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 MEXICO CITY
 MEXICO, D. F.

Sierra Paracaima
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April 23, 1954					
REPL: —					
FILE: <i>Persersmith</i>					

AVR 1954
 Cl. Hess.

Dear Dannie :

I have not written ~~you~~ a letter, I believe, for the last two weeks, and I think this is the first time that that has happened in the last twenty years. I have a tremendous accumulation of correspondence, personal and otherwise, and the real reason that I have not written any letters is that with moving, not feeling well and many things to do, I have neither had the time nor the courage to write.

The doctors have found what the trouble is that has been giving me so much pain and discomfort. I had these attacks of hernia of the oesophagus at the end of January and of February but I am well over that. In spite of that trouble being out of the way, I had these tremendous pains in the abdomen, and it was not until about a week ago that the doctors arrived at the conclusion that the pains come from an inflammation of the outlet of the stomach made in 1919 when I had an operation for ulcers in Belgium. This plumbing has served me well in all these years and I have had no trouble except in Buenos Aires in 1946 when I had the same kind of inflammation, and it kept me unhappy for months. I saw the doctor this morning and he tells me that they hope to cure it like they did in Buenos Aires, but there is the possibility that I may eventually have to have an operation for it which, if necessary, I will have done in New York rather than here. I feel very comfortable some days, and other days I have really tremendous pains, when the stomach cannot empty itself. In any event I am in good hands here and now that we know what it is, it is easier to handle. The net result, however, has been that I have really not felt like doing much a good part of the time. Today I feel like a million dollars and really think the thing is getting better.

I have been wanting to write you every day. Now there is so much to write about that I cannot even begin. So this is just a letter to tell you how sorry I have been not to have been in touch with you, but I am sure you will understand. Marion and I are planning to leave here about June 1st, and to spend most of June in New York, and after the annual meeting in Toronto to return to Mexico City. I am wondering if you will be back by that time. I do hope so, and I do want to see you and have the opportunity for a real visit.

This devaluation of the peso is a very serious matter in every way. I think I study and follow the general Mexican picture financially and economically, more closely than any foreigner, and I certainly have as good opportunities as any

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foreigner to do so. I can only tell you that the devaluation came as a complete surprise. Whether it was necessary or not, it has been done and all the consequences have to be reckoned with. They will be more serious than those following the last devaluation. It will be months before things will in any way become normal here, but I hope that there will be no political unrest and I believe there will be none, at least none of a serious character. The consequences however are so tremendous for everybody living here and there is so much lack of confidence in so many circles that the handling of the situation will require the greatest wisdom and at times great firmness.

So far as Mexlight is concerned, the consequences for us would be tremendous unless the Government takes in adequate time the adequate measures. I have the absolute conviction that in the important government circles as well as in commerce and industry the importance of the Company in the economic life of the central area, which is the heart of the country, is so well established that we are going to get adequate relief. I will not go into this in this letter, nor give my reasons because it would require a long story, but I thought you would be interested to know that I definitely believe that the position of the Company this time will be properly corrected by the Government. It will take a lot of work on our part and a lot of patience, and we will have to have some help from our friends, but all of this I am sure is going to be present. It is a terrible blow after all that we have done, but we will get through it. There was never a better understanding of the importance of the Company than there is now, and that is our safeguard.

Draper is taking hold very well here and I am sure he will fulfill all of our expectations. He is extraordinarily energetic and resourceful and deeply interested. He has to learn, which is quite natural, the atmosphere in which we are working, and with regard to some matters he may be overly optimistic, but that is better than the other attitude of not seeing what can be done. I find that his ways of thinking and his general approaches are very much like those that I follow, and we have not had any difference of any importance. I repeat that I think it will work out well. The only one of his ideas I could not go along with was the thought which he has been having as to the possibility of our going into the actual sale of electrical household appliances. There are literally hundreds and perhaps thousands of firms, large and small, in the area we serve, selling household appliances, and I think if we went into the business we would do ourselves a great deal of harm. The primary purpose he has in mind is, I think, not so much the profit in the operation, as the stimulation of domestic demand, and the latter of course is

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good, but we do not need to go into the appliance business to stimulate demand. As a matter of fact we have often thought of the possibility of going into the appliance business and we have always found every reason against it and none for it.

The financing problems of the Company are going to be more difficult under any circumstances, even if the Government gives us adequate relief and the help which we need, but I am sure that can be met. Draper has very good ideas about this and is more resourceful in this respect than I am, so that his background and experience will be very helpful to us.

You will shortly be seeing Maryssael as he simply has to spend a few weeks in Belgium to see his family. He has been putting this off from time to time, but now he really must do it and we hope that he can take a long holiday with his family in Belgium later in the year. He is really an extraordinarily capable man and his usefulness to the Company has steadily increased over the years, and I do not see how the Company could get on without him.

As I said, there are so many things to talk about that I cannot even begin. Marion is quite well. Our house is really a little jewel and will serve all our purposes in Mexico City, and the Cuernavaca house is all that anyone could wish for. I think it will turn out that we will spend at least four days of every week in Mexico City and three in Cuernavaca. We look forward to a real visit from you and Hetty and Edna and Yvonne. Marion has been very unhappy about me and it has worn her down a bit, but I am really getting better, and even if I should eventually have to have an operation for this outlet of the stomach, I would not shrink from it, although I certainly have had enough of that. In many ways I have been fortunate that this plumbing job done in Belgium in 1919 has served me over so many years. It is not infrequent that people who have had this operation, have found it necessary to have another after a number of years to increase the size of the outlet.

I hope that you are enjoying your days in Brussels and I am sure you will see many old friends, including Adenauer. Concerning the big picture, I will not touch on it for the same reason that I cannot talk about the little picture in Mexico. I really look forward to a good visit from you in June and I do hope that you and Hetty and Edna and Yvonne will come down during the second half of this year, for a real visit.


Marion joins in love and good wishes and I hope you will give our best to Yvonne who I suppose is with you. Do remember us to any of our friends who you think would be interested in hearing from us.

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Always Faithfully yours,


George S. Messersmith.

GSM/go