Berlin, Germany, May 5, 1933.

MEMORANDUM

OF CONVERSATION WITH DR. GOEBBELS, THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT AND PROPAGANDA ON MAY 5, 1933, AT 1.30 O'CLOCK.

During a conversation which I had with Dr. Milch, the head of the Ministry of Air, on April 28 on the question of discrimination against American firms in Germany, a copy of which was transmitted to the Department with my despatch No. 1273 of May 2, 1933, he suggested that I also see Dr. Goebbels, the Minister of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda, and an arrangement was made for a conversation with Dr. Goebbels for May 5 at 1.30 o'clock. I was at the Ministry promptly at 1.30 and was announced to the Minister, but was kept waiting for twenty minutes. I had to call the attention of an official of the Ministry in the anteroom to the fact that I had already waited twenty minutes.

I explained to Minister Goebbels the steps which the Embassy and the Consulate General had taken with respect to the American-owned German firms in Germany which had been discriminated against under the orders of the National-Socialist party, that only German-owned German firms could sell to the states, municipalities and public-owned utilities. I emphasized particularly to him as Minister of Propaganda the discriminatory treatment on several occasions of the Associated Press G.m.b.H. and of the New York Times G.m.b.H. I gave him in general the same information as I had given to Dr. Milch, as set forth in the memorandum covering that interview. Dr. Goebbels after I had made my statement requested that I put it in writing and send it to him so that he could give the matter his immediate attention. I stated that I had come for something more definite and wished to have an expression as to what would be done. I emphasized that a good deal of patience had already been shown by the American firms concerned and by our Government and that in spite of promises we had seen no action. Dr. Goebbels then said that if I would give him a detailed statement of what I had told him he would take up the matter, and he assured me that it would be satisfactorily adjusted.

There was present at the interview Dr. Hanke of the Ministry, but who took no part therein. As I was leaving I said to Dr. Hanke "You are familiar with this whole matter" to which he replied that he was, but offered no further comment.

Mr. Gordon
Mr. Gordon, the Charge d'Affaires ad interim, and I had agreed upon the course of action to be followed by me should Dr. Goebbels raise the question of his proposed trip to the United States which Dr. Goebbels had informally mentioned to Mr. Gordon after a dinner at the Italian Embassy. As Dr. Goebbels did not raise this question of his visit to the United States during the interview I made no reference to it.

I had a distinct impression of coldness and very great reserve on the part of Dr. Goebbels during the interview. I would not be surprised that the idea of his going to the United States to give some propaganda lectures under the excuse of being present at the opening of the Chicago Fair, was entirely his or that of his wife, and that he discussed it informally with several people before having discussed it with his associates in the Government and in the party. Announcement of the proposed visit was made in the newspapers of May 4. The announcement has since been corrected in the newspapers with the statement that it is not yet certain whether Dr. Goebbels will be able to go. It is quite probable that it was brought to his attention that it might not be desirable for him to go to the United States, on the ground that he might be to the American people generally less acceptable as a representative of the present Government than other officers thereof. If this is the case, his coldness and reserve are quite understandable as he is extremely sensitive and self-centered and any cold water thrown on his trip by his own people would be a grave disappointment to him.

A letter covering the statements which Dr. Goebbels wished to have is being prepared and will be sent to him.

George S. Messersmith,
American Consul General.