Departments Circular as above stated.

It is awkward after a death occurs and all the world knows it and have ceased to talk about it, to receive a circular despatch from Washington ordering the flag at half mast, to receive such a circular 25 or 30 days after the event. Colleagues and others send round to our Consulate to ask why the flag is at half mast for. This time I put the flag at half mast at once and put on mourning badges, without waiting for orders from Washington

I am happy to report that the feeling of regret and sorrow for our great loss seemed to be universal. Seldom has this entire city been so shocked as it was by this foul deed. Expressions of highest regard for President McKinley were many and sincere. My Colleagues and many others did not forget in their words of sympathy, to mention the Presidents noble wife. I was pleasantly surprised at the depth of feeling manifested on this occasion by the Turkish Governor. And the English Consul and the English Community showed that they regarded our loss and our sorrow as their own. This was a terrible calamity; - This crime was a terrible crime. But if, as a result, our nation shall bestir itself to eradicate that deadly poison which is prepared to destroy all government and all law, and if it shall help to develope in our people a higher regard for both, then President McKinley the Good, the Great, the Martyr, will not have died in vain.

Respectfully Your obedient Servant
(Signed) Selah Merrill
U. S. Consul

Palestine 1901.
Rainfall

The usual rainfall in this country is from 25 to upwards of 30 inches. Twenty five inches are thought to be necessary to secure good crops, and if the amount is 18 inches or less the harvest is certain to be a poor one. Last season only about 14 inches of rain fell. After the last week of January there was no appreciable amount of rain and as a consequence there was a winter drought with very hot weather, disastrous alike to health and the prosperity of the country. It was the southern part of the country that was most seriously affected by these conditions, say from Nablous (Shechem) south to the desert a distance of 60 to 80 miles, and from Jaffa and the sea-coast eastward across Judea, the Jordan Valley, and the great plateau beyond the Jordan as far as the desert in that direction. North of Nablous the rainfall was greater and the crops were better. The crops that suffered most severely were the wheat and barley, there being only half a crop of these and in some sections less than that. As a result there is and has been a great deal of suffering. Were there a remittance of taxes in such years the peasants would feel some relief, but there is none and the people of the country endure these hard conditions with a fortitude that is simply amazing. - The summer crops have done fairly well, that is such as are raised without rain or irrigation, dura (oriental maize), melons, sesame, etc. and somehow the inhabitants have been able to weather the bad times.

The greatest sufferers have been the cattle, sheep, and goats. At first there was stubble on the plains, but at last that also disappeared. The fields looked as if they had been swept they were so bare of anything in the shape of dried grass or straw. Some cattle have died and some have been driven to the north by their owners who hope to find something in those regions for them to eat. It need hardly be said that good milk is not to be had and the beef and mutton offered for sale is so juiceless and leathery that it is next to impossible to eat it.

Water Famine

Early in the spring there was practically a water famine and a skin of water brought a fabulous price compared with ordinary times. Private cisterns were exhausted and those built for supplying water for the market were not available as the owners were holding them expecting to reap a harvest of profit by selling the water during the summer at exhorbitant prices. The usual supply from what is known as

The Fountain of the Virgin was very limited owing to some break in the deep underground natural canals which feed it. By a considerable outlay of money and labor trenches were cut in the earth, the leaks discovered and remedied, the Fountain yielded again its usual supply and the price of a skin of water fell at once to one third its former value. This afforded some relief but this fountain at best was never adequate for supplying a large number of people, and it was at this time that Mr. Bonnefus the President of the Jaffa and Jerusalem railroad generously offered to bring water in tank cars from a certain unfailing spring 6 miles southwest from Jerusalem and deliver it at a fixed nominal price to every body. After his arrangements were completed water, good for drinking and household purposes, was furnished at the rate of five gallons for one cent at the reservoir of delivery by the train and the same amount for two cents if delivered in the town half a mile or more distant.

The result of this arrangement is that the inhabitants never before (at this season of the year) had such good water to drink and the diseases which always mark the end of the summer owing to the scarcity of water and its poor quality (chiefly fever) have this year prevailed only in a mild form. To the soldiers, the Jews, the poorer classes in general and to very many families that are fairly well to do, the introduction of a water supply in this novel way has been a great boon.

Public Health

For the most part the city and country have been generally healthy during the past year with the exception that last winter there swept over this province an epidemic of small pox which carried off thousands of victims. Very few Europeans, however, suffered; it prevailed mostly amongst Mohammedans and Jews. Vaccination is now compulsory while a few years since it was unknown. I should say that compulsion is theoretically true because there are multitudes who escape or neglect this precaution.

Quarantine

Strict quarantine against Egypt has been enforced since May to the great detriment of commerce and travel. It is still in force and there seems no immediate prospect of its being removed. The universal feeling amongst the intelligent classes throughout the country is that this quarantine has some other reason for its imposition than the exigencies of the case and that it is both arbitrary and useless. At no time has there been any plague in Egypt that need cause anxiety or alarm.

Oil Engines

Oil Engines

Within two or three years past oil, or rather gas engines have been introduced for raising water in the orange gardens at Jaffa. About 70 of these engines are now at work and the most of them have been set up within the past 18 or 20 months. A few come from England, but the large majority of them are made in Cologne, Germany. These 70 machines vary in size from 3 to 10 horse power. I believe that only one of larger size, 16 horse power, has been set up and that was for a mill. The larger the engine the less in proportion is the original cost: for example, if a 3 horse power engine, set up, costs about $375, one of 5 horse power will cost about $400, and one of 10 horse power will cost about $700. I need hardly say that the old and time honored way of raising water was by means of great wooden wheels turned by camels, mules or donkeys, with small buckets attached to and endless band by which the water was brought to the reservoir on the surface of the ground. Only a part of the water brought up found its way into the reservoir, – the rest of it fell back into the well or pit. It was a rude and very slow process and required a long time to raise water sufficient for an ordinary garden. It would be difficult for a gardener to estimate even approximately the cost of raising water in this way: – the rude machinery and its constant repair; the cost of the animals from 3 to 6 and their food; the hire of the driver although the driver was frequently a woman or a boy; but the cost was considerable. Some of the gardeners have come to think that the gas engines are cheaper, and the agents for the machines formulates the matter in this way: Gas machine, 1 hour, – half the cost with double the result of the old method.

That is, old way, 1 hour cost 20, – produced 50
new way, 1 hour cost 10, – produces 100.

So far the result of these machines is generally satisfactory.

They do not require the constant attention of a man, once set going they run themselves for some hours with perfect safety without care from any one.

By the old method the wheels had to be kept going night and day to raise the required amount of water whereas a gas engine has to be run only a few hours for the same result.

This business is of course limited for there are only 400 gardens in Jaffa and many crusty conservative owners will never give up the old way for the new.

Orange Crops

In this connection I will say that the orange crop last year was only a middling one, and not far from 300,000 boxes of oranges were shipped chiefly to England. The home consumption is great and the crop last was worth upwards of $500000. In a good season the value of the crop would reach a much higher figure. At this time of writing it is difficult to forecast the incoming crop

Reaping and Harvesting Machines

During the past few years several reaping and mowing machines have been introduced into Palestine. These machines have been ordered exclusively by Germans and by Jews who live in the Jewish colonies; the natives never have any use for this kind of labor saving appliances. These machines all come from the McCormick company Chicago and the agent for them lives in Haifa. There are about a dozen of what are called "The Daisy Reaper" in use; also two Reapers and Binders; and one mowing machine. It may be necessary to say that there is no grass in the country except in a few fields in the German colony of Sarona north of Jaffa where they raise hay for their cattle. The Daisy Reaper costs from $90 to $100. The Reaper and Mower costs $240, the mowing machine costs $60.

Such machines can be used only on the plains, never in the mountains; for the moment the foot hills are reached the ground is broken and rocky forever forbidding this use. The sale of a few machines does not make a market for them yet it is gratifying to know that American skill and American productions are appreciated and that these machines give the highest satisfaction.

Flour

The effort to introduce American flour into Palestine has not been successful. One merchant, a baker, sent an order for 150 sacks of flour of 100 Kilos or 222 pounds each sack. It was six months before the flour reached Jerusalem and the freight

was not far from $100. The terms of payment were rather hard for the merchant, 90 days, so that in addition to the 90 days he lost the use of his money for three months more before he received the flour. He ordered three kinds of flour and the dearest proved to be the least desirable. On this quality he lost money. In all the coast towns of this country the climate is so moist that flour will keep but a short time. American families have tried this to their sorrow. The climate of Jerusalem is very damp in winter and very hot in summer and if American flour is to be used here it must reach the consumer very soon after it is ground and be consumed immediately. No family buys more than a few pounds of flour at a time for the reason that it will not keep. In the coast towns flour soon spoils and bread moulds in two days after it is baked.

France and Russia get flour into the hands of the consumer in this country in two weeks after it leaves the mills in Marseilles or Odessa, and there is little chance of Americans competing under such conditions with these two nations in regard to this particular article.

Life Insurance

The Mutual of New York and the New York Life are doing here a small business. They have been established but a few years, say two to four. The head offices are in Paris and I am informed that all litigations must be settled by French law. I can see how such an arrangement would not always be for the advantage of the American companies and their patrons. No Moslems and almost no resident Europeans become insured; the clients are native Christians (Syrians or Armenians) and Jews. In Jerusalem and Palestine some thing over one hundred have been insured in the New York Life, and twenty five or more in the New York Mutual. Neither the Government nor the traditions of the country encourage people to provide for the future, and the idea of life insurance as a means of doing so is quite new to Orientals, a plan they do not avail themselves of with eagerness. Moreover 90 or 95 per cent of the inhabitants are so poor

poor that they could not possibly afford it. The Agent of the Mutual tells me that, "most of the possible clients are taken up; at present perhaps one a month or one in two months is secured, and these only for small amounts." I do not know how the agents manage but it is a fact that very many of the natives and most of the Jews are ignorant of their exact ages. A Jew is just as likely to declare that he is eighteen when he is twenty five, or that he is twenty four years old when he is thirty. I should think the companies and their clients who know and give their exact ages would suffer in this way.

Carriage Roads

In June 1901 I reported that a carriage road had been constructed between Jerusalem and Birch nine miles north of this city on the route to Naplous and Damascus. After some delays the order such an order must always emanate from Constantinople for the construction of the second section, Birch to Surgil (St. Giles) ten miles, has been issued and work upon it is already begun. This being one of the main thoroughfares of the country both for natives traffic and travel and for travellers, the importance of this work is simply incalculable. The same contractor an Armenian who built the section from Jerusalem to Birch is building the second section

Carriage roads now in existance in Palestine are, Jerusalem to Hebron 23 miles; Jerusalem to Jericho 22 miles; Jerusalem to Jaffa 40 miles; Jerusalem to the Mount of Olives 4 miles; Jerusalem to Birch 9 miles, the section now being constructed Birch to Surgil 10 miles; a branch from the Jaffa road to Ain Karim less than 3 miles; a branch from

from the Hebron road to Artas 2 miles. Carriages that go from Jericho to the Dead Sea and the Jordan, from Jaffa to Gaza (40 Miles), from Jaffa to Haifa (60 Miles), go across country and pick their way where they can. The road built for the German Emperor between Jaffa and Haifa, in 1898 is now with all except one of its many bridges nearly or quite in ruins.

Commercial Travellers

A few years since none of the class came to Palestine but now as many as sixty or seventy come every year. They find it for their advantage to do this otherwise they would not come. Probably the majority come from Italy, Germany, and France; but a considerable number come also from Austria and England. Russia has a line of steamers which come regularly and touch at all the Syrian ports. The same is true of France and Austria. The same has become true, within two or three years past, of England, Germany and Italy. America has no such line of steamers and no steamers that touch here at intervals. I have made this statement in previous reports and it has been denied. I wish however to re-affirm it and to say that we who live here know best about this matter. Unless American goods can be brought direct to this market our merchants and manufacturers cannot compete with the six rival nations who take the trouble to send their goods direct to the doors of the consumers and who send agents to display their goods and to urge them upon this market. American goods for the most part are recognized as superior in quality; but superior quality means a higher price. Italy, Austria, France, and Germany bring in cheap goods which find a ready sale chiefly for the reason that people who have very little money think it economy to buy the lowest priced goods.

Type Writing Machines.

I was urged by a certain firm manufacturing these Machines to recommend some one who would act as their agent. I took pains to find such a person, one whom I knew to be thoroughly reliable, and put him in communication with the firm. The young man worked

faithfully, secured several orders with several others that were conditional, and sent for the machines. To his surprise and chagrin the firm wrote that unless the money accompanied the order they could not send the machines, and further that otherwise they could not employ him as their agent. This is an illustration of what I have said in other reports, namely, that many firms have no desire to cooperate with consuls to introduce their goods. In fact I have seldom found a firm that had any desire to build up a business in this country, but I have found very many whose notion of business is to sit in an office, receive cash orders, give instructions to their shipper to send so many goods to such a place, and give themselves no farther concern in the matter. This apparently is the modern idea of "building up a business." It is not encouraging to Consuls who are doing all in their power to introduce American goods. It seems to me that goods should be displayed and a live agent should be with them to convince purchasers of their advantages.

A Word About Postage

The State Department has a wise and fatherly solicitude as to the expenditure for postage by its Consuls. Now of the hundreds of letters that I receive every year from manufacturers and business firms in America urging me to introduce their particular kind of goods not one per cent inclose stamps for return postage. In many instances the letters sent to us have only a two cent stamp on them. I am obliged to pay ten cents for all such letters and five cents for my return letter in reply which makes fifteen cents. If the very large number of persons asking favors of the Consul would inclose stamps for return postage would it not be in the aggregate, taking all the United States Consulates, amount to a considerable saving to the Government? This is a suggestion and not a complaint; but somehow it seems to me that if manufacturers and business firms have a right to have the Government pay their postage why have not other classes of our citizens the same right?

Post Offices

We have now in this city of 50,000 inhabitants five post offices, Austrian, German, French, Russian, and Turkish. The Turks do not allow any post but their own to be sent or brought by the train, hence the mail of the four other nations goes and comes by wagon. When the mail steamers arrive at Jaffa early in the morning the mail wagons reach Jerusalem two or more hours before the Turkish mail arrives because the train leaves after midday. The Turks do not relish this but it is the result of their own arrangement. The new Turkish postage stamps (new this summer)

are so crowded with writing and ornamentation that the figures indicating the denomination is nearly obscured. Moreover they have one kind for inland purposes, and one for foreign countries. The are similar in color, but the inland stamp has on it certain writing which is not on the other. It is difficult to distinguish between the two, and there is frequent confusion and consequent loss.

General Observations

(1) The Department knows very well but the majority of our American people do not know that Jerusalem is not an important commercial port. The duties of the office which are many and arduous, are chiefly semi-diplomatic. More than half the time of the Consul and of all the consular employes, including those of the Jaffa agency, is spent in looking after our nine hundred or one thousand naturalized American Jews, seeing that their rights are maintained, caring for them in a multitude of ways, and helping them out of trouble.

(2) The restrictions against Jews coming to this country are severe and in fact very few have come for five or six years past. A large number of Jews, including a very small percentage of American Jews, have left Palestine during the past year, one steamer took away not less than twenty six families. They go to Egypt, the Soudan, to Australia, to Canada, and to the United States. Since the Rothschild two or more years withdrew their subsidies from the Jewish colonists many of them have become restless and have gone away. Moreover the general depression of the country, in other words its actual poverty, makes it impossible for this class to earn a living here, and they are anxious to get away to some other country.

(3) About a few places, say Jaffa, Jerusalem, Hebron, and Bethlehem, there are signs of prosperity due chiefly to foreign influences, but throughout the country the condition of things is the opposite of encouraging and the people are becoming more and more discouraged.

(4) The Jaffa and Jerusalem railroad, 54 miles, narrow gauge, after many struggles and reducing its expenditures to the lowest possible figure has for the last two or three years been paying a small dividend; the present year the dividend is larger than before.

(5) America leads all other nations combined in the number of travellers visiting Palestine, last season there being not far from 1200. A distinction is always made between travellers or tourists and pilgrims; of the pilgrims last season brought as many as 12,000 or 13,000 to Jerusalem. Russia sends the largest number, about 7,000 to 8,000. Pilgrims are provided for in pilgrim houses, hospices, and convents while the hotels

and tourist companies take care of the travellers. They come from Egypt, North Africa, Greece, the islands of the Mediterranean, Turkey, Russia, Armenia, and central Asia; sometimes they seem to come in crowds. The revenue that comes to Jerusalem and Palestine from these travellers and pilgrims is simply immense.

United States Consulate
Jerusalem, Syria, November 23, 1901.

Hon. Thomas W. Cridler
Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D.C.

Sir

Inclosed please find my report on this district for the past year 1901, embracing commercial and other matters.

In former reports I have stated the difficulties and expense of getting statistics of exports and imports at Jaffa and the unreliability of the same. Hence no attempt has been made this year to obtain them.

Respectfully your obedient servant
(Signed) Selah Merrill
U. S. Consul

United States Consulate
Jerusalem, Syria, January 3, 1902

Hon. Herbert H. D. Peirce
Assistant Secretary of State
Washington, D.C.

Sir

I have the honor to inclose herewith the accounts and returns of this office with the necessary vouchers for the quarter ending December 31, 1901, and to advise my drafts Nos 46 and 47 for $375, 00 and $126, 82 respectively in favor of Thomas Cook & Son.

Respectively

Respectively Your Obedient Servant
(Signed) Selah Merrill
U. S. Consul

Inclosures:—

1. Account Interpreter and Messengers 4 inclosures
2. Contingent expenses:—Oath;—10 inclosures.
3. Notarial Services:—Oath:— Same Jaffa Agency.
4. Passports visaed.
5. Names Persons employed:— Same Jaffa Agency.
6. Digest Invoice Book.
7. American vessels at Jaffa.

United States Consulate
Jerusalem, Syria, January 4, 1902

No 0

Hon Herbert H. D. Peirce
Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D.C.

Sir,

During the quarter ending December 31st 1901 the following despatches and documents have been received:—

State Department numbered despatches, none. No. 48. Hebrew Inscription Pl. 20

State Department numbered Despatches:—

Oct. 5, Ack Despatch No 42.
Oct. 5, Ack Despatch No 43
Nov. 29, Ack Despatch re-observances on the death of President McKinley.
Dec. 3, Cont. Exp. acct & acct Interpreters & Messengers quarter ending Sep. 30, received

Circulars:—

Sep. 16, Mourning for late President McKinley.
Nov. 16, Herbert H. D. Peirce appointed Asst