

ing on his part to see it accomplished.

Tegucigalpa Honduras, Oct. 9th.—A new nation, having an approximate area of 100,000 miles and a population of 4,000,000 will come into existence tomorrow, when the Governments of Honduras Guatemala and Salvador will cease to function, and the provisional Federal Council of those countries, will take charge. The new republic lies between Mexico and Nicaragua with Tegucigalpa as its Capital. The pact of the Union was signed early in January of this year at San Jose, Costa Rica by the three mentioned States and Costa Rica, whose national assembly rejected it later by a small majority. Nicaragua refused to sign the pact, on account of differences with its neighbour states about the interpretation of the Bryan-amorro treaty, which gave the United States special right for the constitution of a new inter-oceanic canal through its territory.

VIRGIN ISLANDS FINE ENTREPOT; TRADE VALUE TO U. S. OVER- LOOKED.

BY ADOLPH SIXTO.

Situated at the northeastern extremity of triangular formation of mountains and valleys which stretch from Cuba to the island of Trinidad, enclosing a vast sea which covers the plains of the prehistoric continent of Atlantis, lies a group of small and picturesque islands to which Columbus, in obedience to the piety of his epoch, gave the biblical name of the Virgin Islands. Curiously enough, the best known of these insular virgins which form the subject of this sketch, is the masculine St. Thomas which with its sister isles, St. John and St. Croix comprise the Virgin Islands, as generally understood.

About them are many fertile and productive islands or islets and, about 10 miles away, the largest of the British Virgin Islands.

Beyond the fact that the Virgin Islands St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix, with their near dependencies, were bought from Denmark by the United States during the great war, very little is known about the newest acquisition of the territorial possessions of this great republic. The purpose of this sketch is to show why these islands were a bargain at 25,000,000, if they are properly exploited and developed by the United States.

Fifty years before their final purchase this country negotiated for the acquisition of these islands because of their strategic position and the value of St. Thomas as a coaling station. That value has been greatly enhanced since the opening of the Panama Canal by an outpost for the defense of the canal. So much stress has been laid on this feature that the commercial value of the is-

lands has been largely overlooked. But the Virgin Islands have greater importance to the American business man than even the well merited interest which they command for the military man.

St. Thomas lies at the crossroads of ocean traffic between the Atlantic and the Pacific. The Atlantic ports of the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America and Europe are controlled as it were by the position of this island. For centuries the magnificent harbor of this island sheltered vessels conducting the trade between Europe and the Caribbean Sea and between North and South America. St. Thomas was for many years the headquarters and first western port of call of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Co., the Compagnie Generale Transatlantique, the Hamburg America Line and many other steamship companies. The West India & Panama Telegraph Co. landed its transatlantic cables at St. Thomas, making this island the headquarters of what was once the only and still the most important cable company connecting Europe with the Caribbean Sea.

In the spacious warehouses of the beautiful city of Charlotte Amalia, the capital of St. Thomas, were stored goods to the value of many millions, and her yearly importation for transshipment through the West Indies, Central and South America, exceeded \$25,000,000.

Merchants from Venezuela, Columbia, Brazil and Central America, came periodically to restock their stores. The principal commercial streets, where exhibitions of German, French, Spanish, and British manufacture in pre-war days. There is every convenience for commercial expansion there—telegraph and wireless stations, telephone, electric light and power plants, marine repairing docks, extensive coaling facilities, hotels, large and extensive buildings, banks, insurance companies, and extensive warehouses; climate of perpetual summer, and a population commercially trained and speaking several languages.

The business man of the United States, who avails himself of these advantages offered as an entrepot will find every advantage there by reason of climatic and other conditions, when he will be able to maintain a high standard of living, with wages far lower than those commonly paid for the same class of work in the United States. To the shipping man and the manufacturer who is interested in extending his export trade to the West Indies, Central and South America, St. Thomas makes a special appeal and offers to extend his commercial interest.

The largest of the Virgin Islands, and the most important from an agricultural point of view, lies about 40 miles south of St. Thomas. The island of St. Croix, is extensively cultivated in sugar cane for sugar manufacture and its towns,

Frederiksted and Christiansted, are up-to-date and modern cities.

Between these two there is a valley of level land many miles in extent, presenting a beautiful scenery, magnificent, and can compete with any known health resort—being an excellent place for the establishment of hotels for tourists and others who seek rest and recreation at any period of the year.

The island of St. John lying about 20 miles to the east of St. Thomas, also affords opportunity for the investment of capital. Sparsely populated, this island has splendid soil, adapted to the cultivation of tropical produce and fruit for shipment to the United States. Citrus fruits, bananas, cocoanuts, and many too numerous to mention are found there, and can be extensively cultivated for business purposes. It has forests of valuable hardwood and dyewood and there are evidences of mineral wealth.

Only a comparative small amount of capital would suffice to put the whole island on the proper exploitation and give a substantial return to the industrious and wide awake promoter.

The inhabitants of the Virgin Islands, are law abiding and industrious. Among them literacy is practically known.

Contact with people of different nationality and language has given them a charming urbanity. There has been some friction with members of the American occupation, but this is a circumstance that is being controlled by the present administration. On the whole it is not observed as any disposition of the Americans to oppress and outrage a civil and courteous people.

On the contrary, the American occupation is being distinctly advantageous to the islands. The educational system, though good in the past, has been improved. Free public libraries have been opened. The hospitals are now second to none in the West Indies. There is better sanitation and the death rate has declined.

Natives of ability now occupy responsible positions in the local government.

But while the naval administration is producing such good results, the people of the United States have given little attention to the Virgin Islands.

Recognizing this fact they are inviting the American enterprising business men to visit their shores and satisfy themselves, when they will be able to point out to them and the general public some of the valuable features of these small but important territories of the United States.

The Manufacturers Commercial Association of St. Thomas had undertaken the duty of advertising the importance of these islands to the American people, and has sent a representative to New York, who will be pleased to supply any information about these islands that has not been covered in this brief sketch. —New York Commercial. Oct. 1st.