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THE SAINTS IN MEXICO.

W. D. Johnson Jr., who presides over Colonia Diaz ward, in Chihuahua, Mexico, in the capacity of Bishop, and who has been in this city attending the annual conference, starts for his home tomorrow. In conversation to-day he gave the following items regarding the settlements of the Latter-day Saints in Chihuahua.

During 1891 and 1892 the drouth in that part of the country was terrible and almost dried the people out. Tens of thousands of cattle died from lack of water and scarcity of food caused by the failure of the grass. Such a drouth has never been known before in Mexico. Its operations, associated with the failure of the crops of J. W. Young to pay for work done on the railway, caused considerable hardship, and almost financially ruined some of the people. Last winter, however, the rains again began, and a marked change has come over the whole scene. The grain and grass are growing nicely, the first crop of lucerne is now ready to cut, and the fruit crop is in splendid condition. From conditions which caused feelings of serious discouragement there has been a transition to brighter prospects than were ever known before.

There are five Mormon settlements in Chihuahua. Diaz and Juarez, with a population of over 700 each; Dublin, with 250 to 300 inhabitants; and Pacheco and Cave Valley, with an aggregate population of about 300.

Diaz is located in the Ascension Valley, which is about 50 miles long by 20 to 25 miles wide, and Dublin in the Casas Grandes valley, about the same size, and through both runs the Casas Grandes river. Though so much farther south than Great Salt Lake valley, the climate of Diaz valley is no warmer in the summer time. This is owing to the fact that its altitude is 400 feet above that of Salt Lake. In the winter, however, the weather is not nearly so cold. Last winter the heaviest storm deposited about four inches of snow, which lay on the ground a whole day. Usually snow melts as quickly as it falls.

All kinds of temperate fruits except apples do well in the Diaz valley. Apples are grown, but they are not up to the standard of first class Utah fruit. But grapes, peaches, apricots and other small and stone fruits do splendidly. The valley is not warm

enough for oranges, though these do well on the west slope of the Sierra Madre, about 125 miles west of Diaz, in Sonora, where the altitude of the valleys is much less.

As at Deming, New Mexico, a noticeable feature on entering the Diaz valley is the number of windmills to be seen on every hand. These are used to obtain water for gardens and orchards. There is an abundance of water within four to sixteen feet of the surface, and it is brought up from wells by being pumped by the windmills. But for corn, beans and other field crops the rains have been largely relied on and the failure of these caused the drouth to be felt so severely. A fair supply of water is now obtainable from a canal twenty-five miles long, which comes out from the Pala Tada spring, and in which the Mormons have purchased from the Mexicans a one-third interest. They are also working on a reservoir system, by the completion of which they anticipate averting all further danger from drouth. The waters of the river are to be stored in winter in a vast reservoir already partly prepared for this purpose by nature.

Two crops are raised annually; in fact this is a necessity in the case of potatoes if planted early, as the first crop would not keep over for seed; so a double crop is raised. In the case of corn, beans, etc., they are raised as a second crop after wheat. At first the people thought they could not raise wheat, as the seasons were so much changed in some respects from Utah, and they depended entirely on the Mexicans for their supply. But the pressure of hard times caused by the drouth compelled to engage in wheat cultivation, and the result is that this year there will be a magnificent harvest in the latter part of May and first of June. The crop will be all in before the summer rains, which begin in July and continue till the early part of September. Mr. Johnson is taking in a threshor and header which will be put in operation next month.

Juarez is located in a canyon through which flows a branch of the Casas Grandes river, which does not fail as the main stream did lower down. It is a splendid place for fruits. A canning factory there did well last year, and it is anticipated will do still better this season. There is a good market among the Mexicans at Chihuahua and other places.

A woolen mill is shortly to be estab-

lished at Juarez, as there is ample water power there. In fact, it is the purpose to make it a manufacturing center for the surrounding country, for which it possesses all the necessary advantages. There is now running there a co-operative store, a shoe factory, and a tannery. In the cana agrie, or sour cane, which contains 80 per cent tannin, and grows wild in almost inexhaustible quantities they have an article for tanning leather which cannot be excelled. Large quantities of it are shipped to Europe for tanneries there, as well as to different parts of the United States and Mexico. A Deming company has now commenced the manufacture of a cana agrie extract, and exports it in that form. At this establishment \$20 per ton is paid for the root, which the people are now beginning to cultivate because of its marketable value.

The Juarez academy is under the direction of Dennis E. Harris as principal, and has a large attendance. There are a number of Mexican members of the Church, and services are held weekly in Spanish, under the presidency of Elder Henry Eyring.

Pacheco and Cave Valley are located in the Sierra Madre range of mountains, and are conveniently located for raising fruit and vegetables, for the care of stock, and for access to extensive timber tracts for lumber. They now have two sawmills and a planing mill.

Diaz and Dublin are in the valley, in a good locality for grain and fruits. At Diaz there is an orchard, owned by one person, that contains 7000 peach trees. The Diaz academy has an attendance of over 200 children, some of them Mexicans. John M. Mills is principal. The academy is in excellent condition. Every other Wednesday the theological exercises are conducted in the Spanish language.

The best of feelings exist between the Saints and the Mexicans. The latter welcome the former to the country. Eight years ago, when the Mormons first went there, there was not in the town of La Ascension a wooden door or a glass window. But in that period there has been a great change and wooden floors, and doors and glass windows are very common. The Mexicans have copied after their more advanced neighbors, to whom they will now grant any reasonable privilege.

As yet there is no nearer rail-