Subject: Random notes on Intelligence and Investigating Services.

For what seemed to be completely fortuitous reasons almost from the beginning of my service for our government I began to have contact with our investigating and intelligence agencies. While I have seen strange things happen, and while I have seen innocent persons suffer for some time, I am one of those who is profoundly convinced of the necessity for these investigating and intelligence agencies. The Good Book speaks of men being sent out to "spy the land". From the earliest times of recorded history governments have been obliged in their interest and in the public interest to carry on these intelligence and investigating activities. Our own governments had matured before we ever really entered into this field. It was really only in the first decade of the 1900's that we began to give serious attention to intelligence work. The increasing responsibilities of our government and our vulnerability made it essential. European governments long before we ever thought of doing any work of this kind had their agents in our country and in other countries.

Elsewhere in these notes I have referred to the fact that although I was completely inexperienced in intelligence work and had no background therein, I became involved in it deeply in the second post at which I served, that is, Curacao, in the Dutch West Indies, where I went in 1916. Although it seemed a quiet and remote spot because of its strategic position and the shipping activities which centered there and the trans-shipment activities in particular there were any number of Italian and German agents on the island. Most of them were pretty stupid and easily detected. It was there that I was fortunate enough to discover the code which led to the locating of almost three score of German agents in the United States and the sending home of Von Papen and Captain Boy-ed. When we entered into the war all kinds of secret
agents of our government appeared on the scene. I think that during the initial stages of our being in the first World War some of the most ridiculous mistakes were made that we have ever made in the matter of intelligence. I recall one opera singer who was rather well known who was sent to Curaçao as a secret agent and within two or three days after he was there everyone on the island, including a good many of the ignorant negroes, knew who and what he was. On the other hand we had men who did their work quietly and effectively in the West Indies and in South America.

It was while I was in Antwerp as Consul General during the years from 1919 to 1928 that I had my first experience with paid informers. I was in touch with various of the investigating and intelligence agencies of our government and was in the position to pay out certain sums for information offered. I must say that the contact with these agents for the most part was a loathsome thing. It is not pleasant to deal with a national of a country who is endeavoring to sell military or other secrets of his country. To sift out the information and to determine what is worthwhile is one of the most difficult things that faces our government and those who have to do with it. I have little respect for the paid informer but one cannot disregard him. I have had too many occasions happen during the years when information which came this way and which had to be paid for was valuable to us. All governments resort to it. It may be a dirty business but there are dirty governments and dirty people and one must know how to deal with them.

It was while I was in Antwerp that I had my first serious contact with the agents of the Treasury Department. Our government has made a constant and steady fight against the introduction of narcotics of various kinds into the United States. While it is a nefarious business and people who now present a very respectable front have made their
fortunes out of this traffic, it is one which had to be fought with great cleverness. Antwerp being one of the great ports of the world was naturally a center for endeavors to get narcotics into our country. I remember in Antwerp one day the officer in the Consulate General in charge of the Invoice Section brought to me an invoice covering a shipment of shoes from Antwerp to New York. As he had not heard of shoes being shipped from Antwerp before his suspicions were aroused that possibly the shipment was being used to conceal narcotics. I told him to certify the invoice without raising any question. We put our people to work. We had the collaboration of the Belgian officials, particularly those of the port of Antwerp. We found that this shipment of shoes had been sent from a private house in Antwerp to a private house in Antwerp. There the soles of the shoes were removed and the leather carefully scraped down so as to create a nice receptacle for the concealment of cocaine. The shipment was allowed to leave without molestation for New York. On arrival at New York it was seized and the receivers, who were in this narcotics traffic, were apprehended and given long prison sentences. I recall on another occasion a shipment of iron bedsteads for some reason aroused our attention. It will be wearisome to go into the details. The hollow tubing of the bedsteads was found to be filled with opium, heroin, and cocaine. The value of this particular shipment ran into many hundreds of thousands of dollars. By the vigilance which was displayed at Antwerp by our officials and by the collaboration of the Belgian officials, we were able to eliminate the traffic from there, which does not mean that the traffic was eliminated as a whole as it merely moved to other ports and through other channels.

The city of Antwerp had for several centuries been one of the leading diamond cutting centers of the world. It was one of the important industries of the city. The smuggling of diamonds into the United
States was a profitable business. It is a type of smuggling which is almost impossible to control. Through the machinery which we set up and through the collaboration we got from some of the responsible diamond dealers in the city and through the collaboration we got from the Diamond Dealers Association as well as from the Belgian authorities, we made so many seizures of diamonds which it was endeavored to enter into the United States in the most ingenious ways, that the losses to the individuals concerned became so heavy that for years the traffic was kept well under control.

The work of the Treasury Department in Washington, which has been responsible for the control of such illegal activities, such as the narcotics traffic, diamond smuggling, etc., has done a wonderful job. The work of the Treasury in this respect has become increasingly effective. A consular officer who was doing very well in the service decided to switch over to the Treasury. His name is Harry Anslinger. In due course he became the head of these activities in the Treasury and for many years has been doing a most unusual job. He has perhaps done more to control the smuggling of narcotics and diamonds into the United States than any other man in our country. There is perhaps no man who has greater knowledge of the despicable narcotics traffic than Anslinger, and certainly no one who has done more to control it.

Our country and England and others have made very serious efforts to bring about international agreements for the control of narcotics. Most of the governments concerned have been honest in their efforts to collaborate. The degree of performance of various governments has been relative. The tremendous amounts of money to be made out of the traffic are bound to be an obstacle to all around good enforcement. Every government has to deal with officials. Certain governments, however, in particular several in the Far East have never loyally collaborated in
these international agreements for the control of narcotics shipments. There are even governments that do not hesitate to make money out of this traffic. Fortunately these are few and known, so that other countries can concentrate their defensive measures.

I found that the use of censorship in time of war is justified and productive. It sometimes brings about some curious results and sometimes it does injury for the time being to the innocent. As soon as censorship is established certain undesirable people find means of using it to attack people who, for some reason or other, they wish to attack or undermine. I recall, for example, that during the last World War, while I was Ambassador to Mexico, I was sent from time to time censorship transcripts of certain letters which it was believed would be of interest or of help to me. Some of my friends who had control of this matter had a sense of humor and they sent me a good many letters in which I was mentioned. Some of the few laughs which I got out of my work during the days that I was Ambassador in Mexico came in the spare moments when I read these censorship excerpts. In every batch there were excerpts from letters in which I was represented as having built up a monopoly in the importation of steel and other products into Mexico. I was engaged in all kinds of business to my profit. I was represented as having friendly relations with persons who were known to our people as being German agents or German sympathizers. All of these letters were written with the intent that the censor should read them and that they would do injury to me. Even where the writer did not sign his own name we were usually able to determine who had written the letter, and it was usually some one who had fallen into the bad graces of the Embassy and of our government through improper actions or through engaging in improper transactions or through dealings with the enemy. On the other hand, a good deal of information which was secured from
these censorship excerpts was useful. The various devices used by German agents in the United States to communicate with German agents in Mexico and through Mexico to Europe were really most interesting. Our people got on to, I think, all of them. It would, I believe, still be improper to speak of some of these ingenious means which these German agents in the United States found.

The important thing is how information secured through intelligence and investigating agencies and censorship is used. It is the evaluation and analysis of information which is the most important factor. When I arrived in Mexico I found that one of the most important businessmen in the country, and one who had done a great deal to contribute towards its industrial development, could not be given a visa by the Visa Section of the Embassy. I knew this man well. I knew that he was completely pro-ally in his sympathies. When I protested that it was an act of injustice that he should not be given a visa to permit him to go to the United States on business which was of interest to him and of interest to our government and to our commerce, I made no headway at all. The various agencies in Washington which had to do with these matters simply told the Department of State there was nothing doing. It took me over six months before I could get the information which had been lodged against this man and on which basis these agencies were basing their refusal to permit him to come to the United States. It was when I actually got the information that I was able to prove to these agencies that it was completely false. I was able to prove to them that it had reached them through persons who for some reason wished to do injury to this important businessman. In one case the informant had tried to borrow money and had not been able to get it. In another case he had been promoting a false charity and had not been given the money that
he asked. In spite of the inconvenience which our controls gave to this man, he was the first to recognize that these things happened in time of war. He recognized the necessity for certain controls and said he would rather be one of those to suffer than the controls not be carried through. Too many bad eggs were caught, so that if one good egg had to suffer it was in the common interest.

The censorship served many good purposes. One evening one of the highest officials of the Mexican government sent for me as he had something of interest to tell me. When I came into his office he gave me a letter written in the writer's hand which he said had come from a certain person whom he mentioned. In this long personal letter the writer told this high official of the Mexican government to what degree I was damaging Mexican interests in the United States. He referred to correspondence which he had with one of the highest officials at the time of our government, in which this American official expressed the same opinion about me. This high Mexican official said, "I know the writer of this letter and why he is writing it to me. I do not know the American official with whom the writer of this letter is in touch, but I have heard of him and I can readily understand why he is no friend of yours. He pretends to be a great friend of my country but I know he is anything but a friend of my country". I said to this high official that I appreciated very much the information which he had been good enough to give me. I said I was aware of the correspondence between the writer of the letter, which he had just shown me, and this high official of our government. Through the censorship which we exercised over the mail I was aware of what this Mexican correspondent was saying about me and what the American correspondent was saying about me. Our own officials, of course, were informed concerning this correspondence
which affected a rather important Mexican at the time and a very impor-
tant American. Needless to say, I did not suffer from any of this but
the Mexican lost all countenance with his friends in his own country
and the American official in due course suffered from public opinion
passing its judgment on him. It was not necessary for me to take any
action whatever. I was too busy with what I had to do every day to
bother about things of that kind. I have made these latter notes merely
to emphasize how altogether erroneous information may be planted through
censorship and other ways, and can do a great deal of damage in many
cases to innocent persons. I know from practical experience how dif-
ficult it is to get such improper and erroneous information erased
from the record. If we were again to be engaged in a war, which I hope
not, I would be one of the first to favor the most complete censorship.