Erivan, Armenia,
Jan. 5, 1922

My dear Dr. Lovejoy:

Your short letter of Nov. 26, arrived last night. There is a jump from Nov. 7 to Nov. 26, and I am wondering if one is lost. This is such a short one. It is full of promise, however, as it tells of your talk with the N.B.R. and the possibilities of enlarging the work.

Your cable mentioned the possibility of enlarging and I feared you might consider a new field, and I was anxious to get a letter off to you and the rest of the board laying stress on the great need here. However, it is plain you have a poor line on conditions and you will need no more from me. Let me assure you all that you simply never could do too much here. It is very discouraging at times, the enormity of things and the feeling that one can never see daylight. One goes blindly on, hoping one is making a dent on the surface and then the particularly optimistic moments one really feels that something is being accomplished, but mostly I must say, it seems a good deal like dipping water out of the ocean.

These many institutions in the U.S. would be a job-out here if you scramble with two assistants and all the rest more or less (mostly more) incompetent help. Every day I bless my stars that I have two such fine girls to help me on my way. I could give up if it wasn’t for them.

For a time you will see a great increase in the no of patients—this is because I am getting all trachoma, scabies and favus out of the orphanages. I hope, in time, to clear this up largely and we can then reduce the number. I am telling prevention a lot and hope to get the state of the orphanages in a better condition so that we don’t have so much sickness. We have only orphan children and N.B.R. employees and some of their relatives in the hospitals.

We have a great deal of trachoma and a severe form of gingivitis which we are trying to eliminate with mouth ‘ashes and dental work’.

I received a cable from Dr. Gray the other day asking if I needed Miss Logge and, although I grained at the thought of having to do so, I cabled back “Budget will not allow.” Later I figured up my pay roll in dollars and cut off the equipment money the board disallowed and found that I could afford to take her on nicely so straightway cabled for them to send her right on. It will give us a chance to do things up so much better.

I am having to spend so much time doing a lot of detail work that I could hand over to Mrs. Rowe who is so good at pushing through and that will give me more time to spend with the doctors and see that they do things in better shape. I want to form a medical society for them, and I am asking the N.B.R. to furnish a medical library for them (French) and I have my medical journals which some of them can manage to read.

Did I tell you what I was doing for one of the young women doctors who just graduated from Odessa this past year? Sending her down to Dr. Ulia American trachoma specialist for six weeks for her to learn his method and when she comes back I will put her in charge of the trachoma work here. I have a very nice woman assistant now, but she can only give half time as she works for the gov’t the rest of the time. She is energetic and interested, but her technique nearly drove me wild. I am in hopes this younger one will not have formed so many careless habits I am always discovering that Dr. Anna has allowed a child to go to school or that she lets them do needle work, etc., and it worries me horribly.

We have had ten cases of cerebro-spinal meningitis since I have been here and not one drop of anti-meningococcal serum—I have shed tears over it! I cabled soon after my arrival to Constant for some and it has not
You said once in Constant, you couldn’t stand it in this country on account of the slowness of action and the Red Tape—you’d go stark mad out here. I’m sure I will, but it’s all fascinating and I will have a good time while it lasts! I have had to quarantine two of the orphans on account of the meningitis; I dread a regular epidemic.

You see, even with Miss Lane we will be within the 10,000 limit of our budget, and we really will not have to enlarge our American personnel here. I don’t believe in having a large American personnel when these poor things are so in need of work. So if you raise the rest this year you could let it go on the larger work, or, if you decide to keep it in Briva you could take on the full support of a hospital or the expense of a nurse home. There are enough ways that it’s needed, Goodness knows!

Taking on the whole of Armenia is certainly thrilling. Would you like me to send you an estimate budget so you would know what to plan on? Then there is another idea. If you couldn’t take on the whole—the Alexandria unit is much larger and we might change another year and take that over. That would include Capt. Ward’s dream of a big central training school.

If we can raise the full 15,000 for this year and the same next and save the 5,000 from this year, I believe we could swing it. That is, Alex.

There, we really would have to have two American doctors. Now I’ve started saying we" when I ought to be packing my little trunk for home.

Dr. Gray asked me about Togninzi and I cabled her that I might need her in June—that is when her contract is up. I was thinking of her for Imilz. Let me know what you think about her coming on then to take Dr. Dewey’s place. I have had no word from you as yet as to what you and the rest of the board think about my arrangement there. He may stay on—I’m sure he will be willing to if his own station is not open. For my part I feel very satisfied to have him there, but I would have to have Dr. Togninzi get nicely on her way home and then have Dr. Dewey leave. The NER are very glad to have him there and the missionaries are especially glad because he was so tired of waiting around to go to Syria. He was about to go home then we decided on this move. Dr. Jaquith told me I was saving a medical missionary to Turkey by taking him in there, and I did. If you can help me decide this question I will be so much obliged. I wondered if the NER would release us from our agreement there in favor of here. He could concentrate more here then. We are no matter this way.

I will try and get my financial report ready for this letter. I plan on writing you about getting my financial report ready on Sunday, but this one being New Year there was too much distraction.

My best regards to all the board,

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Malcolm E. Elliott