Subject: Tradition and Legend.

During my many years of work beginning in 1900 in three very diverse and in so many respects completely different activity -- first, 1½ years in school work, then almost 3½ years in the Foreign Service of my government, and then almost 7 years in the service of the largest private company in Mexico as its Chief Executive Officer and Chairman of the Board of Directors -- I found in my dealings with events and with people a good many big men occupying small posts and a lot of little men occupying big posts. This sort of experience over so many years has, I hope, given me a certain measure of perspective as to why events and men are really important or negligible. I have seen these small men in big places and really very capable men in little places and the great mass of those who have to work in between, struggling against circumstances some of which they created themselves and others by the circumstances in the world in which they lived -- all of them in this serious effort to survive.

As the years have gone on I have had the opportunity to reflect on this constant struggle in which I found those I was associated with or had to observe were engaged in. As the intimate memories of events and men crowd in on me as I am making notes of some of my observations over these years, I am led to make a few random notes which occur to me on tradition and on legend.

Tradition is and should be a treasured possession by countries and by peoples, as it is by families and by individuals. A tradition can only be created by nations or groups or families or individuals through hard effort, sacrifice, toil, courage, infinite perseverance -- and only over a lifetime or generations. Once established it is practically indestructible.

Legend, on the other hand, is created by an individual or a group through self interest, through the spreading of an idea or of a story, often without any basis. Legend is created by selfish propagandists and among these in our day the more irresponsible type of political or social columnist is the principal sinner. Legend is fragile and quite readily destroyed and dissipates in the cold light of
fact when such fact is marshalled against it.

We in our country are fortunate in the possession of many fine traditions. We indeed are a fortunate people in that those who came to first settle what became the 13 colonies came from the middle classes of England. The hard lives which they had in establishing themselves on new land so far distant from those in which their ancestors had had root for centuries and a combination which are known to every school boy and school girl in our country ingrained in our people certain virtues and certain practices and certain ways of living and thinking which have happily endured to this day. Since the days since these first colonists came from England we have received in increasing numbers from practically every part of Europe and other parts of the world those who for some reason or other wished to better their way of living. All these new groups from so many diverse origins and of so many different races brought with them their own ways of living and thoughts. The virility of the early bases which we established in our life has shown itself through the fact that although there has been a certain dilution of the earliest traditions, they remain practically as they were established by those first hardy colonists.

Just as these basic traditions have survived, so certain men who have become a tradition in our country have kept their place in our admiration, affection and respect. Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln are traditions in our country and not legends. In the same way Roosevelt in our country and Churchill in England are a tradition. We might almost say that Roosevelt and Churchill are common tradition of ourselves and of Britain. Legends arise around the truly great and around those who have pretentions to greatness. Legends which arise around the great are purely secondary. The tradition which lies in achievement, understanding, perseverance and as vision remain. For the legends which are created around the near-great and the small with pretentions to greatness, they do not survive their demise more than a few years. As soon as a great man has passed from the picture through retirement or
ill health or through demise, the vultures start to work but even the efforts of these scavengers do not affect the basic work of these men. The hard bones of tradition and truth remain and the legendary dissipates.

I have been led to make these random and inadequate observations with regard to tradition and legend because I wish to make reference to one legend which has done a great deal of harm. There has grown up in our country a legend about career diplomats and foreign service officers and consuls as "cookie pushers," useless ornaments, people who lead a soft and easy life and who spend their lives at government expense in widely scattered places in the world, going from one party to another. So much has been written and said by uninformed and irresponsible and completely thoughtless persons as to the kind of life that our foreign representatives lead that to a good many of our people still the term diplomat or foreign service officer brings up the picture which I can best describe in the terms that these irresponsible people themselves use of "cookie pushers". The facts are entirely to the contrary and this legend has done a great deal of harm.

From the earliest days of history we find that countries and monarchs found it necessary to use emissaries beyond their borders. The herald was succeeded by the counterpart of our present chief of mission and foreign service officer. After we had established our independence and the federal government was established, President Washington found it desirable and necessary, in accord with the constitutional provision which had been provided for this contingency, to send abroad men to England and to France and later to several other countries. In the very first days of our independence we found it necessary to be able to speak with other governments. Already in the time of President Washington we had commercial interests and shipping interests which led us to send consuls to various European and Mediterranean ports. The men sent were men of high quality and of the best we had at home. More of us ought to be familiar with the work which men like Benjamin Franklin and others did in those early days in speaking for our country before foreign gov-
ernments and peoples. To those who think of foreign representation, more concretely
Ambassadors and Consuls, as purely ornamental and useless appendages it would be
well to recall from their history how monarchs sent ambassadors to other countries,
either to explore the basis of making war and the possibility of it being a success
or to prevent a war; to arrange a marriage or an alliance to strengthen the position
of the monarch and the nation; to get the most advantage in a treaty which was con-
templated; to make clear the position of the monarch or of the country so as to
avoid misunderstandings. The men who during the middle ages and up until the period
of modern diplomacy who were sent to do these tasks had to be capable men and men in
whom confidence could be placed. Had they not been that type of men there would have
been no purpose in sending them. They had to live high and well in many cases. They
had to spend lavishly and to entertain widely. They had to know how to distribute the
favors of their sovereign. The diplomat in the old days had to be in many ways what
we commonly call a "hard egg". He had to be astute, resourceful and usually with a
hard head for liquor and a good stomach.

With the end of the Napoleonic Wars in Europe the life of states began to
be more intimately tied up with each other even than before and the need for foreign
representation, both diplomatic and consular, became more widely felt and there
began to emerge the beginnings of what might be called the old career diplomatic
and consular services. For many decades before the advent of Secretary Root in the
Department of State we had been sending as chiefs of mission abroad men for purely
political reasons -- either to reward them or to get an inconvenient personality out
of the country. For the consular posts for the most part invariably the executive
chose men who had no merit other than that they had performed a political or personal
service.

As the interests of our country became more important and particularly as
our trade began to expand, there came slowly the recognition that this foreign re-
presentation had to be put on a firmer and more effective basis.
These recollections and observations which I am putting on paper are not the place to endeavor to give a picture as to how we gradually developed what was for many years the best and most effective foreign representation in the diplomatic and consular field of any country. I have elsewhere noted that it was during the time of Secretary of State Stettinius that the morale if not the effectiveness of our Foreign Service was seriously affected.

When through the efforts of Secretary Elihu Root and succeeding Secretaries of State, we slowly and painfully developed the career diplomatic and consular service, we were only doing what an increasing number of our people found to be an imperative necessity. We were getting closer to the rest of the world and the rest of the world was getting closer to us. Not only our government but many sectors of our people had to be accurately and adequately informed in a timely way of political, industrial, social, financial developments in practically every part of the world. Although this recognition slowly arose, the establishment of these career services was a slow and painful process. There was a reluctant Congress and among a great part of our people whose thoughts did not go beyond the village or the farm, there was complete apathy with regard to these services or anything that concerned them.

It was easier to do something in the development of good consular representation because there was broader understanding of the need of these officers and of the services which they rendered and of the fruits of those services to our people. This is strikingly brought out by the fact that in 1914, when I took the examinations for the diplomatic service, the salary paid to a Third Secretary, which was the lowest grade in the service and through which one had to enter, was $1,200 dollars a year without any allowances of any kind whatsoever. The lowest salary of a consul in 1914 was $2,000 dollars a year without any allowances and he did not have some of the obligations which a diplomatic officer had. These thoughtless persons, therefore, who write about earlier career diplomatic service
as being made up entirely of rich men or men or men with rich wives failed utterly to take into account the difficulties which the executive and the department had in finding men to take these diplomatic posts. I recall so well that when I decided at the end of 1913 to switch from school work to some form of foreign service, I decided to take the examinations for the diplomatic service. I took the written and oral examinations early in 1914, and very shortly thereafter received word that I had passed the examinations and was to come to Washington. I went with a good deal of elation and as soon as I had settled myself in the old Ebbit House, I went to the old State, War and Navy Building and sought out the office of the then-Counselor of the Department, Mr. John Bassett Moore. He was an old and a very close friend of the family of the young woman to whom I was engaged and who was to set out on this new venture with me. Dr. Moore was at that time the greatest authority in our country on international law. He was one of our most distinguished men. He had written a monumental work on international law which I believe remains today the basic textbook on that subject in our country and which is authority in practically every country in which any respect is paid to international law and practice. I knew Dr. Moore also. While I was principal of the schools in Felton, Delaware, which was the native state of Dr. Moore, I lived in the home of Dr. Moore's father and his father's sister. Old Dr. Moore and his sister lived alone in a big old-fashioned house in Felton. They had a couple taking care of the house. They were good enough to permit this couple to take me in as a boarder and for two years I had my meals with Dr. Moore and Miss Moore. It meant a great deal to me for I was a very young man and the association at meals and in the house with these two fine people meant a great deal to me.

My heart sank when I went into the ante room of Dr. Moore's office in the Department. There must have been some 11- people waiting to see him. They all looked like important people. I was thinking that I would be spending the rest of the day there before my turn would come. To my surprise the negro messenger took me in
I still recall the feelings I had on going into the office of Dr. Moore. It was one of the corner offices on the first floor of that stately old building. It was a large, imposing room. Little did I realize how familiar that room and every room in that big building was to become to me during the following years. I stood in great awe of Dr. Moore. I had read his massive work I believe in six or seven or eight volumes on international law. To me it seemed incredible that a man could have such knowledge. He was a short, heavy set man with a closely cropped full beard. He received me in his kindly, courtly manner and asked me to be seated. I think I recall pretty textually what he said to me, "I understand that you have passed the examination for the diplomatic service. I congratulate you on having passed it very well. You are, I believe, No. 3 from the top of the list. Because you have made this good grade you are to be assigned as Third Secretary at Vienna, but you are not going to Vienna." My stomach went down between my legs and I was completely speechless. Dr. Moore went on to say in his quiet, courtly way, "It is my understanding that you are going to marry Marion Mustard. I understand that you don't have a penny of private income. Her people have some means, but I am sure that you are not thinking of trying to live on her and her family. From what my father and my aunt have told me about you, I do not think you are that kind of a person. No one can go into the diplomatic service and try to live on the salary."

Dr. Moore then went on to spend at least half an hour telling me why it was impossible for me to accept the post in the diplomatic service without having a private income of three or four thousand dollars to supplement the $1,200 dollars I would receive as salary for some years as a Third Secretary. He pointed out to me how small the diplomatic branch of the service was and how slow promotion was, even with good performance. He pointed out to me what the obligations of a Third Secretary were. He ended up by saying that what I must do was to take the examinations all over again for the Consular Service. He thought I would find it more interesting
and as promotion was more rapid, the financial problem was entirely different, and on top of this the obligations of a Foreign Service officer in the way of representation in those days were not as great as those of a diplomatic secretary. A very much crestfallen but a very appreciative young man left Dr. Moore's office. Before leaving the Department and Washington, I took the necessary steps to secure designation for the written and oral examination for the consular service. In every respect nothing better could have happened to me, because the many years which I spent in the consular service before undertaking diplomatic posts served me in useful stead indeed.

I of course learned to know many of these secretaries in the diplomatic service at the time. Some of them remained in the service actively until after my own retirement in 1947. Without exception these secretaries in the old diplomatic service did have either assured private income of their own, or they had families which made them an allowance or they were married to a wife with adequate income.

Naturally there were among these junior secretaries in the diplomatic service of that period of which I am speaking, young men who were merely looking for a life abroad or for whom the life in foreign capitals and courts had a certain glamour. As one who was associated not only with the services but with these men as of 1914 on until my retirement and until today, I would like to say that I cannot think of any more unjust legend that was developed in our country through irresponsible people than that which clung to our diplomatic representation for so many years and which in some quarters today still persists. Whether a young man was an officer in a diplomatic service or in the consular service or is a member of the combined and single service of the Foreign Service of the Department of State today, he cannot perform his obligations to our government and to the Department of State unless he forms wide acquaintance in political, industrial, financial, intellectual circles in the capital or city where he is assigned. It is a necessary part and an essential part of his work, for without such associations he would be working in a complete vacuum. He would neither have the sources of information which are essen-
tial in the work nor would he have the opportunity of contact with all kinds of people to which he can give an understanding of our own way of life in the United States.

How this legend of cookie pushers really started it would be difficult to explain. I have never been able to find any explanation because there were no facts of any kind on which to place even the beginnings of such a legend. On the contrary, some of these secretaries were pretty hard eggs. They knew how to give and take. They knew their way around. Depending upon where they were stationed and upon varied circumstances, they had to be able to take their liquor and hold their tongue and to sit through long dinners and keep a reasonable digestion. Men like Joe Grew, Bob Bliss, Norman Armour, William Phillips, Ray Atherton and a host of others made their way from the bottom of the career diplomatic service to the most important ambassadorial posts of our country. It would be ridiculous even to think of the necessity of speaking of the useful contribution which the men I have just mentioned and so many others made in important posts and in critical times to the interests and prestige of our country. These are the cookie pushers of the legend. What these men really did was to establish a tradition, as did the men in the consular branch of the service, of integrity, hard work and capable representation in the interests of our country in all parts of the world, so that in 1940 no country had a better representation abroad than our own. Traditions are indestructible. Legends are fragile. Traditions remain and fortify. Legends pass away and dissipate in thin air. The tradition of continuous, unswerving, unselfish, loyal, understanding and effective service to our government and to our people and its interests at home and abroad has withstood the shocks of ill considered administration from which it has had to suffer since 1945. Since that time we have had too much administration of the departmental and foreign service by men who, with the best intentions in the world, have been brought in from other fields of activity in our country and who, without any knowledge of the substance of the
work of the department or of its services abroad, have created a disorganization which has led to a decrease in effectiveness. The highest tribute which can be paid to the career unified foreign service of the United States is that during these years this tradition of service so painfully established over many years and by so many earnest, devoted men in the Department and in the field, has been so largely maintained, and it is this well established tradition that has made it possible for the Departmental and foreign services during these late, difficult experiences to maintain their morale. A new step forward has been taken, in the early days of 1955 to bring the administration of the department and of the foreign service again into the hands of men who know the substance of the work to be done and who have that knowledge that comes only out of experience and practice. Tradition and morale have survived and remain and will remain, and the fragile legend of the cookie pusher has been dissipated.