

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
IMMIGRATION SERVICE

DISTRICT HEADQUARTERS  
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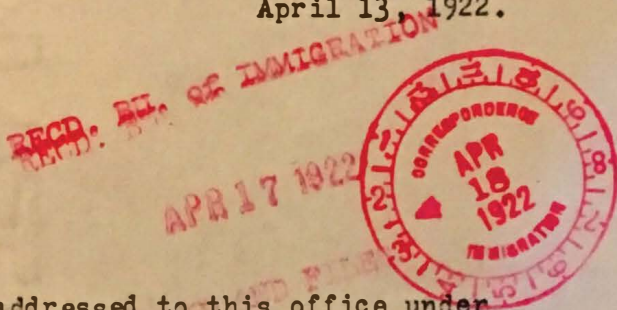
IN ANSWERING REFER TO

No. 5026/149

OFFICE OF SUPERVISING INSPECTOR  
MEXICAN BORDER DISTRICT  
(TEX., N. MEX., ARIZ., AND SO. CAL.)  
EL PASO, TEXAS

April 13, 1922.

Commissioner-General of Immigration,  
Washington, D. C.



There is enclosed copy of a communication addressed to this office under date of the 6th instant by the Inspector in Charge at Los Angeles, together with copies of self-explanatory correspondence therein mentioned, all dealing with the general subject of co-operation between the Customs Service and the Immigration Service. It will be observed that the Chief Coordinator, General Supply, has apparently addressed the Treasury Department, pointing out a condition on the Canadian Border which indicates possible avoidable duplication of work and suggests that if the two Services were to combine their forces, the number of men required could be greatly reduced. The Treasury Department addressed the Collector of Customs at San Diego on this subject and also, it is understood, the four other Collectors of Customs within this immigration district. This office has already discussed the subject in detail with the local Collector of Customs. It is not known whether the Bureau has received a similar communication on the subject, but if it has not, it seems not unlikely that it will sooner or later. The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to furnish such advance information upon the subject as will enable the Bureau to satisfactorily answer any such inquiry.

The work on this border divides naturally into two major classes; that which has to do with actual administration, such as inspection, investigation before

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boards, field investigation, and hearings in deportation proceedings; and that which primarily and directly has to do with patrolling. One is administrative and the other is police. The administrative work is highly specialized, calls for an extremely broad and comprehensive knowledge of the laws and regulations, possible to acquire only by long, close and patient application. A good immigrant inspector, properly employed, has no time to be anything else and it is believed the same may be said of a Customs inspector. It is practically impossible for him to be both an immigrant inspector and a customs inspector at one and the same time. It is possible for him, perhaps, while performing the multifarious duties of an immigrant inspector, to incidentally and in a more or less superficial manner perform some of the simpler duties of a customs inspector. However, any scheme of dual authority and responsibility would present many practical difficulties. An officer cannot serve two masters. He cannot successfully perform duty under a collector of customs and at the same time perform duty as an immigrant inspector under an immigration officer in charge without danger of conflict and neglecting one job or the other.

The policing problem (patrol work) lends itself more readily to coordination; in fact, as this office has repeatedly pointed out in previous communications, there seems to be no very good reason why the entire patrolling system should not function as a unit under a central control, answerable to one department of the Government only, but charged with the responsibility, nevertheless, of policing between fixed stations, against all violations of federal laws involving the travel of persons to and fro across our frontiers. A federal patrolman (a mounted guard) could, very properly, undertake to detect and prevent the unlawful entry of aliens under the Immigration Act, the entry of aliens



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and citizens alike in violation of the Public Health or quarantine laws, the entry of aliens and citizens alike, bringing fruits, vegetables, cotton, etc., in violation of Agricultural Department quarantine, the entry of aliens and citizens alike, bringing cattle, diseased or otherwise, in violation of the rules and regulations of the Bureau of Animal Industry, the entry and departure of aliens and citizens alike in violation of neutrality laws, the entry of aliens and citizens alike, transporting liquor in violation of the National Prohibition Act, and the entry of aliens and citizens alike, transporting narcotics in violation of the Harrison Narcotic Act. In these unlawful operations aliens constitute easily ninety per cent of the offenders; so that while jurisdiction might lie with one department in one case and with another department in another for the purposes of prosecution, jurisdiction of the Immigration Service would be common as to the vast majority of violations.

Even assuming (which this office cannot concede) for the sake of discussion that it were practicable for immigration officers and customs officers to combine and in common exercise authority and perform duties of administration, the writer is convinced that there could be no curtailment of the aggregate number of officers so employed, for the reason that the immigration force and the customs force likewise, it is understood, are, in point of numbers, inadequate to satisfactorily perform the duties now devolving upon them.

A combination <sup>of</sup> ~~of~~ merging of the customs and immigration line riders, patrols, or mounted guards under a dual control cannot function with a maximum of efficiency. Much has been done, however, along these lines in an informal way during the years the writer has been on the border, but always there is the difficulty arising from dual control as represented on the one hand by this office for the



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entire border, and on the other, by the various collectors of customs along the border, who change with more or less frequency. It is difficult, if not quite impossible, in these circumstances to maintain uniform and continuous coordination and cooperation. Another difficulty, which is more or less psychological, enters into the problem, namely, that each officer under the existing system, inevitably feels that his first duty is to his own department, and the work of that department is naturally given precedence and preference over all others.

In the judgment of the writer, administration should remain vested in the responsible heads of the departments respectively charged with the responsibility for the enforcement of the various federal laws.

The answer seems to be a unified, co-ordinated patrol answerable to and controlled by a central authority.

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MVC  
Incl. 5879.