[. . . ] I have at last received a reply from Herr Gmelin to the letter that I sent him at your command. From this reply I see not only that he himself has long since reported to your Excellency on his circumstances, but also that his Highness the Duke of Würtemburg and his Privy Council have written to His Highness [Razumovskii RLC] on his behalf. Although I am very repelled that Herr Gmelin has tried to justify his actions, because I had the honor to write my own opinion on the matter to you, Dear Sir, nevertheless it seems to me that his crime is greatly extenuated by the reasons he announces to me, provided they are true.

In the first place he writes me that when he concluded his new contract he stated that he had already accepted an appointment from his Duke, and that he would attempt to procure the Duke’s approval for the new contract. If such is the case, as no one could know better than you, his return depended not on his own will, but on the permission of the Duke. Thus if the Duke refused his permission, Herr Gmelin could not be held responsible.

In the second place, Herr Gmelin attempts to excuse himself by saying that he had in no wise yet accepted the professorial position offered him by the Duke, and in his first letter to His Highness had humbly asked for his consent. The whole strength of his case now depends on what the Duke wrote to His Highness, from which it will be explicitly determined whether or not it is true what Herr Gmelin originally said, to the effect that the Duke refused to release him. I earnestly desire that all this will turn out to be true, and that His Highness the President will pardon Herr Gmelin for his other crimes. To that end you, Dear Sir, can make representations, and I make bold to ask you humbly, trusting that if you see some resemblance between the offences of Gmelin and Delisle, yet the former is so much smaller that it is nearly annihilated by the latter. Since that time Delisle has written to me several times, but I have not written a single word in reply. Several days ago he wrote to the General
Feldmarshall that he had learned that His Highness the President had forbidden all members of the Academy to have any dealings with him, and that he was amazed that such cruel measures were being taken against him, as he had done nothing wrong, only announced that he no longer wished to have any association with the Academy and was prepared to publish all his observations himself. Herr Gmelin is very far from such irrationality and conforms to His Highness’ decrees in all respects. He undertakes to place all his Siberian observations at the disposal of the Academy alone, and sent me what he had written so far on the second volume of the Siberian flora. It lies before me at present, and I shall send it to you immediately. And Gmelin intends in the future to send all his works for the use of the Academy, provided he can obtain forgiveness for his carelessness, having such great confidence in this favor that he does not plan an immediate return.

Herr Councilor Schumacher has written me that a new volume of the Commentarii is to be published; and although I know that a considerable number of my articles are at the Academy, I nevertheless, request that you will keep me in the high favor of His Highness Herr President. [...] consider it my duty to send new ones from time to time. With this intention I am enclosing a dissertation which I humbly ask you to present at the meetings. I am always congratulating myself on the honor that I have in being a member of the Imperial Academy of Sciences. It suffices to note that, since other members for the most part send little or nothing to the Academy, I trust that His Highness Herr President will take note of my diligence when he pays the annual pensions. If I could hope for that at the beginning of the next year, I humbly request that the money be entrusted to Herr Keppen.

However, I hope that you, Dear Sir, will have good fortune throughout the remainder of this old year and all prosperity in the new, and that the future will often bring new additions of honor and raises in salary. And I particularly recommend myself to your sincere friendship, of which I have had the good fortune to receive such important signs, requesting that you will keep me in the high favor of His Highness Herr President. With the deepest respect I have the honor to remain […]