

August 11, 1925.

Hon. James E. Ferguson,
Austin, Texas.

Dear Mr. Ferguson:-

Your interesting reply to my letter of August 5th., puts a different light on the circumstances upon which my letter to you was predicated and is the direct variance with the circumstances as related to me in a memorandum and later in personal conversation with Mr. Evans.

In the first place, however, permit me to say that I feel quite sure that Mr. Evans had no thought of doubting any statement made by you in the interview you gave him and in going to the Highway Department later for information he was not actuated by any such motive and no one here in the office had any such idea in mind.

However, Mr. Evans said at the time and still says that the submission of the written questions was not of his own initiative. The circumstances as related to me by him were substantially these: Mr. Evans went to the Highway Department seeking information and asked Mr. Hank, the Chief Engineer, a few questions and was requested by Mr. Hank to return the next day in order that he might have time to get the information desired. In the interim Mr. Evans says he talked with you and that you informed him that Mr. Hank had told you of his coming to him for information and that you had told Mr. Hank not to answer the questions until they had been submitted in writing. Mr. Evans says you asked him if he had any objection of submitting the questions in writing and that he told you he had none whatever. Then he submitted them to Mr. Hank and he in turn referred them to you and then followed the conversation between you and Mr. Evans in which Mr. Evans maintains that you told him you had instructed Mr. Hank not to answer the questions. That was all the information I had on the subject and this information I didn't receive until a week or ten days after the occurrence for the reason I was out of the City.

We did not make formal and official request for the answers to the questions when we first learned of the occurrence for the reason that we did not think it necessary. Heretofore, it never had been necessary to back up the mission of one of our reporters or staff correspondents with an official request from this office. You have dealt with Mr. Silliman Evans for many years. Doubtless, in the course of your campaigns and in your governmental actions Mr. Evans has asked you hundreds of questions and this is the first time we have been requested by you to back up a request of his for information with an official statement from this office. Furthermore, we felt that since the Highway Department was a branch of the State Government its acts were official acts and part of the State records; that any request for information would gladly be met without the necessity of formal and official requests from this office and, certainly, without bringing forth the charge that such requests were for political purposes.

In this connection, permit me to disabuse your mind of one thought if it is possible. You say that you reached the conclusion that our efforts to get information concerning the workings of the Highway Department were in the interest of our candidate for Governor. You, also, state that I may deny this if I desire but that you feel you know what you are talking about.

And, while we naturally, under the circumstances, disagree with your idea - knowing that the real facts are entirely contrary to your belief - at the same time we accord you the privilege of viewing the matter from your own viewpoint as you see fit. We in turn insist that our Highway series is in no sense connected with the political fortunes of any candidate for State office. If we have a candidate for Governor, it is news to me. For my own information, I should like very much to know who it is. As a matter of fact, we have given no thought or consideration to the campaign of next year. I imagine, however, that our course in this respect will be much the same as in the past - that is, we shall await until all the entries are in and then decide to back the candidate, who in our humble judgement we feel best fitted for the office. Certainly we shall make the selection ourselves without dictation of outside influence of any character. The Star-Telegram is operated by the executive officials who own the paper and

our only interest is for the general welfare of Texas and it has always been our policy to publish a newspaper for the benefit of our readers along fair and consistent lines without malice or fear and we expect to continue this policy irrespective of critics or any influence brought to bear by any particular candidate for any public office.

The answers to the questions which you enclosed with your letter and which as you state were prepared by Chairman Lanham of the Commission will be published in full as written and without change upon our part. We have no thought of using them otherwise and as I assured you in my former letter no matter what turn this series may take or what it may disclose it shall be our endeavor to handle it with the greatest fairness and to accord the Highway Commissioners, yourself or any other affected person of interest every opportunity for reply and for the statement of their side of the question. Our interest is solely that of a constructive series in the interest of highway development and it is our hope that the articles will disclose that the funds of the Commission are being wisely and economically spent and that effective progress is being made in the development of a real system of State Highways.

We are not interested in the political fortune of any candidate or political punishment of any state official or officials, but we do feel that as a newspaper we have the right to inquire into the workings of the Highway Department; to determine the character of roads being built and to show our readers, who are the tax payers how and where their money is being spent. We, of course, feel that we should be accorded this privilege without being charged with political motives and certainly that the members of the Commission, who are charged with the spending of the people's money, should not object to any inquiry of this sort. On the other hand, we should think the Commissioners would welcome it.

Since you decline to accept our statement that we are not actuated by any desire to conduct a campaign against your wife's administration, we are perfectly willing to let our subsequent actions

speaking for themselves with confidence that in the end no matter what you may think of our series, you shall have no cause to complain of unfairness.

With best wishes, I remain,

Very truly yours,

FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM,

JMN.KM

Editor.