

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
Immigration Service

Office of Supervising Inspector
Mexican Border District
El Paso, Texas.

No. 5026/12

June 9, 1922.

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

Original forwarded 7-10-22

There is transmitted herewith copy of a letter dated the 25th ultimo, received from the Inspector in Charge at Los Angeles, dealing with the problem of properly guarding the highways leading from the border to Los Angeles. From time to time this office has furnished the Bureau with reports giving in detail some of the experiences of officers engaged in smuggling preventive work and it may be added that only comparatively few of the interesting, and it might be said hazardous, events reach the Bureau, as ordinary happenings have long since become routine. Doubtless the most important avenue over which travel is had to interior points is the highway between San Diego and Los Angeles. This highway is constructed of concrete and the maximum speed can be made over same. In order to inspect the vehicles passing over same, one inspector and three mounted guards have been stationed at Oceanside, though one of such positions is vacant at the present time and another vacancy will occur on the 30th instant, when one of the mounted guards will resign. Under existing conditions, these officers are required to work in shifts of 12 hours and such work is most exacting and requires an unusual amount of tact and zeal. Every effort is made to cause the traveling public to stop at the inspection point which varies from day to day, but it is not uncommon for the drivers of automobiles to disregard the signals to stop, in

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fact, it frequently happens that coincident with the signal, the driver proceeds to increase the speed of the automobile and pass the officers while traveling at a very high rate of speed. In such cases various means are employed to stop the automobile and for the most part, the use of the motorcycle is resorted to and usually it is possible for a motorcycle to overtake the average automobile. Such work, it will be appreciated, is hazardous and if a load of contraband liquor or aliens is found, the officers must know what should be immediately done to prepare for a future criminal prosecution. These circumstances are referred to with the view of pointing out the necessity for having men assigned to this class of work who possess a high degree of intelligence and who are at all time willing to undertake a difficult assignment and who will use good judgment in trying circumstances. Experience has fully demonstrated that it is almost impossible to retain the services of mounted guards who possess the qualifications desired as such officers have in most instances sooner or later secured a more remunerative position with less hazards. The Inspector in Charge at Los Angeles points out that motorcycle men employed by the state authorities in California receive compensation ranging between \$175.00 to \$190.00 per month and are provided with an up-to-date motorcycle at the expense of the city or county. The Bureau is aware that we are offering prospective employees as mounted guards the sum of \$110.00 per month plus the bonus for the balance of the current year and a maximum allowance of \$30.00 per for the upkeep of motorcycles, while as a matter of fact, we require a higher grade of men than do the county or city authorities engaged in a similar line of work.

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The writer fully appreciated the difficulties confronting the Inspector in Charge at Los Angeles in carrying on the important work incident to preventing smuggling over the border and frankly, the writer is somewhat at a loss to offer a satisfactory solution thereof, which he believes may be possible by the Bureau. He realizes the difficulty of increasing the compensation of a few mounted guards without giving similar consideration to those stationed at other points and engaged upon a more or less similar line of work. It is doubted whether the assignment of inspectors to this class of work should solve the problem as it is not at all likely that an inspector who would satisfactorily perform the duties required would be satisfied to continue on such work for any reasonable period and a mediocre inspector would be less than useless on such work. For the immediate present this office has advised the Inspector in Charge at Los Angeles that all things considered, it is believed preferable to continue to employ mounted guards and that he may on or before July 1st present for consideration recommendations looking to providing additional motorcycles as well as a complete expression of his views as to what he believes would be a suitable and reasonable allowance to cover upkeep of same. The subject is now presented to the Bureau as a forerunner of something to come, as it is a foregone conclusion that sooner or later some plan must be worked out whereby satisfactory employees can be secured who will continue upon this hazardous class of work.

(SIGNED) F. W. BERKSHIRE

Supervising Inspector.

MVC

Incl. 47038.