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1126 PACIFIC MUTUAL BUILDING
LOS ANGELES

April 27, 1940

Mr. Amon G. Carter
c/o Star-Telegram
Fort Worth, Texas

Dear Sir:

I have read an article in the Los Angeles Times of this date concerning a letter to you from Secretary of the Interior Ickes and would like very much to obtain a verbatim copy of the letter.

According to the article in the Times, Mr. Ickes in his letter refers to having gone into Texas bearing "rich gifts". I assume that the Honorable Secretary is referring to allocations of public money for public works projects in Texas. This then would appear to be an official declaration that disbursements of public monies personally entitle the official making the disbursement to the gratitude and support of citizens who may benefit thereby. If such be the case, this declaration constitutes nothing less than the elevation of the discredited spoils system to an idealistic principle in government administration.

This indeed is a novel and unique concept of political science as it has heretofore been officially recognized in this country. I have always supposed that making "gifts" of the people's money was an exclusive royal prerogative of kings and emperors. The Honorable Secretary would appear to have issued an official pronouncement that our public officers enjoy a like privilege. If this be true, the subject is worthy of the careful attention of the people of this nation.

Moreover, I am also interested in the official recognition of the "pie-counter" apparently contained

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in Secretary Ickes' letter to you. We who pay the taxes and exercise no official authority have long suspected and, in fact, on occasion have been bold enough to assert the existence of this institution but this is the first time, to my knowledge, that a high government officer has publicly acknowledged it.

I rather get the impression from Mr. Ickes' letter as reported in the Times that the "pie-counter" at present is overstocked with soft custard pies and that Mr. Ickes has adopted the somewhat ancient Keystone Comedy technique of throwing them at those who provoke him.

For the reasons hereinbefore set forth, I would like the opportunity to carefully study the entire text of Mr. Ickes' letter and will appreciate it if you will accommodate me with a copy thereof.

Thanking you in advance, I am

Very sincerely yours,

Byron A. Hanna.

