The task of an American Ambassador in Cuba is not always an easy one. Although the Cuban people are traditionally perhaps the most friendly towards the United States of any country in Latin America, and American Ambassador has to watch his step. Just because the traditional relationship between the United States and Cuba has been so close since independence, and just because the Cuban people feel a deep debt of gratitude towards the United States government and people for having aided them in freeing themselves from the yoke of Spain, it is all the more important for the American Ambassador not to throw around his weight. The Cuban people, are charming, vivacious, friendly people. Many of the people who are in government posts or who are in high posts in business, banking or in the sugar industry or in the important business of the country have traveled widely in the United States. Practically all of them speak English, that is the people in these circles. In many of the Latin countries it had been customary for important people in government and in the professions, literary people, newspaper publishers, etc. to travel more in Europe than in the United States. In Cuba this was entirely different. The atmosphere therefore in which the American Ambassador worked was a very friendly and happy one and my wife and I found our stay there really a delightful one. We never had more friendly and understanding treatment from all circles in any country where we had been than we had from the outset of our stay in Havana, and our stay there will always remain as one of the happiest ones during our many years of service abroad for our government.

By the same token, however, an American Ambassador in Cuba who does his duty is bound to awaken the enmity or bad feeling of certain people. I was not an exception. It was known that I was for correct practices in business. It was known that I was correct in keeping the relationships between the two countries and governments on a certain level. This naturally interfered with the plans of many people. All this did not give me any concern because I knew I was following through what was in the best interests of Cuba and that what I was doing had the
support of the President. More than that I knew that what I was doing was carrying through the traditions of our own government and of the way we carried on our foreign relations.

On several occasions after perhaps six months of my stay in Havana the President said to me that he thought I must not fail to take into account that there were some people who did not like me and that I ought to take some precautions. I told him that I did not feel like taking any precautions. I did not think that they were necessary. I thought it would be the most unhappy thing possible if an American Ambassador went around with protection. Batista smilingly remarked that one of my predecessors had never gone about without protection, and had been very insistent that the Cuban government give him this protection when in fact he said the government did not feel it was necessary (he had reference to Caffery who during a good part of his stay when he went out usually had one automobile precede his and another follow it and was very exigent about the Cuban government providing all sorts of protection). I told the President that I did not want any of this sort of thing and that I was prepared to take any risks. It was several months after this when during one of our conversations the President said that he must really tell me that he had been obliged to take some precautions for my safety without my knowing it. He said that Mrs. Messersmith and I went out to the Country Club very frequently for the evening among friends and that he knew and had definite information that some thugs were planning to "beat me up". He said that some of these people were planning this sort of thing really thought they were doing him, Batista, a favor. He said he had had the word go out that anyone who molested me was going to suffer dearly. He said that the protection he had been giving me at night when Mrs. Messersmith and I moved about, especially outside of the center of the city, was very discreet. I told him that I had not noticed it. He told me he thought that it wouldn't have to be done for very long but that he would see to it that it was done.
we would not come to any harm. He laughingly said, "I have told these people that
the American Ambassador is too important to the Cuban government to have him
beaten up or disturbed in any way. Besides that, he is my friend."

I never noted this discreet protection of which the President spoke and
if it continued I have no knowledge as to how long it continued or when it stopped.