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POST ALLOWANCE.

The retention of the post allowance system is in any case advisable, and if the Diplomatic Service is not to be closed to all but those with independent incomes, it is necessary. It is certain that under present conditions diplomatic officers of the United States cannot live abroad in the manner which the dignity of their position and the importance and character of their work demands, on the salaries which they are paid. Relief from this situation may of course be afforded by a further increase in salaries, but to this course the post allowance system is preferable.

The principal reason for this is the fact that living conditions, rates of exchange, etc., now vary so greatly at the various posts that such a course is necessary to equalize so far as possible the conditions of service of all officers of a certain class. Another great advantage of the system is that it enables the Department of State more nearly to equalize conditions of service between unmarried men and married men, the expenses of the latter being far greater, if only because of the necessity of their doing a certain amount of entertaining.

But whether it be by an increase of salary or by the appropriation of a generous sum for allotment as post allowances, there are two important reasons why diplomatic officers of the United States should be paid sufficient amounts on which to live. The first reason is that by not doing so the service is being restricted to the comparatively small class of men with independent incomes, thereby often necessitating, purely through lack of material, the acceptance into the service of men who are sufficiently well-
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educated to pass the examinations (generally after being tutored and cramming particularly for them) but who lack some or all of the qualities which a diplomatic officer, to perform his duties efficiently, should have. It cannot be said that our country is lacking in the proper material. Our colleges and universities are filled with the very type of young men who should be attracted to the service and who, with a proper amount of specialized preliminary training would make excellent diplomatic officers, but by far the larger number of them have their own living to make in the world and are immediately precluded from any thought of this career by the fact that the first quality demanded of them is a wealthy father, or a personal income.

This brings us to the second reason, which is that the present system is undemocratic in that it tends to exclude the ambitious and patriotic young man with his own future to make, at the same time throwing open the service to his more opulent brother who often desires to enter it less to advance American interests than to go abroad and obtain the rights and privileges and social prominence which the position brings.

To return to the post allowance, mention may be made of the fact that one secretary of this Legation was obliged to resign from the service this year because of the reduction of his post allowance. Even with the present stagnant business conditions, he was able to obtain a position with a business firm at double the salary he was receiving in the service.