No 94

United States Consulate at
Jerusalem Sept: 24th 1880

Hon. Chas Payson
Third Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D.C.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of duplicate copies of a Circular dated July 8th 1880; in regard to Commercial Reports from the Consular Officers of the United States.

And I am happy to acknowledge also the receipt of a package through the Despatch Agent Mr Stevens, containing Flags and Stationery; which came prompt and safely within a week, after receipt of Mr Stevens notice of shipment.

1/. I send herewith, enclosure No 1. List of articles received, and
2/. enclosure No 2. List of articles not received; and of which I am impressing need, and for which, again, I renew the application.

The Shipper, or the packing Clerk, seems to have relied upon his own "inner consciousness" for a knowledge of the wants of this office, rather than, upon the order of the State Department, or the list of articles needed which I furnished.

I have written to Mr Edgar Consulate Beirut for a few copies of the missing Forms, to enable me to make my quarterly returns, Sept: 30th 1880.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your obedient Servant
Wilson
Consul

Two Enclosures
1 List of Articles received
2 " " " not received



No. 95

United States Consulate at
Jerusalem Oct: 1st 1880

Hon. Chas Payson
Third Assistant Secretary of State
Washington

Sir,

I have the honor to transmit herewith my return for the third quarter of 1880, Viz:

1/2. List of official letters received and sent, during the quarter, as per Enclosures Nos 1 & 2.

3/. Rent and Miscellaneous Expenses $76.83 as per enclosure No 3.

4/. Salary of Interpreter - Guards &c. $160 50/100 as per enclosure No 4.

And to advise my drafts for the foregoing accounts, in favor of Messrs Melville P. Bergheim & Son, Bankers of this City.

I remain, Sir
Respectfully your obet. servant
Wilson
Consul

Four Enclosures
1 & 2 Letters received and sent
3 Rent & Miscellaneous expenses (with 3 enclosures)
4 Salary of Interpreter Guards etc. " 2 "

---

No 96

U.S. Consulate at
Jerusalem Oct 8th 1880

Hon. John Hay
Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D.C.

Sir,

In pursuance of instructions, I have the honor to enclose
1/. herewith duplicate report of this Consulate for the year ending Sept: 30th 1880.
2/5 Also with an exhibit of the commerce and navigation of the port

port of Jaffa, for the same period from the Consular Agent Mr Wallegg.

There are 120 American Citizens residing in the Consular district.

There were during the travelling season 539 American travellers enrolled at the Consulate.

I have written during the year one hundred and sixty three despatches, and have received One hundred and seventy two.

I have also granted sixty Consular orders, and have collected of fees $104.50, for the U. S. Treasury.

I have the honor to be
Sir,
Your obedient Servant
William
Consul

Ten Enclosures

1 Duplicate report of this Consulate
2 " Statement of Commerce from Jaffa
3 " Exports Statement " "
4 " Navigation " " "
5 " Commercial report " "

---

# Report

U. S. Consulate at
Jerusalem Oct. 8th 1880

I have the honor to report that the harvest in Palestine is good this year, and it is supposed that there will be a considerable export of grain, especially, if there should be a short harvest in any parts of Europe.

Fruits from Jaffa gardens are exported every year to Egypt, and to other North African districts and to southern Europe.

The imports of goods for the wants of the natives, are from Italy, Germany, France and England.

There are many articles for house hold and farming purpose, manufactured in the United States, lighter, better and more economical



economical than those of Europe but the difficulty of purchase and of transit, and the expense attending shipment at Liverpool and at Alexandria, restrict the purchase and traffic within very narrow limits. Any considerable degree of trade between America and Palestine, must be dependent upon the establishment of a line of trading vessels, for the coast.

Occasionally I find an American steam engine, or Gun, or sewing machine, and it is said that some of the lumber via Beirut is from the forests of America but with few exceptions, the only considerable import from the United States, is the Petroleum, for which we are dependent entirely upon the American market.

The transit, is by sailing vessels freighted with petroleum, to Beirut and to Alexandria.

Inasmuch as the amount of imports must depend upon the resources of the people and their ability to purchase, any extended system of commerce must depend upon the increase of agricultural industries. In former eras, there have been at least respectable, as evidenced by, the ruins of roads, cisterns, gardens & villages and cities, on the hill sides in the valleys, and on the sea coast, and it is but natural to suppose, that under the fostering & influence of a firm and wise Government, all of these industries might be revived.

The old cisterns should be repaired for irrigating purposes, the old aqueducts should be rebuilt, roads should be made, harbors constructed, and an extensive system of tree planting should be inaugurated, to temper the atmosphere to afford cool and refreshing shade to afford a supply of timber, and of fruits and to regulate and distribute the dew and the rainfall.

For centuries, the country has been declining, and is still declining, the peasantry, the only producing classes, they are the farmers and more and more depressed, by taxation and extortions and are becoming poorer and more degraded — Where their fathers lived in marble houses, they now live in mud hovels, or hovels of loosely constructed and unhewn stones.

Their aspirations are grovelling their resources limited, and their progress, if any be seen, is progress backwards.

Fortunately, their wants are few, and their sufferings, less perhaps than might naturally be supposed.

The complaints, against the government are numerous, but the

there is no redress and no present means of redress.

Not only, the taxes onerous, the extortions of the tax-gatherers under the farming system are outrageous. The Fellaheen have no love for their masters, the ruling Turks. The Turk is a soldier and a gentleman on horse back. He has no genius for construction, or for making repairs.

Hence, the evidences of ruin and degradation of ancient works on every hand.

Raouf Pacha, the Governor of Palestine, who is an accomplished man of European culture, proposes to construct some roads to Hebron and to Nablous, and to repair the road to Jaffa, and has for this purpose obtained a concession from the Sultan of twenty per cent of the taxes, the present year.

The harvest is good, and the taxes large. Viz; one tenth gross from every threshing floor – With the exception of the road to Jaffa, there is nothing worthy of the name in Palestine.

Some years ago a Firman was obtained by a French company for a Harbor at Jaffa, and a railway to Jerusalem, and about once a year a corps of Engineers appears, with maps and charts and surveys, and promises; but beyond a little demonstration of this kind nothing is done, nor is there any immediate prospect of the inauguration of the work. The presumption is that the capital requisite has not been subscribed, nor do the statistics of the revenue, and of commerce, warrant such an enterprise. The population is too sparse, the resources of the country are too limited, and property & life even too insecure.

Recently, a Firman has been obtained for a Tramway from Jaffa to Jerusalem, and to the Jordan Valley. Also a Firman has been obtained for a line of Steamers on the Dead sea for the transport of salt, and bitumen and grain, but the Firman states expressly, that the Government does not guarantee protection against the aggressions of the Bedouins

As yet, such an enterprise must be regarded as premature, and the time is inappositine and the circumstances – inappropriate. Sir Lawrence Oliphant has failed in his attempt, to secure a concession for a Colony of Jews, in the trans Jordanic country – the Hourán, and the land of Midian and of Moab; and even, if successful, and if the Colony were planted, it would be exposed to



to the inroads of the Bedowin tribes – The arms of Turkey are not strong enough to restrain or to hold in check, these fierce Ishmaelites of the desert.

It is true, that this is the most fertile portion of the land of ancient Israel, and during the Roman occupancy it was densely populated, and a high state of civilization prevailed, as the ruins of cities, aqueducts temples and roads abundantly attest, but for ages it has been desolate, or ruled over only by the Bedowin.

The Palestine Railroad Company, has been organized in New England, under the railroad law of Massachusetts, and it is proposed to ask for a Firman from the Sultan for the building of a railroad from Egypt, to Damascus and to the Euphrates Valley – I do not learn that the capital stock has been subscribed, nor is it probable that a Firman can be obtained. just now, the Porte is exceedingly jealous of all foreign influence and interferance.

The Sultan wishes to be let alone – Turkey is not yet ripe, ready and willing to be plucked.

Were the Euphrates Valley re habilitated and were there a strong and stable Government, and were the natural resources of the country developed with an augmented population, such a railway might be regarded as a promising enterprise, but at present, and under the circumstances it would not pay three percent on one tenth of the cost of construction.

Such a railway has been talked about by the English people and as a political measure, by the British Government for the protection of the India possessions, it might possibly be regarded as feasible, without regard to cost, or profitable return upon the capital invested.

The population and the wealth of Palestine have not increased during the last forty years.

The Fellaheen (peasants), the agricultural class, are poor ignorant, squallid and prejudiced against innovations, either in manners, customs or religion.

They are exceedingly religious, in its ceremonies fasts and festivals. Their wants are few, and their resources limited. In Jerusalem, and some other towns, where are missionaries, and convents there has been an increase of population, but not of wealth.

The

The mass of the people of Jerusalem are mendicants and beggars. The old families of wealth and influence and splendor, are decayed, and decaying.

The subject of reforms still agitates political circles at Constantinople. nor do I see how the proposed reforms can be effected of the Turkish Government, which is in fact a Theocracy — a religious despotism the constitution being the Koran and the Interpreters the Chief Rients of the Moslem religion, to whom great questions are referred for decision by the Sultan and his Cabinet.

Other religions, exist by sufferance, and for a Moslem to abandon his religion or to become a Christian is a capital offence.

Reform implies revolution! Western ideas and Western institutions cannot be engrafted upon an Oriental stock. Reformation in the western sense of the term means overthrow, and the substitution of another system of Government.

I see there might be amelioration of the present system. Taxes might be, if not lighter, less capricious, and surely some means might be devised against the extortions of the tax gatherers — whose cupidity is excited by the evidence of possessions, so that the poor Fellah has no encouragement to exertion — the less he has, the less the amount of payment to the publican.

The cost for the support of an average Fellah family of six persons is about fifty dollars — seldom more than seventy five dollars.

There are but few Turks, in Jerusalem, but they are the ruling class — The Consuls divide with the Pacha the government of the inhabitants — the foreign residents, being under the Consulate, the number being, or the proportion rather, in the following order. Austrian German, Russian, American, English, French, Spanish, Greek, Italian, and Persian.

There are in Turkey, some Christian provinces thoroughly, it seems to me, to be made independent, or placed under the protection of the Christian powers, but the majority of the people are Moslem, and must be governed by a theocratic Government — either Sultan or Caliph — The solution of the Eastern question, is far from a consummation —



A nation, as a tree, is the growth of centuries, and it takes a nation a long time to die.

Rome was three hundred years in dying; and for two or for nearly three hundred years, Turkey has made no territorial conquests. Nothing seems more capricious, nor is more unnatural, than the distribution of population in Palestine — the plains neglected as Esdraelon and the Jordan Valley; and the hill country and the mountains, as is the Lebanon in Syria and Samaria near Nablous, and in Judea, densely populated in some instances, in a high state of cultivation. The Bedouins have driven the inhabitants to take refuge in the hills, while they dominate in the valleys and plains, the natural pasture grounds for their flocks. It is Mohamet Ali, only in modern times who has attempted even to restrain these lawless freebooters who carry off cattle crops and goods, devouring little hamlets and penetrating even to Hebron and Gaza.

There is a regement of Soldiers stationed at Gaza, for the protection of the inhabitants, and almost every year soon after harvest, the Governor of Palestine is under the necessity of sending additional troops, and heavy ordinance to repell the invaders on the southern border and to assist in maintaining order. Sir Lawrence Oliphant has failed to obtain the signature of the Sultan to the Trade authorizing the formation of a company for the purpose of colonizing the trans Jordanic country with Jews, in consequence it is said of the Sultan's suspicion of all foreign proposals, though the plan had the approval of three of the former Grand Viziers. Khairedden, Midhat and Mohamed Sadin. The plan seems to be a plausible one but it is liable to two objections, the fact that the Jews are not agriculturists, and the fact that any colony beyond the Jordan would be exposed to the depredations of the Bedouins.

The importance of Palestine in ancient times was from its relation to the Euphrates and the Nile — the seats of the Great Empires of antiquity; but the world, the commercial world and the civilized world has grown larger and Assyria and Egypt, are but grains of sand, mere spots on the map, what either of them or both of them might be blotted out, or converted into another Grave of death and the shock of the convulsion would scarcely be felt beyond

London or at New York.

The routes of commerce have been changed, and the great commercial centers are London Bombay and New York.

Not the Camel and the Caravan but the Ship and the Steamer are now the carriers of the world and not the Mediterranean Sea, but the Atlantic Ocean is the Great high way of the world's commerce.

In the future this must be mainly in agricultural country, and even this is limited by the constitutional and acquired inertia of the people, and by their traditional attachment to old forms and old implements & appliances. Their wants are few, their resources limited, their modes of culture rude and unproductive, and there is no promise of any large surplus for export, in the near future.

The taxes are irregular and capricious. Besides, there is the liability of forced loans. It is the uncertitude of possession and of right as well as the insecurity of life and of property, that discourages investment and restrains industry enterprise and thrift throughout Turkey.

European colonization has not been successful, either socially or financially.

Besides the peril of acclimatization there is especially trouble on account of the prejudices of the native population and the perplexity and delay in getting their land titles acknowledged and protected by the local authorities.

The Jewish experimental farm near Safad, has been abandoned, and that near Jaffa, does not pay running expenses.

The American Colony from the state of Maine located near Jaffa some years ago was a failure.

The German Colonists at Jaffa Jerusalem and Haifa are very nearly self supporting, though many of them are subjected to very serious privations, and there is little in their history to encourage or to justify similar experiments.

The climate is not adapted to Europeans, or Americans, especially if exposed to out door labor, and even for merchants, professional men and missionaries, it is depressing and enervating; so that a voyage to Europe is a necessity, occasionally, in order to maintain a comfortable

a comfortable degree of energy and health.

There are four hundred gardens at Jaffa, averaging perhaps from two to six acres each, and the profits are about 6 per cent upon the investments and the expenses of culture, water, labor, harvesting and marketing.

Besides the home market, including Jerusalem, and Nablous, the fruits are sent to Egypt and southern Europe.

Hebron, as of old is famous for its vine yards, and for grapes, worthy of the traditional reputation.

This mountain region is favorable to the cultivation of the grape, and there is no good reason why the wines of Palestine should not enter largely into the commerce of the world, and be as justly celebrated as are the wines of Cyprus or of France.

Inasmuch as the imports measured by the ability of the people to purchase, must bear some relation to the exports, it is evident that the future of the commerce of Palestine depends upon the development of the agricultural resources of the country, and it is equally evident I think, that any considerable degree of participation on the part of the United States, in this commerce, whatever it may be, must depend, primarily and chiefly upon the establishment of a line of trading vessels, from America to this Coast.

Statement showing the value of declared exports from the Consular district of Palestine to the United States during the year ending September 30th 1880 — Jerusalem

| Articles | Quarter ending — December 31st 1879 | March 31st 1880 | June 30th 1880 | September 30th 1880 | Total for the year |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Francs | Francs | Francs | Francs | Francs |
| Fancy articles of olive wood, walk, and mother of pearl etc | 361:65 | 177:90 | 420:50 | — | 1960-05 |
| Total in U.S. Gold | — | — | — | — | $ 379:83 |

From the above statement of exports it appears that there is an increase of $48:59 on the exports for the year ending Sept. 30th 1878, and $126,85 also, more than the year ending Sept 30th 1879.

Mr

We might have had more exports of articles if it were not that the Bethlehemite people, ship their goods first to France and Italy and whatever remains from the sale they then ship to the United States. I know this for a certainty because I have recently vised six passports for the Bethlehem merchants who left for the States via Europe with nearly thirty boxes of goods, valued at least at two thousand dollars. These merchants return with American Gold and a little idea of civilization and begin to build new homes with European taste, and some times they bring with them American tools and other articles for home furniture. There are thirty new houses building at Bethlehem, which is the best town in all Palestine.

A great many of them at present are preparing more work for the coming exposition at New York, at the year 1883.

Wilson

(Signed)

Consul

---

No 97

U. S. Consulate at
Jerusalem October 28 1880

Hon. W. Hunter
Second Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D.C.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No 54, under date of Sept. 24th 1880.

Agreeably to Section 353 of the Consular Regulations I respectfully ask of the Department of State, Sanction for expenses, for refurnishing the Office.

I want, new Chairs, new divans etc. The old ones are worn out. When it is considered, that large numbers of American citizens, visit the Consulate, it is obvious that it should be kept in a presentable condition

I want also, a paper case for filing documents.

Also, a brace or silver stick. The Consulate has but one, I have to use two, on all official occasions. And it is not pleasant, to have to borrow.

Most of the Consulates have four. I need two.

I think

I think that one hundred dollars will cover all the expenses proposed.

Hoping that this application will be approved.

I have the honor etc

Wilson

Consul

---

No 98

U. S. Consulate at
Jerusalem Dec: 29th 1880

Hon. W. Hunter
Second Assistant Secretary of State
Washington D. C.

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your despatches Nos 52, 53, and 54, the last dated December 2d 1880.

Also I have received by this week's post five pamphlets of the "Reports from the United States Consuls on the Commerce Manufactures etc. No 1 Oct. 1880, which I have placed among the archives of this Consulate.

Referring to your despatch No 52 in regard to the blank forms Nos. 102, 116, 118 and 119 they have not as yet been received.

In regard to my request for allowance of one hundred dollars for the purchase of furniture for this Consulate, which as at present cannot be granted owing to the condition of the Consular appropriation, I beg you to lay this case before the next appropriation committee, as I have not had any allowance for furniture, and as the Consulate is very much in need of being refurnished.

I have the honor to be
Sir
Your obedient servant
Wilson
Consul