I have elsewhere noted that when on April 1, 1946, Secretary Byrnes spoke to me about the desire of the President and himself that I go as Ambassador to Buenos Aires, that I was insistent on the necessity of sending a career officer as chief of our mission in Mexico. Among the three men whom I named at the Secretary's request as men who could fill the post adequately, was that of Walter Thurston, who was then, I believe, Ambassador in Guatemala. Thurston was a studious, quiet, and somewhat too reserved man. He knew Spanish well and he had had ample experience in Latin America. Interested as I was that things should go well in the relations between Mexico and our country, I never regretted that I had suggested Thurston as a possible successor to me in Mexico City. He carried through his work with dignity and he had the respect of the Mexican authorities and Mexican people as well as of the large number of Americans in Mexico City and throughout the country. He is a man of excellent judgment and great discretion. There were those who at times felt that he was not a man of great decision but that was because he did not make a parade of himself or of his actions. He made an understanding and excellent and, in many ways, effective representative of our country in so important a friendly country as Mexico.

During his time as Ambassador he had the same problem to deal with, or rather to annoy him, that I had. The post in Mexico City, because of its proximity to our own country and because of the many attractions which the capital and the country have for so many of our countrymen, is one that is sought by all kinds of people. There were, therefore, during his time as there had been during my four years and more in the Embassy, constant rumors as to a replacement for him. These were usually the personal propaganda of individuals who were endeavoring to get the post, and the rumors did not mean that there was any serious consideration...
of a change.

It was, however, early in 1950 (I will have to leave the exact date blank) that I learned from friends during a trip north on business of my company that an unholy bargain had been entered into in connection with the political situation in New York City and State. Without going into any of the unhappy details it is sufficient to record that in connection with the elections which were approaching, Ed Flynn and Ben Smith approached President Truman and leaders of the Democratic Party in the country and said that the only way in which to win in New York would be for O'Dwyer, then Mayor of New York City, to retire and put up a strong candidate for Mayor and Senator. Whatever the varied opinions may be which are held by our countrymen with regard to any great public figure such as President Truman, I think that even those who had much disagreement with President Truman and may even not have held him in too high regard realize that any bargain which involved giving O'Dwyer a presidential appointment of importance would be displeasing and distasteful to the President. Completely aside of the record of O'Dwyer he had been no friend of the President and had opposed him politically in New York State. President Truman was a politician; it was his training. For many years before he became President he had learned the importance of bargaining and accommodation in matters of this kind. I was therefore told that with great reluctance the President had agreed to appoint O'Dwyer as Ambassador to Mexico, thus replacing Thurston. When this information was first given me I could not ignore it coming from the friends who gave it to me but it seemed really incredible. In view of the position in which O'Dwyer was in New York City and of the open scandals which were constantly aired in the press, I could hardly believe that even for what seemed to be a very
important/political reasons he would be sent as Ambassador to a country the relations with which were so important to us and where we had so many delicate problems arising constantly. I was assured that the information was absolutely correct.

My first thought was that I should say something about this to Thurston. I had very high regard for him and I knew how annoying these constant rumors about a successor can be. I decided that I would not say anything to him as I couldn't get myself to believe that it would really happen. It was only about a month later that I made another trip to New York on business and I learned through the same friends and some others as well that everything with regard to this change was definitely fixed up. It was just a question of the time of the announcement. As a matter of fact, an occasional rumor that O'Dwyer was going to resign and go to Mexico as Ambassador began to appear. On my return to Mexico City, as there was no question that the matter was all fixed up, I could not help but think of what a shock this would be to Thurston. I recall that with all my experience of men and things, the way my "resignation" had been accepted as Ambassador to Buenos Aires in 1947 had come as a shock. I realized that while Thurston was an able ambassador he had few intimate friends and had not had to rub up against some of the realities of life and living that I had been obliged to face all my life. I felt that it was only the human and decent thing for me to tell him about this thing.

I called on Thurston and told him what I had been informed of during my last two visits to New York. I had not said anything until I was as sure as anyone could be of anything of that kind; that the decision to replace him had been made. It was a dirty deal. I did not know what satisfaction it would be to him to realize that almost the
identic thing had happened to others in the service and certainly to myself. I told him about the way Leland Harrison had been relieved of his post as chief of our diplomatic mission in Switzerland after so many honorable years of service. The Swiss Foreign Office knew about his successor being indicated before Harrison had any word that his resignation had been "accepted". I told him about what had happened to me in the Argentine and what had preceded it. I said my only purpose in doing this was because I felt friendly to him as a man and I admired the work he had done at his post in Mexico and I knew that we were all human beings and if it were any relief to him or any alleviation of the shock of the news when it came for him to realize that it had happened to men like Leland Harrison and myself, I should tell him about it. Thurston was really deeply appreciative. He said that all he knew was these constant rumors. There had been constant rumors ever since he had been in the post in Mexico City of a change. He had sort of got used to it. He thought that the rumors with regard to O'Dwyer resigning as Mayor of New York and coming to Mexico City as Ambassador were the same sort of thing. I told him unfortunately they were not the same sort of thing.

I told Thurston that he must really not take the matter in a personal way. I said that I had every reason to believe that President Truman thought very highly of him as a man and as an officer. The post in Mexico City had become a part of a political deal; he would be sacrificed as others had been. Thurston said it was particularly comforting for him to have been good enough to tell him the intimate details of what had happened with respect to me in Buenos Aires. It was also comforting for him to know about Leland Harrison, for he had not
known anything about the details of how the change in Switzerland was made.

It was not long thereafter that the announcement came. Thurs­ton's resignation was "accepted". He was offered the post of Ambassador to one of the smaller countries of South America. He decided that the best thing to do was for him to ask for his retirement and he courteously declined the appointment to this country of South America. He was dis­sua­ded later to withdraw his application for retirement and to assume the status of career minister and for a short time he remained in the Department as a member of the Planning Board. When he realized that the intimations which had been given with regard to a more important appointment to the field would not be realized, he definitely retired from the Foreign Service.