

Evacuation Hospital No. 1,
M.O.T.C. Ft. Riley, Kansas,
November 18th, 1917.

Mr. Albert Cottingham,
Ashmore, Illinois.

Dear Albert:

Your favor of the third inst. finally reached me, though your other one has not yet. I am not quite sure just what information you wish since, as I told you, before leaving, I had given my wife power of attorney over all of my business. That of course gives her full power to transact any and all business in my name. You must understand that being in the army, especially at this time, practically cuts one off from the outside world. I have neither the time nor the opportunity to do anything here except military duties, so I have by this means made the least possible break in my business relations.

I have left my wife unhampered by instructions, except to carry out all existing contracts. When they expire she will use her own judgment as to further contracts. I am glad for her to handle what she thinks she can handle but I am not willing that she be taxed with business worries as she has a most difficult position and it is not likely to be easier for a long time. She has my complete confidence. If you and she do not enter into a contract for another year the present contract provides for the method of settling the partnership. I hope this year's business will show as nice a profit as last year's did. In regard to your suggestion as to labor I would call your attention to the following:

1. That you are being paid each month for your personal work;
2. That in the lease between the firm and me the amount of rent was purposely kept low with the understanding that the labor done for upbuilding the place was in lieu of additional rent. If that labor was to have been paid in cash I would have expected the rent to be higher;
3. That any change that there has been in the original contract on account of the fluctuation of the markets has been in your favor and no increase has been asked that would favor either the firm or myself

individually.

4. We have tried so far as practicable to provide what improvements you wished at heavy expense. Most of this would not have been done under ordinary conditions of renting.

As I reread and study your letter I feel that you do not understand or appreciate present conditions. So at the risk of repetition I wish to emphasize the following points:

1. My being called into the army has played havoc with my business affairs the same as it will with yours if you are called;

2. To make as little break as possible in my business affairs I have given my wife power of attorney which gives her complete and absolute legal control of my affairs which she exercises in my name. To have taken any other course would have compelled me to have closed up everything in the few days that I had given me. This would have put you, as well as myself, at a much greater disadvantage than has existed.

3. I have advised her to handle my affairs in the way that will mean least worry and annoyance to her for no matter how hard a lot a soldier may have, it is the wife and mother that stays at home and raises the family, and waits and hopes, who bears the real burden of the war.

4. It is not a question of dissatisfaction with you, but a question of how best to handle existing conditions.

I feel sure that if you and she handle the situation with an open mind and in a businesslike way it will be settled satisfactorily to both parties: for you each have a sense of fairness that can be depended upon.

I regret the necessity of closing the partnership but if it will make my wife's place any less subject to worry it is an absolute necessity. It is for her to decide and her only, so far as I am concerned. It was my luck to be called and yours not to be yet. I sincerely hope you will not be needed. I can only ask that you handle the situation with as much fairness as you would expect of me were our positions reversed. I know I can expect that of you.

It is certainly a peculiar experience to be suddenly dragged away from home and business and be thrust into an entirely different life. It is much as if one were dead and could look back dimly to one's former environment and yet not be able to communicate with it. But it is a fine life, full of outdoors hard work and long hours, but plenty of good food, a place to sleep and association with a lot of the finest men the country has. You would enjoy the life. One absolutely does not have time

to get homesick. Each one has more work piled on him than he can possibly do. Most of the men here, both officers and enlisted men, are volunteers. Most of them came at a big financial sacrifice but they stick to their work with scarcely a complaint, and their country has good reason to be proud of them. I had hoped to get a few days leave about this time to get home, but so far my efforts are unsuccessful.

I hope you and your family keep in first class health. I will be glad to be remembered to any of the old friends and neighbors who may inquire about me.

With kindest regards, I beg to remain

Very truly yours,

P. S. I am sending your letter and a copy of this one to my wife for her information.