

Messenger and Visitor.

THE CHRISTIAN MESSENGER,
VOLUME LXV.

Vol. XIX.

ST. JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1903.

{ THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR
VOLUME LIV.

No. 7.

The Venezuela Difficulties. The republic of Venezuela is a state which owns an area greater in extent than that of Germany and France combined. Its natural resources are enormous, and if properly developed would make that country one of the greatest on the continent. The great lack is in wise leadership. Chronic revolutions are in order. In seventy years there have been one hundred and four of these. Owing to the unfaithful stewardship of its political leaders the country is very little, if any—better off than it was under the Spanish rule in 1811. If the Monroe doctrine meant anything, then the United States should insist upon a stable government and that this government should so conduct the affairs of the country as to maintain right relations with other countries—pay its honest debts and see that the rights of the people of other nationalities are protected. There would then be no claims to adjudicate and no ports to be blockaded in order to a settlement of these claims. From the latest reports concerning the difficulty between Venezuela and the three European powers, it seems that a basis of agreement has been reached between Minister Bowen on the one part, as representing the South American Republic, and the representatives of two of the European powers, viz., England and Italy. Germany is still pressing for a larger cash payment and from reports at hand, has succeeded in part. The question of preferential treatment is to be referred to the Hague Conference.

Finland and Famine. The famine district in Finland covers more than half of the entire area of the country and contains a population of more than 40,000 people. The entire population of the whole country is about 2,500,000, so that nearly one-sixth of the people scattered through the forests of this sparsely settled region are to-day dependent upon the charities of the world for food, and even for the seed with which to plant their fields the coming year, if they shall then be alive. This great distress is due entirely to natural causes. The people live in rural districts and the failure of the crops has left them without the necessities of life, and disease from hunger, is the result. The treatment which these people have received from Russia will lead many of them to migrate. They would be a splendid acquisition to our own growing western country. We hope that the efforts now making in Europe and America to send them food may be crowned with success.

The Value of our Forests. There is no country in the world that would have profited more by an intelligent and well maintained forestry policy than this Dominion of Canada. For many years the loss entailed upon the country has often been pointed out, but in vain. The policy of the governments of the respective Provinces has been to sell to lumbermen the exclusive right to cut the timber and thus secure a large addition to the public revenues, while the men who purchased their timber areas, adopted needlessly wasteful methods of denuding the land of trees. Only those of a certain size should have been taken, but on most of the timber berths practically everything has been swept off, leaving not enough even to re-seed the ground for a new crop. And now that the pulp industry is developing to such an extent, it looks as if the time had come for the country to devise such means as shall protect the forests. In Germany, France and Sweden forestry has been practiced by the State for a century and a half. It has only been within a few years that the United States have turned their attention to this important subject. Today the importance of forestry and the necessity for systematic instruction in it as a branch of applied science, is receiving recognition in that country. It is not too late to make a beginning here, but this should not be any longer delayed.

Agriculture in Nova Scotia. The total value of farm property in Nova Scotia for 1901 according to the census returns is placed at \$70,694,595. The total for land and buildings is \$58,752,384—for implements and machinery, \$3,208,869—for live stock, \$10,603,024, and for the crop and animal products, \$16,305,555. There were in operation in the Province during the census year 31 factories, of which nine made cheese and butter, sixteen made cheese only and six made butter only. The cheese product was 502,300 pounds, worth \$54,018 and the butter product, 270,400 pounds, worth \$55,657, making a total value of \$109,675. The increase in the value of factory dairy products compared with the previous census year was \$62,000 or 130 per cent. It is said that in Prince Edward Island the value of products rose in the same period from \$8,448 to \$506,824. The rent value of leased farms is 71 cents per acre, and the rate of wages for farm labor is \$5.26 per week including board. This is a good showing for the agricultural work of Nova Scotia.

Macedonia and Bulgaria. The people of these countries are in a ferment of unrest. Trouble is breeding between them and Turkey. There may be an uprising at any time. Russia and Austria are deeply interested in all matters pertaining to Turkey, but for different reasons. The former wants a free outlet to the Mediterranean and will not rest until she secures it. Austria wants peace along her borders with, perhaps, an increase of territory, along the Adriatic. Reforms are needed in Macedonia. The Turk is slow in granting them. But Russia and Austria are uniting in demanding from Turkey certain reforms. Meanwhile the latter is taking time by the forelock so as to be prepared for emergencies. Preparations are making for the transfer of troops from Asiatic Turkey to the European Provinces of Turkey. It is said that the Sultan has ordered 240,000 troops from Asiatic Turkey to reinforce the second and third army corps at Adrianople, Salonica and along the Bulgarian frontier. The fact that these troops are of a semi-barbaric character and decidedly hostile to Christians, is likely to increase the difficulty of the situation. When it became known that Russia and Austria were preparing to take the question of reform into their own hands the Macedonians resented this outside interference, and the rival factions in Bulgaria laid aside their animosities and came together. They have issued a circular to the country, in which they declare that no reforms emanating from Russia and Austria are likely to be acceptable to the revolutionists. On the other hand, the Mohammedans of Albania are holding meetings, declaring that they will revolt against Turkish rule if the Sultan attempts to introduce reforms which will give Christians part in the local government of the Provinces. The outlook therefore is not bright for a peaceful ending of the difficulties which confront the Turk.

Russian Censorship. The latest orders of the Russian censor which have been sent to the writers of Russian papers afford interesting reading to residents of this country where the liberty of the press is regarded as one of the most sacred rights of a free people. Among the tabooed subjects are, all information or rumors about the Czar and the imperial family, except such as come

to them from official sources, information about movements of troops or warships, matters connected with the discipline of the navy, details about measures taken for the protection of the Eastern Chinese Railway, about journeys undertaken to Persia by officials of the ministry of finance and their results, matters referring to students' disturbances; information about political crimes, trials and sentences, also about Russian strikes or peasant riots, about the progress of the plague or other epidemics in Russia, about the actions of the secret police, about disciplinary measures against heretics, and Tolstoi's quarrel with the authorities of the Orthodox church, finally, about the object of the present journey of the Minister of Finance in Eastern Siberia. This is quite a formidable list that has been given. The news columns of the Russian Press will be quite barren for some time to come. Russia is undoubtedly a great country, but not a very pleasant home for a free people, one might think.

The Alaskan Treaty and the U S Senate. The idea which has obtained in many quarters, was that the Senate of the United States would refuse to ratify the Alaskan treaty for the definition of the boundary between that country and British Columbia. It was thought there would be sufficient opposition to its passage develop, under the pressure of Senators from the Northwestern part of the United States that would compel the President to withdraw the treaty from the Senate and thus save it from being rejected by that body. But such has not been the case. The Senate has passed the treaty and the contracting parties will now appoint the court, and settle if possible this vexed question. The points to be submitted are seven in number. 1. The starting point of the boundary at Prince of Wales Island. 2. Which of the channels is the one that is called Portland channel in the treaty? 3. As to course of the boundary between these two points. 4. What is the route the boundary should take between the head of Portland channel and the fifty-six parallel of latitude. 5. Was it the intention of the treaty to absolutely exclude Great Britain from access to the Pacific Ocean by a fringe of territory along the coast? 6. Whether the thirty miles inland from the shore are to be measured from the mainland coast of the ocean strictly so called, or from the head of the inlets? 7. Whether a chain of mountains specified in the treaty as part of the boundary really exists, and what mountains if any are referred to? It will be seen that these six jurists have some knotty points to discuss and upon which to reach an agreement. The finding of these men will be a document of some historic value.

New Zealand and Temperance. The recent elections in New Zealand have emphasized the Temperance question as did that of the referendum in Ontario. The growth of the Prohibition sentiment is marked, as will be seen from the following facts. In 1896 the number of votes throughout the colony in favor of prohibition was 99,917. In 1899 the number had increased to 120,542, while in the last election the vote was 159,992, an increase of 60,075 votes in favor of prohibition in a period of six years. The total number of votes is placed at 300,000. The fact that women voted at the last election may account for this great change. The liquor question is submitted once in three years to the electorate. At the last election there were three issues before the people (1) that the number of licensed houses in the electoral district remain as at present; (2) that there be a reduction in the number of licensed houses, (3) that there be total prohibition of the sale of spirituous liquors. Either of the first two issues may be carried by a bare majority, but a three-fifths majority is necessary to carry the third. To carry total prohibition in any district there must be a three-fifths majority. But if prohibition is once obtained, it takes a three-fifths majority to reverse the position. Up to the present the only district that has maintained prohibition was that of Clutha. At the last election there was no change in Clutha, but a three-fifths majority agree to introduce it into five other districts. This is good news for all Temperance workers. Hold what you get and press toward the goal of all endeavor—the total prohibition of the liquor traffic.