

Zittau i/S, 2nd March 1905

Bruederstrasse 3

To Count Linden

President of the Württemberg Association for Commercial Geography and Founder of the
Museum of Ethnology

Dear Lord!

I have received Your delightful, gracious letter of 24th January here in Zittau where I spend some time at my parents' home in order to rest. I rejoice over the acknowledged great success of Your creation and send You my sincere congratulations on Your – for German standards incredible – accomplishment: to have collected over one million Marks for the construction of a home [building].

When Dr. Hugh Hardy met me in order to help provide a collection of ethnographic material from the Philippines for You, I offered my own private collection with pleasure, although the Museum of Natural History in New York has offered me a high price for it. Apart from the state collection, my collection was the best and richest in regard to Igorot and Negrito material. It covered distinctive objects from the Samal or Coastal Moros and the Lake Lanao Moros, as well as the Bagobos. The state collection had to be sent back. Out of sensitivity (?) I have not purchased any of the collections brought to St. Louis, because I have been solely responsible as organizer of the whole Philippines exhibition.

After the exhibition, all objects that did not belong to private or state institutions were transferred to the American Museum of Natural History in New York on condition of not only satisfying the Portland exhibition, the Smithsonian Museum, the Philadelphia Trade Museum and many other museums with the collection, but also other complainants and You. Because Dr. Wilson had to lay down his office before the end of the exhibition due to irresponsible management, he did not have any power of control. He has been satisfied by the New York Museum as Director of the Museum in Philadelphia and will now satisfy You as well, as he has promised me and Dr. Hardy several times.

I have transferred my collection to the German Reich Commissioner for reforwarding to You in January just as I have planned with Dr. Hardy. I hope that it has reached You by now.

Because President Roosevelt is planning a systematic research on the Philippine Islands and has demanded one and a half million (or [sic] half a million) Dollar from the American Congress for this purpose, the Secretary of War Mr. WM. H. Taft has requested that I would be ready for this fine Commission. However, at the same time he has – at my request – given a letter to the American minister Mr. Charlemagne Tower, in which he is asked to help me

Translation: Jasmin Günther

gain a position in the German Reich, if possible, whereby my foreign service of over 25 years shall be taken into account so that an appropriate rank may be given to me simultaneously. I have not submitted this letter yet. I have also hoped to receive a letter of President Roosevelt to His Majesty the German Emperor, but my request was declined because it would not be wise for a head of state to approach another with a personal request. Therefore, I do not hope for much success now, although I am convinced that I – with my longstanding experience and multifaceted knowledge – could be of great use for the German Reich in colonial service or as trade commissioner.

I resigned my position at the Philadelphia Museum after I returned from Paris, where I reestablished the French Colonial Museum at the Palais Royal in one and a half years and where I received 30000 doublets for the museums of Philadelphia as reward. I then accepted a call from the American Secretary of War and went to Manila in order to take over the organization of the Philippine contribution to the St. Louis World Fair, which I have mastered better than expected and despite many difficulties.

Please forgive me for getting personal. Again with congratulations I remain respectfully
Yours,

Gustav Niederlein