

1206

Personal and
Confidential

April 26, 1939.

Dear Mr. Meyer:

You will recall that on several occasions I have spoken to you about the desirability of the consolidation of the Foreign Services of Commerce and Agriculture into that of State. I am glad to say that the President yesterday, on the recommendation of the Secretaries of State, Commerce and Agriculture, gave his approval to the consolidation of the Foreign Services of Commerce and Agriculture into that of State as a part of the reorganization plan under the Reorganization Act. The matter, as you know, has been under consideration for a number of years and the recent action is a result of the intensive study which has been given to the problem in the last months. The fact that the President is submitting this consolidation plan for the Foreign Services is still confidential and will be until the plan is sent to the Congress by the President, which will most likely be on Monday or Tuesday of next week. Once the plan is sent to the Congress, with the accompanying message from the President, it will be printed and become immediately a public document.

My thought is that it would be extraordinarily helpful if the Post prepared an editorial on this subject, for I know it would be very helpful in warding off thoughtless and ill-considered criticism. There will be some people who may say that it is a neglect on the part of the President of business interests in this country. There may be even some who will attack Mr. Hopkins for agreeing to this consolidation plan. As a matter of fact, Secretaries Hopkins and Wallace deserve a great deal of commendation for agreeing to this consolidation after the careful study they have made of it. I can assure you that every phase of the matter has been most

meticulously

Mr. Eugene Meyer,
The Washington Post,
Washington, D.C.

meticulously gone into. The step is being taken because it is realized that no more constructive step could be undertaken by our Government under the Reorganization Act than the consolidation of the Foreign Services of Commerce and Agriculture into that of State. The existence of these separate services abroad for Commerce and Agriculture was leading to serious inconveniences in the conduct of our foreign relations, to friction between the departments in Washington and between the men in the field, as well as to unwise and costly duplication of effort in the field. This consolidation enables us to present a solid front abroad in our foreign representation and if ever we needed that, we do so now.

Handwritten signature

I can assure you that there will be no lessening of the services to government, business and our people in general. On the other hand, the whole objective of the plan is to ~~bring~~ our foreign representation and the services it can render to business and to other elements of our population. As an officer of our Government who has served twenty-five years in the field, I can tell you that this plan will unquestionably strengthen the position of government in rendering service to business, to agriculture and to our people in general. The plan is merely applying good business practice to government and certainly business should not criticize government for doing what it believes is best in well conducted business.

The background of the problem of course is very broad and in order that this may be available I have prepared a memorandum of which I enclose a copy. It looks like a formidable document, but I do not think it will be found difficult reading. The parts which have been deleted refer to matters which have no integral connection with the consolidation plan. I am unable at this time to send you a copy of the President's plan and message as these are confidential until the plan goes to the Congress next week. The essential features of the plan, however, are found in an appendix of this letter and on pages 47 to 51 of the pamphlet.

As this is really a very constructive step and is, I believe, so definitely in the public interest, I think it would be highly desirable, and of course most helpful, if you would have someone prepare an editorial commenting on this initiative under the reorganization program. Such an editorial in The Post, if it were to appear a day or two after the plan reaches the Congress, would have a great influence throughout the country and would,

I believe, do a great deal towards preventing thoughtless adverse criticism of a constructive measure.

I know that I am asking a great deal, but I am so bold as to do it because this is a matter which has had my earnest thought for so many years. In fact so deeply do I feel about this and so important do I believe it is in the conduct of our foreign relations, and for our business interests, that I venture to suggest that you follow the course with such an editorial that you occasionally follow and send the editorial to your correspondents throughout the country. I do not believe that there will be much adverse criticism of this plan, but there is the possibility that there may be some stimulated by purely selfish and altogether prejudiced interests. I am confident that no one who will take the pains to go into the matter will offer any adverse criticism, but there is a very real possibility that there may be those who will criticize it without in any way going into it merely on the basis of opposition to reorganization in general or the belief that it may be a blow by the Administration to business.

I would of course not dare to approach you on this matter if I did not know what a constructive interest you have in all of our problems including those of our foreign representation and of the best service that government can render to business. I think I should say that a good deal of credit is due to Secretary Hopkins and to Secretary Wallace for they know that they may meet with some criticism, but they are prepared to go ahead with this because they are convinced that it is the sound, constructive and wise thing to do.

Believe me with very good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

Enclosures:

1. Memorandum
2. Statement.

A-M:GSM:MJ