My dear Messersmith:

Your letter of June 13 concerning Hanfstaengl has just come in. The whole story is too long to write but a few details may be interesting to you.

Hanfstaengl let the boat train for the EUROPA leave Berlin and then suddenly announced that he had changed his mind, flew to Cherbourg and caught the vessel at that port. Then began the fun. The Class Secretary of Harvard came down to Washington and asked if there were not some possible way in which Hanfstaengl could be prevailed upon not to attend the reunion. If, however, this were not possible, would the Government undertake to assure his protection? The Class of 1909, which was to be quartered in the Harvard Yard together with wives and children, were apprehensive of actual physical molestation. Jimmie Dunn and I replied that while we would see that Hanfstaengl would be protected in landing, after that it was a matter for the State authorities.

The Honorable

George S. Messersmith,
American Minister,
Vienna.
authorities and that while we could, if necessary, tip off the Massachusetts authorities we thought it would be more regular for the University or for the class to take the matter up with the Mayor of Cambridge and, if necessary, even with the Governor of Massachusetts. Scarcely had he left when the Vice President of Harvard telephoned Mr. Carr, and the next day another member of the Class came down to offer the delightful suggestion that perhaps the German Embassy might telegraph Hanfstaengl urging him to come to Washington for purposes of consultation rather than go to Boston. I replied somewhat acidly that that would only shift the locus of any possible incident and would not solve the problem. The next step was a routine request from the German Embassy for customs courtesies. Finally, the German Ambassador himself came down to protest violently against a report that the Dickstein Committee was going to ask Hanfstaengl to appear as a witness. Poor Luther was terribly exercised at this possibility and pointed out that even though Hanfstaengl was not a Government official, nevertheless the closeness of his relationship to Hitler would make any such "insult" a very serious matter in the relations of the two countries.

After
After a good deal of thought he was told that the resolution setting up the Dickstein Committee enabled it to subpoena anyone as witness; that in coming to this country and accepting our hospitality, Hanfstaengl subjected himself to our laws; that he was not walking into a trap as the Dickstein Committee had been openly functioning for a long time before Hanfstaengl embarked; that the Executive branch of the Government had no authority over this Committee; that the Executive would be glad to do what was in its power, namely, facilitating Hanfstaengl's debarkation and taking steps to warn the police to look out for his safety; but that when it came to seeking immunity from the functioning of our laws for a private citizen, it did not seem possible to grant a request of this sort. Fortunately, the Dickstein Committee decided on its own not to subpoena Hanfstaengl as long as he stuck to his business and did not commence propaganda.

On the whole the visit thus far has gone off far better than we anticipated, though there are still ten days to go. He has not been guilty of any undue indiscretion, and much to my surprise has not sought undue publicity. The Harvard exercises went
went through with only one unfortunate incident, and he is still on the North Shore visiting former friends.

None the less the whole visit was a great psychological mistake, and we certainly did not pretend anything else in our talks with the German Embassy.

Such in brief is the story to date but I thought it might be of more than casual interest to you. At any rate Hanfstaengl's background both in Germany and during the years of our neutrality in New York, was pretty well known to us here, but your letter was none the less appreciated and certainly was valuable corroboration.

With every good wish,
As ever yours,