Referring to the case of Professor Einstein, a correspondent said that he had a message from Berlin to the effect that Consul General Messersmith was not in Berlin during the Einstein visa incident. The correspondent then asked if the Secretary could furnish him with any additional details concerning the case. In reply, the Secretary said that it was true that Consul General Messersmith was not in Berlin when Professor Einstein was questioned. By way of background, the Secretary said he wanted to tell the correspondents an old story, one that probably happened before most of the correspondents present were born. We had a very celebrated sculptor in this country many, many years ago named MacMonnies, who made a statue which was to be placed in front of the Art Museum in Boston. This statue, which was a very beautiful one, represented a Greek girl in the nude in a pose of one of the dances to the god Bacchus. This graceful and beautiful statue was known as the Bacchante. When, however, it was set up in front of the Art Museum a great rumpus arose out of the fact that there was in this country at the same time another very well known citizen of the highest character, but who was utterly devoid of any sense of humor or sense of perspective, named Anthony Comstock. Now, Mr. Comstock got up a movement to put drapery on the Bacchante and the episode came to be known all over the United States as Mr. Comstock’s attempt to put pantaloons on the Bacchante. The Secretary said his mind reverted at once to Mr. Comstock’s attempt to put pantaloons on the Bacchante. A correspondent here spoke up and said that the pantaloons this time would have to be red ones. Mr. Stimson continued then by saying that his observation of the present incident was flavored somewhat by the Bacchante incident. However, the case also has a serious side because there has been very severe criticism of Mr. Messersmith who is a very worthy servant of the United States. The Secretary said, furthermore, that he had met Mr. Messersmith in Berlin, that he knew his reputation, that Mr. Messersmith was one of the most careful, accurate and loyal men in the service of our Government, and that it was very unfair that he should be pilloried for an incident of this sort. The trouble has come from the fact that when Professor Einstein visited the United States on previous occasions he came as an official representative.
representative of the German Government and traveled on a special passport - a passport which exempted him from any examination. But this time, however, he had to travel on an ordinary passport. Furthermore, under the absolutely explicit laws of the United States all people who present ordinary passports must have visas from consular officers. These officers are required under the laws and regulations of our country, which also are very explicit, to ask certain questions as to their connections with communist organizations. The consuls have no discretion whatever in such cases and there is no outlet whatever except to make the examinations as courteous and as inoffensive as possible. The Consulate General in Berlin fulfilled the law in this case. Mr. Stimson added, furthermore, that he had looked into the case personally and had found that the Consulate General had acted with the utmost courtesy and comprehension of the situation in this case. Professor Einstein was ruffled probably because he did not know of the difference in his position this time and the time before. The Secretary then said that he hoped the people of the United States would remember the Bacchante when thinking of this incident.

A correspondent then asked the name of the officer who handled the case. The Secretary replied to the effect that offhand he did not know. Mr. Messersmith, the Consul General, is technically responsible, but a personal investigation of the matter by the Secretary has caused him to know that Professor Einstein was treated with great courtesy. The officer who examined the Professor acted under instructions of our Government given through its laws and regulations which allow no discretion whatever in the case of an ordinary passport.