Ministry of Health,
Whitehall, S.W.1.
10th November, 1939.

My dear Edward,

Many thanks for your letter of 31st October. I quite appreciate your desire to send a favourable reply to the gratifying offer of Winthrop Aldrich and other Americans to raise funds to establish and maintain American hospitals here and in France.

I am not very clear whether the intention is to send over the necessary medical and nursing staff and to provide all equipment, or merely to defray the cost of staff and equipment to be provided, so far as the treatment of civilians if concerned, by my Department. There is the further difficulty that we are already utilising pretty well all the suitable buildings in this country and have in fact made arrangements which will satisfy all our requirements, so far as we can foresee them at present.

Subject to what Hore-Belisha has told you, it seems to me that much the better plan would be for the Americans to get their units together, equip and train them and keep them on hand in America ready to embark for this country or for France, wherever it may seem that they could be best utilised according to the course this curious war takes.

As you know, the absence of air raids has led to some criticism of our arrangements for the treatment of air raid casualties in this country, and I think you will agree that it would/
would be unwise to bring the Americans over here (if that is
the suggestion) and have them kicking their heels waiting
for casualties to turn up.

Yours ever,

(Signed) Walter Elliot.