Hon. George S. Messersmith,  
Assistant Secretary of State.

Dear Mr. Messersmith:

Pursuant to our recent conversation, I give you herewith this Department's reactions to the Plan proposed by your Department for the consolidation of the Foreign Agricultural Service and the Foreign Commerce Service into a single Foreign Service of the United States.

I want to say, first of all, that I am keen on the maintenance in the Foreign Service of this Government, particularly in Latin American countries, of a corps of competent, agriculturally trained men. We have, I believe, made a good start toward developing such a corps in the Foreign Agricultural Service. It is important, from the point of view of this Department, that this development continue.

Having this general principle in mind, this Department is prepared to agree to the transfer of the permanent field offices of the Foreign Agricultural Service, that is, the Agricultural Attachés, the Assistant Agricultural Attachés, and their staffs, to the Department of State for consolidation in the Foreign Service of the United States, provided we are able to arrive at a mutual understanding with respect to certain aspects of such a transfer. These aspects, which are not covered explicitly either in the proposed message of the President to Congress or in the text of the Plan for the reorganization of the Foreign Services, relate, first, to the question of the competence, from an agricultural point of view, of the officers of the consolidated Foreign Service assigned to agricultural work and, second, to the question of the direction of the work of such officers along lines most useful to this Department.

In regard to the first question of personnel, there is, as you know, an item in the budget of this Department for 1939-40, as submitted to Congress, providing funds for four new offices of the Foreign Agricultural Service in Latin America and for strengthening the office in Buenos Aires. If this item is included in the Department's appropriation bill as passed by Congress, it will mean an expansion of something like 75 percent in our foreign field office force. I am personally extremely
interested in this proposed work in Latin America and I should like to be assured that this Department will have the opportunity to select the men for these positions even though this might require a short postponement in putting the Plan for reorganization into effect.

As regards future personnel of the Foreign Service to be assigned to agricultural work, I believe that there should be a definite regulation to the effect that such assignments should be made only to men who have had either two years of work in an agricultural college or two years experience in this Department, unless this Department should in a particular case request the assignment of a Foreign Service officer of the combined Service who may not meet these requisites but whom it may consider qualified for the work and post.

Next to the question of competent personnel is the question of the direction of the agricultural work of the Foreign Service along lines most useful to this Department. Such direction would include such matters as determination of posts to which Agricultural Attaches are to be assigned, the territories to be covered, the individual to be selected for individual assignments, etc. We should like to be assured that this Department would be given an opportunity effectively to register its views on such matters.

As one means toward this end, I should like to know whether it would be agreeable to your Department to have a qualified officer of this Department, to be mutually agreed upon permanently assigned to your Department for the purpose of maintaining a close liaison between this Department and the Foreign Service. Such an assignment would be in addition to the designation of an officer of this Department to sit on the Board of Examiners and, as the occasion requires, on the Board of Foreign Service Personnel, as proposed in the draft message of the President to the Congress.

In addition to these broad questions, we would like to suggest certain specific changes in the language of the Plan of organization.

The language of Paragraph 1 of the Plan, as it relates to the transfer of the Foreign Agricultural Service is too broad. Actually, the Foreign Agricultural Service, as it now exists in the Department of Agriculture, consists of three more or less separate but interrelated parts: (1) the Washington staff, (2) Commodity Specialists who are assigned alternatively in Washington and the field, and (3) the permanent foreign field offices of the Service, consisting of the Agricultural Attaches, Assistant Agricultural Attaches and their clerical assistants. This Department would contemplate the transfer to the Department of State of only the third group and it is accordingly suggested that the language of Paragraph 1 of the Plan be changed so as to make this clear.

Paragraph 3(f) of the Plan provides that all laws relating to the Foreign Agricultural Service "remain in full force and effect under
the administration of the Secretary of State in so far as such laws are not inapplicable". This would seem to have the effect of revoking such laws so far as this Department is concerned. Since it is contemplated, as indicated in the draft message of the President, that this Department, as well as others, should continue to send specialists abroad from time to time under commissions from the Secretary of State, it is important that such specialists should receive certain privileges, with respect to leave, transportation of families and household effects, etc., as they now receive under the terms of the Act of June 5, 1930, creating the Foreign Agricultural Service. It is accordingly suggested that the language of this section be altered so as to assure that these specialists would continue to receive such privileges.

Sincerely yours,

H. A. WALLACE

Secretary.