

GENERAL RECAPITULATION.

By E. Levasseur, Member of the Institute.

I will endeavor to recapitulate, in a few pages, the masterly exposition made by each of the *collaborateurs* of "Mexico at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century," concerning one of the parts of the administrative and economic task accomplished in Mexico during its last thirty years, and to set in relief, by the accumulation of the results, the sense of unity which inspired the conduct of President Porfirio Diaz's administration.

Mr. Sebastian de Mier, Mexico's Minister Plenipotentiary at Paris, and former Commissioner-General of that country to the Universal Exposition of 1900, had, as stated in the introductory part of this book, conceived the idea to prepare, at the commencement of the twentieth century, a work similar to that which Alexander de Humboldt produced at the beginning of the nineteenth century, under the title of "Essai politique sur le royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne," through which he made a revelation of what Mexico was to the European world.

Mr. Sebastian de Mier made it the purpose of his contribution to address the most eminent men upon each special subject; he has had the merit not only to obtain the assurance of their co-operation and of those whose auxiliary help was necessary to carry the matter into effect (1), but also to supply works, which have required many years of attention, all the official documents, and to impart to all the light of his experience. Humboldt was in position to formulate his great work in the coun-

(1) By the side of the names of the writers who have signed the proper chapters we consider it a matter of duty to signify the names of Mr. Marcel Charlot, secretary of the president of the Chamber of Deputies and secretary of Mr. Leon Bourgeois; of Mr. Georges Voguet, assistant of the secretary of public works, former secretary of Mr. Camille Krantz. We

try itself and to describe what he saw. If the writers of "Mexico at the Beginning of the Twentieth Century" have not had such opportunity, they have found, at least, a greater supply of administrative, economic and statistical elements.

Their work shall be one of the monuments of Mexican history, of which the present recapitulation may be the finishing touch.

will also thank Mr. Elisee Reclus, who has subscribed the maps appearing in the two volumes, especially the political and physical chart, which, among its class, is a work of great merit.

We owe a souvenir and a tribute of regret to Mr. Gustavo Baz, secretary of the Mexican Legation. In him we had the contribution of a man of vast erudition. He died in March, 1904, while the work was yet incomplete.

Above all, we owe our recognition to Mr. Albert Hans, who, under the direction of Mr. Sebastian de Mier, has acted with indefatigable activity as secretary of the editorial staff, taking charge of the reports of the writers and correcting all the proofs. Mr. Albert Hans, former assistant commissioner from Mexico to the Universal Exposition of 1900, was, on account of his deep knowledge of the language, geography, history and institutions of the country, the proper person to select as a *collaborateur* of this work.

POPULATION AND COLONIZATION.

Before proceeding, it appears necessary to state the condition of the population and its growth. The census of 1869 gave Mexico a population of eight and one-half millions. That of 1900 takes it up to 13,611,694; Prince Roland Bonaparte says that considering the omissions, it is safe to expect that in 1903 it will go up to at least fourteen and one-half millions (1).

The average density of the population is as yet very light; about seven inhabitants per square kilometer. This density is, however, an increase of 30 per cent above that of Anahuac, and whatever the case may be, the total number of inhabitants has increased 70 per cent since 1869; no other American country of those situated in the inter-tropical zone has approached such figures.

Marriages, though imperfectly registered up to the present time, are generally effected at an early age; one-fourth of the women get to be mothers about the age of 16 years (2).

Immigrants are not very numerous; the census shows that there were 57,500 in 1900. The majority of them are Spaniards (16,258) and Americans from the United States (15,265), the former being enticed towards Mexico by the affinity of race, the latter by reason of constant business relations. The French (3,976) come next to the Guatemalans (5,804). Englishmen, Germans, Cubans,

(1) Mr. Matias Romero, in 1895, estimated the population to be about 20 per cent above the census, because great many people hide themselves for fear of taxation. In the annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science (January, 1903), Mr. Walter F. Weyl expressed the belief that the population of Mexico was between fifteen and sixteen millions.

(2) During the five years from 1897 to 1901 there were 2,336,113 births registered, 206,593 marriages and 2,317,454 deaths, thus indicating an excess of births over deaths of 0.8 per cent, an average of 17.08 births per marriage. In 1901 statistical data showed 470,060 births, 60,227 marriages and 444,900 deaths. The aforesaid figures only give an approximate estimate, as the civil status of the people is as yet imperfectly established.

Italians and Chinamen number approximately between 2,500 to 2,900 for each nationality. Such immigration is beneficial to the country and deserves to be encouraged inasmuch as it may not become a menace to Mexican nationality.

The Mormon colonies, the agricultural importance of which is praised by Mr. Hippolyte Gomot, are rapidly developing, and suggested to Prince Roland Bonaparte the idea, not devoid of good reason, that they ought to be watched closely, on account of their ideals and particularizing instincts. Prince Roland Bonaparte, who has made an eye study of the Mormon people, affirms that such colonists will never amalgamate with the Mexican nation; he considers Mormons as the vanguard of a prolific and invading race.

With regard to Chinamen, their number has increased with rapidity subsequent to the census of 1900. Only in the peninsula of Yucatan their number was estimated, at the beginning of 1904, at about 10,000; they were employed preferably in henequen plantations. Many thousand more have also disembarked at ports of the Pacific coast, principally at Manzanillo. It would be safe to state that the "Celestials" outnumber the Spaniards or the Americans. Chinamen appear in Mexico, as they do everywhere else, as hard-working people who live on very little, but are regarded with dislike by the natives.

As a great number of Chinamen succeed, in spite of prohibition, to enter the United States through Mexican soil, the Government of the United States has resented this violation and proposed to the Mexican Government the means to regulate the landing of Chinese, which means have not been agreed upon so far (1).

It is hoped that Chinese immigration may not become a source of trouble for the Republic of Mexico. Prince Roland Bonaparte, whose high authority is indisputable, has expressed some fear in this respect.

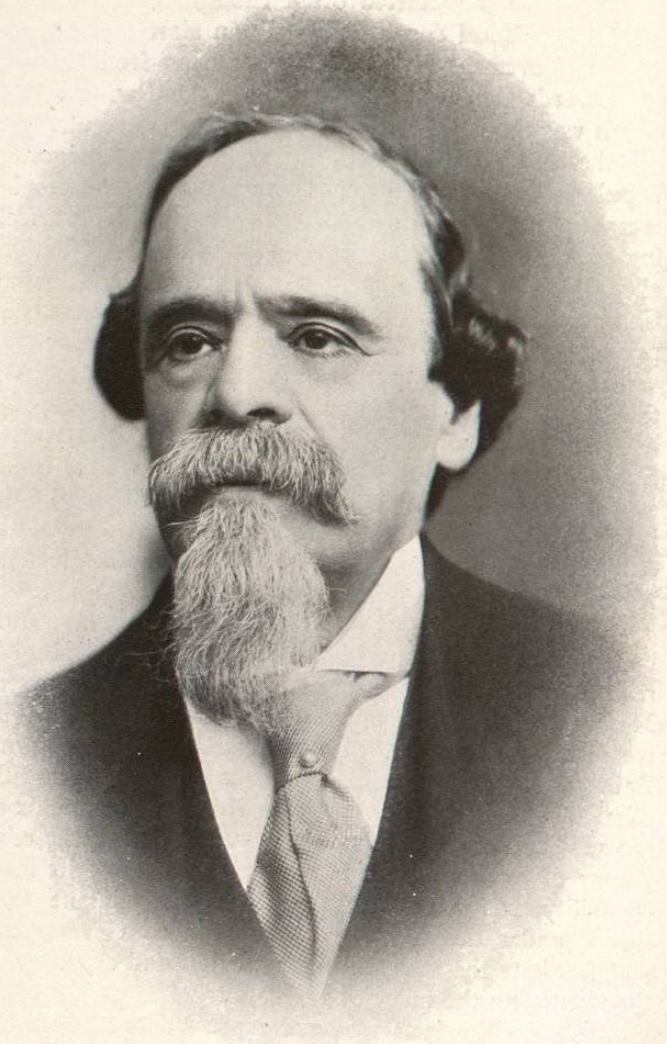
(1) On the 14th of December, 1899, a treaty was signed at Washington between Mexico and China relative to the immigration of Chinese laborers.

The preponderance of immigration from the United States has been predicted often enough, but this being purely economical does not assume an alarming attitude. The old movement of colonization, starting from the center towards the northern portion of the Republic, and which was the main factor of so many good results during the Spanish domination, has again taken a vigorous impulse. This constant contingent, which tends to increase the population of the northern States, causes a feeling of tranquillity among the friends of Mexico's nationality. The rapid development of the States of Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila and Nuevo Leon has been a surprise to observers.

Unfortunately, the movement of emigration towards the North does not stop at the frontier; it goes beyond, and the emigration of Mexican laborers to the United States, pointed out by Prince Roland Bonaparte, is becoming more remarkable. The cause of this must be the increase of wages and the fact that the same are paid in gold. This emigration means a considerable loss to Mexico.

President Porfirio Diaz has encouraged immigration by relieving immigrants from fiscal taxation. He has revived a traditional measure adopted by the Viceroy of Mexico in order to populate some vacant regions by means of colonies and even by the creation of new towns. Railroads have greatly aided towards this end. The submission of the rebel Indians of the North, who were made the subject of an exterminating war, and that of the rebel Mayas of the South, which country, in spite of its inaccessibility, has become the Territory of Quintana Roo, placed under the authority of the central Government, will facilitate the increase of population and at the same time complete the unity of the country.

In sum, the facts we have expressed and which are intelligently set forth in the study made by Prince Roland Bonaparte, rich in new thought of perception, show that the ethnic body of the Mexican nation is sound and endowed with strong vitality.



HON. IGNACIO MARISCAL,
Secretary of Foreign Relations.

GOVERNMENT AND ADMINISTRATION.

A master in political matters, Mr. Leon Bourgeois, has made an analytical study of the Mexican Constitution, of February 5, 1857, which served as the basis of organization of a democratic, federal, representative Republic. Said Constitution, inspired in that of 1824, was modified in great many points through a series of amendments, specially so by that of 1887, by virtue of which the President, whose election was made by secret ballot and for a term of four years, by the electors chosen by the people, sanctioned by the House of Representatives, may be re-elected any number of times. A law passed in 1904 has just extended the presidential term of office to six years.

The President has the exercise of the executive power. He is assisted by seven members of his cabinet, who are appointed or dismissed by him, but they are not responsible to Congress and can not form part of the same. The Vice-Presidency, which had been suppressed for a number of years, has been re-established this year. The Vice-President is elected by popular suffrage.

The legislative power is vested in a Congress composed of two elective Chambers: The Chamber of Deputies (House of Representatives, numbering 232 members), elected to office for two years, and who, among other powers, have the exclusive right to vote upon taxation; and the Senate, one half of which is renewed every two years, there being two Senators for each State and two for the Federal District, and who, besides other powers, have the right to ratify the appointment of high officials. A permanent Commission, composed of fifteen members of the House and fourteen Senators, acts during the recesses of Congress. This body has been intimately associated, without default, for over twenty-five years, to the regenerating action of President Porfirio Diaz.

The judicial power, emanating directly from the people, is exercised by the Supreme Court of Justice, which settles all differences between the States, through the Federal District Courts, the judges thereof being also elective, and besides other missions, the judicial power acts as the safeguard of individual freedom against the abuse of authority of the administrative power. The members of Congress and all public officials, up to the President of the Republic, are responsible for their acts before the courts or before the House of Representatives.

Each of the twenty-seven States of the Union is the master of its own constitution and government, provided they are not in conflict with federal laws, and that they do not raise any barriers against interstate commerce by virtue of customs or revenue taxation. Each State has its governor, legislature and courts. Throughout the Republic criminals are tried before a jury.

The Constitution of Mexico, which greatly resembles that of the United States, is based on principles equally liberal to those of the latter. It provides individual freedom and prohibits monastic orders; it affirms the equality of all citizens, freedom of worship, the right of association, freedom of labor and teaching; under certain restrictions it admits the liberty of the press and respect to property.

Foreigners enjoy, with the exception of the right to meddle in politics, the same privileges allowed to Mexicans. The laws of naturalization are very liberal. But, at the same time, the Constitution of Mexico has to contend with a country composed as yet by dissimilar elements, which have for too long a time been divided by class prejudices and troubled by dissensions which have checked, to a certain extent, the full application of the Constitution.

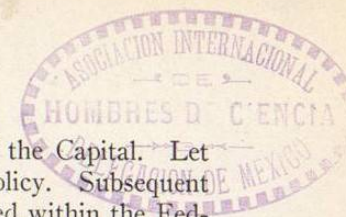
The present order of things tends towards the complete enjoyment of future freedom. President Diaz has devoted his attention to insure the latter by consolidating the central power. To that effect he has limited, with a view to strengthening and generalizing the principle of

federation, the municipal autonomy of the Capital. Let us observe several examples of said policy. Subsequent to 1903 the various municipalities located within the Federal District, and particularly that of the Capital, have been provided with a commissioned council, acting under the direct authority of the executive power. An additional article to the Constitution has deprived the States of the right to negotiate loans with foreign countries: a very important measure, the tendency of which is to prevent that unwise contracts prejudice the credit of the nation which now follows the progress of the world.

Bands of marauders, which were the remnant of civil wars, were the cause of terror throughout the country. The organization of the rural guards, that of the city police in the Federal District and the energy of the President have caused the disappearance of the above calamity. Besides the great number of measures which set in relief the solicitude of the Government to accomplish the material and moral advancement of the people, it is just to mention the creation, in the City of Mexico, of a model penitentiary, the suppression of gambling houses, the improvement of infants' asylums and hospitals, the drainage of the valley of Mexico and the sanitation of the Capital.

All religious questions have been solved by the complete separation of church and state; real estate owned by the clergy has become the property of the nation; and religious communities have been prohibited. However, the Catholic clergy, the subject matter of such measures, continues to exercise a great influence upon the spirit of the people.

From 1827 to 1875, according to Mr. Leon Bourgeois, "not one country could have been so ill-disposed to accept the establishment of a peaceable and normal situation." Notwithstanding that, thanks to the internal policy of the Government of which we have set forth the essential features, and which has been observed with firmness and perseverance during thirty years, Mexico was able to come out of the chaos. Mr. Leon Bourgeois says with



good reason: "There is not a statesman in Europe who would not be proud of having accomplished such results."

Is the task complete? No. The spirit, the institutions and the fate of nations are constantly moving towards an eternal future. This is the reason why civilization has a history. If evolution is evident in nations ripened by the action of centuries, a greater reason exists for it in Mexico, a country whose initiation in the road of peaceable development does not date back of one generation.

FINANCES AND PUBLIC CREDIT.

One of the most arduous questions to solve was that of finances (1). It was also one of those which required an immediate solution for the relief of the State.

The income of the Treasury, during the period 1822-1844, had been more or less 14 million pesos; the same having increased, in 1844, to 34 millions of pesos, decreased, by the influence of civil discords and wars with foreign countries, to 10 millions of pesos from 1852 to 1853. A short time after, following a short period of relief, the income dropped to 5 millions from 1865 to 1866. The expenses surpassed the income about 30 per cent and the deficit in ten years (1867 to 1878) had grown upwards of 50 million pesos.

During his first presidential administration (1876 to 1880), General Diaz raised the Government's income to an average of 20½ millions, though it went beyond 23 millions during the last year. The financial condition was still crushing; the foreign debt was therefore suffering a good deal; a large portion of the revenues were encumbered, and public officials were incompletely paid.

After 1884 President Porfirio Diaz has made of the restoration of finances the most important feature of his administration. He has been powerfully seconded in his task by the wise economist Mr. Jose Ives Limantour, to whom President Diaz entrusted since 1893 the department of the Treasury.

A system of economy was then realized, principally by the suppression of a number of employes; new imposts were established without causing the feeling that any of the contributors were overtaxed. The floating debt

(1) See geographical and statistical notes on Mexico, by Mr. Matias Romero (p. 139), for the schedule of income and expenses subsequent to 1822.

was consolidated in 1885; the foreign debt, contracted in London, was reduced, in 1887, to 30 million dollars; two loans, one 10½ millions sterling, negotiated at 6 per cent in the market of Berlin, facilitated the liquidation of a large portion of the indebtedness (1888) and the other of 6 millions sterling was devoted to the payment of subsidies accorded to railway companies (1900); new loans had to be made, which were crowned by success.

Old bonds, which were numerous and divers, were converted (1893-1894) into certificates subject to interest. "We have no floating debt," said the President in 1896; "all the debt of the nation is represented by regular certificates of the public debt which are subject to interest."

The effects of such reforms were already felt at that time. They became more and more evident in the years that followed. Thus, in 1889, Mexico was able to negotiate a loan of 22,700,000 sterling at 5 per cent to clean out those it had contracted twelve years before at 6 per cent.

Although public revenues, which in 1877-1878 did not surpass 20 million dollars, were increased to 38½ millions in 1889-1890, they were not sufficient at that time to cover the expenses.

The deficit became more and more sensible during a number of years, exceeding 6 million dollars in 1892-1893.

But finally the Government released itself of its financial burdens. In 1901-1902 the income of the federal Government, half of which is provided by its customs duties and by the stamp tax, reached the sum of \$66,774,380 (1), while the expenses were only \$62,275,101, therefore leaving an excess of the former over the latter.

The results of the fiscal year 1902-1903 are still more remarkable; \$76,023,416 income and \$68,222,522 expenses, leaving an excess of \$7,800,894—that is to say, a balance of over 11 per cent.

To have a complete idea of public expenses it would be necessary to add to the federal budget that of the

(1) The stamp tax, established by the law of August 25, 1893, produced alone \$25,000,000.

States, the total of which in 1902 reached the sum of \$18,086,952, income, and \$17,322,707 for expenses, plus the municipal budgets, which show \$10,490,901 income against \$10,148,804 for expenses. The credit of Mexico has increased in proportion to the development of its finances generally; its foreign loan, which was floated in the markets of Europe at the rate of 58 francs (for certificates of 100 francs) reached the rate of 90 francs (1895) and surpassed its par value towards the end of 1899. On March 31, 1903, 5 per cent bonds were and are sold in London at 103.

The Government of Mexico has been benefited, legitimately, in converting into 5 per cent bonds, as stated before, the loans it had contracted at a higher rate of interest. Such certificates, however, have also surpassed their face value in June, 1903.

President Porfirio Diaz deserves moreover the credit of having accomplished such purpose since he was, as Messrs. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu and Alfred Foville remarked, strongly hampered by the decrease in the price of silver.

On the other hand, customs duties, which constitute one of the heaviest revenues for the Treasury, were calculated on a silver basis. Or, the white metal which in 1876 maintained still its proximity to par value (1) has followed an almost constant decline during twenty-five years, so much so that in 1903 it was worth, according to the progress of precious metals, less than half (24 1-16 pence per ounce) of what it used to be, this being the cause of a decrease in value of mining property and also of the fall in the income of the Treasury. This last decrease has been partially remedied by the law of January 1, 1903, which establishes a basis for the payment of customs duties, which, however, may be an obstacle to importations (imperfectly compensated, from a point of view of a general interest, by the benefits that may be derived by the exporters of national products, silver excepted); a

(1) The average price of silver per ounce in London during 1876 was 52¾ pence.

menacing commercial crisis, a considerable overcharge for the payment of arrears of the foreign debt, which, for example, were calculated, on account of conversion of silver into gold, at nearly 28,000 francs in 1892-1893.

The Government has been enlightened by the advice of those who, being the most interested in the matter, were consulted through a commission appointed in February, 1902. The counselors advised the Government to pay its debt in silver, same as if the par value had been maintained, which would have meant a total failure. The Government, however, was wise enough not to follow this counsel and it was perfectly right in doing so; for it is to that sense of sagacity that a good deal of credit placed to-day upon its bonds is due. Furthermore, it appears that the decline of silver may be stopped for some time at least.

The series of operations that have placed Mexico's credit on a level with that of the majority of the large European nations is the work of a wise and restorative administration. Upon the evidence of it, Mr. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu has repeated the words of one of the greatest ministers of the restoration, Baron Louis: "Give me a good political administration and I will give you prosperity." One could add that prosperity helps a good deal to perpetuate a good political administration.



HON. RAMON CORRAL,
Secretary of Interior.

ARMY AND NAVY.

A government should always have at its disposal a sufficient armed force to maintain order and insure the security of the country, to defend when necessary the integrity of its territory against a foreign aggression, and also to cause the respect abroad of its national flag. "No country," said with good reason the great General Niox, "should consider itself exempt from the dangers of war."

The Mexicans are not wanting in the habit of making use of arms; political parties have done no other thing than to appeal too often to the use of arms during intestinal dissensions. They are not wanting, either, in endurance before the hardships of war or in courage to face death. General Niox, who is an eye-witness of their struggles, pays homage to their valour. They are lacking, however, in a good military organization. President Diaz has made it his purpose to provide one for his country.

General Niox explains with correctness how the recruiting of the army has been regulated and how the various corps have been constituted by means of new laws, especially by that of July 1, 1901, establishing the principle of compulsory military service for all those between the ages of 20 to 50 years, combining with it the mustering of volunteers and conscripts, distributing the recruits of different social standards among the various corps of the army, instituting or restoring military schools and creating an important supply of war material.

It is calculated that the ordinary number of soldiers that a country ought to support in times of peace is about a one hundredth part of its population. Mexico could, therefore, support 140,000 men under its flag. However, it has only 31,000 men of regular troops, 3,500 of which are officers. The number of officers is comparatively large, this being done for the purpose of recruiting the

necessary number of men in case of war, thus raising the present army to 220,000 combatants.

There are two reserves. The first is composed by the rural guards, customs officers in the northern portion of Mexico and on the coasts, and the corps of gendarmes of the Federal Districts and the States, the whole amounting to about 20,000 men. The second reserve is constituted by levies mobilized from the States, which reserve is poorly enforced but which can be utilized to fill the deficiencies of the regular army.

The arms in use are modern and of good quality.

With regard to the navy, the same is still in its embryotic state—a few gunboats and steel sloops, three of which were recently constructed in Genoa and New York. The great extension of Mexico's coast lines will force the construction of a navy capable of protecting the country. That is a task for the future to accomplish, and, for the present, such needed improvement has been provided for by the addition of new credits to the general budget (1).

On the other hand, Mexico can not for the present go beyond the maintenance of a small fleet on the Pacific, an ocean which some day will play a part equal to that played by the Mediterranean concerning the rivalries of the Old World. We consider it proper to repeat an old adage: A country without a navy is a bird without wings.

(1) The war and navy budget in 1901-1902 did not exceed \$14,000,000. The proportion, therefore, as remarked by Mr. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, is not excessive with regard to the total budget.