub" for Howard

(From a Staff Correspondent.)
Lincoln, Dec. 7.—(Special.)—Senator Phil Kohl of Wayne will be a candidate for re-election as president pro tem of the senate, according to information given out by him this morning while on a short visit at the state house. Senator Kohl was one of the live wires of the democratic majority at the last session and gained considerable favorable mention for his lead in blocking the work of the house in its efforts to cut appropriations below what appeared to be the needs of the departments. While president pro tem, he had but one opportunity to preside, as Lieutenant Governor Pearson was always on the job and with his eye on the big chair. It is understood that Senator Howell of Douglas, and Senator Beal of Custer, are also candidates for the honor.

Departmental Orders.
Washington, Dec. 7.—(Special Telegram.)—A civil service examination will be held January 13 for postmaster at St. Michael, Neb.; Miranda and Okato, S. D. Bids were opened today at the Treasury department for the construction of the public building at Chadron, Neb. The lowest bidder was W. D. Lowell of Minneapolis, Minn., at \$189,200. E. A. Goodard of Omaha was next lowest bidder at \$195,500. J. Weiss bid \$122,500.

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