

# The St. Mary Banner.

VOL. XXVIII.

FRANKLIN, LA., SATURDAY, MAY 6, 1916

NO. 2.

## The Pension Bureau.

A great, angular red brick building, set in a green park, is the home of the pension bureau at Washington. It was built at a time when the architectural ideas of the country were in the formative period. A feature of the exterior of the building is a broad frieze, showing groups of infantry, cavalry, artillery and seamen, in bas-relief. Inside is a great, beautiful court, somewhat marred by being made to contain ranks of file cases. In times past, when inaugural balls were important social events in Washington, these balls were held within the court.

It seems to be the belief of the average citizen having business with the pension office that the commissioner sees and answers all correspondence. This is impossible, as nearly 4,000,000 pieces of mail a year go out of the bureau. A force of about 1,800, including doctors, lawyers, expert accountants and other specialists, are kept constantly employed to handle the business.

Each pension check is now issued from this central office, and is received when due, instead of many days thereafter, as was often the case when pension agencies were distributed over the country. This and other economies introduced has greatly reduced the clerical help required, the force of the office being gradually cut down.

Yet it is no small task to handle some 785,000 individual pension accounts and provide for regular payments thereon, even though the total is decreased each year by death. The appropriation for the ensuing fiscal year is \$164,000,000, and Commissioner Saltzgeber expresses the opinion that it will be about \$4,000,000 less during the following year.

## Corn Cultivation.

The following advice is offered by J. L. Hiers, of the Extension Division, Louisiana State University:

The main object in the cultivation of corn is to establish a shallow mulch to prevent the escape of moisture from the soil, and incidentally to free the soil from weeds and grass. It is easy, then, to see that a flat, shallow cultivation, not over 2 or 3 inches deep, with an implement that does not interfere with the root system will give best results.

If the ground has crusted the first cultivation may be done with the section harrow across the rows before the corn is up. The same implement may be used profitably after the corn is up till it is 4 or 5 inches high, running the harrow diagonally or in a different direction each time. The second cultivation after the first should be done with a 14-inch cultivator or some similar implement. This cul-

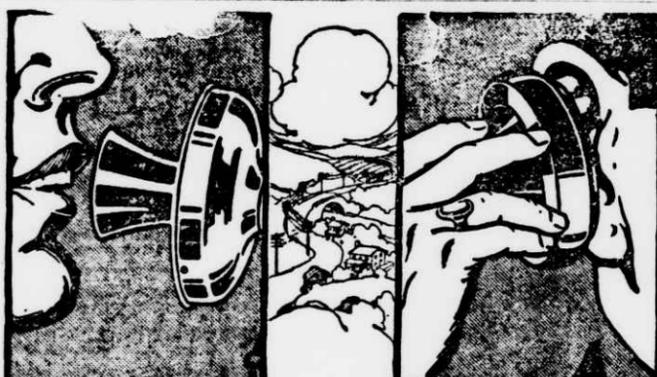
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tivation must be thorough and establish a soil mulch all over the row that should be maintained all the time. To cultivate deeper would interfere with the tiny roots and cut off some of the food supply.

It is difficult to say how often corn should be cultivated as that will depend on the weather conditions. If it rains every week the ground will form a crust. This must be broken and the soil mulch

restored, or the moisture will be lost by evaporation. Cultivation along this line should continue till the corn is in tassel, or even till silking time, if soil conditions demand it.

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