

NOTES.

FARM WAGES.

AN interesting statistical comparison of farm wages in the United States since 1869 has just been published by the Department of Agriculture. In it are embodied the results of twelve investigations conducted by the department at intervals during the past thirty-five years. These tables show the number of farm laborers in each state in 1900; the wages paid in each state to laborers hired by the month, with or without board; by the day, with or without board; also wages in harvest seasons.

The average wages for the United States without board were lowest in 1879, being only \$16.42 per month. From that a gradual increase is shown till 1893, when the average was \$19.10. With the depression of the following year wages declined, until only \$17.69 was the average wage paid farm laborers without board in 1895. This is \$1.27 higher than the low point reached in 1879. Each report since 1895 shows an increase in wages, and the farm wages of 1902 are the highest that have ever been paid. And for the country as a whole they are only \$22.14. If the laborer is employed for twelve months in the year, his annual earnings are only \$265.68, while the average earnings of the laborers employed in manufacturing industry in the United States by the census of 1900 are \$437.96. When the proper deduction from the earnings of the farm laborer are made for enforced idleness due to climatic conditions, his annual income will not be more than one-half the wages paid in manufacturing industries in the United States. In this fact we find an explanation of the rapid growth of industrial, at the expense of agricultural, population.

A study of the wages in different states shows the highest wages in the range states of the West. California, Washington, Montana, Wyoming, and Nevada pay over \$40 per month to men who furnish their own board. The corn and wheat belt of the north central states pay about the same rate of wages as the New England states; *i. e.*, from \$30 to \$36 per month. But the conditions determining the rates of wages in the two sections differ materially. The great

productiveness of the north central states makes the farmers there offer high wages to keep as hired laborers men who otherwise would rent or buy farms for themselves. In New England the agricultural laborers are employed near industrial centers in dairying, gardening, and like operations. To keep them on the farms it is necessary to pay a wage approximating that paid by the manufacturers to laborers of equal skill.

It is in the southern states, where easy conditions of life, a shiftless class of laborers, and the absence of other forms of employment all combine to keep wages low, that we find laborers receiving the smallest sums. In this region also we find the increase in wages in the recent years of industrial activity much less marked than in other sections. In South Carolina the average monthly wage, without board, is \$11.66; in North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama it is between \$13 and \$14; and in none of the southern states are wages as high as \$20 per month. And yet in most of these states the wages paid to the farm laborers exceed the income of the farm owners, as shown by the census returns.

INDIAN CORN IN ARGENTINE.

THE Department of Agriculture has just published a special report dealing with the production and export of corn in Argentine which contains much valuable and interesting information. It deals with the climatic and labor conditions, the methods of cultivation, harvesting, and shipment, and the results accomplished. The facts set forth indicate that the great corn belt of North America is not the only important source of supply for this great crop. Indeed, when it is noted that they are so far behind us in methods of culture, and yet get an average yield as large as ours; that they have only fairly begun the culture of corn, and have as yet hardly begun to feed it to cattle and hogs; that they have very extensive areas suited to corn culture; that through the use of the best cattle they can import from Great Britain and the United States they are rapidly improving their live stock — when these facts are noted, we are likely to feel less sure of retaining permanently our present predominant advantage in supplying the world with beef and pork.