

*Secretary's Intercom*

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September 30, 1927.

**MEMORANDUM FOR MR. G. E. GAPEL,  
Chief, Press Service.**

In response to your request in memorandum of September 29, addressed to Mr. Paul G. Redington, who is now in the West, I am submitting herewith, for the convenience of the Secretary at his first regular weekly meeting with representatives of the press on October 5, a memorandum concerning the importation of foreign birds and mammals in the United States.

Very truly yours,

W. C. Henderson

Acting Chief.

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ESP:MOB

September 30, 1927.

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

Dear Mr. Secretary:

The United States maintains the most comprehensive and probably the most complete quarantine against the importation of injurious animals and birds of any country in the world. Practically all wild animals and birds imported from abroad can be entered only under permit from the Secretary of Agriculture and certain species known to be injurious, such as the mongoose, the flying fox, the English sparrow and the European starling, are prohibited from entry. This list may be extended to include such other species as the Secretary of Agriculture may from time to time declare to be injurious to interests of agriculture.

This law is enforced primarily through the Customs Service, but at the principal ports of entry are stationed inspectors of this Department who examine the larger shipments to guard against the introduction of the injurious species and identify the various animals and birds brought in. No other country maintains such an extensive service as this, although Canada has a similar requirement and western Australia and possibly other British colonies prohibit the entry of injurious species. This law has been in effect for 27 years. Since that time no injurious foreign species of bird or mammal has gained a foothold in the United States, although two birds, the English sparrow and the European starling, the former imported in 1852 and the latter about 1893, had already gained a foothold before the enactment of the law.

When it is recalled that about 1500 different kinds of foreign birds are imported into the United States at various times, more forms than are native to this country, the danger of introducing species which may become injurious to agriculture is ever present. On an average the United States imports more than 1000 wild birds every day in the year and a varying number of wild animals, chiefly foxes.

Under the Tariff Act the birds are subject to a duty of 50 cents each if valued at less than \$5 or 20 per cent ad valorem if valued at more than \$5, and the mammals are subject to a duty of 15 per cent ad valorem, the only exception being in the case of bobwhite quail brought in from Mexico, the duty on which has been reduced to 25 cents each by proclamation of the President on October 3, 1925.

TSP:MOB

Prior to the annexation of Hawaii and Porto Rico, the mongoose had been introduced into those islands and has increased so that it has become a serious pest, as it has in Cuba, Jamaica and other islands of the West Indies. Being introduced into Jamaica about 1872 to rid the cane fields of rats, the animals increased to such an extent that within a few years they have done ten million dollars worth of damage. Notwithstanding the foothold which the mongoose has already gained in Hawaii and Porto Rico it has thus far been successfully kept out of continental United States under this law which not only prohibits the importation but also interstate commerce of prohibited species.

Very truly yours,

Acting Chief.