RUSSIA.

Mr. Smith to Mr. Blaine.

No. 64.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
St. Petersburg, December 23, 1890. (Received January 16.)

SIR: On the 18th instant the church known as the American, and sometimes as the British-American, church of St. Petersburg celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the erection of its present house of worship by a public meeting under circumstances of such an interesting and, in some respects, of such an unusual character as to render it obligatory that I should make some report of the proceedings to the Department.

This church was originally founded under the express sanction of the Emperor Nicholas, solicited and granted through the good offices of James Buchanan, then minister of the United States to Russia. Though the church has probably always embraced in its membership more British subjects than American citizens, the early interest of the American minister in its behalf has served to identify it in some measure with the American legation. For this reason the present American minister was invited to preside at its jubilee celebration, an invitation which, under the circumstances, he felt it incumbent on him to accept.

I was also informed that, besides being indebted to the Emperor for its original sanction, the church had always been accorded full protection by the Government; that at various times it had received direct assistance from members of the imperial family; that the church wished on the occasion of its jubilee to express its grateful sense of these continued favors; and that it desired to make this expression through a resolution to be proposed by the chairman, and, if practicable, in the presence of the appropriate representative of the Russian Government.

At the request of the church I undertook the duty of conveying this desire to the Government and addressed a communication to the imperial minister of foreign affairs. Before his reply had been received, but, as it turned out, after it had been sent, I addressed him a second communication for the purpose of placing before him the exact text of the resolutions which were to be proposed. In his reply the minister of foreign affairs announced, what we had hoped but more than we had ventured to expect, that he would have pleasure in personally attending the celebration. It may be stated that in a conversation which I held with him he informed me that he had shown my first letter to the Emperor, and His Majesty had graciously indicated his desire that his minister should be present on the occasion in person. At the suggestion of the minister of foreign affairs, invitations were also sent to the minister of the interior and to the prefect of St. Petersburg.

On the appointed evening the celebration took place in the presence of all these representatives of the Russian Government, of Gen. Vlan-
gali, adjunct of the ministry of foreign affairs; of the British ambassador, of various other functionaries, and of a large assembly which completely filled the church edifice. After the opening proceedings the chairman proposed the resolution of acknowledgment to the Russian Government already referred to, accompanying it with such remarks as seemed appropriate to the occasion, and with allusions to the long and cordial friendship which had existed between Russia and the United States. Upon the unanimous adoption of the resolution, Mr. de Giers, the imperial minister of foreign affairs, who appeared to be much touched by the general manifestation, responded in warm and graceful terms, returning thanks for himself and his Government, reciprocating the sentiments which had been uttered, and announcing that he should make it a duty to convey the expression of the meeting to the Emperor.

The British ambassador, in proposing the resolution of felicitation, spoke upon the essential unity of the American and British branches of the English-speaking race, and other addresses were made by the pastors of the French and German churches at St. Petersburg and by Mr. Crawford, consul-general of the United States.

On the second day after the celebration I received from the minister of foreign affairs a communication, in which he states that he had placed the proceedings of the meeting before the Emperor, and that the Emperor had been pleased to charge him with the duty of making known His Majesty's sincere thanks for its expressions. In addition, I enclose a more precise account of the occasion as reproduced in the Journal de St. Petersburg from the Messager Officiel, with a translation.

I am sure that the interest and dignity given to this celebration by the marked and gracious attention of the Emperor and by the personal participation of the minister of foreign affairs have justified me in deeming it worthy of this detailed report, and that the manifestation of their friendly regard in connection with a church and an event so identified with the American name will be received with hearty satisfaction.

I have, etc.,

CHAS. EMORY SMITH.

[Insclosure in No. 64.—Translation.]

Extract from the Journal de St. Petersburg.

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the creation of the Anglo-American congregation at St. Petersburg and of the construction of the church of this congregation there took place on Thursday, December 6–18, at 8 o'clock in the evening, at the Anglo-American church, a ceremony presided over by his excellency Mr. Charles Emory Smith, envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary of the United States. The church was ornamented with exotic plants and with greens, while the vestibule was draped with Russian, American, and English flags. The busts of their majesties stood out in the midst of a grove of flowers.

The ceremony was opened by prayers at the chapel, in the presence of their excellencies the Secretary of State Mr. de Giers, minister of foreign affairs; the Secretary of State Mr. Dournovo, minister of the interior; the Secretary of State Mr. Ostrovsky, minister of domains; the Secretary of State Mr. de Vlangali, adjunct of the minister of foreign affairs; Sir Robert Morier, ambassador of Great Britain; the staff of the English embassy, of the American legation, the pastors of the Lutheran and Calvinist churches, and the representatives of the English and American colonies of our capital.

After the opening service the president of the meeting, Mr. Smith, pronounced a discourse, in which he retraced the history of the congregation and of the Anglo-American Church of St. Petersburg. In conclusion Mr. Smith said that the congregation owes much to the Russian Government, which had always given its protection,
and consequently it ought to be always grateful to His Majesty the Emperor of Russia. In answer to this speech his excellency Mr. de Giers, minister of foreign affairs, said that he would transmit to His Majesty the Emperor the expression of the sentiments of gratitude cherished by the congregation for the Russian sovereign. Then the ambassador of Great Britain and the clergymen, successively, spoke in English, French, and German to congratulate the congregation.

The meeting came to a close about 11 o'clock in the evening.

Mr. Smith to Mr. Blaine.

[Extract.]

No. 75.]

Legation of the United States,
St. Petersburg, February 10, 1891. (Received February 25.)

SIR: A few days since I had an extended, interesting, and suggestive conversation with the imperial minister of foreign affairs, Mr. de Giers, concerning the attitude and policy of Russia in respect to the Jewish subjects of the Empire. Mr. de Giers himself introduced the theme. In the absence of specific instructions and of any pending cases involving the rights of American citizens of Jewish faith and thus touching the question more or less directly, I might have felt some hesitation, unless in the course of an informal and personal talk, in opening an inquiry possibly liable to the reproach of intruding into the domain of the internal policy and domestic affairs of the Empire. But the freedom with which Mr. de Giers himself raised the question removed all embarrassment. In view of recent publications throughout the world and of the wide public and humane interest in the subject, the exposition and statements of the minister of foreign affairs are noteworthy and valuable. I can not undertake to repeat all that was said in a conversation which was quite prolonged, but will give the more salient features.

Mr. de Giers began by alluding to recent publications in American newspapers respecting Russia and the Jewish question, and said that these publications had been the subject of a conversation between the Emperor and himself the day before. Some of them contained personal references to the American representative, and an expression of the Emperor on this point was repeated—an expression to which allusion is made only as indicating how the conversation originated. Mr. de Giers then referred to the current reports that the Russian Government had projected or meditated new laws of a harsh character against the Jews, and said in the most explicit terms that no new laws had been made on this subject, and that none were in contemplation. He added that he was thoroughly informed, for he was a member of the council having charge of the question. The published reports were destitute of foundation, and no such purpose was entertained as that which has been imputed to the Government.

This statement was a repetition and confirmation of the denial made a few months ago on the first publication of the reports. At that time, however, it was charged in response that, while it might be true that no new laws had been framed or would be promulgated, still substantially the same object would be attained by the revival and vigorous execution of the edicts of 1882, which had long remained dormant. I recalled these facts and asked Mr. de Giers whether there was any good warrant for this allegation. He replied that there was not. The edicts of 1882 were, he said, somewhat misunderstood. They were not strictly
new measures. They were rather in the nature of formulating and more precisely defining provisions already in existence in less specific and exact form. They had come just after the assassination of the late Emperor and after the anti-Jewish disturbances in several of the interior provinces, where there was a tendency towards a more stringent application of the restrictive policy. It was his own feeling that the minister of the interior at that time had proceeded with too much rigor. Old laws which had slept practically unexecuted in many features were suddenly applied with too severe a hand, and hardships had inevitably resulted.

Since then the execution of the laws had again been relaxed, and their restrictions had been disregarded and overstepped. I asked Mr. de Giers if it was not true that measures had recently been taken towards the removal of the Jews from the villages to the towns in the pale to which their residence is limited by law. He answered that there was some movement in that direction. What was being done was to tighten the application of the old laws somewhat, but it would be done gently and gradually—"I am careful to quote his own words—and with every reasonable allowance and consideration. The laws had not been changed; they had simply slumbered, in large part, and, because they had been so generally disregarded and nullified both by the Government and by the Jews, the movement to enforce them, even though in a limited degree, created all the more outcry.

In answer to my inquiry as to why it was deemed necessary to withdraw the Jews from the villages and lands where they had been located, Mr. de Giers said that, so far as it was done at all, it was a measure of self-protection. This question involves what is well known to be a subject of earnest controversy. The Jews contend that when they have a fair chance they address themselves to agriculture as faithfully and successfully as other people. Mr. de Giers, however, maintained the contrary view. He said that if they would really devote themselves to agricultural pursuits the Government would leave them undisturbed and would gladly give them land for cultivation. He cited a special and notable experiment of the kind in the province of Kiev under the Emperor Nicholas, which was claimed to have resulted unfortunately. He insisted that when they acquire land they secure a Christian tenant and go on as before with their own vocations. He declared that they monopolize what he described as the saloons and the mills. They make such a combination that all operations of production and sale must go through their hands. He gave these allegations as an explanation of the law which restricts the Jews to the towns, and insisted that it was a question not of religion but of economic policy. This view will be vigorously resented and resisted by the friends of the Jews, who hold that it is unfair in statement and unjust in conclusion, and that so far as it has a basis of fact the conditions grow out of the exceptional necessities imposed by a long historical course of oppression directed against the race and not limited to any country. But Mr. de Giers was stating what is relied on as the justification for the policy of the Russian Government, and in reporting his observations I am under the duty of giving them as he made them.

He frankly admitted that the question was one of great difficulty and perplexity, and that it was hard to tell what ought to be done in justice and reason. On the one hand, he recognized that the Jews suffered hardships, and he felt much sympathy for them. On the other hand, it was necessary to protect their own people, and especially the simple and improvident peasantry. In this connection he adverted to the re-
striction upon the proportion of Jewish students permitted to enter the schools. The Hebrews were an intellectual race, more alert mentally than the ingenuous people by whom they were surrounded, and if they had free and unlimited access to the highest opportunities of education they would absorb the professions within themselves. As an additional reason, he repeated the statement earnestly made in some quarters and as earnestly denied in others—that among the educated Hebrews are found many of the nihilists.

Mr. de Giers recurrent several times to the fact that the laws were left in large measure unexecuted. They existed on paper, but they were loosely applied. For instance, theoretically, Jews are not permitted to reside at St. Petersburg or at Moscow; yet in practice they are here by the thousands, filling the professions and the banking houses, with their great synagogue recently erected and their unfettered religious devotions. The laws had long nominally restricted the movements of the Jews to the towns within the fifteen districts which constitute the pale; they had prohibited these proscribed people from holding lands or dwelling in the villages, except under certain conditions. But these laws had not been strictly enforced, there had been a steady encroachment upon prohibited ground, and now that their interdictions are again applied to some extent it produces all the more friction and complaint. In answer to an inquiry as to whether there was not at the present time a considerable emigration of Jews under these coercive measures or through fear of a more serious proscription, Mr. de Giers said that at various times there had been an emigration under such apprehensions, but in many of these cases the emigrants had found their way back worse off than when they went away.

One great source of trouble, he remarked, was the difficulty of controlling the subordinate officials. He did not doubt that there were wrongs of which the Government had no knowledge. In an Empire as vast as Russia it was impossible to watch closely all of the thousands of employés. The whole question, Mr. de Giers repeated, was surrounded with difficulty, but he hoped that some solution might be found, though he did not suggest what it might be, and his tone carried the impression that there was yet no clear perception of a satisfactory issue.

Though the fact that Mr. de Giers himself introduced the topic, and was so free and frank in discussing it, seemed to invite and encourage corresponding freedom of inquiry, I intimated that I felt some hesitation in interrogating him upon what might be regarded as a matter of internal policy. In reply he desired me to dismiss all hesitation and to ask any question I liked. He added, speaking with emphasis:

Don't hesitate to ask even disagreeable questions, or questions that you might think disagreeable, for we are so conscious of our good intentions in this matter that we are willing to meet any inquiry.

The subject had come up unexpectedly, and I thought it best, under the circumstances, to confine myself chiefly to eliciting information, and to reserve representations deemed expedient or obligatory until another occasion, after communicating with the Department. I did, however, feel it incumbent on me to say, as I did during the course of the conversation, that, while we recognize the treatment of the people within its own borders as a question of domestic concern that belongs primarily to Russia, except so far as it may affect the rights of American citizens, we hold, and in any reference to the subject the representative of the United States must hold, the attitude which is in harmony with the
theory and practice of our Government, which makes no distinction on account of creed. I added that the American people, prompted by the liberal and humane sentiments which distinguish them, would witness with satisfaction movements toward the amelioration of the condition of the Jews; at the same time, in any utterance on the question, we desired to approach it in a fair and friendly spirit and with a just sense of the peculiar situation of Russia. To this Mr. de Giers replied that he thought the feeling of the American people was quite natural; there was, unfortunately, much in the condition of the Jews to pity, but the conditions of the two countries were entirely different. The Jews of the United States were of a high class and were in accord with the general body of the citizens, and he thought the American people, though their feeling was easily understood, misapprehended the real facts as to Russia.

Such in substance, and at the more vital points in the exact language, so far as it can be recalled, was the conversation. It furnishes a fresh assurance, in harmony with the information I have heretofore communicated, that the Russian Government itself declares that no new measures of a prescriptive character against the Jews are contemplated. As to the existing laws, they have come to be fairly well known, though on various points it is still difficult to ascertain their precise provisions. They consist of a vast mass of edicts, ordained from time to time, filling hundreds of pages, some of them actively in force and some of them practically obsolete or unexecuted. They subject the Jews to a special code in matters of taxation, education, residence, rights of worship, limitations of industry and trade, and kindred affairs entering into all the relations of life. If they were generally and stringently enforced, they would involve incalculable hardship. As showing what the Russian Government itself says in explanation of these discriminatory and restrictive laws and in regard to the disposition with which it approaches their administration, the statements of Mr. de Giers have a value which will be appreciated. His reputation as one of the most liberal and careful statesmen of Russia gives them weight. To a people trained with a different inheritance and under a different system the reflection is, however, suggested that, whatever may be thought of the evils alleged in justification of the existing policy, the remedy more consonant with the spirit of the age would seem to be not to proscribe an entire people, the innocent with the guilty, but to proscribe the offenses and proceed against the offenders without regard to their race or their faith.

On the question of the administration of the laws, I have instituted inquiries in other quarters, upon which I shall report hereafter.

I have, etc.,

CHAS. EMBRY SMITH,

Mr. Blaine to Mr. Smith.

No. 78.]  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE,  
Washington, February 18, 1891.

SIR: On the 20th of August last the House of Representatives adopted a resolution requesting the President to communicate to that body any information in his possession concerning the enforcement of prescriptive edicts against the Jews in Russia. To this resolution the
President responded on the 1st of October, and accompanying his response there was a report in which, with reference to the rumors that new measures of repression were about to be put in force, I said:

Such a step, if in reality contemplated, would not only wound the universal and innate sentiment of humanity, but would suggest the difficult problem of affording an immediate asylum to a million or more of exiles without seriously deranging the conditions of labor and of social organization in other communities.

The correspondence communicated to the House of Representatives included your reassuring dispatch No. 44, of the 25th of September last; and this dispatch, together with assurances received in conversations with the diplomatic representative of Russia at this capital, tended to allay the apprehension necessarily aroused by the prospect either of the adoption of new measures or of the harsh enforcement of the old.

Up to the present time the Department has not been advised that any new edicts affecting the Jews have been promulgated. The cases of distress that have been brought to our notice are the result, in some instances, of the new interpretation, and, in others, of the strict enforcement of regulations which have for some years been in existence, but of which the severity was not generally understood because they were not rigorously applied.

The Department is informed that for many years the Jews in Russia have, as a race, been compelled to live within a certain area denominated the pale of settlement. Under the laws of May, 1882, it is understood that their places of residence within this area have been restricted by forbidding them to live in villages and to force them into the towns. The effect of the recent and summary enforcement of this measure in certain districts has been to deprive many of their means of livelihood. It is also understood that under the laws for many years in existence Jewish artisans have been permitted to reside outside of the pale of settlement. The Department is informed that by a new interpretation of the law many classes of workers formerly regarded as artisans are now denied that privilege, and being suddenly forced to quit their homes and to swell the number of their race in the overcrowded towns within the pale of settlement, find themselves unable to gain a subsistence by the pursuit of their respective occupations.

Other measures, such as the withdrawal of the privilege of pursuing many occupations, the denial of admission to the schools, and the actual expulsion as "alien vagrants" of persons long domiciled in Russia, contribute to swell the emigration. I forbear to enumerate the edicts peculiarly applicable to the family, by which the ties of relationship are rent and a premium put upon their severance. I do not dwell on these things, not only because it is not my purpose to indulge in a general criticism of the anti-Jewish laws, but also because those that I have explicitly referred to in the main account for the cases that have been brought to my notice.

That numbers of Jews have been and are daily being compelled to quit their homes in Russia by the enforcement of these oppressive measures, is amply shown by the present immigration of destitute Russian Jews into the United States. Heretofore this immigration, although large, being mainly made up of persons who were in some measure prepared, for the change, has not overtaxed the resources of the various benevolent associations which are so generously maintained and admirably administered by the Jews of the United States. I am told on excellent authority that within ten years some 200,000 Jews of Russian origin have been received into this country, have been furnished, when necessary, with occupation and homes, and have become speedily assim,
lated into the body politic, of which they form an orderly, thrifty, and law-abiding element.

The gravest fears are expressed lest this resource should fail if taxed with a great influx of Russian Jews, who, by reason of their sudden expulsion from their homes and their unfamiliarity with the language and ways of life in this country, would stand in need of immediate, and in many cases of long-continued, assistance and care.

You are aware that the problem of efficiently controlling immigration has been before the national legislature for some years. Measures have already been adopted for its regulation, and several schemes of further legislation are now pending before Congress. These measures, however, have not been due to an inhospitable disposition. The policy of this Government in respect to the admission of aliens to its shores has been most liberal. It has afforded to many thousands a home and entrance into its political and social life, and it still offers to spontaneous, self-helpful, and independent immigration a cordial welcome.

If measures of restriction have been adopted, it is only because it has been found necessary to avert the injection into the population of elements not assimilable and the bringing or sending hither of the indigent and helpless to become a charge upon the community. In no instance has any measure of expulsion or of oppression been adopted in respect to those who are already here, all of whom stand under the equal protection of the laws.

But the hospitality of a nation should not be turned into a burden. And, however much we may sympathize with wanderers forced by untoward circumstances to quit their homes, and however ready the disposition to relieve the deplorable condition into which they may be cast by the application of the laws of their native country, the Government and people of the United States can not avoid a feeling of concern at the enforcement of measures which threaten to frustrate their efforts to minister to the wants and improve the condition of those who are driven to seek a livelihood within their borders.

We are not forgetful of the ties of good relationship that have long subsisted between the United States and Russia, and of the friendly acts of Russia towards our country in the past. The Government and people of the United States are fully animated with a desire to preserve this cordiality of feeling, and for this reason they the more strongly deplore the enforcement in Russia, in respect to a portion of her people, of measures which not only arouse a general feeling of disappointment, but which also operate to impose a tax upon the charitable and humane in this country.

The Government of the United States does not assume to dictate the internal policy of other nations, or to make suggestions as to what their municipal laws should be or as to the manner in which they should be administered. Nevertheless, the mutual duties of nations require that each should use its power with a due regard for the results which its exercise produces on the rest of the world. It is in this respect that the condition of the Jews in Russia is now brought to the attention of the United States, upon whose shores are cast daily evidences of the suffering and destitution wrought by the enforcement of the edicts against this unhappy people. I am persuaded that His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia and his councilors can feel no sympathy with measures which are forced upon other nations by such deplorable consequences.

You will read this instruction to the minister of foreign affairs and give him a copy if he desires it,

JAMES G. BLAINE.
FOREIGN RELATIONS.

Mr. Blaine to Mr. Smith.

No. 78 bis.]

Department of State,
Washington, February 27, 1891.

SIR: Your dispatch No. 75, of the 10th of February, reporting a conversation with Mr. de Giers in relation to the treatment of the Jews in Russia, was received by the Department on the 25th of the same month. On the 18th of February, just a week previously, I addressed to you a communication to be read to Mr. de Giers on the same subject.

While the statements in that communication touching the harsh treatment of the Jews are completely confirmed by Mr. de Giers, I have observed, with not a little satisfaction, his readiness in suggesting this topic of discussion and his expression of willingness to consider any inquiries which you might make. It was believed that the Government of Russia would not disregard the evidences which have appeared in various countries of the general interest and solicitude which have been excited throughout the civilized world by the reports of the oppression of the Jewish race in the dominions of His Imperial Majesty. Nevertheless, the fact that the subject has been brought forward by the imperial minister of foreign affairs himself increases our hope that the representations of this Government, based upon the deplorable aspects of the question which have been brought to its notice, will not only receive the consideration to which they are thought to be justly entitled, but will also more fully impress the Government of Russia with the fact that the effects of the repressive policy against the Jews are not confined to that country, but that they also excite the sympathy and appeal to the generous and charitable efforts of the people of other lands.

Ever since the transmission to you of the instructions of the 18th of February the Department has received fresh evidences of the immediate and material, as well as of the broad and general, interest which has been felt in this country in regard to the hardships of the Jewish subjects of His Imperial Majesty. Almost every day communications are received upon this subject, temperate and couched in language respectful to the Government of the Czar, but at the same time indicative and strongly expressive of the depth and prevalence of the sentiment of disapprobation and regret. No government can be insensible of a fact of so much significance, and I am happy to perceive the appreciation of the sentiments and interests of other people which the conversation of Mr. de Giers discloses.

I am, etc.,

James G. Blaine.

Mr. Smith to Mr. Blaine.

[Extract.]

No. 79.]

Legation of the United States,
St. Petersburg, February 28, 1891. (Received March 17.)

SIR: In view of the numerous and varied reports during the last few months concerning the purpose and action of the Russian Government in regard to the Jewish people living within the Empire, I have deemed it useful to institute some inquiries on the subject through the consuls of the United States. To this end I sent out in January a circular letter. The design of this circular was not to initiate a minute investiga-
tion into details which would require much time, but to elicit trust-
worthy information upon the spirit and tendencies which mark the
present policy towards the Jews. It was deemed necessary to commu-
nicate only with the consuls located in the section where the Jews are
found in considerable numbers, and the circular was therefore addressed
only to the consuls at Warsaw, Odessa, and Riga.

They all agree in declaring that there is no evidence of the applica-
tion and enforcement of new measures against the Hebrews. At the
same time, those on the western frontier of the Empire observe signs of
the more stringent execution of old laws which have heretofore been so
loosely and lightly observed as practically to be inoperative.

As to St. Petersburg and Moscow, the best information I can gather
leads to the conclusion that the present policy of the Government is
inducing some withdrawal of the Jews from these centers. The long-
established laws permit only Jewish merchants of the first guild and
Jews of certain other professional or artisan classes to reside in these
cities. But the prohibition against Jews outside of these classes has
not been enforced with any degree of strictness, and under the influence
of this laxity thousands who are interdicted by the terms of the law
have settled in St. Petersburg and Moscow. I do not understand that
there is any harsh or general movement to enforce the law now, but am
informed that such inquiries have been set on foot as to create the fear
on the part of those not embraced within the tolerated classes that
trouble may be experienced, and that under this apprehension some of
them are removing from the two chief cities of the Empire.

I have, etc.,

CHAS. EMORY SMITH.

Mr. Smith to Mr. Blaine.

No. 81.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
St. Petersburg, March 12, 1891. (Received March 28.)

SIR: I have the honor to report that I yesterday waited upon
the minister of foreign affairs, Mr. de Giers, with a copy of your instruc-
tion No. 78, relating to the edicts and policy of Russia concerning the
Jews. Upon hearing my statement of the object of my call Mr. de
Giers requested me not to read the dispatch to him, but to leave a
copy, which he could examine at leisure.

I then gave him a brief verbal outline of its contents, referring to
the resolution of inquiry passed by the House of Representatives in
August of last year touching rumored proscriptive edicts against the
Jews and to your report in response. You had received assurances, so
you stated in this dispatch, which tended to allay apprehensions that
had been aroused by alarming publications, and the Department had
no information that any new measures hostile to the Jews had been
undertaken. The cases of distress which had been brought to its
attention were explained by the more rigorous enforcement of old laws
whose severity had not been understood so long as they had not been
applied. That the Jews in Russia were subjected to coercive and
oppressive measures which compelled them to quit their homes was
shown by the number of unfortunate and indigent Russian Jews who
were now arriving in the United States. You had been informed on
excellent authority that within a period of ten years this immigration
amounted to 200,000. Most of these immigrants had been well pro-
vided for, but a further influx of destitute persons entirely unprepared for the conditions and requirements of American life would be a very serious burden upon the American people. It was in this aspect of the results forced upon our country that the condition of the Jews in Russia under existing measures presented itself to the attention of our Government and people, and, in view of the mutual duties of nations, constrained this expression of their sentiments.

On this statement of the general tenor of your dispatch, Mr. de Giers hastened to ask at the outset what was its conclusion—what demand it presented. I replied that it presented no demand, but was a declaration of the views of the Government and people of the United States, which was submitted for the consideration of the Imperial Government of Russia under a sense of its own obligations. Mr. de Giers inquired particularly as to the statement that 200,000 Russian Jews had immigrated to the United States within ten years. I repeated your statement on this point. He rejoined that if such a number of people had gone to the United States as workers to aid in developing the country, he supposed they would be acceptable, but if they went to "exploit" the American people, as he expressed it, he could understand how objectionable it was. After some further observations of a general character Mr. de Giers concluded by saying that the dispatch would be received in the same friendly spirit in which it was sent; that he would submit it to the Emperor; and that, if it was determined to make reply either verbally or in writing, it would be duly communicated.

I have, etc.,

CHAS. E. SMITH.

Mr. Smith to Mr. Blaine.

[Extract.]

No. 89.]

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
St. Petersburg, April 20, 1891. (Received May 4.)

SIR: In my No. 79 it was stated that some of the Hebrew residents of St. Petersburg and Moscow were taking their departure from these cities under the apprehension that measures threatened in the near future and directed against them would render their continued stay either quite uncomfortable or altogether impossible. These persons belong to the classes of Hebrews who are prohibited by law from locating outside of the pale of settlement. Under the nonenforcement or lenient administration of the law they have established themselves here and at Moscow and have remained for years without being disturbed. But the premonitions of a more stringent policy have led a few to withdraw themselves in anticipation of early steps for their forcible expulsion.

These fears have been measurably justified by the event. Within a few days the Russian journals have stated that 150 Jewish families of Moscow have been notified that they must remove from that city, and I am informed that 50 families of this city are about to receive a similar notification. It is probable that these are only the forerunners of further expulsions. No new law has been ordained and none has been required to this end. It is held to be simply an application of the existing law hitherto unenforced. According to the strict letter there are many thousands living here and at the ancient capital of the Empire
without legal authority. The number is said to be from 10,000 to 20,000 at St. Petersburg and nearly 100,000 at Moscow. Though destitute of technical right, their residence has had the sanction of long toleration and has acquired the sacredness of an established home, the compulsory abandonment of which would be attended with hardship. It is supposed that the result will be tempered with such degree of consideration and such allowance of time for preparation as are compatible with a measure of this nature. The Government has declared that this new application of the old laws would be made “gently and gradually,” and the steps now taken, with those to follow, will show how these terms are to be interpreted.

I have, etc.,

CHAS. EMMORY SMITH.

Mr. Wurts to Mr. Blaine.

No. 92.] LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
St. Petersburg, April 27, 1891. (Received May 13.)

SIR: Referring to Mr. Smith’s dispatch No. 89, of the 20th instant, I have the honor to transmit to you herewith inclosed a translation of an imperial ukase prohibiting the emigration of certain categories of Israelites from the zone assigned for Israelites, as well as their immigration into the city and province of Moscow, and at the same time directing the expulsion of these classes of Israelites from that place into the zone assigned for their settlement.

It will be remarked that this order applies only to Moscow, no mention being made of the city and province of St. Petersburg, perhaps for the reason that, the number of Jews in this city being estimated at five times less than at the ancient capital of the Empire, no special urgency is felt for a measure to arrest the increase of the Hebrew population in this place.

It is premature to report on how this order, made public only a few days ago, is being executed, but I regret to say that rumors are heard of undue severity in its application.

I am, etc.,

GEORGE W. WURTS.

[Inclosure in No. 92.—Translation.—From the Official Messenger.]

Imperial ukase concerning the domicile of Jews.

On the proposition of the minister of the interior, His Majesty the Emperor has deigned to order, on the 28th of March, 1891, as follows:

(1) To forbid, until revision by legislative channel of the arrangements of article 157, note 5, of the regulation concerning passports, Israelites engaged in the business of machinist, brewer, distiller, and in general Israelite master workmen and artisans, to emigrate from the zone assigned for the fixed settlement of Israelites; as also to immigrate from other parts of the Empire to Moscow or to the province of Moscow.

(2) To charge the minister of the interior to take, in concert with the governor-general of Moscow, the necessary measures in order that the Israelites above mentioned may gradually be sent away from Moscow and from the province of Moscow into the zone assigned for their settlement.
Mr. Smith to Mr. Wharton.

Legation of the United States, St. Petersburg, October 20, 1891. (Received November 4.)

Sir: As stated in my No. 114, I prolonged my stay in London while returning to this post for the purpose of meeting several gentlemen particularly conversant with the Jewish question as it is now presented in Russia. I was especially anxious to see Mr. Arnold White, the representative and active manager of Baron Hirsch in his project for the colonization of the Jews. His visits and investigations in Russia in furtherance of this scheme had been made since my departure on leave; and, indeed, the full development of the Russian policy had come within the same period, so that a conference with him gave promise of information which would be instructive and useful in dealing with the subject. I wished to learn the spirit with which he had been received, the attitude of the Government towards the movement for the relief of the proscribed people, the general result of his inquiries, and the character of the measures contemplated. All of these points, it was manifest, would have a direct bearing upon the utility and efficacy of independent representations.

Mr. White informed me that he had been favorably received by the members of the Russian Government, and that every facility had been furnished to him for the prosecution of his inquiries and for the advancement of his work. He believed that the policy which treats the Hebrews as a people separate and distinct from the great body of the Russian subjects, to be proscribed and prohibited from the major portion of the Empire and to be restricted within a limited area under special conditions and special laws, had been adopted as a deliberate and settled purpose and was not likely to be abandoned. At the same time he believed from his observations that the methods of its execution might be tempered, and that the time allowed for the removal of those ordered away from their existing domiciles might be extended. He had traversed the parts of the Empire where the Jews are chiefly concentrated; he had examined into their conditions, attributes, and tendencies; and he was able to give a favorable report of their disposition and capabilities. Contrary to the representations made in some quarters, he insisted that the Jewish agricultural communities in Russia presented creditable and successful results, and that the Jewish occupants of land attested both their inclination and their adaptability to agricultural pursuits. As the plan of colonization is based upon the theory of their willingness and capacity for farm labor, this was important testimony.

Mr. White found much distress in the Jewish settlements. The great body of the people were poor, and the limitation of their activities under the Russian laws made the struggle of life all the harder. The summary expulsion of thousands who were living outside of the legal pale of settlement, and who were compelled to take their choice between locating in districts already overcrowded with those of their race or removing from the Empire altogether, aggravated the hardships. As to the manner in which these arbitrary expulsions were enforced, little was said in detail. Mr. White had found himself exposed to some public censure in England, because he had deprecated violent criticism and had indicated that some of the current reports of severities were exaggerated. He stated, in explanation of his attitude, that he regarded himself as acting in a semidiplomatic capacity; that he wanted to accomplish practical results in which the concurrence and coopera-
tion of the Government were vital; and that he did not wish to embar-
rass this work by arousing a suspicious and unfriendly feeling on the
part of those to whom he must look for aid. In the promotion of this
scheme of colonization he proposed to return to Russia and to spend
some months in organizing committees of emigration and in arranging
the essential machinery of operation.

In some other quarters deeply concerned about the future of the Jews
in Russia I do not find as hopeful a feeling respecting the practical
fruits of Baron Hirsch's great project. In the munificent spirit which
prompts it and in the great-hearted and large-minded nature of the con-
ception, it must command the sincere admiration of every friend of hu-
manity. But, magnificent as it is in its liberality and broad as it is in
its scope, it is questioned whether it is equal to the exigencies of a
problem which touches the welfare of 5,000,000 to 6,000,000 people. I
was told in London that even at its best this project could not provide
for more than 25,000 persons a year. Without having undertaken any
calculation, this seems to me a serious underestimate. Possibly, if ap-
plied only to those who could not help themselves at all, it would not
be wide of the mark; but when self-help is united with philanthropic
aid it must reach a much larger number. Even on the most favorable
calculation, however, it must be limited in its operations. It is esti-
lated that the increase of the Russian Jews is 3 per cent per annum,
which, if there were no countervailing movement, would bring an incre-
ment of 150,000 to 180,000 a year, and thus the problem becomes con-
stantly more difficult.

Against this steady augmentation there has been within the past few
months a large outflow. The number of Russian Jew emigrants pass-
ing through Charlottenburg and thence sailing from Bremen or Ham-
burg was, in the two months of July and August, about 23,000. This
is entirely independent of the exodus through Odessa and the southern
parts of the Empire, which, however, is not supposed to be large. The
major portion of this emigration through Bremen and Hamburg goes
to the United States. Germany does not permit the fugitives to remain
within her domains, and English authorities do all that is within their
power to direct them away from the British shores. The chief force of
this movement of the Russian Jews has come within a comparatively
short period. My dispatch No. 79, of February 28, reported the be-
inning of a withdrawal from Moscow and St. Petersburg in apprehen-
sion of adverse measures. In my No. 89, sent on the eve of my de-
parture on leave, the first known orders of the year for the expulsion
of a number of families from the two capitals were indicated. This
was the open inauguration of a policy which has since assumed large
proportions.

The laws under which the expulsion of Jews living outside of the
pale of settlement was directed had not for a considerable period been
rigorously applied, and were now practically and palpably enforced for
the first time in many years. When last year it was currently rumored
that harsh and proscriptive measures had been or were about to be un-
dertaken, this legation, in common with others, reported that the Rus-
sian Government denied and repelled these allegations. This answer,
it is believed, was strictly in accord with the fact as it then was. The
movement for the renewed application of the old laws has taken prac-
tical form and force within a few months. I observe that the corre-
respondent of the New York Times, who has been in Russia making a
special investigation of the subject, indicates that its enforcement
began in March. Information from other sources harmonizes with this
statement. While before that time there had been some emigration, induced, perhaps, by the strenuous and precarious struggle for life in vocations which were limited and crowded or by the apprehension of a severer policy or by the harshness of irresponsible subordinate officials, the great outflow which excites the attention and interest of the world did not commence until the last spring. Since then it has gone on in a strong and steady current, and it becomes a question of special importance to us whether this movement and the causes which lie behind it can be influenced and modified.

I was desirous of meeting Col. Weber, chairman of the Emigration Commission, on the completion of his investigation in Russia, and on my arrival in London I opened correspondence with him for this purpose. But, as he was moving about, the letter was delayed in reaching him, and it was only a few days before his departure that I received a message that he was obliged to sail for home before I could reach Berlin.

I have, etc.,

CHAS. E. SMITH.

Mr. Smith to Mr. Wharton.

LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
St. Petersburg, October 22, 1891. (Received November 7.)

SIR: I find in the Journal de St. Petersburg a statement of the extent of the famine and destitution prevailing in a portion of Russia which is, perhaps, the most trustworthy and exact now attainable. It combines the information presented in various Russian newspapers and the estimates of several official authorities, and may thus be regarded as embodying the conclusions accepted in Russia itself. Without translating the immaterial parts of the article I proceed to give the essential statements.

The great question of the moment, says the Journal, is to know the extent of the calamity. The estimates made by the different branches of the administration differ sensibly among themselves. Thus the department of tariffs has decided to grant an abatement for the transport of grains in twenty provinces and six districts of two other provinces. The minister of domains furnishes firewood gratuitously from the forests of the State in twenty provinces, while the list of regions afflicted as made by the minister of the interior counts only thirteen provinces entire and twenty-three districts of eight others. These thirteen provinces are Nizhnee-Novgorod, Simbeersk, Saratov, Oofa, Penza, Toola, Kazan, Samara, Orenboorg, Tambov, Riazan, Voronezh, and Viatka. The region thus indicated is an immense section lying east and south of Moscow, in the very heart of Russia, stretching for a long distance on the Volga, covering an extent north and south of not less than 400 or 500 miles and a still greater distance east and west. The number of people involved can not be accurately given, for the census is neither recent nor precise. According to the data of the central bureau of statistics, the masculine population of the thirteen provinces amounted in 1875 to 8,763,000. The increase since is estimated at 14 per cent, and, adding the females, the total population is now placed at about 20,000,000 souls.

But public assistance is not contemplated and is not necessary for all. It has in view only the peasants who have the average amount of
land and those who, not possessing land, have no longer regular work. According to the estimates of Prof. Khodsky, who takes as a standard the lot of ground given to the former serfs, the number of peasants moderately possessed of land varies through the thirteen provinces from 25 to 88 per cent. I do not stop to give the figures in detail of the several provinces, which would encumber this dispatch, but present only the aggregates. From these data the conclusion is reached that the number of people who have need of assistance reaches 13,728,000. This number includes from 6,000,000 to 7,000,000, counting families, who lack work and who require aid. The relief thus demanded is estimated at 30 pounds of bread per month for each person, and it must continue through the ten months which intervene before the gathering of next year's harvests. In the aggregate it is calculated that the equivalent of 45,000,000 to 50,000,000 pounds of rye will be required to meet the demands of the needy in the desolated provinces—reduced to English pounds, from 1,700,000,000 to 1,900,000,000. At the present price of the grain this supply, with the cost of transportation, involves an expenditure of 50,000,000 rubles, or more than $25,000,000. In some quarters the estimates are sometimes two and even three times higher. These figures give an idea of the extent of the calamity. It should be added that the Government and that all classes of society are contributing most liberally for the emergency. I have, etc.,

CHAS. EMORY SMITH.

Mr. Smith to Mr. Blaine.

No. 121.] LEGATION OF THE UNITED STATES,
St. Petersburg, October 30, 1891. (Received November 12.)

SIR: The Messager Officiel, the official organ of the Russian Government, publishes a communiqué which gives additional information respecting the existing famine and the measures adopted for its alleviation. This authorized publication states that through the local authorities the Government has had timely information of the extent of the disaster and has been enabled to come to the aid of the sufferers. The failure of this year's crop not only involved present famine, but menaced the sowing of the next year. The Messager announces, however, that by reason of the measures taken the winter sowing has been made under favorable conditions and without any sensible restriction of the cultivated territory. In some of the provinces, besides, the spring sowing has been assured and the seeds purchased through funds loaned by the treasury. Special care has been taken to retain in the country the available supply of grain and to provide the means of existence for those most in distress.

It has been recognized as necessary to create bodies of relief within the famine-stricken districts, and the following measures have been taken: (1) Special conferences of representatives of the Imperial Government and of the zemstvos, which are provincial councils under the presidency of the governors; (2) the other organs of local administration, and especially the chiefs of canton, have been asked to take an active part in the work of distributing food; (3) the creation by the zemstvos of depots of grain and flour for the sale of bread at cost price or below; (4) detailed regulations for furnishing assistance; (5) arrangements for the
cheap transportation of cereals and forage; (6) permission for the pasturage of the cattle in the Crown forests and authority for the people to gather the brushwood in these forests; (7) the furnishing of employment on public works to the distressed.

To meet these requirements it will be necessary to draw largely on the general resources of the State. The amount of credit demanded is known at present only approximately. Up to this time the allowance for the twelve provinces named has been as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Seeding</th>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Smolensk</td>
<td>1,300,000</td>
<td>3,700,000</td>
<td>5,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samara</td>
<td>1,368,000</td>
<td>2,031,000</td>
<td>4,400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazan</td>
<td>1,701,000</td>
<td>2,590,000</td>
<td>4,291,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penza</td>
<td>1,460,000</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td>2,460,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nizhni-Novgorod</td>
<td>1,376,000</td>
<td>1,422,000</td>
<td>2,798,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saratov</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>3,000,000</td>
<td>2,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tambov</td>
<td>1,120,000</td>
<td>1,720,000</td>
<td>2,840,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tobolsk</td>
<td>1,711,500</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,711,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orel</td>
<td>1,200,000</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perm</td>
<td>850,000</td>
<td>650,000</td>
<td>1,500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orenboorg</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kizan</td>
<td>500,000</td>
<td></td>
<td>500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>28,911,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Besides this, an expenditure of 1,994,000 rubles has been allowed for the provinces of Koorsk, Taurida, Olonets, Orel, Viatka, and Toola, making for the eighteen provinces a total outlay up to the present time of 31,905,000 rubles, or about $16,271,805. In addition 1,125,000 rubles have been assigned for public works, without counting those of constructions in wood and on railroads.

I have, etc.,

CHAS. EMORY SMITH.