

PSF Executive Offices : Daniels, Jonathan
of President

PSF
Subject Files "E"

Box [REDACTED]

149 - [REDACTED]

1 PSF Exec. Opc.

J. Daniels folder 2-43

file personal

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 11, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. JONATHAN DANIELS

Will you work on this?

Ask Slattery to issue the
Attorney General's opinion,
after getting his permission.
Under the opinion he cannot
begin issuing insurance.

Will you also put this
(the Senate's)
into Scott Lucas' ear to avoid
the Smith Resolution for \$15,00
which will go to Scott Lucas?

F. D. R.

Nov 11/43.

Shattering to ruin the Atty -
Sent's opinion that he can't
start insurance.

And put this into the
Senate's ear & avoid
the Smith revolution which
will go to Scott Lucas.

T-222 PSF Exec. Ofc. Jonathan Daniels folder 2-44

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 9, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. JONATHAN DANIELS

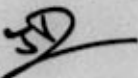
How am I going to get
Slattery to resign? That is
the first thing that has to
be done.

F. D. R.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON January 31, 1944

MEMORANDUM FOR The President

FROM Jonathan Daniels 

Some immediate action should be taken with regard to the Rural Electrification Administration in recognition of the fact that the fate of REA may seriously involve the fate of your entire power program.

The Senatorial investigation has been going on for nearly six months without any serious disclosures and without attracting any attention from the press. The committee has exhausted its first appropriation of \$2500 and is now asking for \$15,000 more. It will probably get \$5000. I am assured that members of the committee do not wish to drag out the investigation. It is possible, nevertheless, that the investigation may peter along while REA disintegrates.

Harry Slattery has, in effect, retired from any direction of REA. He has been almost continuously away from St. Louis spending most of his time in Washington. He has, however, recently declined to approve an important Alabama acquisition which was submitted to him. The Secretary of Agriculture is now personally deciding that case.

While the Secretary of Agriculture feels that the situation within REA has improved, considerable division and confusion remain. Morale is low and the agency lacks such vitality as it will need to face its important post-war operations.

Secretary Wickard is, I believe, earnestly trying his best to deal with the situation. I am convinced, however, that he lacks both the technical knowledge and administrative drive necessary for the job.

As the weakest point in your power program and, as such, a symbol for that program's enemies, I am sure REA deserves the attention of the best talent in the power field which the administration can muster.

I suggest:

1. That Slattery be removed as administrator. He would now be more willing to get out. The personal attacks upon him from the officials of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association have ceased since Clyde Ellis went into the Navy. Also, Slattery knows that the members of the Senatorial investigating committee are not impressed by his administrative capacity.

2. That David Lilienthal, J. A. Krug or John Carmody be assigned to the job of reorganizing and revitalizing REA with full authority from you.

3. That, if such a man can be secured, serious consideration be given to making REA an independent agency.

PSF Exec. O/c. Daniels p.c. 2-11
(2574)
Ans

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

February 22, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. JONATHAN DANIELS:

I will talk to you when I
get back.

F.D.R.

Memorandum for the President from Hon. Jonathan
Daniels, 2/17/44, in re Harry Slattery's statement
in re White House pressure on him.

PSF Exec. Ofc.

Daniels folder

9-44

(not sent)

March 2, 1944.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. JAMES F. BYRNES

What do you think of my sending to the Senate Committee which had Daniels before it something along the following line:

"My dear Senator (Chairman):

I note that your Committee called Mr. Jonathan Daniels before it to ask questions relating to the details of his conversations with Harry Slattery -- and that Mr. Daniels declined to answer these questions.

I knew nothing about his appearance before you but his refusal to answer has my unqualified backing.

The story goes back sometime and has very simple.

For the last two years I have been distinctly worried about Mr. Slattery's health. He was away from his office for long periods of time. He is an old friend of mine and I was definitely worried because I felt that his organization was not running smoothly and was in many ways inefficient -- all of which I put down to his health.

Things got gradually worse and I felt that it would be advisable to undertake some other work for the Government.

Several people, knowing all this, suggested to me that for him the best thing to do was to leave REA and take another place. At one period Harry Slattery seemed on the point of doing this.

Orig. filed - Senate folder, 4-44.

However, during the past few months the situation did not improve and I asked Mr. Daniels, as my confidential assistant, to go to him again. Mr. Slattery declined to leave the REA and take another post. It would have been, of course, wholly possible for me to call him before me, present the case against him, as I did in the case of Dr. Morgan of the TVA, and remove him unless his answers and explanations were satisfactory.

There the matter stands but I thoroughly believe that his usefulness in his present post is ended.

That I made these inquiries over many months, through the Secretary of Agriculture and Mr. Daniels, is in accordance with law, as I asked them to do so on behalf of the President. As Chief Executive I am responsible for administrative acts, and I have used Members of the Cabinet and Administrative Assistants in similar cases, for that is a part of the duty of Cabinet officers and Administrative Assistants.

If these officers can be called before the Legislative Branch of the Government and questioned as to the details of how, when and where they carried out the orders of the Chief Executive, I feel that my own rights and privileges under the Constitution of the United States are being infringed by the Congress.

I think that your Committee will go along with this thought.

No impoliteness to Committees or individual Members of either House is in any way intended. I know you will realize that the Executive Branch of the Government is too large for peace time but that in practically all cases it is not too large for the prosecution of this war. Because of its very size it is necessary for checks to be made as to the efficiency of tens of thousands of officials. One man cannot do it. That is why the Staff of the President has had to be enlarged. He cannot do it all himself.

-3-

No improprieties are involved in the present case. I am certain that Mr. Slattery would have done well in his task if he had had his former health."

F. D. R.