

UNCLE SAM'S GREAT STAFF

A Mighty Corps of Reporters Scattered Throughout the World.

EXTENT AND VALUE OF THEIR WORK

Outline of the Duties of Consular Agents, Marine Hospital Correspondents and Trop and Weather Reporters—A Mammoth Publishing House.

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 11.—Uncle Sam is the greatest news gatherer we know. All of the agencies of the newspapers of this country put together are hardly as great as the corps of men he retains to send him information of current events. Some of this information he publishes in the shape of public documents which few people ever read. Some of it he preserves in the files of his departments at Washington for the use of his executive officers.

The big government news machine has correspondents who are reporters; it has editors in the different departments, and a Chief Clerk in their chief office; and it has sub-editors and copy writers, and a blue pen in the news service covers a very wide range—much wider than that of the average newspaper. For though the government does not follow the record of deaths and marriages or the chronicle of local crime, it has often a far more accurate and rapid service on some great foreign war. Like the Chinese-Japanese conflict or the recent Brazilian trouble, than any of the great newspapers can obtain, no matter how great their expenditure of money. In matters of this kind the government service should be far ahead of the newspaper service, and treaty obligations require the transmission of government messages by cable when commercial messages can be declined. But it is pretty hard for the government, even with all the apparent advantages on its side, to get ahead of the enterprising American newspaper.

CONSULAR COMMERCIAL REPORTS.

The transmission of news by cable during some such emergency as now exists in Asia is not the only news duty of the American consuls and commercial agents or the ministers or ambassadors of the United States at foreign capitals. The bureau of statistics of the State department issues at monthly intervals a series of reports sent to our diplomatic representatives; some of them volunteered and some sent in response to inquiries of the department. This news feature of the consular service is one of the great commercial importance to the United States. Much trade was being lost by American exporters, particularly in South and Central America, through the negligence of shippers in packing goods in such a way that they carried long distances on mules or horses were packed in boxes when they should have been put in sacks. The matter was brought to the attention of the State department by American exporters because of bad packing. At another time some one called the attention of the bureau to the fact that the export business in the United States was being lost. Out went another circular and back came an elaborate set of reports from north, east, west and south, telling just what kind of goods were being shipped, and in what part of the world, whether they came from America or not, and if not, why not. The American minister could not send a drummer around the world with an expectation of obtaining a complete list of this valuable information, and it goes. Is there trouble with the introduction of American goods into China? Our consul at one of the chief Chinese ports writes to tell the department in Saigon, through the department of the American manufacturer and exporter that the local prejudice against American goods is partly racial, and that in part it is due to the fact that the Chinese officials who are interested in their own goods have not been sufficiently "informed." The American people are disturbed by the reports that the Chinese ministers and consuls send to the State department for publication information about the way foreign nations legislate to settle questions arising between themselves and employed. The American public is wrought up over the trolley question. Along comes the consul general at Frankfurt with the information that a German law is being passed which would give the question of an independent motor for street cars, and that a model is being built in England to be sent to this country in October next to be used in the trolley which possibly interest the people of the United States relating to any mechanical, manufacturing or social question with which the American consul is not prepared to grapple. He jumps from Berlin to the State department with a description of the Brussels public pawn office of Russia, of course, in his report. He reports there is a judicious exercise of the editor's pencil. Not all of the consular representatives of the United States are trained writers, and the State department has to express an opinion without making themselves offensive to the people among whom they are working.

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THE FASHIONABLE GIRL

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