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Dear Annie - This is just a note to our old C.M.  
friend who is really a great man.

December 14, 1951. *J. H. H.*

My dear friend :

I have just read in the international edition of the New York Times that you have decided not to be a candidate for reelection next year and that you will thus end your long, useful and constructive service in the House.

I must say that when I read this article in the TIMES one thing that amazed me was that you are 83. You have carried your years so well that I did not realize that you had reached this ripe age. I must say that while I can thoroughly appreciate your desire to be relieved from the heavy and responsible duties which you have been carrying for so many years, and certainly you are entitled to a rest, in many ways I am regretful that you will be leaving the House and the Committee on Foreign Affairs. You have rendered in that Committee and in the House a service which is equalled by few in the House, and I would like to say that in many respects it has not been equalled. You have had the extraordinary capacity of realizing from the outset of your service in the House that matters affecting the conduct of foreign policies are outside of the realm of domestic policies and parties. Few men in our history have been able to reach this height of thought and action, and the service which you have rendered in this connection for so many years and which our late good friend Senator Vandenberg was able to render during the later years of his service, have been an extraordinary asset in the conduct of our relations, in the formulation of policies and for our country. I believe that you can have the satisfaction of knowing that not only your friends and colleagues and associates, but a very great number of your fellow countrymen appreciate the contribution which you have been making.

I am particularly regretful that you are leaving the House at this time, when men of your capacity and ripe experience and knowledge and poise are needed more than ever. I am sixty-eight and I often wish I were twenty years younger, for if I were and had at least a part of the experience which I have had in our foreign relations, I would like to think that I could be useful in these times which are so fateful for our country and for the world when every act of ours finds its repercussion in every or practically every part of the world. It was with the greatest regret

The Honorable  
Charles A. Eaton,  
House of Representatives,  
Washington, D.C.

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that I retired from the Foreign Service towards the end of 1947, but I felt at the time that my opportunities for real usefulness no longer existed. There is little further that I can do, for any position which I could undertake in which I could really be useful would involve physical strains which I am not able to carry. One of the unfortunate things of our life today is that the strain on those who have to carry burdens and who know how to carry them, are so great that it takes a good physique to carry through, even though one's mental capacities may be unimpaired and at their height of usefulness. One cannot undertake any kind of a task of real responsibility in these days unless one has the physical endurance to stand up under it, or else one is doing anything but rendering a public service.

It is a matter of great regret that my visits to Washington during the last few years have been of only a few days at a time, and occupied with business of my Company, so that I could not see old friends. I can only say that every time I have been in Washington you were one of the few persons whom I had a real urge to see, and I always left with the regret that I did not have the opportunity to see you.

You know in what high personal regard I have always held you, but aside from this personal affection and regard I have had this great admiration for your understanding and capacity and for the services which you have rendered to our country, and I regret that it is the occasion of your announced retirement that I for the first time write you in this sense, but I am sure that you know how I have always felt about you and still do.

Perhaps the greatest comfort and satisfaction that one gets out of life in these troubled times is that one gets out of one's family, friends, and work, and the feeling that to the best of one's ability one has carried through the obligations thrust upon one, and that one has followed, in a measure possible, the example of Christ in making sacrifices for one's fellow men. This you have done to an extraordinary degree.

I hope that you will have a very happy Christmas and that the new year may bring you a full measure of good health and strength and good things.

Believe me always

Cordially and faithfully your friend,

George S. Messersmith.

GSM/go