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FILE NO. 1-8

February 4, 1924.

Mr. Julean Arnold,  
Commercial Attaché,  
Care American Legation,  
Peking, China.

Subject: Substitute for Quarterly Review

Dear Arnold:

For some time I have been concerned over the increasingly perfunctory tone of the quarterly reviews. This has been caused mainly by the inability of the several division chiefs to take time to review carefully the work of each foreign office at the end of the quarter. A much more specific and direct reaction has been arranged which will permit us to discontinue the quarterly review.

The ordinary primary duty of each office is the preparation of major reports. The investigation and research work involved in the preparation of such monographs frequently require the service of the entire staff of an office. Moreover, it is such material as this that is of greatest utility in Washington. When a major report is received I will send it to the division chief primarily interested with a note that I want a candid analysis and criticism. I am going to review these criticisms personally and then write to the field officer regarding his work.

Of course this arrangement will only be followed when major reports are received, but I believe it will assist each of you in the field by furnishing suggestions and criticisms as soon after the receipt of a report as possible.

However, you are in a much better position than I am to say what is valuable and what is not. I want you to let me know just what you think of this arrangement. Criticisms of it and suggestions for its improvement will be most welcome. I am counting upon your cooperation to make the direction of the Foreign Service as practicable and satisfactory as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Julius Klein  
Director

OFFICE OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHE  
PEKING, CHINA

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE

REC'D.

April 10, 1924

File 002

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Subject; Substitute for Quarterly Review

Dr. Julius Klein, Director  
Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce  
Washington

Dear Dr. Klein:-

Referring to your communication of February 4 on the above subject, I may state that I am in thorough sympathy with the representations made therein.

There is a danger that the Bureau's organization abroad will become so saturated with the demands for routine work, involving the preparation of numerous stereotyped reports that it will lose much of its effectiveness. We must safeguard ourselves against having to expend fifty per cent of our time and money in what might be termed useless routine. One of the most useful services which the Bureau can perform in furtherance of the effectiveness of its work in the field is to cut down in every possible way the demands upon the time and energy of its organization abroad in labors of a useless nature. Sometimes I am under the impression that we are called upon to devote ten minutes in explanations of five minutes of actual work done.

There is a danger that the Bureau's foreign service will fall into the unsatisfactory condition which today marks the Consular Service. The best thing that could happen to our Consular Service today would be to have every Consulate in the world burn down with all of their archives and records, as well as all of the archives and records destroyed in Washington, making it necessary to start in all over again and build up a new service under a new set of offices at Washington. Our men abroad are so swamped with routine, red-tape work that they hardly have the time to devote their energies to the larger, constructive phases of their work. I am always impressed when I call upon our Consul-General at Shanghai to find his desk

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Dr. Klein  
April 10, 1924

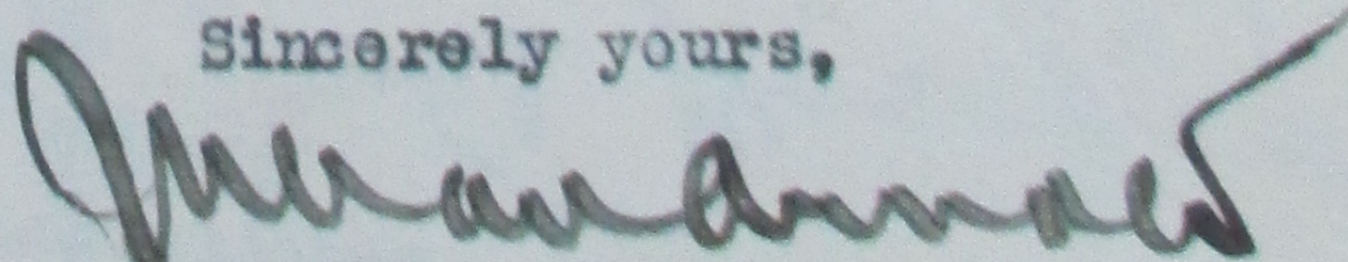
swamped with routine, and then note the contrast when calling upon the Japanese Consul-General or the British Consul-General to find their desks comparatively clean, leaving them free to devote their efforts to less exacting details in connection with their work. The personnel of the American Consulate-General is larger than that of the British or the Japanese, and yet our interests at Shanghai are no greater and probably less than are those of either the British or Japanese.

The elaborate system of recording every service and act performed, the keeping of most detailed records and most exacting instructions in regard to the handling and filing of correspondence, the multiplicity of useless reports combined with the filling out of all sorts of forms and the making of sextuple and octuple copies - all contribute to swamping us with over-organization and inconsequential details.

Thus I am in full sympathy with everything that has to do with keeping our organization from getting into these ruts that become so deep that we are not able to see the landscape beyond because of the height of the sides of the rut into which we have fallen, as is the case of our Consular Service today. I make this statement in no spirit of unkindliness towards the Service for the reason that in spite of the very unfavorable conditions surrounding it, we have in the majority of cases a splendid corps of men working hard to get results, but horribly handicapped by conditions under which they are forced to labor.

The discontinuance of the quarterly review is an excellent idea. Concentrating our efforts on major reports is still more in line with effective constructive efforts. We need criticisms in connection with these reports so long as these criticisms are of a friendly and constructive nature. Some individuals criticise for the mere sport of it, or because they are by nature given to adverse criticism - in other words, everything done by anyone else is subject to criticism on their part. Hence it is necessary to lay down some broad and general rules and ideas in connection with the entire subject of criticisms, so that they may be of a constructive and helpful nature. The object of any criticism in connection with reports prepared by men in the field should be to make those reports of the most help in actual trade promotion. I am certain that the men in the field will appreciate careful criticism designed to be helpful in this connection. In fact without such criticism I am convinced that our work will not be as useful as it would be otherwise.

Sincerely yours,

  
Julean Arnold