

NEW ORLEANS TO BE RATLESS CITY

Health Officers Drive Rodents
From Their Abodes.

PLAGUE STIRRED UNCLE SAM

Discovery of Disease in June Started Campaign Which Was Waged Relentlessly Until All Danger Had Passed—Poison and Traps Are Used, and Docks Are Made Ratproof.

New Orleans.—The federal government is helping this city to rid itself of rats, those carriers of the fleas that carry the bubonic plague.

On June 19 a case of bubonic plague was discovered here. A hurry call was sent to the public health service, and a strenuous campaign was started to stamp it out. The government was concerned in preventing its spread to other sections of the country. And the task is costing the government \$27,000 a month.

There are three kinds of rats, but the worst is the Norwegian rat. He is the nomad of the rodent family, a militant brute that soon cleans out all others of his tribe. It is he who carries the fleas whose bite causes bubonic plague. And he carries it everywhere. Plague is thought to have reached New Orleans from the orient via Liverpool, which trades largely with the east.

The rats are being exterminated with poison and with traps. Several expert rodentologists were brought from San Francisco, and they have trapped as many as 7,724 rats in a single week.

Thousands of rodents have been examined for infected fleas, and in all 121 plague stricken rats have been found. About twenty-five cases of plague among humans have developed, with six deaths. No new cases have been reported among humans for some time, but infected rats are constantly being trapped. A few days ago a Chinese restaurant was condemned and demolished, and in the process no fewer than thirteen rats bearing plague parasites were found.

The fight has been going on since early June, and the situation is now well in hand. Various bodies planning to hold conventions in New Orleans have been notified that the city is quite safe. But the battle is by no means over. The Norwegian rat is a hardy brute, and there is always danger of a fresh outbreak.

It is a herculean job to ratproof an ancient rabbit warren of a city like New Orleans. The city has been divided into districts, each under the charge of a doctor of the public health service, and a survey has been made of each district, of all rat breeding or rat harboring places noted, and now they are cleaning up the place. Holes are being stopped up, buildings raised or lowered so that they clear the ground sufficiently to allow free circulation of air and sunshine or else hug it too closely to afford shelter to the rodent, walls and foundations are being fixed to keep the rats from getting through. Nuisances have been abated in over a thousand places, and disinfectant and fumigation chemicals are being used liberally. Standing garbage, stable refuse and the like are anathema. Permits for keeping chickens are being revoked, for chicken feed is a great attractor of rats.

The wharves and docks and the railway freight yards are being gone over. Every ship before leaving the port is fumigated with sulphur or carbon monoxide. An attempt is being made to ratproof the wharves, but it is only partially successful, for a really ratproof wharf must be almost entirely of concrete.

New Orleans being a great distributing center for freight for the west and southwest, an enormous number of freight cars must be inspected, ratproofed if necessary or fumigated. In one week over 3,000 were inspected, of which seven were condemned.

Infant mortality, particularly from summer bowel complaints and the like, has fallen greatly since the beginning of the anti-plague crusade; so has the general death rate.

The federal public health service has more than 200 men engaged in the work here under the leadership of Dr. William C. Rucker. Surgeon General Blue visited the city at the beginning to look the situation over, bringing with him Dr. Creel, who stamped out the plague at Porto Rico.

A Joker in India.
Calcutta, India.—"By kind permission of the Endem," is the inscription scrawled by a joker on piles of merchandise waiting shipment here. The German cruiser has played havoc with Indian commerce.

FORCE A CUT IN COTTON ACREAGE

Bankers of South Planning to
Curtaill the Output.

MEANS DIVERSIFIED FARMING

South May Now Become Great Cattle and Grain Section—Climatic Conditions Excellent For Production of Wheat and Corn—Three Thousand Financiers Co-operate in Movement.

Atlanta, Ga.—Three thousand bank presidents, constituting a majority of all in the cotton region, have signed a pledge "to extend financial aid to farmers who reduce their cotton acreage one-half in 1915 and plant the remaining land in food crops."

They also promise "to discourage in every proper way the planting of more than half of this year's acreage in cotton next year and to urge the supply merchants of their respective communities to adopt the same policy."

It is believed that this assures a reduction which will wipe out the cotton surplus in one year and will open a new era of diversified farming in the south.

The action is the result of a campaign begun by the Atlanta chamber of commerce in September. Letters were sent to all bank presidents in the cotton states explaining the plan and asking a pledge of co-operation on postal card. The replies received are practically unanimous.

Three thousand and ten pledges with signatures of the bankers have been received, and cards are still coming in. Of these pledges 517 are from Georgia, 725 from Texas, 225 from Alabama, 269 from Arkansas, 114 from Louisiana, 177 from Mississippi, 190 from North Carolina, 443 from Oklahoma, 168 from South Carolina, 113 from western Tennessee and 69 scattering.

This campaign is based on the fact that 80 per cent of the cotton farmers are more or less dependent on banks or supply merchants for advances with which to make crop. Heretofore the average farmer to obtain credit had to show that he would plant enough cotton to pay the debt.

Now the bankers and supply merchants will insist on a reduction of cotton acreage by one-half as a condition of credit. This is a reversal of the credit system of the south.

Mell R. Wilkinson, president of the Atlanta chamber of commerce, made this statement: "Being actual or prospective creditors of the south to a large extent, northern people wish to know whether it will meet its obligations. This depends on its ability to make the cotton. Just now cotton is selling 30 per cent below the cost of production."

"It has neither an open market nor a fair price, because of the surplus caused by the European war stopping thousands of cotton mills. This work of the Atlanta chamber of commerce is intended to accomplish two great objects. One is to wipe out the cotton surplus and to re-establish the market. This answers the question of the north. The other object is to replace the one crop system with diversified farming. That means the south will become the great grain and cattle region of the continent. No other section has produced as much corn per acre under good conditions. Soil, seed and culture being equal, a month more sunshine makes more corn."

"Georgia, the Carolinas and Alabama have authentic records of more than 200 bushels per acre. Three thousand Georgia boys averaged nearly sixty bushels and seventy-six boys made more than 100 bushels per acre last year."

"Our returns show that the farmers of the southeast made this year two-thirds of a year's supply of corn and forage. We have marshaled the financial resources of the south behind the farmer in his supreme effort to emancipate himself from the all cotton system."

The letters show a spirit of grim determination, shared by bankers, supply merchants and farmers, to cut the next cotton crop by half. These expressions come from every state from North Carolina to Texas, and the keynote is struck by J. W. Bolton, president of the Rapids bank at Alexandria, La., who says:

"It would be folly for us to attempt to take care of this year's crop and allow customers to plant a full crop next year, when by so doing they would depreciate the value of the security we have taken from them, which is their cotton."

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