

Congress a lack of sufficient interest in this country to take up the subject in earnest, went to England and there enlisted in the enterprise several prominent capitalists who were ready to consummate an agreement to construct the railway, when the negotiations were suddenly suspended by complications that arose in Mexico. While these were being satisfactorily adjusted the promoters of the Nicaragua Canal came before this Government with a treaty presented by the Executive looking to the construction of the canal by the Government itself. Interested in this scheme were a number of high officials of the Government, who gave it all their influence.

The Senate failed to ratify the treaty, but the discussions in the Senate and in the public press gave evidence of such an intense interest on the part of the people, not so much in the Nicaragua Canal as in the general subject of an Isthmian crossing, that it became very evident that this country must be interested commercially, financially and politically in any inter-oceanic crossing of whatever kind and wherever located. With this conviction the promoters of the ship railway, comprising some seventy or eighty capitalists and public-spirited citizens of the United States, intend to ask Congress at its next session to give the stockholders of the Ship Railway Company a guarantee for fifteen years that they shall receive dividends of 5 per cent. on \$50,000,000, with the condition that the guaranty shall not attach until after the railway is completed and in operation, and that any sum paid under the guaranty shall be repaid to the United States. The consideration which the company proposes to give for this guaranty is a reduction of 25 per cent. upon the tolls on all American coastwise commerce carried over the ship railway for thirty years. The Mexican Government agrees to guarantee 5 per cent. per annum upon \$25,000,000 on the same conditions, and agrees to give the company the right to obtain the guaranty asked of the United States from it or any other nation, or nations, and to give such guaranteeing nation a representation in the board of directors fully equal to that which Mexico reserves. It can scarcely be doubted that such a proposition can fail of acceptance by our Government.

If we can shorten the voyage 8,000 miles and the time one-half, lessen the cost of insurance and keep the grain out of its long sojourn in the tropics, a new era of prosperity will dawn at the Golden Gate and along the Columbia and Willamette. Our commercial organizations should memorialize Congress on the subject, and do it before final action is taken instead of afterwards, as on a former occasion.

REMEDIES FOR MALARIA.—Dr. Crudelli, of Rome, gives the following directions for preparing a remedy for malaria which may be worth trying, as it is said to have proved efficacious when quinine has given no relief: Cut up a lemon, peel and pulp, in thin slices, and boil it in a pint and a half of water until it is reduced to half a pint. Strain through a linen cloth, squeezing the remains of the boiled lemon, and set it aside until cold. The entire liquid is taken fasting.

FORESTS AND PRAIRIE.

THE transition from the heavy forests of the eastern and central portions of the Atlantic region to the treeless plain is gradual. The change occurs within the prairie region. Here is the strip of debatable ground where a continuous struggle between the forest and the plain takes place. There is here sufficient precipitation of moisture to cause, under normal conditions, a growth of open forests, but so nicely balanced is the struggle that any interference quickly turns the scale. Trees planted within this prairie belt thrive if protected from fire and the encroachments of the tough prairie sod, and so extend the forest line westward; if the forest which fringes the eastern edge of the prairie is destroyed, it does not soon regain possession of the soil, and the prairie is gradually pushed eastward.

Other causes, however, than insufficient rainfall and a nicely balanced struggle between the forest and the plain have prevented the general growth of trees in the prairie region east of the ninety-fifth meridian. The rainfall in this region is sufficient to insure the growth of a very heavy forest. The rain falling upon the prairies of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois and Missouri equals in amount that enjoyed by the Michigan peninsula, and the whole region south of Lakes Erie and Ontario, while prairies exist within the region of the heaviest forest growth. It is not want of sufficient heat or of sufficient or equally distributed moisture which has checked the general spread of forest over these prairies. The soil of which the prairies are composed, as is shown by the fact that trees planted upon them will grow with vigor and rapidity, is not unsuited to tree growth. It is not perhaps improbable that the forests of the Atlantic region once extended continuously as far west as the ninety-fifth meridian, although circumstantial evidence of such a theory does not exist. It is, however, fair to assume that forests once existed in a region adapted by climate, rainfall and soil to produce forests, and that their absence under such conditions must be traced to accidental causes. It is not difficult to understand that forests once destroyed over such a vast area could not easily regain possession of the soil protected by an impenetrable covering of sod and subjected to the annual burnings which have occurred down to the present time; while the force of the wind, unchecked by any forest barrier, over such an area would, even without the aid of fires, have made the spread of trees slow and difficult. The assumption that these eastern prairies may have once been covered with forests is strengthened by the fact that since they have been devoted to agriculture, and the annual burnings have been stopped, trees which were formerly confined to the river bottoms have gradually crept to the uplands. The eastern portions of the prairies are fast losing their treeless character, and the forest protected from fire is gradually gaining in every direction; regions which fifty years ago were treeless outside the river bottoms now contain forests covering 10 or even 20 per cent. of their area.

These eastern, well-watered prairies must not, however, be confounded with their dry western rim adjoining the plains, the debatable ground between forest and plain, or with the plains themselves. There is no gradual, constant spread of forest growth upon the plains. They are treeless, on account of insufficient moisture to develop forest growth; and while trees may, perhaps, if planted, survive a few years beyond the western limits of the prairie, the permanent establishment of forests there does not seem practicable.—*Professor Sargent in United States Census on Forestry.*