Memorandum From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Philander C. Knox, June 7, 1912

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson
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Dear Mr. Secretary:

If I correctly understood you that the President is going to transmit to Congress the Economy Commission's report, as tentatively drawn up and submitted to him, along with a message wherein he the President will dissent from its findings affecting this Department, then the more I think of it the more I am convinced that this procedure would be most dangerous.

The business men of the country, not understanding the technics of foreign relations in commercial matters, would probably to a great extent think it a fine idea to give the whole business to Commerce and Labor if they heard that the Economy Commission had thought well of such a project. Moreover, all the opponents of the President and the Department would be delighted to seize the opportunity to listen to the Commission and to ignore the President's recommendation.

As I understand it, the Commission was created at the President's

The Honorable

The Secretary of State.
President's request for his purposes and is answerable to him. If this be so I cannot for the life of me see why the President cannot call the Commission together and say, "Gentlemen, I think you have not thoroughly investigated the Department of State and the special considerations affecting the conduct of commercial diplomacy and foreign affairs affecting commerce. I, therefore, wish you to study the State Department's memorandum, to confer with the Secretary of State, and then later to make a fresh report. If it is necessary to make an incidental study of the systems in vogue in foreign countries the Department of State can be asked to obtain for you full data from abroad. Meanwhile unfortunately the impression has been created at Congress that I am going to send a message with a report from you approving the action taken by the House in crippling the commercial instrumentalities of the State Department and to combat this I intend to send a brief preliminary message giving my present view of this question pending your ultimate report."

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