November 1, 1934.

Dear Messersmith:

I have three letters for which to thank you, dated October 4, October 18 and October 19.

May I first of all thank you for the exceedingly kind remarks you made about my work here. They are far from merited, but there is no one from whom I would rather receive a word of praise than yourself.

To take up seriatim some of the points you raised in your letters.

(1) Mrs. Hammerand. I think this case was handled in a peculiarly felicitous manner. Mrs. Hammerand's family here have written in two or three times expressing appreciation of the information we have been able to give them and have really observed the seal of confidence under which we gave it to them. They have more than a sneaking suspicion that Mrs. Hammerand's release was due to some remarks made in the proper quarters

"off

The Honorable
George S. Messersmith,
American Minister,
Vienna.
"off the record" but appreciating the delicacy of the situation have never put their suspicions into actual words.

(2) The Vacuum Oil Company. Your presentation of the case has entirely satisfied those of us who were working on it at this end. The way we were going to handle the matter was to call down the representative of the company (Mr. Bowen) who had been asking our assistance, tell him the story and if necessary let him read certain carefully chosen excerpts of your despatch. Before we received the despatch, however, he must have heard directly from Mr. Evans because he promptly sailed for Europe and left word that he would in all probability visit Vienna in the course of his trip. I wish that American companies would employ American agents and that they would learn not to deal through paid intermediaries. The results of the latter remind me only too often of secret service information bought from spies. It is rarely worth the paper it is written on.

(3) As to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, I have not yet received your despatch. In Germany, Geist was successful in effecting the release of the property which had been seized in various
various States and furthermore with the added proviso that they could use their printing presses for printing Bibles and certain types of commercial papers. Their representatives here asked us to go yet further and persuade the German Government to let them continue their religious work and to publish tracts. I told them that this did not seem to me to be a consular function, that Geist had done what we instructed him to do and had done it very well. He could continue to create a better atmosphere between the Society and the German authorities but it was not up to us to intervene in Germany's religious policy, the more so as the Society was composed exclusively of Germans and was merely an affiliate of the American mother branch.

(4) Speaking of Geist, he has continued his excellent work. For your strictly confidential information, I sent a memorandum to the Personnel Board on the day when Douglas Jenkins took over along the following lines: that I did not know whether it was usual to send a special commendation to a consular officer who has just completed a prolonged period of service in charge of an important Consulate General. If so, I should like to recommend that such a message be sent to Geist. In
the two phases of his work which had come to my immediate attention, namely, political reporting and the protection of American interests, he had done a superlative piece of work. He had shown energy, judgment and discretion. It had been a real comfort to have him in that post during those critical months and I think he worthily carried on the Messersmith tradition.

(6) Your predecessor, George Earle, was down here for a day or two and asked for the latest news of Austria. He is waging a hot political fight though most of my Pennsylvania friends do not feel that he will succeed in the elections. He has a strong opponent, Schnader, against him.

(7) Mr. Sackett was here a few days ago and I had one or two long talks with him. Of course you
you have read in detail the role he played in effecting the release of his niece, Mrs. Stoll. I saw him forty-eight hours after her return. He had visibly aged in the short space of a month. He told me that unless one had been through such an episode one could not believe its strain. Curiously enough, Mrs. Stoll herself was less shocked nervously than any other member of the family.

I have not time to write more during the naval talks now going on at London. They are keeping us pretty busy even though there does not seem to be any sign of a modification of the Japanese views. That does not mean, however, that we do not follow with the closest interest everything affecting Austria and Central Europe as it is and I fear will for years remain one of the acute danger spots.

Again my very best thanks for your letters and with every good wish to you and Mrs. Messersmith, in which Lilla joins,

As ever yours,