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NO. 1539

AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL,
Berlin, Germany, August 25, 1933.

SUBJECT: Explanation of the frequent quotation of, and
reference to the "Berliner Tageblatt" in
despatches of this Consulate General.

THE HONORABLE

CONFIDENTIAL.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON.

SIR:

I have the honor, in explanation of the circumstance that this Consulate General refers constantly to the "Berliner Tageblatt" in its despatches on various subjects relating to the German situation, to state that this has been done as a matter of convenience and continuity and is not an indication that the Berlin and the rest of the German press are not consulted by this office. The Department is aware that the press of all Germany is censored and controlled by and through the Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment in the most effective way. This Ministry has its divisional representatives in various parts of Germany and through its officials and representatives in the offices of the principal newspapers completely controls what is published and the form in which it is published. Any newspaper which does not adhere to the prescribed form in which news is to be issued, is immediately suspended.

suspended. There is, therefore, a striking similarity in all the German newspapers, and as they can only publish what is fed out to them, the same news item appears in practically all the newspapers in identical form.

While in the Consulate General we receive all the principal newspapers published in Berlin and while we are advised as to what appears in the newspapers in the rest of Germany through the cooperation of the other consular officers in the country, I have found it advisable for the basis of the reporting which I do for the Department on the German situation, to use principally the "Berliner Tageblatt". This newspaper is completely controlled by the National-Socialist Party but does not have the distinctive earmarks of the Party quite so much as the "Angriff" and the "Voelkischer Beobachter" published in the city. The news is generally published in the "Tageblatt" in the exact form in which it is given out by the press divisions of the various national and Prussian departments. As these references to quotations which are made in the despatches are used in support of circumstances which it seems desirable for the Department to know, there would seem to be no better source to use than the clippings of the "Berliner Tageblatt" which have the obvious complete approval of the Government. In other words, if an official statement or a piece of news with regard to the German internal situation appears in the "Tageblatt", it can be understood to be something which the German Government is willing to admit as correct.

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I have thought it worth while to make this explanation in order that the practice of this Consulate General in quoting the "Berliner Tageblatt" so frequently in its despatches may not be misunderstood. All the news in the German press is so controlled that quoting one paper now is in most cases equivalent to giving a resume of the comment which appears in the whole German press on a particular item.

Respectfully yours,

George S. Messersmith,
American Consul General.

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GSM:P

A true copy of
the signed original.
GSM