

June 10, 1941.

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

Dear Mr. Secretary:

Mr. John W. Naylor, who has been Oil Editor for the Star-Telegram for more than fifteen years, is now a Major in the National Guard and is on leave for military service located at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. Mr. Naylor, while on a visit here over the week-end, showed me a copy of a letter he had written to you in which he said your appointment as Petroleum Coordinator would be gratifying both to me and to the newspaper with which I am associated. Although, this letter was written without my knowledge, I want to take this opportunity of confirming what he told you.

While we have had some political differences, I have never at any time doubted your integrity or ability as a square shooter and all of us feel that at no time since it was placed under any control was the control of the oil industry as capably exercised as during the time you were NRA Oil Administrator. We feel confident this will be the case again.

The oil industry is by far the most important activity in our state, and as such a natural concern of our newspaper. The nature of the oil business at this time would seem to make an umpire most necessary, and, of course, it is important that the umpire be both capable and fair in his administration, and that we know, from previous experience, we can expect from you. Unfortunately, this has not always been the case with the umpires the business has had. That is all our newspaper has ever asked of any of them, but the NRA period is the only one in which we felt we got it.

I can claim some knowledge of the oil business because, like most Texas business men, I have made oil investments from time to time. We have never permitted this to interfere with the policy of our newspapers which is for the constructive welfare of the industry in Texas. This is far more important from a

newspaper standpoint than any personal investment in oil. On the other hand, I feel they have been of value in educating me, to a certain extent, into the workings of the chief business of the state. For one thing, it has opened my eyes to the necessity for the existence of an umpire, because I have found out that large and strong concerns could almost eliminate competition of the independents should they choose to do so or be allowed to do so.

In an emergency like this, you will no doubt be able to command the services of the ablest men in the country and I feel you will have no difficulty, if you so desire, in organizing a strong board of advisors. In which event, I desire to call your attention to Charles F. Roeser, who is undoubtedly the strongest leader in the ranks of independent oil men in the state or nation, insofar as that is concerned, and a man who commands the confidence of the legitimate independents and is yet fair to the majors and the public.

I am very much distressed because the "Fact-finding" Committee of the oil business does not have on it any of the strong independents, who are not likely to be faced down by the major leaders, who, though sincere, may not always see problems outside of their company orbit. Mr. Roeser knows the intricacies of the business as only one who has been in it for a life time can see it, yet his situation in the business is such as to make him at once as independent and as disinterested as anyone could possibly be. His oil interests are in an area which will be practically unaffected by any of the various measures which are proposed. They are in a low cost area so he could get along on a price which would paralyze the greater part of the industry, and they are of sufficient volume that he is at once independent and free of obligations to any company or group. In addition to that, being relieved of the necessity of making more money, he is chiefly interested in performing some public service and, in my estimation, beyond a question of a doubt, would be the best qualified independent operator to see that the Federal Oil Administration, for which he has consistently fought - even when it was unpopular - should be a success.

I realize this information may be unnecessary, as you are probably well acquainted with Mr. Roeser's qualifications, but those of us who see much of him feel so strongly his worth that we cannot

help but speak of it. I do not always agree with Mr. Roeser personally. In fact, I have differed with him on many occasions; however, I do recognize his ability and sincerity and feel that the public could only benefit from the services of a man of his type.

Some of the oil problems which you are about to tackle, I feel certain, can be met by improved efficiency in operations. Especially do I feel that you will find this true of transportation from the interior to the East Coast. For example, a more efficient use of some of the facilities we have left should no doubt take up a great deal of the slack which the removal of tankers from coastwise service has brought. And, I feel surely that some of the difficulty could be removed by changing tankers from the trip around the Cape to the Trans-Atlantic run, where the mileage of three round trips would be less than one on the present route.

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However, these are only a few of the problems which I know you will meet. Your new duties will no doubt present plenty of difficulties, but the importance of the business, both in peace and in war, is such that their handling will afford compensation in the satisfaction of handling such a task.

In conclusion, I trust you will not consider it presumptuous on my part in making these friendly suggestions. I have no personal ax to grind. We are interested in the oil industry as a whole and particularly what it means to Texas as it now pays approximately 55 percent of our taxes and gives employment to more than 225,000 men.

These are tough, precarious times we are passing through and the country is indeed fortunate in having a man at the helm who has the courage of his convictions and the support of the people as a whole to back him up.

We extend to you our whole-hearted cooperation in the important problems with which you are confronted in your various duties.

Very truly yours,

H. G. Carey.