

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE

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OFFICE OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHE
PEKING, CHINA

April 3, 1916.

"NOT FOR PUBLICATION"

Subject: Article for Publication - "Mercantile Training for
Consular Officers in China and Japan."

Chief, Bureau of Foreign & Domestic Commerce,
Department of Commerce,
Washington.



Dear Sir:

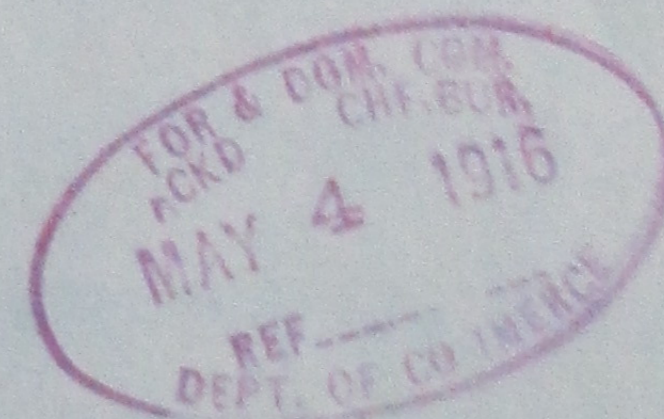
I enclose in ^{du}triplicate my article entitled "Business Train-
ing for Consular Officers" for possible publication in "The Ameri-
cas". The Bureau some months ago stated that this Journal wanted
an article from me. It may be the Bureau may find it more desira-
ble to offer the article to "The Nation's Business", which would
meet with my full approval.

Respectfully,

Fulcan Arnold

American Commercial Attaché.

Enclosure: as stated.



BUSINESS TRAINING FOR CONSULAR OFFICERS.

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Julean Arnold, American Commercial Attaché.
Peking, April 1, 1916.

Great strides have been made during the past fifteen years in improving our consular service. Since 1902 we have been sending college graduates to China and Japan, commissioned as student interpreters attached to our Legation at Peking and our Embassy at Tokyo. After spending two years studying the language of the country, these students are detailed to our consulates in China and Japan, as vice-consuls and interpreters. From time to time these men are shifted from one consulate to another, so that after five or ten years' service in subordinate capacities in our services in these countries, they acquire a knowledge and experience which make them distinctly valuable to our interests in the Orient. We now have in China, eight graduate student interpreters raised to the position of principal consular officers and eight occupying positions as vice consuls and interpreters in the service. In Japan three graduate interpreters have been elevated to the rank of consul and four are serving in subordinate capacities. We have at Peking, attached to the Legation, nine student interpreters, who have not yet completed the prescribed two years' course of study. At Tokyo, there are at present three such students. The Japanese Secretary at the Embassy at Tokyo is a graduate student interpreter, as is also the Assistant Chinese Secretary at Peking. Eventually, all consular officers in China and in Japan will be graduate student interpreters.

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student interpreters to Tokyo and Peking are appointed by the President, after examination. The majority of the appointees thus far have been college graduates who have come almost directly from American universities to their posts at Tokyo or Peking.

They have been selected with considerable care, for the Department of State gives the applicants for examination a preliminary test before recommending them to the President for designation for examination. Thus, so far as their educational qualifications and general fitness for the work are concerned, the men appointed to the student interpreter corps come well recommended. They lack, however, in that with but few exceptions these men have had no experience in mercantile pursuits. They lack not only actual business experience but the discipline of service in mercantile houses. Both are valuable to a successful performance of their duties in our consular service in the Orient.

The main object of the maintenance by the United States of a consular service abroad is for the protection and extension of our foreign trade interests. It is very desirable, if these interests are to be properly conserved, that the men in whose direct care they are entrusted, should themselves have had some business experience. Our consuls abroad are called upon to advise our manufacturers and merchants as to trade possibilities and trade methods in their respective consular districts. They must compile trade reports for the information of our businessmen. They are obliged to reply to scores and hundreds of varied commercial enquiries. While their college educations, supplement-

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ed by their studies in the countries to which they are accredited, may have fitted them to discharge their duties in these directions, in an able manner, yet the fact remains, that without actual contact with business problems, such as one receives in service in a successful mercantile house, and without the discipline which such service gives, these men cannot perform as valuable or satisfactory service as otherwise. Furthermore our manufacturers, capitalists and merchants will have more respect for recommendations and suggestions of our consular officers when they know that these men, in addition to the special training they have had in the countries to which they are accredited, have had a prior or supplementary experience with a successful American mercantile house.

I believe I am right in presuming that our manufacturers and merchants would welcome an opportunity to be of assistance in furnishing opportunities to our young men embarking upon careers in our consular service abroad to familiarize themselves with American business methods and practices by actual experience in American mercantile concerns. The Chamber of Commerce of the United States, the National Foreign Trade Council, the Manufacturers' Export Association, certain of our Chambers of Commerce and other trade organizations interested in our foreign trade development would undoubtedly assist in devising a means whereby our prospective consular officers may be accorded a mercantile experience, which will make their services in the interest of our foreign trade of added value because of this experience.

The New York World of March 1st contains an article under the caption

...great Bank Will Educate College Boys in Finance". The article states that the National City Bank proposes the establishment of a business fellowship which will enable certain students selected by colleges to spend one year in the Bank during their four years or more in college. Facilities will also be accorded by this Bank to permit of some of the students spending portions of the year in service in bond houses, commission houses, forwarding companies, custom houses or in some form of executive work. Can any business man in the United States dispute for one second the value to our foreign trade of such a training as this for our consular officers? I would go even further than prescribing such a course to our student interpreters before they are sent to China and Japan. I would take the men now in the field, two at a time, order them home, and give them six months or a year's training similar to that prescribed by the National City Bank, provided facilities for such a training could be secured.

We want in China and Japan, in our consular service, men who are not only able to converse in and read the languages of these countries, but men who can also converse in and understand the language of our merchants and manufacturers in the United States. We want men who can connect American merchants and manufacturers with trade opportunities in the Orient; who can do this work as well and if possible just a little better than can the consular officers of other nationals for their respective merchants and manufacturers.

When the war is over, competition abroad will be on closer lines well qualified to write, that this man was actually dangerous than

than ever before. We shall find great organizations of the nations of Europe back in the field, more determined than ever to capture the foreign trade. We shall probably find ourselves in need of foreign trade to a greater degree than ever before experienced. We need not fear competition if we prepare ourselves for this competition. In fact, we shall find pleasure in competition so long as we are able to hold our own with all comers. But to hold our own with all comers, we shall have to have team work, with every man on the team trained to play his part as well or just a little better than his opponent in the other team. Are we preparing our consuls in China and Japan, yes, and in other parts of the world, to be able to play their parts in our team work? No, not until we give these men, in addition to the special training they are receiving in the countries to which they are accredited, such additional training as will make them think in terms of the American merchant and manufacturer when investigating and reporting on foreign trade opportunities.

I have heard the work of our consuls in China and Japan as well as elsewhere severely criticized by our mercantile interests as being of comparative little value to our manufacturers and merchants, on account of the lack of knowledge of and experience in business matters possessed by most of our consular officers. Their trade reports are pronounced by some as too academic; by others as lacking accuracy of expression and abounding in careless methods of handling statistical data. One of our merchants in China stated to a specialist sent by the Department of Commerce to China to report on a subject concerning which he was eminently well qualified to write, that this man was actually dangerous because vice, not only as subordinate officers in their relations to their superiors, but also as individuals in their relations to the public.

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his reports would really be of value to merchants and manufacturers in the United States, thus invite more American competition in China. He stated that, generally speaking, he felt that the American merchant in China had little to fear in the way of possible added competition from anything which American business men would be able to get from the reports from our consular officers. While any unprejudiced observer conversant with the work of our consuls in China would not agree with this broad statement adversely criticizing the value of the consular commercial reports, yet the fact remains that these reports would be open to far less criticism and rendered far more valuable were our consular officers possessed of some actual mercantile experience or had they been associated in some substantial way with business interests.

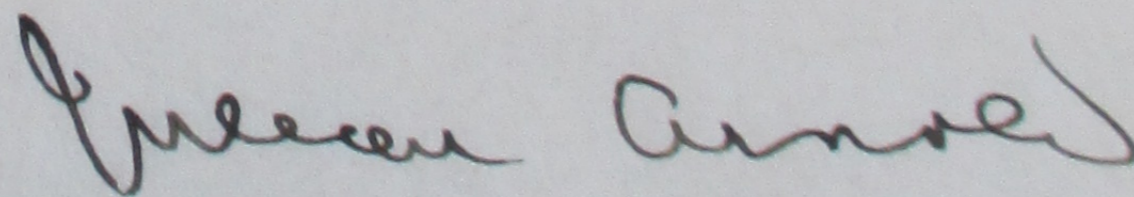
Our student interpreters after spending two years in studying the language are assigned to duty in subordinate capacities in our consulates. Their superior officers often criticize them for their lack of any appreciation of office discipline; for their failure to fit themselves into the general working plan of the office; their lack of appreciation of the necessity of their making themselves part of an organization, of doing the things expected of them necessary to the successful conduct of the office. This action on their part is not the result of any deliberate intention to shirk their duty, but rather, a failure to understand how to make themselves efficient office men. In a word, they lack office discipline, that discipline which comes with having worked as part of an organization in a modern business office. This experience is one of great value to men entering the consular service, not only as subordinate officers in their relations to their prin-

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principal officers, but also to their successful conduct of the offices when they themselves shall have arisen to the positions of consuls.

Furthermore, in their relations with the Chinese and Japanese government officials and merchants, our consular officers in China and Japan, will be in a far better position to extend American influence and prestige and command greater respect for the opinions they may have occasion to express in commercial matters, when the officials and merchants of these countries know that they have had this special mercantile training in the United States.

Thus from whatever viewpoint we may consider the question, a training such as proposed above, for our student interpreter corps in China and Japan, will make these men far more efficient consular officers than possible without such a training, in fact, the day has come when our interest in our foreign trade possibilities has become so extensive as to require that, in addition to the special training which our prospective consular officers are now securing in the countries to which they are accredited, they also have some substantial mercantile experiences.



American Commercial Attaché.