



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

April 18, 1940.

PERSONAL

Mr. Amon G. Carter,
President and Publisher,
Fort Worth Star-Telegram,
Fort Worth, Texas.

My dear Mr. Carter:

To judge from the editorials in the more-or-less esteemed FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM of March 26 and 27, something has occurred to dim your bright spirits. I hope that you have not suffered to such an extent that you no longer are able to adorn the streets of your city as you swing along with a proprietarian air to gladden the eyes and brighten the lives of less favored individuals with your tonsorial effulgence.

You ought to betake yourself to the border, where you could more easily turn back the presumptuous carpetbaggers from Washington who have the effrontery to go to Texas to "dictate" to the intrepid, upstanding citizens of that State how they should vote. It is apparent that you do not trust your citizens to vote without strict supervision. But, do you compliment them by suggesting that they are so ill-informed and so lacking in convictions that it is dangerous for them to listen to the seductive voice of some Uitlander who slips into Texas with the ulterior and sinister purpose of herding citizens to the polls to vote, under compulsion, for a candidate other than the one whose nomination you are supporting?

It would seem that, in common with some native-born and life-long Texans, I, according to the veracious STAR-TELEGRAM, am a "carpetbagger." I have visited your State on several occasions and on no one of them have I made a political speech or talked politics privately. I have gone to Texas bearing gifts--rich gifts--not a few of them eloquently solicited by the Great Editor of Fort Worth--and you never thought of calling me a carpetbagger.

My most recent visit to your State was in response to a courteous invitation, persistently urged, to take part in the celebration of the discovery of the great East Texas oil field. On that excursion I spoke no word of politics to a single human being while in the jurisdiction over which you presume to exercise dictatorial rights as to what ideas may be disseminated among your people, and yet, forsooth, I am a carpetbagger! Yet, I might, with propriety, have discussed the Presidential situation while in Texas because, after all, the coming election is not to elect a President of Texas, but of the United States, of which I am a citizen.

If our political institutions are not a sham, every citizen has a right, peacefully, to influence the opinion of others if he can. I understand that you and your associates sent "carpetbaggers" into Wisconsin and Illinois prior to the recent primaries in those States. If I did not have good authority for this, I would seriously question it, judging from the election results.

I wonder what you are afraid of. We are not afraid of ideas in Illinois and people are allowed to vote without interference with their right to read and think and talk about issues and candidates. Under our

system in Illinois, every qualified voter may cast his ballot freely and secretly. We do not have any disfranchising poll tax!

The day following the Wisconsin primaries, two of your associates gave out a prepared statement in which they jubilated that, although Roosevelt had defeated Garner by about three to one, the third term movement had, in reality, collapsed because the results showed that if the Garner vote were added to the total Republican vote, Roosevelt could not carry Wisconsin next November. They might also have argued that if the total Democratic vote were added to the Vandenberg vote, Roosevelt would be overwhelmingly elected in Wisconsin in November.

In other words, according to this utterance, the movement, in which you are such a shining light, is not for the nomination of any particular man. It is to defeat Roosevelt.

As to my wanting to run the oil business of Texas, that also is flapdoodle. No more than I was a "carpetbagger," when I was helping to distribute generous chunks of Federal money, was I an oil dictator in 1933, when you great, strong, he-men wrung your hands while the price went down to ten cents a barrel in the East Texas field. I was a fine fellow when I went into Texas, with the backing and the helping of the President, to pull you sturdy individualists out of the slough of despond that you yourselves had created.

You have been much interested financially in oil, as I have understood from you on several occasions, and you doubtless regard yourself, as you are held by others, to be a successful and resourceful businessman. And yet you oppose a Federal law to prevent such waste as is occurring in the newly discovered oil fields of Illinois, although if this flush production

continues to be thrown indiscriminately on the market, it is likely to crack the price for crude in Texas, and so destroy the structure that the Federal Government carefully rebuilt for you in 1933 and 1934. You may believe that this shows sound business sense and real perspicacity, but it makes me think of a boy in short pants, playing with tin soldiers, and pretending that he is Napoleon.

The really curious thing about your editorial emanations is that even a native-born and life-long Texan is a "carpetbagger" if he does not respond to the crack of your whip and join your "Defeat Roosevelt!" movement.

One striking difference between you and me is that I have a higher respect for Texans than you seem to possess. Apparently you believe that they ought to think as they are told and vote as they are ordered. I do not hold them in such low disesteem. I do not believe that Texans are political peons. And the straw ballots that have been taken in Texas, but which you neither dare to take nor to print, support this belief.

You call yourself a Democrat, but if you were, you would be satisfied to let the people rule. And you would insist that every citizen be given a full chance to declare whom he wants as his candidate. You think of yourself as a sportsman. But if you were, you would gracefully accept the results when the people have spoken as they have in Wisconsin and Illinois and Nebraska, where people are really allowed to vote as free men. You prate of loyalty to your party and yet you allow the spokesmen of a small minority in Texas to acclaim loudly to the world that, while your candidate is able to garner only a handful of votes here and there, he nevertheless has enough to defeat the President as the Democratic nominee in November.

And when the President shall have been re-elected in November, you and other such "leaders" will be the first to hie you to the pie counter.

Notwithstanding all of which, you are a pretty good fellow--when you permit yourself to function as a normal human being. But not when you print editorials that do not make sense, that have no logic back of them, and which reflect the Ku Klux spirit.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Z. Ickes

Secretary of the Interior.

