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WEDNESDAY - JANUARY 3, 1900

THE CENSUS OF 1900.

One of the subjects on which this congress should legislate without fail at this session is the census. It is high time, says the *Inter Ocean* to be laying the foundations of the next decadal census. It is not too much to say that the last census cost millions more than was necessary through the crudity and delay in the passage of the act of congress under which it was taken.

But before even a beginning is made in getting ready for the twelfth census, congress must legislate on the subject. Ten years ago it made some blunders which ought to be avoided this time. One thing the act went into details too much. The bill was largely the work of the late S. S. Cox, a brilliant and able man, but one entirely without practical experience in that line. He had studied the subject in the abstract and found it very interesting, but there is no school like that of experience.

Congress may provide for a permanent census bureau. A comparatively small number of men could be kept at the work all through the ten years from one census to another, and it would be economy to do it. Those men should be under civil service rules, not examinations prescribed by the civil service commission, but by the superintendent himself and his immediate assistants. The men belonging to that branch of the census bureau should be protected from removal except for cause, the superintendent being held responsible for their efficiency and accuracy. It would be demoralizing to reduce the superintendency to a figurehead. The chief's authority must be such that he will be master of the situation, at the same time exempt from the pressure of place hunters, in congress and out, who made such distracting demands upon the superintendent of the last census, Robert P. Porter. In a recent magazine article from Mr. Porter's own pen conspicuous mention is made of those distracting demands. Evidently they interfered seriously with the work.

But the great bulk of the work has to be done by men who are employed only a short time, a few weeks, perhaps only a few days. Their work, in the aggregate, is really the most important of all, yet it would be impracticable to apply to them civil rules. We refer, of course, to the enumerators of population. There will be substantially the same number of them as there are election precincts, take the country through. Either by act of congress or rule of the bureau, the supervisors, under whose general supervision the enumeration is to be made, should be required to follow voting district lines, so far as possible. The average length of time required to make the return for an enumeration district in 1890 was about two weeks. Every applicant had to make his application in writing, and, so far as practicable, he had to be a resident of the district. No doubt this general system will prevail in 1900. Chicago alone will furnish employment for a fortnight for about 1,500 enumerators. No general examination would meet the requirements of the case. There are a good many districts in Chicago where it is necessary for the enumerator to be able to ask his questions in some foreign tongue. In one it will be Russian, another Pol-

ish, another Bohemian, and so on through a long linguistic list. The enumerator must be able at the same time to read and write the English language correctly. The spirit of the civil service system ought to pervade the entire work of the census.

PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

"—Walton, it is almost half an hour since I ordered that turtle soup." "Waiter—"Sorry, sir, but you know how slow turtles are."—*Tribune*.

"—Mrs. Y.—"My daughter is a promising musician." Mrs. C.—"Will you get her to promise that she won't sing any more."—*Yonkers Statesman*.

"—Her Prudence.—"You insist on my getting my life insured before we are engaged?" She—"Yes; even before you ask papa."—*Harlem Life*.

"—Tom Harty.—"I made a fool of myself in the first engagement ring I ever bought." She—"Didn't it fit?" He—"Don't know. She wouldn't try it on."—*Chicago Record*.

"—"What have you against this hotel?" thundered the landlady. "Almost everything is 'extra' except the meals. They're the worst I ever contended with."—*Detroit Free Press*.

"—Butcher.—"I need a boy about your size, and will give you 12 shillings a week." Applicant—"Will I have a chance to rise?" Butcher—"Yes; I want you to be here at four in the morning."—*Tribune*.

"—Mamma.—"George, if you eat any more of that pudding, you'll have a headache in the morning." George—"Well, there'll be the one satisfaction that I shall know just what to lay it to."—*Boston Transcript*.

"—It's a strange thing," said the old fisherman, meditatively. "What's strange?" asked his better half. "Why, a man always runs to keep from being caught, while what are never caught until they begin to run."—*Yonkers Statesman*.

"—"I'm mighty glad my wife coaxed me into getting her a wheel," said the lean passenger. "Makes her happy, eh?" said the fat passenger. "She's so stock on riding that she ain't going to clean house this year."—*Indianapolis Journal*.

"—Mamma.—"That big building is where all the little boys who have no mothers and fathers live, Arnold. Isn't it nice?" Arnold (after some thought).—"I'd rather live in a smaller house, and have you, though."—*Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*.

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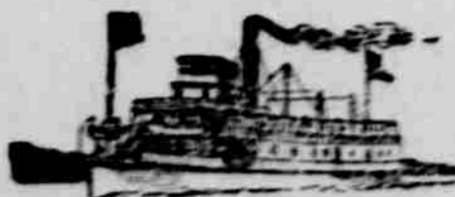
Came to my place on 3-Mile, about the 25th of November, a straw-hay road mare, branded V Placed on the left shoulder, about 5 years old. Owner can have same by paying charges.

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