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Berlin, Germany
October 24, 1937

Dear Mr. Messersmith:

I had no more arrived in Paris than I received news from Berlin that my sister was very ill and so I hurried back to my home. I found that she had been taken ill with a serious attack of the heart and since then there has been no real improvement in her situation. I have become very much alarmed. A specialist has been here a number of times to see her, but the outlook for her recovery according to the doctors is not very bright. For five days and nights her heart has been running at a very high rate and she constantly required the assistance of morphine to get any rest. Now the pulse beat has finally gone down, but she is so weak that she can practically do nothing for herself. The doctors have not, of course, abondoned hope of her recovery; but they regard her situation as very serious indeed. I have already prepared my sister in the United States for the worst. It was no pleasant end to my vacation to find that affairs had taken so serious a turn; but one has to make the best of matters of this sort, the outcome of which does not lie in our power.

I found Mr. Jenkins enthusiastically preparing to leave Berlin and take up his duties in London. He and Mrs. Jenkins are most pleased to leave Berlin and to go to London. He feels particularly grateful to you and is looking forward to his assignment there with much pleasure indeed. He is leaving Berlin at the end of this week. At the same time I am preparing to take over fully the duties of this post.

I have had an important talk with Mr. Gilbert and I believe we are going to work very well together. I found him in a very perturbed state, and I think he anticipates the return of Mr. Dodd at the end of this week with a certain amount of nervousness. He extremely regrets the publicity which appeared in the ANGRIFF concerning the Ambassador's disapproval of Gilbert's attendance at the Reichsparteitag. I learn that the whole matter had been directed more or less by Ferdinand Mayer before he left, and that Gilbert had acted on his advice. I had a long talk with Gilbert and told him many things about the feelings at home and explained to him in great detail the policy which we had so successfully pursued during the years we were together in Berlin and pointed out how one has to deal with these people to get anywhere and how any policy which is calculated to curry favor with the Regime in Germany will lead only to disaster and grave criticism at home. He was extremely interested and listened most sympathetically. The next day I saw Lee, Riddleberger and Beam and had vigorous talks with each one, and gave them Mr; Flack's message about a stiffer attitude in all matters of protection, etc. They all wanted to know whether or not the Department would back them up, and I said the Department did not want to have to back us up, and that we should stand our own

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ground to the last. On the second day I was over Mr. Gilbert called me in his office and said that he was very grateful for the frankness with which I spoke to him and that he wanted to be sure that I had seen the other officers (Lee, Riddleberger and Beam) and told them some of the things which I told to him. I am sincerely pleased with his attitude and I promised him all the assistance in my power at any time. It was a good beginning and I hope that he will keep his promise and let me help him whenever he is in difficulty. He thinks there is a grave discrepancy in the job of "furthering good relations " between the two countries and following the policy which he understands the Ambassador has followed in the past and apparently will more vigorously follow in the future. I told him that he should not look too narrowly on these points. I said the Dodd is not a better American or a better democrat (not in the party sense)than he or I; that what the Ambassador stands for : freedom, liberty of thought, freedom of the press, etc., etc., we stand for too, and that no officer should have the slightest difficulty in supporting a chief who is so truly American. He admitted that, but inferred that he was in an impossible position. I said that this was not true in any sense, and that he had one of the biggest and finest opportunities of any man in the service; that the Berlin post was not easy, but that he had the genius to advise the Ambassador properly and to hold his confidence and sympathy. He said that he knew nothing about being a Counsellor at an Embassy and that everything here was all new to him and that it would take some time to get acquainted with the setup. I tried to encourage him as much as possible and to give him the idea that cooperation came first and that if he utilized all the ability which I was sure he had his period of service would be most successful; and in this atmosphere I left him.

My only hope is that he is a really honest and sincere officer and will take the situation which he finds here with a realism and a high sense of duty. I am sure that this will save him and guide him rightly.

I had a good talk with Hodgdon and he has promised me the fullest support and I have pledged myself to do everything to further his career and to give him the finest chance to make progress. He has been very much encouraged by the frank way I spoke to him, and I am really enthusiastic and happy about the attitude which he has taken. I believe that I can make a new officer of Hodgdon and that he is glad of the chance to show what he can do.

Please give my warmest regards to Mrs; Messersmith and tell her how grieved I am over my poor sister's condition. With sincere affection and every wish for your health and success, I am

Ever faithfully yours

Raymond