

## THE TRADE, FINANCES AND PROSPECTS OF MEXICO.

AN OLD COUNTRY BEING REVIVIFIED; AROUSED BY POLITICAL CONVULSIONS; INTENSE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT; POPULATION CHIEFLY HALF-BREED AND INDIANS; A NUMBER OF LARGE CITIES; REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, EXPORTS AND IMPORTS, GOLD, SILVER AND COPPER THE LEADING PRODUCTIONS; CHIEF TRADE WITH UNITED STATES; NATIVE SHIPPING INSIGNIFICANT, RAILWAYS, BANKS, TELEGRAPH LINES, FUTURE VERY DIFFICULT TO FORECASTE, CONDITIONS VERY CONFUSED, AN EDUCATED GENERATION REQUIRED.

The Republic of Mexico has emerged in recent years from centuries of obscurity much in the same way as Japan, but has not achieved the distinction in arms, in finance, in industrial development which has raised the land of the Rising Sun to prominence as a world power.

Mexico was little known before the ill-fated effort to establish it as an Empire under the practical sovereignty of France. The execution of the would-be emperor ended that mad project. Events and schemes of that nature serve to rouse populations from their apathy. National movements have often derived their initiating force from national disasters, or the roused impulse to resist aggression.

In 1857 Mexico was declared a federated Republic of 19 States, with a constitution of a very advanced democratic type. Each of the 27 States manages its local affairs, much after the pattern of Canada. Manhood suffrage prevails, who elect both members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. The members of both Houses are paid \$3,000 yearly, thus they have a more lucrative berth than Canadian M. P's. The remuneration is so high in comparison with the ordinary income of the members from their personal business or profession as to make the office of deputy much coveted. The effect is regarded as anything but elevating, as independence of action is too liable to deprive a deputy of his income to be indulged in without some certainty of being compensated. The president holds office 4 years, but may be re-elected. President Diaz was first elected in 1876 and he is likely to remain in office until 1908. He is a great power in the Republic, on the whole a power for good, as he is highly intelligent, statesmanlike, and imbued with highly honourable ambition to raise the financial, industrial, educational and political standing of Mexico.

The population at Census of 1900 was 13,605,000, probably at present is 14½ millions. About 19 per cent. are of pure white races, 43 per cent. mixed, Spanish and Indians, and 38 per cent. Indian, of the latter section those few are civilized who come in contact with settled communities in towns and cities.

The city of Mexico has a population of 355,000, Guadalajara has 101,600, Puebla, 93,800, San Luis. Potosi 61,200, and 17 other cities have each a population ranging from 25 to 63 thousand.

The Roman Catholic religion almost universally prevails, but all religions are tolerated and the dominant church cannot acquire landed property, its possessions of which were confiscated in 1863, and church edifices utilized for schools, hospitals, libraries, etc. A State system of education is now enforced, none too soon, for only a few years ago over 80 per cent. of Mexicans could neither read nor write.

The newspapers are of little account, the better ones are partly Spanish partly English.

The above sketch will give a fair idea of the social and political conditions in Mexico, the bearing of which upon its stability, credit and financial prospects as a State is an interesting topic for discussion.

The revenue for year to June 30, 1904, was \$67,959,000 and expenditure the same. Half the revenue came from import and export duties and direct taxes, the other half from stamps, posts, telegraph and other services.

The outstanding gold debt in 1903 was \$110,800,000, and internal debt \$147,097,000; although the soil and climate are favourable for almost any class of products, yet systematic cultivation of the land can hardly be said to exist. This is partly owing to the ease with which life may be sustained in so genial climate, but this distaste for and consequent neglect of agriculture seems instinctive in the Indians and half breeds of all southern lands. Cattle, sheep, goats, pigs are raised in large quantities. The farm animals in 1902 were valued at \$60,000,000.

The output of minerals in 1901 included gold valued at \$12,951,000, silver, \$57,130,033, copper and lead, \$22,415,000. In 1902-3 the exports of precious metals were valued at 106 millions of dollars, and total exports 197 millions, while the imports were 76 millions. The course of trade is as follows:—

	Imports 1902-3. \$	Exports 1902-3. \$
United States.....	40,496,672	143,759,758
Great Britain.....	10,615,348	26,878,580
France.....	6,539,424	3,654,180
Germany.....	9,570,000	9,660,049
Spain.....	3,034,980	1,163,798

Great Britain's cottons, linens, iron goods, woollens and coal sent to Mexico are exchanged for mahogany, silver ore, copper, coffee, oilseed cake, etc.

The United States send iron and steel goods, coal and coke, carriages, wooden wares, cotton, which are exchanged for copper and lead, sisal grass, hides and skins, and coffee. In the case of both countries it may be said in general terms,