

REFORM IN THE SERGEANT-AT-ARMS OFFICE IN THE SENATE.

The new sergeant-at-arms of the Senate finds the office in much better condition than his predecessor found it on assuming his duties seven or eight years ago. Up to the time when Col. Richard J. Bright was appointed the Senate was bombarded with requests for favors from Senators and friends of Senators. Up to that time the years been used to furnish pay to friends of Senators for services never rendered. The old reports show, for instance, that one wealthy man, who had for years been connected with the newspaper gallery, was paid a monthly salary as laborer in the Senate cloakroom shop. Another was paid \$100 a month for "looking after the storing of fuel," and still another received a like amount for "oiling and polishing furniture." The amount paid out occasionally for "rubbing and storing fuel" was greater one year



Colonel Fright began as soon as he was inducted into office to clean these Augean stables. He insisted that every man who drew pay for any work must perform that work, and that each individual on the rolls of his office must report daily his presence in the capitol. Within a month he had abolished the sinecure list entirely.

The new treaty which has been negotiated with Great Britain, clears the way for the construction of the Nicaraguan canal by the United States. The treaty promises that the canal shall be free and open in time of war or of peace, to the vessels of commerce and of war of all nations. The canal shall never be blockaded, nor shall any act of hostility be committed therein. Prizes shall be in all respects subject to the same rules as vessels of war. No belligerent shall embark or disembark troops, munitions of war or warlike materials in the canal, except in case of accidental hindrance of the transit, and in such case the transit shall be resumed with all possible dispatch.

To Govern the Philippines.

The appointment of Judge Wm. E. Taft, of Cincinnati, to be president of the new Philippine commission, is generally approved. The judge is a man of great learning and ripe experience. It is stated that the commission will be organized in the Philippines in March, and its special mission will be the establishment of a civil government for the islands. The appointment of this commission is carrying out the suggestion of the present Philippine commission, which will shortly go out of existence. Some of the members of the old commission, it is said, will be appointed on the new one.

The Financial Bill.

Unless the present indications prove unreliable the financial bill will be a law soon. The vote on the bill is to be taken as early as possible and then it must go to a conference. In the conference the bill will be perfected in the form that it will become a law. The conferees on the part of the Senate will be Senators Aldrich and Allison, Republicans, and Senator Vest or Senator Jones, of Arkansas, Democrat. The House conferees will be Representative Overstreet, of Indiana, the author of the bill, and Chairman

**THE UPLIFTING OF THE NEGROES IN
THE SOUTH.**

Uncle Sam has been co-operating with the negro training schools in various parts of the Southern States in the study of the conditions of life among the negroes and how they can be improved. Having done this work jointly among the negroes in the neighborhood of the Normal and Agricultural Institute in Tuskegee, Ala., at the head of which is Booker T. Washington, and of the Agricultural and Mechanical College in Auburn, Ala., the same investigations have been taken up in Virginia. Dietary studies have been made among the negroes living in the region bordering the Great Dismal Swamp in Franklin county, Va., and also in Elizabeth City



The negroes who live in the region bordering on the Great Dismal Swamp are especially subject to malaria, as may be imagined from the low and swampy condition of the soil. Their houses are small, two or three roomed board cabins, lighted in the evening as a rule only by the open fireplace. There are an exceptionally few families that have stumps or even candles. The living of these people is obtained from the soil. The usual size of a farm is that which goes locally by the name of a "one-mule farm." The amount of land that can be worked by one mule. About half of the produce goes to

earn the rent, and on the other half the occupants manage to get a living, with additions derived here and there by doing odd jobs around the country. These farms are known as "dead-tree farms"—that is, the trees are killed by girdling, and the under-brush being cut away, the land between the standing dead timber is cultivated. Women, of course, as well as the men, work the farms. Where help is hired, payment is made usually in rations—that is, in food materials. The staple crops are sweet potatoes, cotton and peanuts, and such is the poverty of the soil and the people that the crops in most cases are small. Tobacco used to be raised, but the impoverishment of the land put an end to prospects of getting much out of this product.

Their Frugal Meal.

Dogs and cats are much more numerous than the available food supplies warrant. The daily meal, year in and year out, is mainly "hog and hominy." Fried side bacon is the principal meat, helped out occasionally with fish from the neighboring Chesapeake bay. If a family keep a cow, they usually can get a little milk, but the feed of the cows does not encourage a plentiful yield of milk. There is a certain amount of venison, but these people deem snakes, delicious food. Turtles and frogs, of course, are eaten. Muskrat, opossum and racoon furnish variations of the diet. The "hominy" part of the daily meal consists of bread made of unbolited cornmeal, which contains a large portion of bran. Bread making is a simple process. The meal is wet, and baked in the ashes, without salt or



leavening material. Cook stoves are unknown, and all the cooking is done in the fireplace. Drinking water, as might be imagined from the nature of the soil, is stagnant and brackish, and often muddy. One family that has been studied occupies a house made of rough boards set on end without weather strips. The house stands on piles, and fowls and dogs live underneath.

Near Hampton Institute.
In Elizabeth City county, Va., many of the negroes have had the advantage of the influence of Hampton Institute, and also are helped out by the employment afforded by the two large hotels at Old Point Comfort and by the shipyards and industries of Newport News. As this county contains also its full quota of the exceedingly poor, instructive comparisons can be made between those who might be called the fairly well to do and those who struggle through life in a state of almost subject poverty. Many negroes in this county own from one to three acres of land; two or three own forty acres or more, while one negro has raised himself so far above his neighbors as

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Trains arrive and depart from State
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8:30 A. M. for Scottsbluff, Aves. Mt. View, Nunda, Hornsellsville, Fortral, and Olan, and intermediate stations.

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