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COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D. C.

1033

February 19, 1918.

Hon. David Lubin,
c/o International Institute of Agriculture,
Rome, Italy.

My dear Mr. Lubin:

I am handing herewith a clipping from the Washington Post of this day disclosing the sad news of the death of our mutual friend, Mr. Robt. B. VanCortlandt, of New York City. It seems that the poor fellow got tired of living and decided not to wait until his end should come through the process of nature. I thought much of him considering my limited acquaintance with him as did you yourself, because I always thought that he was a lofty fellow and while he had wealth and a family history behind him of much prominence ~~had~~ was sympathetic, generous, approachable, believed in the masses and took a most lively interest as you know in your great work--the greatest of all, agriculture. I am sorry indeed he went the way he did.

In company with about ten other Congressmen I made a trip to Europe last October, returning to America the latter part of November. We went direct to London, where we remained for about five days and then went to Paris. We were in Paris upon two different occasions, remaining there about four days each. We did not go as an official mission, though the courtesies expended to us by the French, British, and Belgium governments were quite as generous as though we had been an official mission. We were taken alternately in charge of by the three governments and were conducted over the battlefields, beginning at the Marne up to and near the present battle lines and in Belgium entering the Belgian front trenches. We had contemplated a visit to Italy, where, of course, I should have been delighted to see you, but owing to the Italian reverses we thought it best not to go down that far as railway congestion was very great and there was some uncertainty as to our getting out of Italy when we wanted to leave; so we returned to the States, and I was much disappointed that I did not get down your way. We had a wonderful trip and the vandalism which we beheld is indescribable, in fact, it can not be visualized at a distance,--one must see it with his own eyes. I suppose you are advised as to conditions here, and of course, we are putting forth every energy to bring the war to a speedy and successful termination, so far as we are concerned as a nation. It is wonderful what has been accomplished in so short a time when one considers that at a given moment we turned from the pursuits of peace to the pursuits of war. Of course, mistakes have been made, but we ^{have} ~~were~~ profited by those mistakes, and while there are many difficulties in the way of getting men and supplies to the battlefields of France, owing to a shortage in ship transportation. We are working day and night to overcome

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this embarrassment and we feel quite confident that if our allies can hold out for a few months, Uncle Sam's big fist will be planted on the Kaiser's solar plexus and that we will yet have him staggering against the ropes.

We are having an unprecedented winter for coldness and snow of which you doubtless are advised. I am much concerned in the American crop production of this year, and should we have a bumper crop this will do much to strengthen our right arm and to shorten the war.

I hope that your health has been good and that all the members of your family have been well. Your friends here have not forgotten you and your closest and best friends among us have been speaking of you and we all hope that the future holds many years in store for you that you may continue to be a blessing to mankind. I should be so glad to have a letter from you telling me about yourself and ~~of the~~ ^{any} long interline that you may think best to write about.

With best wishes always and asking to be remembered to Mrs. Lubin and your daughters, I am

Sincerely your friend,

