

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE

405 Avenue Joffre,
Shanghai, November 11, 1918.

American Legation

OFFICE OF COMMERCIAL ATTACHE
PEKING, CHINA

INDEXED
FILE NO. 128.4

Subject: - Commercial Attaches of Foreign
Governments in China.

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

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In reply to the Bureau's communication of September 17th on the above subject, I have to state that the following governments maintain Commercial Attaches in China: - Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States of America. Japan has special commerce Consuls and Vice Consuls attached to her important consulates in China. Switzerland has a trade expert on silk, as also has Italy. The Canadian Government maintains a special trade commissioner in China, and Australasia sends from time to time a trade commissioner to China to investigate and report on trade conditions.

Before China severed diplomatic relations with Germany, the German Government had a Commercial Attache attached to the Shanghai Consulate General, with a considerable clerical organization for trade purposes.

Recently Great Britain has organized under the joint control of the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade, a department of Overseas Trade and Commercial Attaches abroad are appointed and function under this special department. In China there are at present two British Commercial Attaches, one at Peking and the other at Shanghai. They are contemplating the appointment of a third for Canton. The Commercial Attache at Shanghai has offices at the Consulate General and is provided with a British clerk and a number of Chinese assistants. The Attache at Peking is attached to the Legation and has an office at the Chancery and an assistant and Chinese clerical force. A few years ago the British Board of Trade had two commissioners traveling in China and reporting directly to the Board of Trade conditions in this country. Since the organization of the Department of Overseas Trade, these trade commissioners have been discontinued.

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Prior to the outbreak of the War, the Russian Government had perfected plans for a Commercial Attache and Trade Commissioner service after that of the United States, but the execution of this plan is in abeyance although the Commercial Attache is functioning in China.

The Russian and French Commercial Attaches are at present in Shanghai attached to the Tariff Revision Commission. Ordinarily they divide their time between Peking and Shanghai.

The Japanese Government seems to use its Consular Service for the main work in trade investigations and developments, although there are numerous Japanese commissions constantly traveling over the country and representatives of large concerns investigating conditions at first hand for the advantage of Japanese interests in China. Japanese banks also have special men for investigating commercial conditions. Their efforts are probably better co-ordinated on the whole than those of any other government working in this country.

As for the American method of sending trade commissioners and special agents to China, it is regarded by men of all nationalities in this country as signally effective, especially so when these men are trained specially as most of them have been. In order to make the work of these trained experts more effective and to accord them opportunity for giving the bulk of their labors to bigger tasks which they have in hand, the office of the Commercial Attache in China should be provided with a liberal clerical allowance which would permit facilities for clerical assistance and interpreters for the trade commissioners in this field. The Commercial Attache's office is also badly in need of an American assistant who can relieve him of much of the routine work, thereby making his labors far more valuable to the Government. The office also lacks an efficient and adequate staff for translation work. Very much valuable material is constantly being published in Japanese by agents of the Japanese Government investigating conditions in this country. With several good translators, the United States Government could take advantage of the work of these men and of the Japanese Government generally as its reports are nearly all confined to the Japanese language. Furthermore, there is considerable material published in Chinese which our Government should have the advantage of. We are now in the position of giving out very valuable information to other countries who have facilities for taking advantage of it, while we ourselves are not provided with

*The memo:-
I suggest that the
procure it and
send it to
Dr. Abbott at
Tokyo, if this
is in order.
Abbott could
get it easier
than I could.*

the facilities for taking advantage of what others are doing.

Very truly yours,

William C. Brown

American Commercial Attache.