

The St. Tammany Farmer.

"The Blessings of Government, Like the Dew from Heaven, Should Descend Alike Upon the Rich and the Poor."

D. H. MASON, JR., Editor.

COVINGTON, ST TAMMANY PARISH, LA., SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 1908.

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VERY HIGH WATER

Results in Breaks in the Levee and Overflow of Plantations.

Provisions and Necessaries Being Shipped From New Orleans

Shreveport, La., June 15.—The levee at Taylortown, fourteen miles south of Shreveport, on the east bank of Red river, broke at 3 o'clock this morning, and to-night the southern portion of Bossier Parish, comprising a territory of approximately 100,000 acres, is flooded.

There has been no loss of life, but hundreds of negroes are homeless and the damage cannot be estimated.

W. F. Taylor, one of the largest planters in Northwest Louisiana, places the number of acres of growing crops destroyed at 50,000.

As the critical condition of the levee has been known several days, it is believed all live stock has been removed to places of safety.

Caving banks was the cause of the disaster. The danger first appeared a week ago, and a large force of men and teams was rushed to the scene to build a temporary levee. This was completed when the original levee caved into the river, but it was soon apparent that a third embankment must be thrown up, and work has been rushed on this day and night.

Last night in order to prevent a sudden rush of water against this temporary levee, the water was let through the second embankment, and it was thought the situation was saved.

The new levee held several hours and then gave way. As it was built of soft clay and sand, the crevasses widened with startling rapidity, until to-night it is stated that the break is a quarter of a mile in width.

The break occurred at the W. D. Merer plantation, two miles north of Taylortown. This place adjoins the Scopini plantation, where a levee broke in 1902 and flooded a large territory.

The Mercer, Taylor, McDade, Hodges, Poole and Atkins plantations may be flooded.

A planter stated today that the entire country from the point where the break occurred to Loggy Bayou will be flooded. He estimated that this territory is fifteen miles in length.

Early this morning the Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company sent a special train to Taylortown to remove the people to places of safety. The railroad track was located a mile from the levee, on a line with the break, but within a short time the water began washing, and before the special train returned much of the track had been washed out.

Mayor Bernstein to-day wired United States Engineer Smith at Vicksburg, asking that a government snagboat be sent to Taylortown to rescue stranded families and render any needed assistance. He received a reply this afternoon, stating that a boat had been ordered to Taylortown from the vicinity of Alexandria.

It is conservatively estimated that the damage caused by the flood throughout this section will amount to a million dollars. Considerable loss has occurred in the city, and more than a hundred negro families, living in St. Paul and Silver Lake bottoms, have been driven from their homes.

Help from New Orleans.

Further provisions for relieving flood sufferers in Concordia parish were made by the New Orleans permanent relief committee Monday morning, when that body made arrangements to look after the wants of 2407 persons at ten small landings in the Black river section. Large quantities of supplies for these sufferers left New Orleans Wednesday evening on the steamboat Columbia, and will be distributed at places designated by the relief committee. Monterey Landing, Armagh, Eva, Sevena, Lum, New Era, Acme, Island Bayou, Palmetto Landing and Willow Grove Landing are the places to which the supplies will be shipped, and at each place the provisions will be given over to a committee of three men for distribution. It is believed this load of supplies will be sufficient for the immediate needs of the sufferers.

Though the committee had not fully determined exactly what to send, 5000 pounds of dry salt shoulder, 50 barrels of meal, 10 half-barrels of molasses and other sustenances of this character will be taken by the Columbia. The situation will be watched closely and everything possible will be done to alleviate the suffering. Letters received by the committee and information from other sources, showed that there was much destitution among those unfortunate rendered homeless by the floods in the Mississippi Red and Black Rivers, and it was pointed out that substantial relief was necessary.

Last Saturday the relief committee sent out supplies for 156 families along the Louisiana Railway and Navigation Company's road, and it is stated that they are now provisioned for three weeks. Other sections reported to be in need of aid will be given attention and the judicious and equitable distribution of supplies undertaken by Mr. Blum and his committee will continue. A letter from John S. Boatner, district judge at Vidalia, La., which was received yesterday, states that the situation in Concordia is acute and needs immediate attention.—T. D.

From the Times-Democrat.

A New Break.

Shreveport, La., June 16.—All plantations in Bayou Pierre bottom fell prey to the flood this evening at 6 o'clock this evening. The levee at Lucas, in Caddo parish, eleven miles below Shreveport, broke, letting the water over Leonard, Smith, Pugh and all plantations in Bayou Pierre swamp.

While the disaster is not so great as that caused by the Taylortown break, the flood will cover a large area, and is the second hardest blow struck at the farmers of North Louisiana by the flood.

Governor Blanchard, who was at Lucas when the break occurred, said last night the levee had been in danger for several days. The Texas and Pacific Railroad had a large force of men at work under Mr. Harrison, trying to save the embankment. It was hoped when the Taylortown levee broke the relief felt all along the river would lighten the strain at Lucas.

However, the water from the Dixie Plantation break came along the levee in the rear. This left the flood fighters without room in which to work. Water being on both sides.

The levee broke at 6 o'clock. In a few minutes a crevasse forty feet wide was cut through the embankment. Through this a current came with terrific force, and all hope of closing the gap was abandoned.

Boats were telephoned for and several wagonloads of light craft were sent to the scene by Dr. J. Ashton Blanchard.

For the past six days, with grim regularity, the flood has each day claimed another levee. Six have already fallen: Douglas Island, Free State, Westdale, Dixie Plantation, Taylortown and Lucas. It is estimated that nearly 250,000 acres in this immediate vicinity have already been submerged.

Items of News.

The partly decomposed body of a negro was found in Coburn Swamp, near Bogalusa, June 13. The lower jaw was all that was left of the head. The clothing consisted of blue overalls and jumper. Coroner Brock viewed the body.

News from Houston, Miss., states that safeblowers entered the Houka postoffice on the night of June 13 and secured \$300 in money and \$200 worth of stamps. The burglars are supposed to be the same who have been doing many acts similar to this during the last two months in this section of the State, their actions being similar to those at New Albany a short time ago.

Archbishop Blenk drove over from Lake Arthur Friday afternoon last, accompanied by about thirty-five or forty horsemen, and confirmed a class of 131, at Gueydan, La., Saturday morning, composed of children from Morse and Gueydan. This was the first confirmation services ever held there and was very largely attended.

On June 14 the Emperor received in audience the new American Ambassador to Germany, David Jayne Hill, who succeeds Charlemagne Tower. The Emperor's Master of Ceremonies, Baron Von Dem Knesebeck, called at the hotel June 13, where Dr. Hill was stopping, and informed him that an audience with the Emperor had been granted for June 14. His Majesty coming from Potsdam for the purpose. Three court carriages called for Dr. Hill, and accompanied by his staff he proceeded to the palace, the Emperor receiving him with great cordiality. After the formal presentation and delivery of greetings from President Roosevelt and his official letter, the Emperor engaged Dr. Hill in conversation for half an hour, showing his most charming social qualities.

W. E. Henderson, a Lincoln County, Miss., farmer, has proven to his own satisfaction, and doubtless to that of his neighbors, that there is more money in the meek and lowly onion than in King Cotton.

Mr. Henderson is one of those wide awake Western farmers who has drifted down into Mississippi during the past year or two, bought up a lot of land that is so poor that the average home-raised farmer will not try to make a living on, and has gone to raising something besides cotton. This year he tried one acre in onions, and has made one hundred bushels that sell readily at \$1 per bushel. The land is poor, and the owner expects to make three or four hundred bushels on the same piece in another year or two—a feat that is by no means impossible. These onions come from seed planted last fall.—Exchange.

PEONAGE QUESTION

Investigation by Assistant Att'y General Russell of Washington.

The Reason for the Idea That it Exists in the Southern States.

New York, June 14.—The Tribune has this from Washington:

Assistant Attorney General Chas. W. Russell is of the opinion that "pretended philanthropic promoters of colonizing schemes" in New York and labor agents in that city are in great measure responsible for the peonage that has been shown to exist in many of the Southern States. In the last Supplement of his official report to the Attorney General, which has just been completed, he devotes several pages to the work of these labor agents and "philanthropists," showing in what manner they have connected themselves with the detention of laborers in all parts of the country, Mr. Russell says:

Until we began our work in October, 1906, the chief supply of peons came from the slums, the foreign quarters of New York and Ellis Island, through the operations of licensed labor agents of New York. These were reaping a rich harvest from the price per head for laborers supplied to employers at a distance, and the temptations to fill all orders and outdoor agents by a total disregard of truth and honesty in dealing with both laborer and employer were too great for a number of these brokers.

The representatives of the department, and chiefly Mrs. Quackenbos, have succeeded in procuring from the License Commissioner the revocation of several licenses, and the knowledge that the Department intends to continue a similar policy is believed to have had a very good effect.

These agents know that the Southern people are slow to learn, that these supposedly ignorant and insignificant foreigners fill American newspapers printed in their own language and the mails for Europe and consulates and embassies with accounts of any mistreatment they receive—accounts which, according to the usual way with human nature, are not confined to a plain statement of the facts, but are adorned with high coloring, hearsay reports and expressions of intense feeling.

Under the labor agents' license law of New York a printed slip must be given to each workman sent to a distant employer, on which must be written in a language he can read, a few simple things for his guidance and protection. All manner of frauds were resorted to in order to circumvent the object of this law. For example, in one case with which I am familiar the slips were not given to the men until they were on board the boat on which they left New York; in another instance they were delivered just as a crowd of men were being piled into a van to go to the boat. Then, when the statement was delivered in due season and called for pay at \$1.25 a day, the strangers were told in one case that this wage was for the first week only, would be increased to \$2 and soon to \$3.

As for the place of destination, the strangers were told that it was so many days or hours by boat and so many by train, when it was twice or three times as far. A man bound, as he supposed, for Pittsburg, would some times find himself in Georgia.

Many of them cannot read in any language, and by the time their "statements" are explained to them by their companions they have all been hurried to the boat or train, and, once on it, all are too ignorant of the geography of the country, of the language, the laws and their legal rights, in fact, of everything about them, to know what to do. Many people in the South have wondered that "white men" need care and protection, instead of protecting themselves. If those who so wonder were suddenly set down in the middle of Russia, without money or friends, they would be almost as helpless.

In discussing the chief support of peonage, Mr. Russell says: "I have no doubt from my investigation and experience that the chief support of peonage is the peculiar system of State laws in the South, intended evidently to compel service on the part of the working man."

"From the usual conditions of the great mass of laboring men where these laws are in force to peonage is but a step at most. In fact, it is difficult to draw a distinction between the conditions of a man who remains in service against his will, because the State has passed a certain law under which he can be arrested and returned to work, and the condition of a man on a nearby farm who is actually made to stay at work by arrest and actual threats of force under the same law. The actual spoken threat of an individual employer who makes his laborer stay at work against his will by fear of the chain gang, and the threat of the State to send him to the chain gang whenever his employer chooses to have him arrested, are but the same in result, and do not seem to me very different in any other way."

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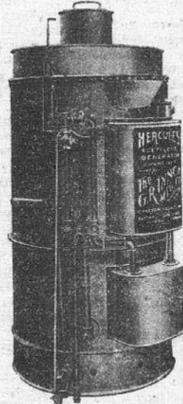
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