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Report on the Organization of the State Department, August 20, 1910

Charles De Lane Hine

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August 20, 1910.

Sir:

A brief survey of the administrative working of the State Department indicates the most modern type of organization, and an intelligent development of the most progressive methods, which logically follow as a corollary when the main proposition, organization, is established. So far from the State Department needing much expert assistance, it is in a position to set an example as to fundamentals of organization and methods for many large business corporations. Government, from its varied nature, can never, in some respects, attain the efficiency of the business world. In other essentials, however, Government can and does accomplish more in maintaining a far-reaching continuity of policy and effect. Too often shortcuts are taken in the business world to obtain the so-called results on a monthly balance sheet, at the expense of the future prosperity of the properties involved.

The State Department, with its Assistant Secretary, has the modern Chief of Staff idea splendidly worked out. Another fundamental principle of organization given intelligent expression is the appointing, to important positions in Washington, of persons with actual experience abroad in the Diplomatic and Consular Service. An effort should, and doubtless will, be made to carry this idea further and include
include most of the clerical positions. Still another great fundamental established is the recent creation of a corps of high-class inspectors, recruited from men thoroughly trained in the duties which they are expected to criticize. It is believed that this excellent feature can be still further emphasized by enlarging the corps of inspectors, by increasing the frequency of their inspections, which should diminish clerical work in Washington. The old theory of accounting, that men can be made honest and money protected by the rendering of elaborate returns to a distant office, is unsound. It must give place to autonomous administration of distant and lower units, rigidly inspected on the ground by high-class representatives of the responsible head. Just as a bank is made a complete local unit and is checked by a high-class examiner, so, under a proper system of allotment, can almost any local entity be made autonomous and be checked for all purposes by traveling inspectors. One thoroughly trained, high-class man on the ground can, in an open and thorough inspection, afford the Government more protection than a dozen clerks in Washington mulling over money and other property returns.

The Bureau of Indexes and Archives in the State Department, after intelligent, painstaking and laborious effort
effort, has worked out a decimal filing classification and may be taken as a model by some other executive departments. The State Department has availed itself of the service of Gunn, Richards & Company, and has wisely considered suggestions from various sources in the improvement of its methods. The success of the Department, however, is due to its willingness and ability to work out its own salvation with the benefit of whatever outside light could be afforded. It is only in this way that other departments can accomplish lasting improvement.

While the State Department is abundantly able to take care of itself, it is respectfully recommended, in the interest of coordination of its admirable work with that of other departments, that there be appointed, by the Secretary of State, a Committee on Organization and Methods of five members. Four of these should be from the Department, and one outside expert, the latter, if practicable, a member of such parent Commission for all the executive departments as may be created. (See Preliminary Report H-2).

The United States as a world power, has outgrown the original conception of the Secretary of State being Prime Minister of the Government. It is recommended that the present duties of the State Department be performed by a
of Foreign Affairs, under a Secretary of Foreign Affairs, a member of the Cabinet; that the State Department be considered the personal staff of the President, with the Secretary of State in effect Prime Minister and Chief of Executive Staff. Under this conception the State Department would consist at first of a few high-class men, some of them detailed periodically from extra members in other departments in such grades as Assistant Secretary, Director of Bureau and Assistant Director of Bureau. It would have a Bureau of Inspection which would gradually absorb and eliminate the various Auditors' offices of the Treasury, and result in a saving of millions of dollars in conducting the business of the Government. In the Government, the largest of all corporations, volume of business, rather than relation of function, should determine planes of cleavage between executive departments. The Treasury Department has enough to do in arranging for revenue and its proper collection. The disbursement of such revenue should be entrusted to each of the executive departments, as prescribed by Congress. The protection of such disbursements should be afforded through a Bureau of Inspection in each Department, insuring fiscal integrity as one of many essentials of efficiency. Under this plan, the Bureau of Inspection (or Review) in the State Department would assure the coordination of methods and standards of efficiency.
efficiency, which includes integrity, in all of the Departments. Such a State Department would also include the Civil Service Commission.

Very respectfully,

Charles Hine.

(Special Representative)

The President,

(Through the Secretary to the President),

Beverly, Mass.