Berlin, Germany, December 14, 1932.

Dear Erhardt:

Thanks so much for your generous note of December 11. I have always had the conviction that the finest possession one can accumulate in this world is friends and the experience of the past days is another proof although I did not need it. Everyone has really been splendid and I shudder to think what the result might have been but for my friends. 19 years' hard work would have gone by the board and a career practically ruined for something that never happened had it not been for the generous support of my friends. I shudder to think what would have happened had I been defenseless and friendless and it is simply horrible to think of what influence the press really has and how cruel it can be.

I am sending you herewith a copy of the Secretary's telegram to me as well as a copy of a statement given to the press by the American organizations here and their telegram to the Secretary. The Secretary, however, had already made his statement to the press on the morning of December 10, and I have private telegrams to the effect that the statement was not only complete, but most satisfactory. I also have private telegrams to the effect that yesterday morning in a prominent position in the New York Herald Tribune Lippmann made the amende honorable. I cannot quite understand how he should have been so casual and it was probably not quite easy for him to make this statement to his many readers as it is bound to more or less affect his infallibility with some of them. But I was confident that he was big enough a man to correct his mistake. So far as Nicholas Murray Butler is concerned whose "heart wept for his country
at the spectacle of what happened at the Consulate General at Berlin" I am not concerned. I have known him for years to be a man whose opinion is valueless and I would not like to put in writing what I really think and know of him. His heart bleeds on every occasion for his country, but he has not been known in years to stand up for his country.

I am not going into the details of the Einstein story as I do not have time, being pressed with so many things now. I can, however, tell you that Einstein, or rather Mrs. Einstein, conducted his application for a visa with the press for days before he ever applied and when he did apply the visa was granted in less than 24 hours, and he was treated with every consideration when he came here to the Consulate by Geist who was in charge while I was at Breslau making an inspection which I had been instructed specially to make, by the Department. As a matter of fact, if anyone was guilty of discourtesy, it was the Einsteins, and if anyone was subjected to a gruelling, it was Geist. The whole difficulty of course was that Einstein and his wife thought they would surely be refused a visa because he has connected himself in name and in certain cases by action, with organizations which are extremely radical and with which he is not really in sympathy. Mrs. Einstein runs the family and she was the one who talked to the press. If we were to tell what we know, Einstein would appear to the world in such a ridiculous position as to definitely injure his prestige, but I am not interested in that now that our own name and that of the Service is cleared. As someone pointed out today the incident is not going to be without its good effect as the newspapers will be a good deal more careful about criticizing our Foreign Service officers for the performance of their duty in the future, and in that sense my becoming the innocent object of this attack may have been a service to our profession, but I can tell you frankly that I am getting just a little bit tired of being "of service", and want to have a little peace and quiet. At all events the matter has turned out very well and so far as I am concerned it is finished, and I hold no feeling against anyone, but have an immense debt of gratitude to the people who were so helpful in this matter, whose assistance I did not have to ask for even indirectly, but who at home and over here took the necessary steps to see that this office and myself were cleared of what was obviously no responsibility.
responsibility of ours. Thanks very much for your generous note.

Whittemore by the way was the former South-American manager for the Singer Sowing Machine Co. and was there for about 40 years and is to-day still probably the most highly respected American in all South-America. He is now living in Brussels, retired, and it was a mighty fine gesture of his to write the letter in which he showed such an utter comprehension of the case as if he had been handling it himself. It shows the kind of person he is.

We are going to spend your Christmas at home, in Berlin. We hope that you and your wife and family will have a very happy Christmas and a new year filled with all manner of good things. If you have any news from home I would be glad to have you write me. I have no late information concerning the budget or the status of our situation.

Very sincerely yours,

John G. Erhardt, Esquire,
American Consul,
Bordeaux, France.