

July 27th 1935.

The Honorable H.A.Wallace
Secretary of Agriculture
Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We have just received clippings of the several insinulative articles about the Expedition which were distributed in the American Press by the Chicago Tribune Press Service and signed by one John Powell. The article published by the Chicago Tribune on Monday, June 24th contains a number of gross insinuations evidently published with the intention to embarrass the Administration, harm the good name of the Expedition's Leader, and handicap the progress of the Expedition. To begin with, the Expedition never caused any embarrassment to American diplomatic and military officials here. The statement that the Expedition was expelled from Manchuria by the Japanese authorities is untrue. The Expedition left Manchuria on its own accord and according to schedule. The vehement attack which was started by several subsidised Harbin papers was chiefly directed against the American connections of the Expedition's Leader. Similar attacks are constantly being made against all American institutions, firms, travellers and even members of the Consular service, as for example the Harbin YMCA which continue to be the object of slanderous attacks in the Harbin papers. The true motive of such attacks in the local Press is easily understood, it is an attempt to check the spread of American influence among the Russian population in North Manchuria. Following the attack in the Japanese supported press of Harbin the Japanese Foreign Office expressed its regret and promised to rectify the situation. From reliable Harbin sources, we know that the Japanese daily paper "The Harbin Times" had received a severe rebuke and since then has kept silent. The recall of the two botanists by the Department is intentionally misrepresented by the author of the Chicago Tribune article. There was no difficulty in obtaining the six army rifles from the 15th U.S. Infantry in Tientsin. The military authorities expressed no embarrassment, and moreover there exist regulations empowering Army authorities in China to assist American expeditions with arms and ammunition. The Expedition never employed a force of "Ataman Semenov's Cossacks". The present Staff of the Expedition is known to the Department and at present consists of the following, besides Mr. G. de Roerich and myself:-

Dr. Y. L. Keng, of the Academia Sinica, Nanking, botanist.

Mr. Yang, assistant botanist.

Mr. V. Gribanovsky, assistant in charge of supplies (formerly a colonel in the Imperial Russian Army who fought on the Causasian Front during the World War.)

Mr. A. Moiseeff, botanical collector.

Mr. M. Chuvstvin, driver.

Mr. N. Grammatchikoff, driver.

Five Mongol camp servants.

All of them had never any connection with either Ataman Semenov or his cossacks. You will recall that Mr. MacMillan in his correspondence made somewhat similar statements about "Cossack guards" in the employ of the Expedition in North Manchuria. It seems that much of this nonsense about Cossacks originated from this source. From the very beginning the U.S. Army authorities were very cordial and it was the Military Atache who mentioned to us the existence of a "whispering campaign" against the Expedition. Major Constant, Assistant Military Attache, visited the Expedition's base in Chakhar, and once more offered his full assistance in case of need. The article published in the Washington Star mentions that Mr. A. P. Friedlaender, of Peiping, is my representative in that city. This is entirely wrong. Mr. Friedlaender is an employee

of the Pacific Storage Corporation which is handling our transportation (this Peiping firm was agent for the Andrews Expeditions and for Dr.Hedin).

It is ridiculous to speak of any suspicions against the Expedition among Mongol leaders. Many of them know my standing in former Russia and now, and have even hinted that some recent foreign travellers in Inner Mongolia and adjacent regions attempted to cause distrust towards the Expedition. You will also notice that facts about my activities in the United States are grossly misrepresented in the articles. A very similar article, evidently emanating from the same source, appeared in the British Tientsin daily the "Peiping-Tiensin Times" on June 24th (a copy of the article will be forwarded to you when obtained). The Editor of the paper admitted that the source of his information came from Kalgan. Mr.Powell, the author of the article in the Chinese Tribune, visited Kalgan in June, coming from Manchuria. Some of the paper's statements were mentioned to us in Peiping even before our start for Inner Mongolia, and several of our American friends have warned us that someone was very active in the foreign colony in Peiping and Tiensin spreading false rumours. Our investigations locally show that there is a certain foreign source implicated in the case, but of course this does not justify Mr.Powell's unwarranted action. We shall keep you fully informed, and only wish to add that the Expedition had up to now no collision with either Japanese, Mongol, Chinese or Soviet authorities. It seems indeed strange that a few years ago the very same papers accused me of Soviet sympathies and now seem to accuse me for White Russian connections.

The scientific work of the Expedition is progressing very satisfactorily and the seed collecting is approaching. We are sure of good results, and hope that the newspaper slander will be efficiently checked and the whole matter clarified.

With all best wishes

Very sincerely yours