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April 21, 1939.

My dear Mr. Secretary:

Assistant Secretary Messersmith has brought to my attention your letter to him of April 21 referring to the recent conversations he has had with you with regard to the proposed plan for the consolidation of the Foreign Services of the Department of Agriculture and of the Department of Commerce into the Foreign Service of the Department of State. I am pleased to know that, as a result of the common study of this problem by your Department and this, you are in accord with the transfer of the Foreign Service of the Department of Agriculture into that of the Department of State.

Under the general provisions of the Reorganization Act recently passed by the Congress, a plan for the consolidation of the Foreign Services of the Department of Agriculture and of the Department of Commerce has been prepared, as well as a transmitting message, for the approval of the President before submitting the plan to the Congress. The plan and the message do not naturally cover all of the details which will eventually have to be arranged in order to carry through in practice the consolidation and it is contemplated that with respect to certain details, Executive Orders may in due course have to be prepared. The plan and the message, of which for your convenience copies are attached hereto, I take it from your letter of April 21, have your approval and I shall shortly transmit the plan and the message to the President with a statement to the effect that you are in accord therewith. In this connection I may say that the Secretary of Commerce has informed me that that Department is also in accord with the message and plan and approves its transmission to the President and the Congress.

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The Honorable
Henry A. Wallace,
Secretary of Agriculture,
Washington, D.C.

I have taken due note of your comment and join with you in the concern that adequate provision should be made for seeing that the officers who are assigned to agricultural work in the field from the consolidated Service shall have adequate training and background. I also understand your concern that the Department of Agriculture should have due choice in the direction of such officers in their work in the field so that it may follow lines most useful to your Department. I am in entire accord that personnel from the consolidated Foreign Service which may be assigned to agricultural work after the original consolidation is effected should be men who have had either two years work in an agricultural college or two years experience in the Department of Agriculture, unless your Department should in a particular case request the assignment of a Foreign Service Officer of the combined Service, who may not meet these requisites, but whom it may consider qualified for the work and post. With respect to adequate choice of the Department of Agriculture in the assignment of officers and in the direction of agricultural reporting, I believe that this will be adequately covered by an officer designated by you from the Department of Agriculture sitting on the Board of Examiners and the Board of Foreign Service Personnel.

With regard to the question which you raise with respect to the increase in personnel of the Foreign Service contemplated in the appropriations for your Department for the next fiscal year, I may say that I quite appreciate the necessity for the appointment of qualified and trained persons. I am quite prepared, therefore, to state that in principle this Department is prepared to assure you that you will have the opportunity to select the men for these positions before consolidation is put into operation in order that these new officers may be included from the outset in the combined and consolidated Foreign Service. I venture to state that on the basis of the conversations which Mr. Messersmith has had with Mr. Wheeler of your Department, there would seem to be no fundamental difficulties in this respect.

I have noted with interest your suggestion that you believe it would be helpful under the plan to have a qualified officer of your Department permanently assigned to the Department of State for the purpose of maintaining a close liaison between the Department of Agriculture and the Foreign Service, such assignment to be in addition to the designation of an officer of your Department to sit

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on the Board of Examiners and as occasion requires on the Board of Foreign Service Personnel. I am quite in agreement with the suggestion, and I believe that the assignment of such an officer from your Department to be mutually agreed upon will serve a very useful purpose.

The language changes in the plan to which you refer in the last two paragraphs of your letter have been duly noted and incorporated in, I believe, satisfactory form in the draft of the plan and message attached to this letter.

It is clearly understood by the Department of State that the consolidation of the Foreign Services involves, so far as the personnel of the Department of Agriculture is concerned, the transfer only of the permanent foreign field officers of the Department of Agriculture consisting of the Agricultural Attaches, Assistant Agricultural Attaches and their clerical assistants.

I believe that in carrying through this consolidation, the Departments of Agriculture, Commerce and State are performing a service which will be in the general interest of this Government, of all departments and agencies interested in the foreign field, as well as in the interest of the various parts of our population which we serve. If this plan becomes effective under the Reorganization Act, an appropriate period is provided in the plan for the carrying through of the administrative details involved in the consolidation. I shall be very happy to maintain constant contact with you in the working out of these practical details and of such Executive Orders as may be necessary in carrying them into effect.

It is my very real hope and my sincere belief that the carrying through of this consolidation will make it possible for the Departments of Agriculture and State to cooperate even more completely than in the past in fulfilling our respective obligations.

Very sincerely yours,

Correll Hull

Enclosures:
Draft of plan and message.

A true copy of the signed original.
OK