

ANSWERED BY MR. FOSTER.

PASSES TO THE APPRAISER'S OFFICE—
WORK OF SPECIAL AGENTS.

WASHINGTON, May 22.—Secretary Foster has written a severe letter to George Borgfeldt & Co. of New-York City in reply to a communication from that firm asking that an annual pass be issued to them, giving access to the Appraiser's Stores at that port. In their letter to the Secretary the Borgfeldt firm states that it imports large quantities of articles "of a complex nature," making it necessary to confer with the Appraiser at frequent intervals. To this the Secretary replies that he is at a loss to understand how the "complex nature" of the "articles" imported by the firm should be permitted to strengthen its claim to invade the privacy of the appraising offices.

In reply to the firm's statement that it is frequently called upon by the appraising officers for information in its line of importations, the Secretary says: "Your willingness to furnish such information confers favor and is appreciated, but it is scarcely possible that an intelligent officer would invite you to visit the Appraiser's Stores for the purpose of furnishing him with desired information and then exclude you from his presence." The request is accordingly denied.

The Secretary has also written to F. B. Thurber of New-York in reply to his letter inclosing a copy of a resolution of the Chamber of Commerce asking certain questions regarding the utility of the present force of special agents. While not conceding the right of the Chamber of Commerce to interrogate him as to the management of his department, the Secretary replies to the inquiries because of the courteous manner in which they are presented.

He describes in detail the duties of the special agents and their great value to the department in the prevention and detection of frauds on the customs revenue. For many years, he says, they have successfully combated the most skillfully concocted schemes of foreign shippers to evade the revenue laws. For the salaries and expenses of these agents in the last five years, the Secretary says, there have been expended \$381,410.67, while in the same period there was paid into the Treasury, as a direct result of their work, \$2,133,832.04.