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THURSDAY, DECEMBER 2, 1909

GREAT NATIONAL PROBLEM.

One need not share J. J. Hill's gloomy view that "high cost of living is the beginning of every national decline" to agree with him that it is now and here in America a great and grave national issue.

There is no question as to the facts. Bradstreet's "index figure" of commodity prices shows an average rise of 56 per cent. in thirteen years in the price of the necessities of life. Rent has in many cases risen in even greater ratio. Wages have generally risen not nearly so much.

We must wait for the 1910 census to show how the workingman now shares in the division of his product, but already in 1909 the wage fund in manufacture was shown to be growing only half as fast as capital and only one-third as fast as miscellaneous expenses. In 1896 the workingman, clerk or professional toiler could buy more food, shelter, clothing and other necessities and comforts with his wages, salary or fees than at any time since the civil war. Today the man of moderate means can buy less with his income than in 1896. For him the wheels of progress have turned backward, and he is deeply dissatisfied. He is ready to wreak political vengeance upon whatever or whoever is responsible.

What is doing the country this ill turn? Some say the trusts; it is a coincidence that the tendency began about the time the trusts did. Some say the tariff. Some say the middlemen. Some blame the increased production of gold since the invention of the cyanide process and the end of the Boer war. Some say living costs more because we have reached the end of our free homestead land—though Mr. Hill and his railroad friends are right in urging that better farming would double our yearly yield.

The cause and cure, whatever they may be, it behooves statesmen and leaders of thought to discover. The conditions of which Mr. Hill speaks, and are known to all men, cannot continue without the most far reaching social consequences and political upheavals in what Americans have long been proud to call the best country on earth for the average man.—*Altoona Times.*

The Swedes have a custom at Christmas time of decorating a pet lamb with red ribbons and bells, then loading it with gifts for the family. The lamb is turned loose in the house, and each person attempts to catch it and find his or her gift.—*Fur News.*

This is akin to the custom which prevails every week-day in the year in Wall street.

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WASHINGTON

From our Regular Correspondent.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 29, 1909

Now that Thanksgiving is over, but a little more than a week will elapse before Congress assembles. The city is rapidly filling up with Members of Congress and the Senate, their families, secretaries and friends. The coming session promises to be interesting, if not exciting. The city will, as usual, be replete with the many who habitually spend the season here and from time to time it will be crowded with conventions. A single convention, that of the Waterway Improvement, is expected here next month and it is said that there will be as many as 5,000 delegates. Numbers of these will, doubtless, bring their families, and, thus, early in the season the hotels and boarding houses will have a full complement of guests. During the summer season the building, especially of apartment houses, has gone on more rapidly in Washington than during any previous summer and many commodious apartment houses have been built, and they are no sooner finished than they are taken up by the great many who have contracted or are learning the apartment house habit. Thousands of houses have also been built in blocks, many of them sold. The city is increasing in population and wealth. Doubtless in time it will be equal in splendor to the great capitals of the old world. Palatial houses have been built, others are in the course of construction. One of the most conspicuous of these will be the French Embassy building. It will eclipse in grandeur that of the British Embassy on Connecticut Avenue. The latter has been for a long time the most imposing diplomatic residence in Washington. The British Government was the first to buy the ground and build a home for its representative at Washington and for a long time the British Embassy building was the most commodious of all the diplomatic residences. In recent years, however, a dozen or more residences of millionaires and multi millionaires have eclipsed in spaciousness and elegance the home of the British Embassy. It has still, however, held the first place in its class. No other foreign embassy can compare with it. Now, however, the one planned by the French Government, and which will be built almost entirely of material brought from France and the French Provinces, will eclipse in spaciousness and elegance that of Great Britain. The French Embassy building will occupy ground on Twenty-second and Decatur streets. It will have a frontage of 385 feet on one street with a depth of 213 feet and it will be surrounded by landscape gardens such as are peculiar to the more imposing residences of France and especially of Paris.

It will be remembered that Representative Longworth from Ohio, the son-in-law of Ex-President Roosevelt, during the last session presented a bill in the House of Representatives looking to the purchase of residences in foreign capital as homes of representatives of this country at foreign courts. It is difficult to make the average American realize the importance of having our foreign representatives established with dignity and elegance as to their place of residence abroad. The average foreigner, even if he is an intelligent Parisian, Londoner or Berliner, is so accustomed to judging by exterior appearances that he is incapable of appreciating or respecting a nation or a people until he has been impressed by a favorable mise-en-scene. It is just as important to the Nation that we shall make a good appearance, or, as the saying is, "put our best foot forward" abroad, as it is to the family that "Johnny shall have his face washed, his hair combed and his shoestrings tied when he is sent to school".

Apropos of foreign mission, the President of the United States will have to appoint two ambassadors at an early day, one to Great Britain and another to France; and, also, possibly an ambassador to Germany to succeed Mr. Hill who is now visiting in this country and is being entertained at the various embassies in Washington. It is not easy to find an ambassador fully qualified for these posts. Thirty or forty years ago the Americans now old enough to be ambassadors were in school. It was thought of little importance that they should know any other than the English language. The representative at the Court of St. James can get along very well without a knowledge of French and, although Mr. White-law-Reid was ambassador to France ten years ago and filled that post with credit, it is doubtful if he can

FARM CENSUS SCHEDULE.

The Most Thorough Ever Compiled by the Department.

Census Director Durand has received from Assistant Director William F. Willoughby the general schedule for the census of agriculture, April 15th next, which Mr. Willoughby, in conjunction with Prof. LeGrand Powers, chief statistician for agriculture and the advisory board of farm economists and other agricultural experts, has been formulating during the summer. Director Durand has approved the form and subdivision of the inquiries and has ordered nine million copies of the schedule to be printed by the government printing office in readiness before January first, although they will not be placed in the hands of the 45,000 farm enumerators until the usual time before the enumeration date. It is believed there are nearly seven million separate farms in the United States, each requiring a separate schedule. The schedule is printed on both sides of a single sheet, thirteen inches long and sixteen inches wide, of white writing paper, twenty-six by thirty-two inches. There is a three-inch wide column of instructions to enumerators on both left sides of the sheet so that it can be cut off after the filled-in schedule has been returned to the census bureau. This makes the schedule smaller in size and better adapted for handling in tabulation than previous schedules. A separate book of instructions to enumerators supplements the schedule information. The nine million copies will consume 4,500 reams of paper, which, counting fifty-two pounds to the ream, will make a weight of 234,000 pounds. The charge of printing, including the cost of paper, will be \$13,660. The schedule is so standardized that it will feed on the perfecting press used at the government printing office, which makes 9,000 revolutions per hour and prints four schedules each revolution, or a product of 56,000 per hour, as against the old flat-bed presses used on the 1900 schedules with a speed of from 1,200 to 1,500 revolutions per hour. It will take about three weeks to print them with the press running sixteen hours a day.

He Wouldn't be Mad.

When Georgia first became a prohibition State a man with a thirst was made to suffer untold agonies. Take the matter of drinks on trains, for instance. Not only was it against the law for liquor to be sold in transit from one point of Georgia to another, but no passenger might even offer a drink to another.

Once a stranger was traveling through Georgia on a train. He entered the dining car, called the negro waiter, and, with guileless innocence, order a highball. He was enlightened. He became resigned.

But his request produced an extraordinary effect. Every passenger who had been seated within hearing distance of the order at once rose from his seat, vanished for a moment in the direction of handbags and suitcases, and reappeared with a bottle. Every known beverage from port to whiskey, and back again by another route, was represented in that Georgian galaxy. There was a popping of corks. The stranger licked his lips and sat silent and unhappy. Presently a Georgian on the next seat turned to him, grinning benignly. "Stranger," he remarked, "it's agin the law for me to offer you a drink, but—God knows I won't quarrel with a man who steals my liquor."

Speak French half as well as the present French Ambassador, Mr. Jusserand, in Washington, can speak English. Our late ambassadors to France, Mr. White and General Porter, both spoke French fluently. A language half acquired after the years of maturity can never be spoken with ease and any one who remembers his difficulty in finding the right word at the right moment in his native tongue can imagine how that difficulty will be increased when the language is other than his vernacular. There are two prominent men in the public eye for these foreign missions. One is Mr. John Hays Hammond, and the other is Mr. Seth Low. Both are accomplished gentlemen, both, I believe, are linguists and both are possessed of great wealth, the last of which possessions appears to be necessary to our representatives abroad, for the salaries fixed by law, even for our ambassadors of the first class, are less than those paid by foreign countries to their representatives here and elsewhere.

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