

March 15, 1918.

Memorandum.

I have carefully gone over Supervising Inspector Berkshire's report dated February 5, 1918, in which he sets forth the general situation with respect to guarding, in an effective way, the Mexican border from Brownsville to Tia Juana.

When the length of this border line is considered (and I suppose it is not less than 2,500 miles long), the ridiculously small number of men in the Immigration Service, who are relied upon to guard this vast space, is most striking.

A total of 94 men, many of them with regular inspection duties to perform, can obviously do little to guard the border, and it is safe to assume that anything of that kind that is attempted simply serves to divert the smugglers and contraband to other places where there is no guarding whatever.

The suggestion as to the creation of a police organization to maintain a strict patrol of the border for all purposes is all right theoretically; practically, it may not work out so well.

The question of cost is primarily important. Mr. Berkshire estimates from 2,000 to 3,000 men would be needed. Place this at 2,500 and figure that the average annual cost per man would be \$1,500. This sum would include the furnishing of a horse by each man, as I take it that it would be a sort of "cavalry" job throughout. The annual cost would be \$375,000.00 and the service rendered would probably be worth all of that sum.

The scheme of enlisting these men does not appeal to me. Just as soon as enlistment is proposed, we shall be confronted with the alternative of having the Army do this guarding, and in any event a semi-military organization would be less flexible than a civilian organization.

The best plan would probably be to have the position of Border Guard placed in the "excepted" class under the civil service rules. This would enable the Department to fix its own standards and would also permit of dealing with disciplinary matters without the cumbersome methods applicable to ordinary civilian positions.

Such a large sum is required that I take it Congressional action would be required, probably based upon joint action by all the Departments concerned, if a common basis of understanding can be reached. Clearly this work should be under the immigration service, as the barrier erected by the educational test is sought to be avoided much more than would be likely in the case in connection with smuggling of merchandise, drugs, weapons, etc.

ROT