

considered farms at any previous censuses.

This enumeration as farms of cabbage and potato patches on city lots, while it accounts for much of the apparent increase in farm acreage, does not account for the wide discrepancy between the figures of the department of agriculture and those of the census as to the production of wheat and other staple products. According to the estimates of the department of agriculture the amount of wheat produced during the census year was 547,303,846 bushels and according to the census it was 661,143,657 bushels, a difference of nearly 114,000,000 bushels. That this discrepancy is largely due to the exaggerated census figures appears from our statistics of exports, which indicate that but 186,096,762 bushels of the wheat crop of the census year were exported. This, if we accept the census figures, would show that in this year our people consumed nearly  $6\frac{1}{4}$  bushels of wheat per capita, or from 40 to 50 per cent. more than the usual amount as indicated by official estimates for other years. This increase might be taken as unmistakable evidence of the prosperity of the consumers, were not the prosperity theory conclusively disproved by census wage statistics, which, when honestly compared, show a decided decrease in average earnings during the last decade.

This important fact the census office has sought to conceal by an adroit juggling of the data.

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## NEWS

The second session of the Fifty-seventh Congress began on the 1st. Only routine business was done, the Senate adjourning for the day in less than a quarter of an hour and the House in less than an hour. On the 2d both houses adjourned for the day after each had listened to the reading of the President's annual message. But on the 3d the regular business of the session began. In the Senate a substitute for the bill passed by the House at the previous session, for the admission of New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma as States, was reported by the committee on territories. It recommends the admission of

Oklahoma and the Indian Territory as one State, omitting New Mexico and Arizona. The House, after discussion, appropriated \$50,000 for the anthracite coal strike arbitration commission.

In his message, President Roosevelt dwells upon the prosperity of the country. While recognizing that this prosperity "is not the creature of the law," he declares that "undoubtedly the laws under which we work have been instrumental in creating the conditions which made it possible," and that "by unwise legislation it would be easy enough to destroy it."

Noting then a great increase and general diffusion of the wealth of the country, the President observes that the conditions favoring it have "also favored somewhat the growth of what was evil," and this leads him to a consideration of the trust question. He believes that "monopolies, unjust discriminations, which prevent or cripple competition, fraudulent over-capitalization, and other evils in trust organizations, and practices which injuriously affect interstate trade, can be prevented under the power of the Congress to 'regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States,' through regulations and requirements operating directly upon such commerce, the instrumentalities thereof, and those engaged therein." Accordingly, he recommends "the passage of a law, reasonable in its provisions and effective in its operation, under which the questions can be finally adjudicated that now raise doubts as to the necessity of constitutional amendment." If, however, such a law be invalid, then he urges that "we should not shrink from amending the Constitution so as to secure beyond peradventure the power sought." In this connection Mr. Roosevelt considers the proposition to deprive trust-made goods of tariff protection. "Not merely would this be wholly ineffective," he argues, "but the diversion of our efforts in such a direction would mean the abandonment of all intelligent attempt to do away with these evils."

Moreover, he proceeds, the abolition of tariffs on trust-made goods would tend to destroy the protective system. This he would scrupulously avoid, because "the mere threat" of "dislocation" of that system, "not to

speak of the performance, would produce paralysis in the business energies of the community." Yet he would not fossilize the tariff, but would readjust its terms by reciprocity treaties and upon reports of commissions, which, while regarding "fixity of principle as regards the tariff," will permit "the necessary reapplication of the principle" from time to time "to the shifting national needs."

On the currency question Mr. Roosevelt recommends that upon banks, as "the natural servants of commerce," should be "placed, as far as practicable, the burden of furnishing and maintaining a circulation adequate to supply the needs of our diversified industries and commerce." He urges, furthermore, that all kinds of currency should be made "interchangeable, and at the will of the holder convertible into the established gold standard."

On the subject of capital and labor the message contains a homily but without specific recommendation.

The policy in the Philippines is described as having established a large measure of American liberty in those islands. "Not only," reads the message, "does each Filipino enjoy such rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as he has never before known during the recorded history of the islands, but the people taken as a whole now enjoy a measure of self-government greater than that granted to any other Orientals by any foreign power, "and greater than that enjoyed by any other Orientals under their own governments, save the Japanese alone." Mr. Roosevelt adds that while "we have not gone too far in granting these rights of liberty and self-government," "we have gone to the limit in the interests of the Philippine people themselves it was wise or just to go."

The other subjects mentioned in the message are Cuba, reciprocity with New Foundland, The Hague tribunal, the Isthmian canal, the Pacific cable, army reorganization, increase of the navy, the postal service, irrigation of and other matters relating to the public lands, Alaska, the Indian tribes, government aid to farmers, the government of the District of Columbia, and the public printing establishment.

From the press dispatches the

United States appear to have entered into diplomatic conferences with Great Britain and Germany relative to the South American republic of Venezuela. Although nothing more definite about the termination of the civil war in Venezuela has been reported than what we produced last month (p. 503), the dispatches indicate that the opposition to President Castro has been subdued, although some unimportant conflicts with small bands of insurgents are still reported. But a new danger has loomed up which may even revive the insurrection. The country is threatened with invasion by Great Britain and Germany. The latter has long menaced Venezuela. Upon the basis of a Venezuelan railroad loan held by German subjects (vol. iv, p. 601-2), it has threatened to collect the debt by forcibly taking possession of Venezuelan custom houses. Great Britain has since been drawn into an agreement with Germany for the ostensible purpose of collecting similar British claims and protecting European interests in Venezuela. This agreement was divulged in London on the 22d of November. It was at the same time reported, also from London, that the British government had received assurances that the United States would not interfere so long as the Monroe doctrine, which denies the right of European powers to acquire territory on this side of the Atlantic, was not defied. Both powers are represented by war ships in the Caribbean sea, and Admiral Dewey has gone to the Caribbean to take command of the large American fleet now in those waters nominally for practice maneuvers. It has been indicated by Great Britain and Germany to present to Venezuela a joint ultimatum, but on the 1st Berlin reports were to the effect that President Castro had signed an agreement acknowledging part of the German claims and that the proposed ultimatum had consequently been postponed. Then there were rumors from Washington that negotiations through the Seligman banking house were on foot for an issue of Venezuelan bonds, to be guaranteed by the United States, out of the proceeds of which the German and British claims might be satisfied. Since these rumors, however, it is reported from Washington that the two European powers are to make a joint naval demonstration at once. It is intimated that both have given assurances to the American government that

their purpose is to serve an ultimatum on President Castro demanding the payment of the obligations due the complaining commercial companies, and, if that fails, to establish a peaceful blockade of the principal Venezuelan ports, probably Puerto Cabello and La Guayra, and, if that fails, to seize custom houses and collect duties to the extent of the debt. To this purpose the government at Washington is understood to make no objection.

Great Britain's Irish difficulties (pp. 455-6, 487, 502) are apparently in process of satisfactory, even if only temporary, settlement. To that end, many of the landlords themselves are in conference with the tenants, though a large landlord faction opposes the movement. A convention of Irish land owners was held at Dublin on the 28th. At the same time and in the same city a committee of other Irish land owners, led by Lord Dunraven, assembled and addressed a communication to the convention proposing a conference with the tenants relative to a possible sale of the lands to them. Dunraven's committee based this proposal upon the fact (see p. 522) that it had sent voting papers on the subject to 4,000 owners of more than 500 acres each, and that the vote returned stood 1,128 in favor of a conference with tenants and 578 opposed, the others not voting. To this communication the landlords replied that the tenants must first perfect a business organization and formulate the terms they desire. Lord Dunraven's response was the adoption by his committee of a resolution instructing the landlords that support his policy to take immediate steps for a conference with their tenants. It is believed that in this policy of conciliation he has the support of the king and the ministry.

The British House of Commons passed the much debated education bill (p. 502) on the 3d by a vote of 236 to 132. It was immediately sent to the House of Lords, where, on the same day, it received its first reading.

In Germany what promises fairly to bring about a dangerous crisis in parliamentary government has nearly come to a head. This serious situation has been precipitated by the determination of the protectionists to force through the ministerial tariff bill, a bill which is opposed stub-

bornly by both the Socialist party and the People's party. Under the rules of the reichstag the measure must be considered by paragraphs; but this process was too slow to satisfy its supporters, and a combination of the Conservative, the National Liberal and the Center parties was made for the purpose of ordering that the measure be passed upon, not by paragraphs, but as a whole. A motion to this effect was made, whereupon the reichstag was in an uproar in a minute. The People's party and the Socialist party, united against the conservative coalition, denounced the motion as out of order and autocratic. No vote upon it has yet been reached. The nature of the feeling aroused may be inferred from the following cabled extract from the speech of the Socialist leader, Bebel, in denunciation of the protection combination:

By devices such as these the tariff will be presented to the ruling classes at Christmas so that they, over their caviar and oysters, may sneer at the efforts of the Social Democrats to protect the pockets of the poor.

France is in the throes of another labor strike, that of the stokers and sailors, which has assumed serious proportions at Marseilles and become a subject of parliamentary consideration. For want of sea transportation passengers to the number of a thousand or more are delayed at that port, and 8,000 troops are patrolling the streets. In answer to an interpellation in parliament on the 1st, the minister of commerce explained that the policy of the ministry in the matter of strikes was to maintain an attitude of neutrality toward both parties, to protect the workmen in the free exercise of their right to strike, and also to enforce regularity in the public service. The postal service was already provided for, he said, and there was not a single mail bag now delayed; but it was not possible to re-establish the passenger and freight traffic in the normal way. There were several other modes of doing so, he continued, one being to furnish sailors of the navy to the steamship companies; but the ministry did not desire to do this, as it would be taking sides with the companies. Another method was to transport the passengers and freight on government ships, but if the ministry did this, it would collect the tolls for the benefit of the state. The third way was to requisition the vessels of the companies and