

connecting Mexico City with Vera Cruz, and about 5,000 miles of telegraphic communication. In 1883 the total railway mileage had reached 2,800. In 1887 there were open for traffic 3,870 miles, and, at the present time, there are forty railroads in the Republic, with a total of 7,384 miles, and a large number of other roads are building and being prospected. The report of the Minister of Communications, just issued, gives the total telegraphic communication at 27,900 miles, not including lines belonging to railways.

The country is progressive, well protected and favored with soil and climate unequalled. It has also stable government under Porfirio Dias, who has occupied the presidential chair for twenty years, and to whose able guidance the present prosperity and development of the country is mainly due. During the administration of Dias, public works have advanced apace. The valley of Mexico has been drained at the cost of \$18,000,000. The harbor at Tampico has been improved to the extent of \$7,000,000, that at Coatzacoalcas to a like amount, and an appropriation of \$20,000,000 has been voted for the same purpose at Vera Cruz, a great deal of which has already been expended. Railways have been bonused to the extent of \$110,000,000, and the Government is ever ready to meet the reasonable requirements of those having enterprises calculated to advance the interests of the Republic.

The tariff is high, but, in reality, not so protective as it would appear to be, for large inland revenue taxes are collected from every industry and business house in the country, besides the burden of the Stamp Act. The duties are in every case specific and there is no discrimination in favor of any outside country.

Although a large number of new industries are starting up, the country cannot be said to be a manufacturing one, the scarcity of fuel being a great drawback to manufacturing. The main output consists of minerals and products of the soil. The principal articles of manufacture are blankets, carpets, wool and cotton cloths, prints, underwear, hats, shoes, silk, fabrics, soap, and a small quantity of paper. The wool and cotton manufactures have already assumed large proportions, and are rapidly on the increase. Wool is produced in abundance, and a large amount of cotton is grown, but as yet, not enough to supply the home demand. The deficiency is supplied from Texas.

THE PROGRESS OF UNITED STATES TRADE.

For a long time the trade of the country was held by Europe, which had the best means of communication. The United States, has, however, with the growth of railroads and steamship connection, made strenuous efforts to extend its trade with Mexico, and with the wonderful result shown by the statistics given farther on. Mr. Crittenden, the United States Consul-General, reported to his Government with reference to foreign competition in Mexico: "I think the merchants and manufacturers of the United States could profitably establish permanent exhibitions of their wares in this (Mexico City) and other cities of Mexico, under the management of those informed and speaking Spanish as well as the English languages. This exhibition of goods will insure their introduction and sale into every part of Mexico, more rapidly, in my opinion, than any other way. The trade in Mexico has been commanded so long by England, France, Germany and Spain that it will not be deflected or divided except by the most industrious methods. The merchants and manufacturers of the United States should organize for this commercial battle, as those other nations will only yield it after the most stubborn fight."

The International American conference in 1890 reports the reason why purchasers buy in Europe: "Trade is no longer done to any extent by correspondence. The buyer and seller must see each other. Acquaintance fosters confidence, and confidence is the foundation of all trade. Whenever foreign merchants have obtained mastery of the markets in Latin America, it has been by sending agents to study the tastes and wants of the buyers, and to lay before them samples of the merchandise they have to sell, and by furnishing prompt and cheap transportation facilities."

Referring to the steady increase of commercial relations between the United States and Mexico, Mr. Carden, the British Consul, says in his report, issued August, 1897:

"The great increase in imports of American goods this year must be regarded by British merchants and manufacturers as another warning that, unless they soon make a serious effort, they will have to give up all hope of profiting by the increase of

the Mexican import trade, and may even lose part of the very limited share of it they at present enjoy."

"The proximity of the United States and the consequent facilities her manufacturers enjoy for filling orders rapidly, gives them, of course, a great advantage; but it is one which could, to a great extent, be neutralized if English manufacturers had enterprise enough to establish depots in Mexico of the articles for which there is the most ready sale, instead of waiting to send them out till they get orders for them."

"There is a steady and increasing demand for all kinds of agricultural and mining machinery and implements, pumps, threshing machines, steam engines, boilers, rock drills and a host of other articles.

"The United States Congress, in 1883, recognizing the necessity for determined effort in order to advance trade relations between themselves and Mexico, Central and South American countries and the West Indies, called together in international American conference through the Secretary of State, Hon. J. G. Blain, and as a result of said conference, a bureau of information was established at Washington, the annual cost of which has since been some \$33,000, besides the amount derived from the sale of the publications of the bureau. The issue of the regular bulletin alone of this bureau reaches nearly 1,000,000 copies annually. The information is mainly collected by the American Consular officers (of whom there are eighteen in Mexico), and the enormous benefit of trade has amply justified the undertaking. In a communication to the President in Dec., 1897, asking a considerable increase in the appropriation to the bureau, the director expresses his firm belief that: 'If the work is pushed with the vigor, the improved outlook for business expansion justifies, our trade in Latin America may be easily doubled, and perhaps trebled or quadrupled within the next two or three years.'"

The steps thus taken have assuredly worked wonders. The September number of the American Bureau reports as follows: "So effective was the hint given the manufacturers of the United States by Mr. Joseph G. Donnelly, Consul-General at Neuvo Laredo, in a communication to the Department of State, under date of April 4, 1897, in regard to the establishment of commercial agencies for the distribution of American manufactures in Mexico, that he is enabled to further report on July 21, that steps have been taken for the consummation of this plan, and its inauguration is the work of the near future. Further intimation of the desirability of this enterprise is indicated in the communication of Mr. Reuben D. George, Consul at Nogales, Mexico."

Great Britain, through its National Board of Trade, is carrying on, in the American Republics, practically the same work which devolves upon the American bureau, and the appropriations by the British Parliament for this branch of its work, are in excess of \$325,000 per annum.

The British Trade Review for July, 1897, says: "The United States are not only making a determined bid to obtain a large share of the trade with Great Britain, notably in respect to dairy produce, but it would seem that no effort is being spared on the part of the American Government, to provide manufacturers and traders on the other side with full details of all the markets importing manufactured and other goods."

"It is idle to conceal the fact that the industrial activity of the United States is making itself felt in a very marked degree in not a few of those markets which British manufacturers have hitherto regarded as unavailable.

"There can, of course, be no undue sentiment with the buyer in his dealings. He will buy in the best, if not the cheapest market. At the same time it is well for producers here at home to carefully note the concerted actions which the States are making to secure a greater share of our colonial and foreign trade, and to see that nothing is wanting on their part to satisfy to the utmost the requirements of those who are being so assiduously solicited by the American producer."

In 1873 Great Britain took 39 per cent. of the total exports from Mexico, and sent to that country 34 4-5 per cent. of the total imports. The United States took 36 per cent. of the exports, and sent 25 3-10 of the imports. All other countries, almost entirely European, took 25 per cent., and sent a little less than 40 per cent.

For the year ending June 30, 1897, Great Britain took something over 12 per cent. of the exports, and sent a little over 15 per cent. of the imports. The United States took nearly 79