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Letter From Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson to Francis E. Warren, June 12, 1912

Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson

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June 12, 1912

My dear Senator Warren:

I consider it of the first importance to our international relations and to the welfare of our business and all other interests affected directly or indirectly by our international relations that the reorganized Department of State be not disturbed in the status in which it is left by the Senate's action upon the Legislative, Executive and Judicial Bill. Having heard rumor of misinterpretation of my attitude on this subject, which I thought had been made clear in various messages to Congress, I have concluded to write you this letter to ask you to use it as a means to combat any such misunderstanding as may exist. I am absolutely opposed to any idea of taking away or transferring the Bureau of Trade Relations out of the Department of State. Diplomacy is partly commercial and such a bureau in that department is absolutely essential. Any disturbance of the politico-geographical divisions or, indeed, of the admirable organization of the State Department would cripple the United States

The Honorable Francis E. Warren,
Chairman, Committee on Appropriations,
United States Senate.

States in its foreign relations both as conducted through the diplomatic service and through the more commercial activities of the consular service. As to the theory that there is duplication between the Department of State and the Department of Commerce and Labor, I am quite convinced that the present status quo should be maintained and that any trifling duplication which may exist can be readily adjusted without disturbing the true fields of activity of either department and without interfering with the efficiency of either department respectively in the foreign and domestic field between which a clear line can be drawn.

I believe the question has been raised in some quarter of having the consular service report directly to the Department of Commerce and Labor as well as to the Department of State. This would never work in practice. We must not have a double-headed foreign service. I feel strongly upon this point and entirely agree with what Senator Root wrote on the subject when as Secretary of State he remarked that such an innovation would cause "inextricable confusion". I enclose copy of Secretary Root's letter to former Secretary Straus setting forth his views upon that point.

Very sincerely yours,