

April 26, 1940.

Honorable Harold L. Ickes,
Secretary of the Interior,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I hope you will forgive the delay in replying to your personal letter dated in Washington April 18, which arrived in Fort Worth on the 22, a delay which has been due to chance and not to any intent of my own. Your letter came to my office during my absence, and, since it bore on the envelope the word "Personal", which was underscored, it was naturally assumed that your wish was that no other person should peruse it, at least until after I had done so. My office sent you a letter on April 24th, by airmail (which you should have received the morning of the 25th) prior to the date you sent out your letter to the Congressmen April 26th. This letter stated the fact of my absence and assured you that the letter would be attended to promptly on my return. Still, you saw fit to change the character of the correspondence from private to public. That is all right with me; but, if only you had thought of the reporters before marking the letter "Personal", we could have gotten all of this over sooner. It may be a small matter, but I prefer my bawlings-out at first hand. I regret the shine taken off your letter by the publicity short-circuit, for it was a pretty good effort, in the best traditions of the blast from the imaginary throne.

I appreciate your thoughtfulness in hoping that I had not suffered to such an extent that I am "no longer able to adorn the streets of our city as I swing along with proprietarian" (Golly, what a word!) "air to gladden the eyes and brighten the lives of less favored individuals with my tonsorial effulgence". This paragraph is a "dinge" and should have lessened the imaginary burden you carry.

I am forced to confess that there has been a bit of extra delay, even after my return Saturday, April 27th, due to the necessity of obtaining help in the

the effort to understand just what all those 12-cylinder words in your letter meant. I have a dark suspicion that if I could figure out all of them, I would tend to be irritated. And that is an alarming thought, after seeing what irritation does to a nature usually notable for its sunniness.

I am sure you do not really subscribe to the theory which you seem to advance in your letter-- that because an official has been right once, he must perforce be acknowledged to be right at all other times, and that because a citizen, not on the Government payroll, has once been pleased with performances by an official that citizen is forever debarred from being displeased with anything the official later may do. Assisted, as you say, by the full power of the Administration, you did a good job in helping Texas with its oil problems, for which we give you full credit; but, I must respectfully point out that we do not necessarily need the same kind of help, with or without the cooperation of your department, in respect to political problems in Texas at the moment.

If there is a connection between oil regulation, or even PWA projects, and the question of whether Texas should be allowed peaceably to stand up for its own John Garner, I fail to get it. But, you see, down here we are just country folks. We get along as well as we do only because there are not many who are hardhearted enough to take advantage of us. Naturally, we can not afford to get mad when there is an occasional exception; we are too busy being thankful there are not more of them.

I am more touched than you can imagine by your solicitude for the freedom of Texas voters and subscribe fully to your obviously lately developed opinion that they are capable of acting for themselves without being told how. If your department had adopted that view earlier, or even now if you would give expression to it by placing a parental restraint on some of the enthusiastic saviors of Texas, who are now on the payroll of your department and presumably under your control, our newspaper would not feel called upon to horn into the matter of your relations with Texas. If it be true, as you say, that our editorials have

attempted to influence Texas voters to stand up for Garner, it is just as true that you, directly or indirectly, by overt word or by the "ensorial effulgence" of your presence, have attempted to influence Texas voters to deny their own man. If our course is "dictatorial", it is plainly less reprehensible than the same sort of thing on the other side coming from outside the State. After all, we are Texans and have been for generations, and we were Democrats even long before the 1932 campaign. Our ballot has always been for the Democratic ticket and we expect it to continue to be so, even though we may be reprimanded from the imaginary throne for having the temerity of expressing ourselves about our State's part in the selection of party Nominees. These things may not be important, but they do suggest that we may have a clearer right to an opinion on Texas affairs than a non-Texan whose party record is of such late beginning.

You stated you have come to Texas "bearing gifts--rich gifts-- not a few of them eloquently solicited by the Great Editor of Fort Worth" and we never thought of calling you a carpetbagger. Frankly, we have had the old-fashioned idea that the grants by the PWA were not personal gifts but in line with the policy of your department in cooperating with municipalities in constructive building programs for the benefit of a community as a whole, and it is a revelation to me to find out otherwise. Incidentally, none of them are in any way a personal benefit to the publisher of The Star-Telegram. Two in particular - the Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum-Auditorium and the Municipal Airport Administration Buildings - were carried out on a constructive basis by your administrators of the Public Works Administration and are being repaid to the Government in full keeping with all of your requirements.

You accuse me and my "associates" of sending carpetbaggers into Wisconsin and Illinois. In reply, will state for the benefit of your information that I am not even an official member of the committee having charge of the campaign for the advancement of Mr. Garner's candidacy for President nor have I participated in any statements made to the effect that the third term had, in reality, collapsed because of the results shown in Wisconsin. Meanwhile, I have no apology to make for supporting an outstanding Democrat

like Mr. Garner who so far as I know is the only definite out-in-the-open Democratic candidate for the Presidency of the United States.

You further state as follows:

"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." This is a misstatement entirely disproved by the facts. No one has a greater personal respect or higher regard and admiration for President Roosevelt than I have. He came into office in trying times and has done a great job under difficult circumstances; however, he has not indicated by word of mouth or in print that he is a candidate for the third term, and in keeping with our previous attitude we are supporting Mr. Garner, as we did in 1932, and have supported Roosevelt and Garner since that time. Garner being the only full-fledged candidate at this time, we are supporting him on a basis of his past record of service to the Democratic party; and his qualifications for the higher office. For this, we have no apology.

You indicated that our opposition to government regulation of the oil industry makes you think of the boy in short pants playing with tin soldiers and pretending that he is Napoleon. It may be that you are thinking of your own attitude on this matter and talking about me. Let's not befuddle the issue. The results in Wisconsin and Illinois have nothing to do with Texas supporting John Garner.

You stated that when President Roosevelt shall have been re-elected in November that I with "other such 'leaders'" will be the first to hie to the pie counter. Frankly, if the President is re-elected, he will be my President the same as yours, and if there be a pie counter left, we shall reserve the right, even without your gracious permission, to demand and expect for Texas the same treatment accorded any other state in the Union. But, for fear I will become serious I will bring this acknowledgment to your "hot-shot" letter to a close.

You stated that I am a "pretty good fellow when I permit myself to function as a normal human being. But not when I print editorials that do not make sense, that have no logic back of them". That is pretty phraseology but, fortunately, you are not the sole arbiter of whether they make sense or not. You are a pretty good fellow yourself but you, unfortunately, irritate quickly and often, and it never occurred to me that one small country publisher could bring forth the wrath and tirade of statements given vent in your letter. Of course, I am flattered by the fact that such heavy artillery has been brought out to squelch me-- like the town drunk who finds it a matter of pride when a whole squad of policemen rolls up. If I'm going to be "took", I like it to be done in style. In your letter to the Texas Congressmen you unduly complimented me again when you stated you were sending a copy of the letter you were writing to "the Horace Greeley of Texas". This is like the darkey who was asked by the white man if he had change for a ten dollar bill, who replied, "Ho, Boss, I ain't, but I sho' do appreciate the compliment".

Since you saw fit to release a copy of your "personal" letter to me before I had an opportunity to read it myself, I presume what is "sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander", and I am taking the liberty of releasing a copy of my reply to your letter (which I am mailing to you by airmail tonight), together with editorial comment which may cover a few phases not contained in my acknowledgment.

When the campaign is over, if you want to rest from the cares and responsibilities that you have and assume, come down to Shady Oak Farm, where the West begins, and we will extend you a cordial welcome.

Most sincerely,

AGC.KD