

Ex-Consul Dobbs At Home Again

HE TALKS OF THE FIVE YEARS HE HAS SPENT ABROAD;

THE CHILEAN PEOPLE PICTURED;

TRADE AND COMMERCE OF THE SUB-ANDEAN REPUBLIC;

MOST PROGRESSIVE IN SOUTH AMERICA;

THE SQUEEZE OF THE GOLD STANDARD AND ITS EFFECT UPON THE PEOPLE;

A TRIP TO THE HAWAIIAN ISLANDS; (SKETCH OF J.M. DOBBS INCLUDED)

Marietta, Ga., January 29 (Special) -- One of the best posted men on all subjects and the most interesting to talk to in Georgia is Mr. J.M. Dobbs, ex-consul to Valparaiso. He is thoroughly conversant with the governments, people and their customs, the products of most every nation of any importance. He has traveled extensively and often in Europe and is familiar with almost the whole of the western hemisphere. He spoke the Spanish language fluently before he was sent to Valparaiso, five years since. Knowing their language as he did, he became thoroughly acquainted with the Chilean people and their country and trade. He perhaps knows their country better in every particular than any person who is not a native of that country.

Asked for his retention He was very vigorous in the prosecution of his duties as consul, an in looking out for every interest of our country. When Mr. McKinley was elected president and for political reasons it was expected that Mr. Dobbs's successor would immediately be named, the president of the National Association of Manufacturers, together with committees from the Philadelphia commercial museums, without the knowledge of Mr. Dobbs, made a personal appeal to the president to continue him in office and gave as their reasons that he had so faithfully and ably represented our interests and had benefited the manufacturing interests of our country.

When asked for an interview for The Constitution on Chilean matters, Mr. Dobbs said, with pleasure:

"I think a great deal of that paper and shall be glad to give them any information I can.

"Chile is the most advanced of all South American republics and has had no war of consequence for 35 years, except the revolution of 1890. It is a strip of country about three thousand miles in length, running directly in northerly and southerly direction, and has all kinds of climates. It never rains in the north, but has a moderate rainfall in the central portion, and in the lumber and wood growing sections of the south they have ample rainfall. Valparaiso has a delightful climate, the thermometer ranging from 40 degrees in winter to never more than 90 degrees in summer, and is a charming city.

"The better classes of Chileans are highly educated and progressive and their statement are not excelled by those of any country. A more patriotic people are not to be found. They have great respect for the United States, and require only a little encouragement to be as friendly with us as either Peru or Brazil or Venezuela."

Change of monetary system

"Prior to 1895 the money of the country was paper, the peso, or dollar, having an original value of 38 pence, was fluctuating between 10 and 14 pence. In December 1895, the conversion law was passed, placing the country on a gold basis and making the value of the peso 13 pence. The

effect of this law was to contract the currency, making money very scarce and interest high, the circulating medium having been cut from 92,000,000 to 50,000,000 pesos. For two years following the conversion act the country suffered a great deal, which, of course, was to be expected until a general liquidation throughout the country had been made. It was a new and interesting experience to me, as I had never before had an opportunity of studying the financial conditions of a country while undergoing a change in its money.

"Chile is a good wheat growing country and has from thirty to forty cargoes a year to dispose of. It is their principal article of agriculture, and brought a good price in 1897, which caused the situation to improve very much there just as it has in the west.

Nitrate industry

"The great industry and real life of northern Chile, the desert of Atacama, is nitrate of soda (saltpeter). The over production of this article and its competitor, sulphate of ammonia, which is being manufactured both in the US and Germany, has caused depression in the business of the country. There is, however, a brighter outlook at present for that industry, owing to recent opening of new markets in Hawaii and Japan, which countries are expected in the near future to become large purchasers of these articles. They also hope to have a greater demand from California and the west coast, owing to the increased culture of beer root.

"There has been a steady growth in commerce between Chile and the US for the past five years and an increasing demand for American manufactured articles up to the passage of the Dingley bill, which made it impossible for Chileans to send wool or hides to the US.

"They grow a class of wool different from any raised in this country, and while it was admitted free of duty, two-thirds of their entire production came to this country, in exchange for woodware, hardware, machinery, etc. Since the passage of this act they send their wool to England, and the effect of this duty will only cause an increased trade with Great Britain and decrease it with the US."

On Mr. Dobbs's return home he spent a month in Hawaii, studying the conditions there, and is heartily in favor of this country annexing the islands.

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