

April 29, 1918.

IN RE PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH AN IMMIGRATION  
PATROL SERVICE ON THE LAND BOUNDARIES.

MEMORANDUM:

The enforcement of the Immigration and Chinese-exclusion laws on the land boundaries has always been fraught with extensive and peculiar difficulties. While it has been possible to maintain a force of immigration officials of sufficient size to insure the proper examination of all aliens applying for admission at designated ports of entry, and while to some extent mounted patrols have been maintained with the purpose of preventing aliens from crossing the boundaries at other places, the possibility has always existed that those of the most undesirable classes would manage to evade inspection and enter in one way or another surreptitiously. In this particular respect the problem now confronting the Service is an old one, therefore. But since the entry of the United States into the world war, and to a considerable extent on the Mexican boundary for several years antedating that occurrence because of the disturbed political and economic conditions existing in Mexico, there has existed a problem of much greater magnitude, one in which is involved not simply the protection of the country against the entry of undesirable aliens but the enforcement of numerous provisions of law that affect international relations and that for the past year have had a vital significance in the conduct of the war by the United States.

A report recently submitted by the Supervising Inspector of the Immigration Service on the Mexican boundary shows that, despite the fact that



every Government agency located along that boundary is cooperating to the fullest extent of its ability with each and every other such agency, there is not being maintained such a guarding of the boundary as might reasonably be expected to prevent violation directly of the laws and regulations (such as the Espionage Act, the Trading with the Enemy Act, the Passport Regulations, etc.) as have been enacted or promulgated for the particular purpose of protecting the United States against the machinations of the enemy, and indirectly of the Immigration, Chinese-exclusion and Customs laws, direct violations of the special statutes tending to encourage and to increase possibilities for indirect violations of the permanent statutes. The submission of this report has lead to a preliminary inter-Departmental discussion of the possibility of establishing a patrol force, such force to be charged with the duty of preventing violations of any of the laws that have a bearing upon the entry and departure of persons across the Mexican boundary; and this memorandum is prepared, for purposes of further discussion and rather tentatively of course, in order that the matter may be reduced to a somewhat concrete form. It is the result of a conference with the Supervising Inspector, called to Washington for that purpose.

#### PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION.

The purpose for which it is proposed to organize the patrol service is sufficiently indicated in the foregoing paragraphs hereof, except that it should be added that, while it is not intended that this patrol force shall entirely supercede the existing agencies for the enforcement of the various laws along the Mexican boundary, it being intended that they shall primarily



be charged with the duty of compelling persons crossing the boundary in either direction to go to the places where their cases can legally be handled, neither is it intended that they shall be proscribed in their functions and authority to such extent that they could not properly investigate and effectively handle up to the point where it would be turned over to the already legally constituted authorities each and every case coming to their attention.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED FORCE.

There are several reasons why a force of the kind suggested should not be of a strictly military nature. It should be constituted of men above the draft age. It should relieve to a very considerable extent the necessity for using regiments or companies of the regular military establishment for different kinds of patrol work along the boundaries. It should take on the characteristics and appearance of a police force rather than of a military organization. But of course, in the interest of effective organization, thoroughness of operation, and the maintenance of proper control and discipline, it would have to be managed along lines and in ways partaking substantially of the military. It should therefore be organized in squads composed of eight men with an officer corresponding generally to a non-commissioned officer of the army directly in charge of each such squad. Then these squads would form divisions of a larger unit, the number of squads assigned to each such unit to depend upon the physical situation in the locality where stationed, and this larger unit to be presided over by an officer of higher rank, and so on. A portion of the boundary line or a division of the territory adjacent thereto would be assigned to each of these squads in accordance with the requirements of the local situation, and a part of the men would be on duty all of the time, day and night.



LAYOUT OF MEXICAN BORDER UNDER PROPOSED PLAN.

(1) Brownsville Section:

The headquarters of this division would be Brownsville, located immediately on the border about thirty miles from the Gulf Coast. At this point 80 men would be needed as it would be necessary to patrol the Rio Grande for a number of miles in each direction over a course that is extremely crooked. In the vicinity of Brownsville, in addition, it would be necessary to station at Point Isabel, directly on the Gulf Coast, eight men, at a ranch half way between Point Isabel and Brownsville another squad, and a squad at each of the following places west and north of Brownsville: La Paloma, Progreso (on the river), San Benito, Earlington (on the railroad). At Hidalgo, a substation of the Brownsville headquarters, it would be necessary to place 24 men, and at Run, McAllen, Madero, Olcassar, and Sanfordyce, points subsidiary to Hidalgo, a squad each. At Rio Grande, another substation of the Brownsville division, 16 men would have to be placed, with a squad at each of the following places subsidiary to Rio Grande: Grulla, Carcias, Roca, and Falcon.

(2) Laredo Section:

At this central point and headquarters, in the vicinity of which very intensive work would have to be done, it would be necessary to station 96 men. At Zapata, about 60 miles southeast of Laredo, one squad would be needed and at 8 points, San Ygnacio, <sup>and a ranch</sup> Juanito Creek, lying between San Ygnacio and Laredo, one squad each; and to the west of Laredo one squad each at Joyce, Dolores, Palafax, and at a ranch between Joyce and Laredo.



(3) Eagle Pass Section:

At this central and headquarters point 96 men would be needed, at ranches on the boundary to the southeast of Eagle Pass about 25 and 50 miles distant, respectively, a squad each; and at Quemado, about 20 miles west of the headquarters, another squad.

(4) Del Rio Section:

A force of 48 men would be needed here, with a squad at a ranch about 25 miles southeast, and a squad at each of the following places west: Devils River, Comstock, Langtry, Pumpville, Dryden and Sanderson, these places being approximately 25 to 40 miles apart.

(5) Marfa (on Big Bend) Section:

This division of the boundary, peculiar from the physical situation especially in the bearing thereupon of the railroads, roads, and trails, is in many respects the most lawless portion and the most difficult to control. Marfa, the railroad point forming the headquarters of this important division of wild country, is located about 70 miles from the boundary by the direct wagon road to Presidio, the central boundary point, and other points in the district are connected up with Marfa either directly or indirectly by railroad, road or trail. At Marfa 56 men would be needed, while at each of the following points on or in the vicinity of the boundary it would be necessary to station two squads (16 men): McKinney Springs, Terlingua, Redford, Presidio, Ruidosa, and Candelaria, these points being named from east to west in order, and to station a squad at each of the following places more or less distant from the boundary but controlling roads or trails: Shafter, Lobo, Valentine, Alpine, and Marathon.



(6) El Paso Section:

In every respect this is the most important point on the boundary, although the territory included is much less difficult to patrol than that in the Big Bend section. At El Paso, the headquarters of this section, and also the headquarters of the entire border service, 192 men would be needed. At Sierra Blanca, about 100 miles east of El Paso, it would be necessary to station two squads, and one squad should be placed at each of the following places situated between Sierra Blanca and El Paso: Ft. Hancock, Fabens, San Elizario, Belen, and Yalata. At Hermanas, New Mexico, the most westerly point in this section, and at Columbus, about 25 miles east thereof, two squads each will be needed, and a squad should be placed at each of three small railway stations between Columbus and El Paso.

(7) Douglas Section:

At Douglas 48 men would be needed, with 16 at Hachita, eight at Rodeo, eight at San Bernardino, these points lying east of the headquarters, and eight at Forrest, on the boundary west of Douglas.

(8) Naco Section:

At Naco 24 men would be needed, with eight at Bisbee, eight at Hereford, and eight at Hamburg.

(9) Nogales Section:

At Nogales 48 men would be needed, with eight each at Duquesne and Parker Canon, east of the headquarters, and eight each at Calabasas, Ora Blanco, La Osa, and San Miguel.

(10) Tucson Section:

While Tucson is situated at the eastern end of this section it is the



natural point physically from which to control the country by stationing men at points along the railroad, located many miles from the boundary which at this point passed through the great desert. Squads would have to be stationed at Tucson, Redrock, Casa Grande, Gila Bend and Mohawk, on the railroad, with two squads each at the mining camps in the desert: Quijotea and Ajo.

(11) Calexico Section:

At Calexico 48 men would be needed and at four ranches along the boundary east of Calexico a squad each with a squad at Andrade and another at Yuma, the most easterly point of the section. To the west a squad would have to be placed at Mt. Signal and a ranch on the boundary.

(12) San Diego Section:

San Diego, the point toward which everything moves in this section and the headquarters thereof, would require eight men, with 32 at Tia Juana, immediately on the boundary south of San Diego, and eight at each of the following places: Loweretay, Dulzura, Tecate, Boulevard and Jacumba, and 16 at Campo.

It will be observed from the above that a total of 1608 patrolmen would be required. The number of officers required would depend to a very great extent upon the system of control finally decided upon. If the force were handled as an integral part of the Immigration Service the employment of additional officers for its direction would be made much less extensive, for instance, than if it should be made practically independent as to control.

The foregoing are dealing simply with the border and its immediate vicinity, but at many points the topography of the country or the direction in which railroads, roads and trails lead will necessitate the maintenance of parts of the patrol at



points well inland, constituting what might be called a second line of defense in the general scheme; but it is believed that so far as it will be necessary in maintaining this second line to use the patrolmen, sufficient leeway is given in the above estimates for that purpose; especially as many of these second line points are already manned with immigration officers.

#### METHOD OF EQUIPMENT.

Either one of two methods of equipping the proposed force might be adopted: (1) To provide that the Government should furnish all of the equipment, automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, horses, saddles, etc., or (2) that the Government would furnish only such equipment (such as automobiles and trucks) as could not possibly be furnished by the men themselves; leaving the men to supply their mounts, their horse furnishings, etc. The same might be said with regard to methods of subsisting the patrolmen. The first method would seem to be preferable for many reasons, especially as in these times, when men of the right kind are scarce, some inducements must be held out and as far as possible difficulties must be removed if men are to be persuaded to take up work of this kind.

#### RATE OF PAY.

The rate at which the men should be paid will depend to a very large extent upon the system that is adopted with respect to equipment and subsistence. If the first plan mentioned above on this subject should be adopted the proper kind of men could probably be induced to accept service if paid not less than \$900.00 per annum. Of course men in charge of squads would have to be paid a somewhat better salary, while those in charge of larger divisions of the



force would have to be compensated in accordance with the responsibility placed upon them. If the second mentioned plan of equipment and subsistence should be adopted, it would probably be necessary to pay as much as \$1500. per annum to the ordinary patrolman.