

IMPENDING CHANGES IN THE CUBAN TOBACCO AND CIGAR INDUSTRY.

The new relations between the United States, Cuba and the Philippines, whatever they may be, involve the solution of sundry questions seriously affecting the tobacco and cigar trade of these countries; and those relating to Cuba, as the most important, have already received careful study from firms engaged in the cigar industry.

Under Spanish rule, the admission into Cuba of leaf tobacco and cigars from other countries has been prohibited, on the obvious ground that it would result in fraudulent substitution and misrepresentation, extremely damaging to the reputation of genuine Cuban tobacco and cigars; but it is apparent that such prohibition could not continue, at all events under American government, which implies a free interchange of products between the different States and Territories. Already at Santiago, leaf tobacco is admitted from foreign countries, unstemmed, at \$1 per pound, and stemmed at \$1.50, and cigars at \$3.60 per 1,000 though it is stated that such rates are merely temporary and provisional. Cuba itself, however, produces various qualities of tobacco and cigars.

The next question in order refers to the existing export duty of \$15 per 220 barrels upon leaf tobacco leaving Havana. Naturally the American Clear Havana manufacturers wish this to be abolished in their own interest and that of their employees, as well as of the Cuban grower, while the manufacturers in Havana think it should be maintained, especially so long as the import duty on cigars into the United States is so extremely heavy, and equal, as they state, to a discrimination of \$50 per 1,000 against them on a standard size, and so much in favor of the American manufacturer. These arrangements, however, are probably bound to undergo some modification, just as far as possible, to both parties. American manufacturers contend that the export duty on Cuban leaf simply amounts to a premium on the growths of Mexico, San Domingo, Brazil, etc., and is ruinous to the Cuban grower, though the Havana manufacturers grew rich by it, and sold their businesses to an English company, which now runs them.

The Hon. Robert P. Porter, United States Commissioner on the Cuban tariff, having invited expressions of opinion in writing from those interested, has received amongst others, a communication from Mr. Gustave Bock, of the Henry Clay & Bock Co., in the course of which he says:

"Previous to the outbreak of the Cuban revolution in 1894-95, the production of leaf tobacco on this island was 560,000 bales or about 62,173,800 pounds. Of this quantity, the Province of Pinar Del Rio produced about 260,000 bales of Vuelta Abajo leaf, 120,000 bales of which were exported to the United States and Europe. The balance of 140,000 bales was used in this city by the first-class cigar and cigarette manufacturers.

"One-fifth of the 70,000 bales of Partido leaf raised in the Province of Havana was used for less expensive grades of cigars and cigarettes by the manufacturers in this city, and the other four-fifths was exported to Key West, Tampa and New York. The average crop in the Province of Santa Clara is about 130,000 bales, familiar to the trade as Remedios leaf. One-fourth of this is consumed locally, and the balance is divided between Germany and the United States, the former using the lower grades and the latter the better.

"The crop of Gibara or Mayari tobacco, raised in the Province of Santiago de Cuba, would annually reach 100,000 bales, two-fifths of which is consumed at home. Three-fifths of the crop is exported to

the regions of Austria, Italy and Spain. This yield is of a very inferior grade and only fit for pipe smoking, the price often ranging not above twelve or fifteen cents per pound."—San Francisco Grocer.

ELECTRICAL ENERGY TRANSMITTED WITHOUT WIRES.

Nicola Tesla, the celebrated electrician, has announced the results of some important experiments which will lead him to attempt the transmission of electrical energy through natural media without the use of metallic conductors. The basis of his claims rests in the fact that rarified air is a conductor of electricity. To carry his scheme into actual practice he proposes to produce electrical pressures of enormous voltage by means of transformers having high tension coils of great length and a large number of turns. One terminal of the transformer is to be connected to earth, while the other terminal will be elevated by balloon or otherwise to a height such that the atmosphere will serve for a conductive path for the current to a second elevated terminal, over the distant point to which the energy is to be conveyed. The phenomenon involved will be that of true electrical conduction. A second transformer will be connected, like the first, to the earth and the elevated terminal, so as to collect the current and step it down to a normal voltage. A current of very high frequency will be employed, and so small that the loss in transmission through the atmosphere will not be great.

WESTERN LUMBER TRADE NOTES.

The Winnipeg manager of the British Columbia Mills Timber and Trading Company, which owns the Hastings mill at Vancouver, recently destroyed by fire, has received a wire stating that the company is prepared to handle all Manitoba orders as usual. They hope by running their two remaining mills night and day to keep pace with the business until the lost mill is replaced. A fortunate feature of the fire is the saving of the planing plant, which includes fifteen planing machines.

The above is from the Commercial, which also says that from British Columbia there is reported to be a shortage of logs, shared by all exporting mills, and this is having considerable effect both on the freedom of export shipments and the prices of finished lumber.

The saw mill of the Assiniboine Lumber Company, Brandon, Man., has closed for the season, after running day and night ever since the ice went out of the river. There are still a number of logs on hand to cut, as soon as the weather permits in the spring.

The saw mill of the Dauphin Lumber Company, at Dauphin, Man., will be moved to the timber limit on the Swan river extension. The mill will be located at Pine River, where the company expect to cut some two million feet of lumber this winter. A store is to be opened at this point.

A Southern exchange says: "The sash and door men are hoping there will be no further advances in the price of glass. Every time glass has advanced, the prices of glazed sash have gone down, and they are satisfied that the divergence is great enough now without any wider separation.

The Minneapolis Lumberman says: "The market for red cedar shingles has been slow for some time. The red cedar shingle manufacturers of the west coast have been arranging for a shut down, and by the end of next week it is likely that more than three-fourths of the mills will have ceased to saw. The present prices

of lumber are held more evenly than was ever before known. But it may be set down as a fact that no combination short of an actual pool could hold prices up against adverse crop and general business conditions. The present agreement is held with its present firmness because the country is able to pay present prices for present stocks of lumber.

LAKE SUPERIOR COPPER.

The Standard Oil Company of the United States is operating in the Island of Michipicoton, Lake Superior. The Toronto World publishes the following:

"Houghton, Mich., November 5th.—The departure from Houghton this week of seven workmen, who left quietly without giving information as to their destination, marks the beginning of a movement which is fraught with most important consequences to the people of both the United States and Canada. The seven men who left here so unostentatiously were the advance guard of a host of miners and mechanics who are to open big copper mines, under the Queen's flag, and with the Standard Oil money. The destination of the little party was Michipicoton Island, lying on the north shore of Lake Superior, about 70 miles north-west of Sault Ste. Marie, and it is probable that within 90 days—perhaps sooner—200 men will be at work opening a mine of copper which has been abandoned since that prehistoric day when the mound-builders laid down their stone tools for the last time.

The present operations on Michipicoton says the same authority, are being directed by Nathan F. Leopold, of Chicago. Born and reared in the lake copper district, Mr. Leopold, some three years ago conceived the plan of reopening three copper mines located here, the Isle Royale, Huron and Grand Portage. The properties were bought for less than \$150,000, after years of idleness were consolidated, and are to-day valued at \$2,500,000, although they will not begin producing copper for nearly two years yet. After successfully consolidating and reopening these three mines, Mr. Leopold turned his attention to the Arcadian, Edwards, Douglass, and Concord mines, three to four miles north of Houghton. These were also bought and consolidated. On June 1st, only five months ago, there were 70 men working at the Arcadian group, where to-day there are 650. The shares of the Arcadian mine are now selling at \$33 each, or at the rate of \$3,300,000 for a property which six months ago was worth less than a quarter of a million. Mr. Leopold interested William Rockefeller, Henry M. Flagler and other prominent directors of the Standard Oil Company in the Arcadian, and the same people are behind him in the Michipicoton venture. The Arcadian began its corporate existence with \$450,000 cash in the treasury, and the Isle Royale started business with an even million dollars on hand for development. The Michipicoton property will be developed on the same broad lines, and it is Mr. Leopold's intention to have several hundred men employed there as soon as quarters can be prepared for them.

—The total earnings of the Omaha Exposition to November 1st, were \$1,306,384. This, with stock subscriptions amounting to \$291,909, and donations amounting to \$163,070, makes a total, from all sources, of \$1,761,364. Of this sum there still remained in the hands of the secretary and treasurer, on the date named, \$420,996, with \$64,985 in bills and accounts outstanding, leaving available for reimbursing the stockholders, \$356,011, which is more than sufficient to pay them off at 100 cents on the dollar.