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Letter From Wilbur John Carr to Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson, July 29, 1931

Wilbur J. Carr

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON

July 29, 1931.

My dear Wilson:

I can not help feeling that your letter of July 20 does not do justice to your usual good judgment. You know, or you should know, from our having worked more closely together for a number of years than most men ever have an opportunity to do that I am not in the habit of trying to conceal the part which other men have played in work with which I have been connected, much less seeking to obtain undue credit for myself. Consequently, the implication in the last paragraph of your letter that in some way I am responsible for the omission from Tracy Lay's book of the part which you had in the reforms and improvements made during the seven years you were in the Department is unworthy of you.

It is true that at the time Tracy Lay wrote his book he was attached to my office where he had been principally engaged on the drafting of the Rogers Act and the Executive Orders

The Honorable

F. W. Huntington-Wilson,

Hopelands,

Woodbury, Connecticut.

Orders which followed it, the credit for practically all of which works belongs to him, and he had access not only to all of the material in my office but to all of the pertinent files in the Department itself. Lay, however, wrote his own book in his own way and according to his own best judgment. Not only did I not have any part in selecting the contents of the book or directing the manner of its preparation but, even had he wished to have me do so, I was not in a position to associate myself with the book in any way because of certain interdepartmental situations here which made that entirely impracticable. The fact that Lay was good enough to dedicate the book to me was not intended by him as attributing to me any responsibility for the contents of his book but was merely an evidence of his generosity and personal friendship.

No one knows better than I the part which you played in the improvements that were made in the Department of State and in the Foreign Service while you were an officer in the Department, and I am certain that no one has more freely than I given you the credit for all of the things which you set forth in your letter, as well as for having done the most constructive administrative job as Assistant Secretary of State that had been done by any officer in the Department up until you left the Service. You must know

know this and I am sure many of your friends know it. But I do not understand that it was Lay's purpose when he prepared his book to attempt to record the part played by various people in the improvement of the Department and of the Foreign Service and for that reason until your letter came it had never occurred to me that an injustice had been done to any one in that regard. If his book is to be judged as an attempt to record individual contributions to the improvement of the Department and Foreign Service then I think it is a failure and that not only you but a number of other people could justly feel so, beginning with Secretary Olney, Rockhill, Chilton and others, who were responsible for persuading President Cleveland to promulgate his 1895 Order in regard to examinations for the Foreign Service which played a large part in bringing about the improvements which came later; François Jones and Senator John T. Morgan, whose bills helped so much to bring the Committee on Foreign Relations to see the need of improvement; President Roosevelt, Senator Lodge, Secretary Root and Robert Adams, to whom after all belongs most of the credit for the great fundamental step for Foreign Service improvement in 1905 and 1906, and without which all later steps would have been greatly delayed even if they had been taken at all. A good many other names could be mentioned, but as I have already

remarked

remarked, I do not think it occurred to Lay that his book should attempt to set forth the part which certain individuals had played in the improvement of the Foreign Service and to give them credit for their contribution, but that his aim was to sketch the several steps taken from time to time which ultimately led to the adoption of the Rogers Act and to point the way to further improvements. As to this, however, he may wish to inform you himself and to that end I am sending him a copy of your letter and of my reply. I feel certain that he will be as much surprised and as regretful as I am that you should feel that an injustice has been done you by his book.

Yours faithfully,

Wm. St. Paul