

1854

CONSOLIDATION OF THE FOREIGN SERVICES OF STATE, COMMERCE
AND AGRICULTURE UNDER THE REORGANIZATION ACT

The President has submitted to the Congress under the Reorganization Act a plan for the consolidation of the Foreign Services of the Departments of State, Commerce and Agriculture into a single Service which will be under the direction of the Department of State as the agency of our Government charged under the President with the conduct of our foreign relations. The basis of cooperation between the Departments of State and Treasury in those matters affecting the foreign field in which the Treasury is most interested requires no change and this consolidation does not affect Military and Naval Attachés as they are parts of a permanent home service and duty abroad as attachés is only incidental and temporary.

The consolidation of the Foreign Services of the three Departments into a single unified Service is a step which has been given very careful consideration by the President and by the Departments of State, Commerce and Agriculture over a considerable period. It is a specific measure to strengthen our foreign representation at a time when the best Foreign Service is needed by all branches of our Government and all elements of our population. The definite objective is to strengthen further the services which our Government can render in the protection of our commerce and other interests abroad and in

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the promotion and development of our trade. Under the three existing separate and distinct Foreign Services, it has not been possible to exert in matters affecting our relations with other states that unified and single approach toward other governments, and generally abroad, which is indispensable and there has been a considerable duplication in activities with consequent confusion and inefficiency. After very careful study over a number of years, during which it has become increasingly apparent to all those having a full knowledge of the situation that such consolidation was in every way in the public interest, the plan for the unification which has been submitted to the Congress by the President was worked out by cooperation between the Departments of State, Commerce, and Agriculture and has been submitted with their approval.

The plan involves the transfer of the Commercial and Agricultural Attachés and the career officers now in the Foreign Services of the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture to the Foreign Service of the United States under the Department of State. In the consolidated service these officers will be given the same rank and status as the present officers of the career Foreign Service under the Department of State. This step is the logical culmination of the efforts to improve our foreign representation which

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were begun with the consolidation of the diplomatic and consular branches of the Department of State into one service in 1924 and of the move towards greater efficiency envisaged in the coordination agreements between the Departments of State and Commerce in 1930 and 1933. The preparation of the instructions to the unified Foreign Service for the gathering of commercial and economic information and for trade work abroad will remain a function of the Department of Commerce. Similarly, instructions on agricultural reporting will be prepared in the Department of Agriculture. The responsibility for the assimilation and dissemination of information on commercial and economic matters from the foreign field will remain in the Department of Commerce and that on agricultural conditions in the Department of Agriculture. It is certain that the services in this connection which the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture can render to the interested sections of our population will be greatly strengthened and expedited by this consolidation. The Department of Commerce will remain the direct contact of government with business in this country and the Department of Agriculture with agricultural interests; and the consolidated Foreign Service under this reorganization plan will serve as the unified and single instrument of all the departments and agencies of our Government interested in information from abroad or in

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services outside our country.

The plans for the consolidation of the Foreign Services involve provisions for the training of young Foreign Service officers for service as commercial or agricultural attachés through assignments to these departments for appropriate periods and through other thorough and specialized training along these lines. In order that the needs of the Departments of Commerce and Agriculture in the foreign field may be adequately considered, the Secretaries of Commerce and Agriculture, or an officer designated by them respectively, shall sit as a member of the Board of Examiners of the Foreign Service and also on the Board of Foreign Service Personnel whenever assignments of commercial or agricultural attachés, or other matters of interest to these departments, are under consideration. In order to strengthen the liaison and the coordination between the departments, and with our commercial and agricultural interests, it is planned that an officer of the Department of Commerce and of the Department of Agriculture shall be assigned to the appropriate division of the Department of State to facilitate not only this liaison, but also the expeditious transmission of information from the foreign field to the respective departments.

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It has been clear to all those who have been giving attention to the problems of government and to our foreign relations, which involve the promotion and preservation of our interests abroad, that the machinery of our Government in the foreign field needed strengthening through greater coordination of effort, through unification of organization and through the elimination of duplication and friction. The major objective in carrying through of the consolidation of the Foreign Services has therefore been to strengthen the services which our Government can render in the foreign field to our people and to the Government itself.

It is, therefore, a constructive step in every sense and in keeping with the objectives of the reorganization program. The economies in money which may be effected at the outset are not considerable because the budgets of these services are not large, but there will be a very real gain in the effectiveness and efficiency of our representation and in the services rendered. It is also safe to predict that this consolidation will make it possible to avoid considerable expansion in the several Foreign Services now being consolidated, which would otherwise have become inevitable.