PSF BEN GREY

Subject File "G"

PSF
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Box [redacted]
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PSF: Ben Grey

file
Personal

CONFIDENTIAL

BEN GREY
SOUTHERN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

TELEPHONE DISTRICT 4616

January 24, 1936.

Dear Miss LeHand:

Referring to last night's conversation, Senator Cotton Ed. Smith, I have been advised has, in opposition to the Soils Conservation Plan, introduced a Federal proposal for a State plan within the framework of the Constitution patterned so closely after the plan Alexander Sachs submitted to you for the President, that I think it likely he may have secured his ideas after consultation with those in the Agriculture Department who know of Sachs' plan.

In view of this and from all that I know, which leads me to believe this plan will be adopted, I should like to see the President publicly take credit for Sachs' plan. He has had this plan now at least several days in advance of what Senator Smith announces, so therefore there could be no dispute about its original date and source.

Please see to it that if Sachs' plan is distributed to the press or to anyone outside the immediate "family", that his name and the name of the Lehman Corporation which is imprinted on the paper, is eliminated. <u>This is of the utmost importance</u>.

Last night I gave you the name of a Judge who, through channels I am informed, will support the legality of Sachs' plan, and I am also further informed that the three liberals on the bench can swing over Hughes and Sutherland if the plan were adopted. I can naturally furnish more details personally if so desired.

Have you forwarded the details given in a memo to you by Sachs to Secretary Wallace? Wallace has conferred with Sachs on this plan and I believe is desirous of getting from the President all information possible relative to it.

Sincerely,

Ben Grey

Written from 145 East. 74th. St., New York City.

TELEPHONE DISTRICT 1818

file

PSF: BEN GREY
SHOREHAM BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

February 19, 1936.

Dear President Roosevelt:

I telephoned from New York Monday evening my felicitations upon the happy advent of another Roosevelt (on the right side of the House) and on the TVA Decision. I also indicated that I would advise you further what progress is being made in the conferences on the utility situation.

Monday afternoon and evening Alexander Sachs was to have met again with Wilkie and this time Muhlfeld was to join with them. It must amuse you no end to learn that Wilkie, the hero of the success stories, telephoned Alec late in the afternoon to say that he was so broken up over the decision that he had to beg off until the next session. Can you imagine how tough, forthright and self-assured he would have been had the decision gone the other way?

Muhlfeld did show. He was very sensible and understanding and fully appreciative of all the angles concerned in attempting to formulate a satisfactory, long term solution to this problem taking into consideration the consumer, the stockholder, the management and the Government. He thought at the next meeting, which is scheduled for this Thursday and which will include Wilkie and Hobart Porter who is of commanding importance and influence and, I am given to understand, a first-rate fellow, they ought to include their attorneys, as well. Alec ruled this out at once and made the observation, which is a correct one, that they, including most all the big industrialists, are completely lawyer-ridden to such an extent that they seem to have lost the capacity to think and act as human individuals, on their own.

To such an extent is this true that every little Vice-President of a bank, or even a fairly successful manufacturer of dispers and drawers, imagines himself, by constant association with his attorney, to be an authority on Constitutional Law, at least.

Mr. President, such instinct for good judgment as I have left, convinces me that now, in the face of the decision, you have a perfectly swell opportunity to give a demonstration of noblesse oblige that will bring the audiance to its feet. If, instead refusing to treat with the now dazed and discomfited Big Business Boy Scouts, also known as the Kilowatt Kids (as they most certainly would have ~~done~~ refused to deal with you, had the decision gone otherwise) and, for the best interests of the consuming public, stockholders of utilities and associated interests, the industry itself, the commendation and support we need from the big and <u>little</u> business-men, (I have a feeling campaign contributions are going to be rather tight this time, and we are going to need a lot of them), to say nothing of good politics, of which you are the past master - and give this crowd the opportunity to put its house in order and come forth with something permanently constructive, I guarantee you,as good public relations, of which I am an acknowledged past master, that it will be a "natural" for you.

I say this as one who, when so many of our friends ran to cover just prior to and during the tellers vote on the "death sentence", actually did something about it with the Kansas contingent and did the best I could with New York. As a prelude we of the National Home Library Foundation devoted two of our coast-to-coast broadcasts to Wheeler and Rayburn and, at our own expense printed and mailed over fifty thousand copies of their speeches, thereby earning critical citation in the Congressional Record.

All this in the face of my opposition, on economically sound grounds, of the "death" sentence and the geographical limitations of holding companies. I supported it because politically I deemed it to be of the utmost importance to you and that tactically I believed you to be sound.

I do not have, and never have had any professional or financial interest in utilities. But I have a great interest in securing the support of all kinds of business-men, large, medium and small for you and your Administration and I deem constructive guidance and the right sort of regulation, the best and quickest means of securing the kind of support I know you want.

Right after this coming Thursday's meeting I'll shoot through a memo of progress. I hope you're feeling swell. You deserve to.

Respectfully,

Ben.

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

PSF: Ben Grey

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MISS MARGUERITE LE HAND OR MISS GRACE TULLY

WH

WHITEHOUSE WASHN DC

LAST NIGHT CONFERENCE ON UTILITIES NOW ADVANCES NEGOTIATIONS SUFFICIENTLY TO MAKE NECESSARY GREY AND SACHS REPORTING TO PRESIDENT AND LEARNING HIS PLEASURE STOP ALSO HAVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON SUBJECT TELEPHONED GRACE TULLY YESTERDAY STOP BOTH SUBJECTS OBVIOUSLY MUST BE HANDLED ORALLY STOP HYDEPARK MEETING ANY HOUR CONVENIENT IS REQUESTED STOP PLEASE ADVISE

BEN GREY 145 EAST 74 ST NEWYORKCITY.

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PST

TELEPHONE DISTRICT 4616

PSF: BEN GREY
SOUTHERN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

p. 8

May 12, 1936.

Dear Mr. President:

Since my talk with you this morning about the proposal for the sale of two ships by the Dollar Lines to Panama Rail Road Co., the proceeds to be turned over to the Treasury by applying them on account of the debt of the Dollar Lines to the Shipping Board, I learned the following information, which I thought I should send to you:

First, there is to be a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Panama Co. in New York next Monday, the eighteenth, and it is more than likely at such meeting they will discuss and perhaps decide whether the Panama Co. will replace its present old ships, and if so, whether by a purchase such as the Dollars propose, in lieu of embarking on a costly new construction program. The War Dept., controlling the affairs of the Panama Canal, is represented on the Board of the Panama Co. by Secretary Dern.

Secondly, Robert Malone has been trying to advance the merits of such a sale through the Commerce Dept., Shipping Board Bureau, by stressing the cash which this will yield to the Government, and the advantage to a most essential segment of the Merchant Marine by assisting toward the stability of the Dollar operations in reducing their debt to the Government. He has given to the Commerce authorities the memorandum of pertinent points which I left with you in view of your inability to schedule an appointment with him. A copy of the letter from Stanley Dollar to Malone, mentioned in the memorandum, is attached hereto.

Following these negotiations, it has developed that Asst. Secy. Johnson will confer in the next day or two with Asst. Secy. Woodring to determine what they might do in the matter.

While the subject may reach Secretaries Dern and Roper in due course, and while Mr. Dern will have it at the Board meeting next Monday, it occurs to me that if the matter is of such importance to the Government as it appears to me to be, you might deem it appropriate to take it up with Secretaries Dern and Roper before the Board meeting of the Panama Co. on May eighteenth.

President Roosevelt, No.2

I feel able to state to you with the strongest possible assurance that from the standpoint of the present relations between the Shipping Board Bureau and the Dollars, there is no conceivable reason for any reservation by the Government in striving to effect such a mutual advantage between it and the Dollars. I understand it is recognized beyond question that from many months' co-ordination between the Government and the Dollars, in fact even supervision by the former, there is nothing to identify the Dollar operations as other than diligent, efficient and honest, and nothing impeding their successful contribution to the Merchant Marine excepting a disproportionate debt, which this sale would largely overcome.

Respectfully,

Ben Grey

President Franklin D. Roosevelt,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

DOLLAR STEAMSHIP LINES

ROUND THE WORLD
NEW YORK-CALIFORNIA
CALIFORNIA-NEW YORK

TRANS-PACIFIC
NEW YORK-ORIENT
ORIENT-NEW YORK

San Francisco, California
April 30th, 1936

Mr. R. W. Malone,
San Francisco,
California.

Dear Mr. Malone:

Referring to our discussions concerning our ideas of current value of our combination passenger and freight steamers, it occurs to me that since these values are by no means mere arbitary appraisals, but rather reflect a closely accurate picture of our investment, you might be interested, and assisted in any negotiations in learning the facts and conditions leading to these valuations.

The present owners of the vessels, Dollar Steamship Lines Inc., Ltd., acquired them in August of 1929, and the figures at which they were acquired from the company previously owning them represented very closely the actual original cost of the vessels to the prior owners, in purchasing them from the government, with only a moderate increase or write up of value to cover the cost or investment in the vessels arising from conditions other than the actual purchase price. That is to say, the vessels when acquired, were bound and limited to the performance of certain specific services, and the pioneering and foundation costs of the establishing and maintenance of such services was, of course, capitalized in the 1929 acquisition cost. Likewise, certain improvements and betterments to the hull and machinery were capitalized.

The acquisition or book value of the vessels at time of organization of their present owners in 1929 has been made subject to depreciation allowance in accordance with the best known practice for vessels of this type, and in accordance with principles sanctioned by the Bureau of Internal Revenue - the rate of depreciation being roughly 3 per cent per annum.

Our conception of current value of the vessels is based upon the original accepted book value, less depreciation as afore stated, as modified by the specific inflationary or currency depreciation policies of this administration, which policies clearly establish a new ratio of property valuation in comparison with former dollar valuations.

Thus, the President liners of the 535 class were originally capitalized in 1929 at approximately $1,560,000 each. This capital valuation, as above indicated, made no provision for extraordinary write up in value due to business inflation conditions prevailing in 1929, but rather was based upon only incurred investment. As at January 1, 1935, depreciation at 3 per cent would have brought the valuation of the ships in this class down to $1,250,000 each.

By that date, however, the President under authority of Congress had completed the policy of reducing the value of the dollar to an equivalent of 59 cents. Simple arithmetic reveals the fact that such inflation policy had a correspondingly reverse effect upon the value of property as expressed in dollars; and this principle applied to the President liners of the 535 class establishes for them as of January 1, 1935, a valuation of $2,118,000 each. Continued depreciation at the 3% rate from that date down to April 30, 1936 yields a net current value of slightly in excess of $2,000,000 each - the figure which I have quoted to you as representing the basis on which we might be prepared to conduct negotiations.

You will readily perceive that our expressions on the subject of valuation are entirely related to our investment position in the vessels, and not to any independent or arbitrary appraisement of them. It is a commonly known fact that inflationary activities, other than currency depreciation, have occurred, and the effect of such activities in other fields - such, for example, as the securities market - has led to a revision of the public's conception of current values to as much as 100 per cent in the past twelve months alone. We have taken no account whatsoever of these other intangible inflationary activities nor of popular expectancy that potentially future inflation may lead to even greater equity values in property. We know, of course, that there may be an additional reduction in the value of the dollar of 9 cents.

Were we to deal independently on the subject of the appraisal value of these ships at the present time, we might use the expert calculations of the government itself, and in so doing would arrive at a figure quite in excess of that which we have quoted to you. For example, in the case of the 535's, the government estimated the "market value at time of sale" of these vessels at $2,315,500 each. They were, of course, sold at somewhat less than such estimated market value, in consideration of a guarantee by the purchaser that a specified and exclusive trade route service would be maintained over a period of years. Such guarantee of maintenance of service has been in fact fulfilled in accordance with the terms of purchase. The vessels, therefore, might be regarded from an appraisal standpoint as worth the government's estimate of "market value at time of sale" less depreciation at 3 per cent, affording a current value in terms of the old currency of $1,551,000, and in terms of the revision of currency of $2,600,000.

Very truly yours,

R. Stanley Dollar

PSF: Ben Grey

RESORT HOTEL IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

The SHOREHAM
Connecticut Avenue at Calvert Street
Washington, D.C.

May 28, 1936.

Dear Mr. President:

The fight between Bill Green and John L. Lewis seems to be drawing to a show-down. Lewis wishes to confer with me Friday evening. Recalling in detail the astute advice you gave me at considerable length when last I saw you on the necessity of preventing an open conflict during a campaign year, I shall first find out just what Lewis has in mind at the moment and indicate to him, the advisability of preventing any open breach which will split the leadership in the labor ranks at this time.

After I have conferred with Lewis I shall advise you of the result and seek further guidance on the subject from you.

Respectfully,
Ben Grey

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

TELEPHONE DISTRICT 4616

PSF: BEN GREY
SOUTHERN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 1, 1936

Dear Mr. President:

Herewith attached is a memorandum covering one phase of the pending Sugar Legislation.

Although, as you know, I am public relations counsel to Mr. Ellsworth Bunker, Chairman of the Domestic Refiners Committee, I feel nevertheless as I did in the case of the Bituminous Coal situation, three years ago, that in this instance there are implications which are broader than the interests of any one group, and I therefore sought to present the material in that light.

Respectfully,

Ben Grey

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

FOR THE PRESIDENT ---- CONFIDENTIAL

The American owned Cuban Refining Co. referred to in the attached is, of course, the Hershey Corp. This company now brings in about half the total amount of refined sugar imported and it is estimated that of all the benefits to all the Cuban sugar interests resulting from the sugar policies of your Administration, the Hershey Co. is receiving half a million dollars a year.

As I presume you know, Mr. Hersey is a large contributor to the opposition's campaign chest.

With respect to the proposed increase in quotas of the continental producers, it is generally understood that such an increase would principally benefit Michigan growers. The other beet states are below their quotas and it is the Michigan growers who are crying for an increase. This accounts for Mr. Vandenberg's advocacy of the change.

THE PENDING SUGAR LEGISLATION.

Conceding that there is insufficient time remaining in this Session properly to consider anew the whole question of sugar quotas, and that therefore a joint resolution continuing the quotas of the Jones-Costigan Act may be necessary, it would seem to be unfair and possibly politically unwise for the Congress to make any changes in the status-quo without giving consideration to the requests of all elements of the Industry.

House Joint Resolution 613 and Senate Joint Resolution 278, which are identical, provide for the continuation of the quota provisions of the Jones-Costigan Act with respect to all elements of the Sugar Industry, with the exception that provision is made for an increase in the quota of the Continental producers. The Domestic cane sugar refiners and some other branches of the Industry feel that the quotas, as established by the Jones-Costigan Act are in need of revision in the light of experience, but believe that unless the whole subject can be properly surveyed no changes of any sort should be made at this time.

The proposed Joint Resolution provides "that for the calendar year 1937 there shall be allotted to Continental United States not less than forty per centum (40%) of any amount of consumption requirements therefor above six million four hundred and fifty-two thousand short tons raw value." This is an increase of the share of the Continental producers in the allottments above the quota basis of from thirty per cent (30%) to forty per cent (40%). It is understood that this proposed increase was agreed to by Chairman Jones to satisfy demands of Michigan Beet Sugar Producers and Florida and Louisiana Can«Sugar Producers. Naturally, since the total amount of sugar permitted to be carried in inter-state commerce under the Jones-Costigan Act as continued by the proposed Joint Resolution is limited to the total estimated consumption requirements, as determined by the Secretary of Agriculture, any increase in the Continental quota must be taken from the quotas of other producing areas.

This proposed change in the quota would reduce, to that extent, the amount of raw sugar to be refined in the United States and would further injure an industry already badly crippled by the inroads in its legimite field caused by permitting the importation of large amounts of sugar refined by cheap tropical labor.

The Domestic Cane Sugar Refiners would welcome at this time an opportunity to present their case for a further limitation of the quotas of imported refined sugars (off-shore whites). It is important to note that the Cuban Producers and Refiners, with the exception of one American concern are no longer opposed to a further limitation of refined sugar quotas, due to the fact that the Cuban interests have been the recipients of about fifty million dollars a year under the Jones-Costigan Act and the Cuban Reciprocity Agreement and are currently more prosperous than they have been in many years. In spite of all this the Domestic Cane Sugar Refiners are content that the whole question of sugar quotas should go over to the next Congress and therefore strongly urge that the Administration, in fairness to all concerned, seek to have House Joint Resolution 613 and Senate Joint Resolution 278 amended by striking out the proviso on Page two, lines sixteen to twenty.

Washington, D. D.,
June 1, 1936.

PSF: Ben Grey

file

RESORT HOTEL IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

The SHOREHAM

Connecticut Avenue at Calvert Street

Washington, D.C.

May 28, 1936

Dear Mr. President:

Although the new Advisory Council organized for your service during the coming campaign is still in the formative stage we have already gotten together a nucleus of valuable material which subsequently will be presented to you in the most acceptable form. The attached, however, I think you should have immediately.

It is the draft of the Republican Platform which has been prepared by an unofficial Platform Committee under the direction of Republican Chairman Fletcher and which, it is my information, will be submitted by the Republican leaders to the Resolution Committee at Cleveland, to be the framework of the final platform. Among the authors of this document were several members of the recently appointed, so called, Brain Trust.

This draft differs materially from that proposed by the Republican Clubs. The authors of the Committee version are particularly opposed to the reemployment plank of the Republican Clubs draft on the ground that "co-operation of Government with Agriculture, Industry and Labor in providing jobs for the unemployed," if anything, implies an endorsement of the N.R.A. and the A.A.A.. The unofficial Committee draft would restrict the Republican Party to its traditional position of letting business solve the unemployment problem as best it can, with the single sop of "an orderly program of Public Works for the conservation and development of natural resources," whatever that may mean.

There is good reason to believe that an additional plank will be included in the draft which is finally handed to the Resolutions Committee at Cleveland under the heading "Stimulation of Employment". This will be a proposal for tax remissions for capital plant improvement expenditures as advocated by Sloan of General Motors in his California speech. That section of Sloan's speech was drafted for him by Steve Du Brul (formerly of N.R.A.) from one of the plans developed in the N.R.A. Division of Research and Planning.

Might it not be good strategy to include in the pending Tax Bill a provision to cover this point, provided a workable one can be devised and

RESORT HOTEL IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL
The SHOREHAM
Connecticut Avenue at Calvert Street
Washington, D.C.

The President, No.2

provided further, of course, that it fits in with the general objectives of the Bill. As a matter of fact such a provision was originally suggested by Jesse Jones in his letter to the Finance Committee.

On the whole it strikes me that this might be a good platform for the Republicans to adopt.

Inasmuch as only a few copies of this draft have been photostated and have to be accounted for, I am under obligation to return this one at the earliest possible moment and am therefore asking Miss Le Hand if she will kindly have same typewritten and return the original to me.

Respectfully,

Ben Grey

The President,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

PSF: Ben Grey

THE SHOREHAM - WASHINGTON, D.C.

May 28, 36.

Dear Miss Le Hand —

The enclosed, for your attention, is self explanatory.

I realize fully how pressed the President is. I'm staying over this coming week & will communicate with you again.

I'm on tap whenever wanted, any time, any-place.

Just as soon as the President sees the photostat, please shoot it back to me.

Kindest regards.

Hastily,

Ben Gray

Miss Marguerite Le Hand,
The White House,
Washington, D.C.

PSF: Ben Grey

TELEPHONE DISTRICT 4616

BEN GREY
SOUTHERN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.
June 4, 1936

Dear Marguerite Le Hand:

Alexander Sachs and I are in possession of the advance confidential sample polls of the Institute of Public Affairs being conducted by Dr. Gallup of the Herald-Tribune and which are being syndicated. These findings will prove of considerable value and interest to the President. In addition we have means of "planting" certain questions in the forthcoming questionairres which, by the very nature of the wording, can predicate reactions favorable to us.

For example, the question "Would you want measures taken for a quick balancing of the budget <u>if it carried with it the risk of a business decline</u>?" could obviously engender the kind of an attitude on the part of the public, as it relates to this issue, of considerable value to the President.

As to my recent conference with John Lewis, his value lies in the balance of power he can exert in the doubtful States of West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois and it is along these lines that I am working with him and feel I should check my subsequent moves with the President.

I realize fully just how pressed the President is at this juncture, and now Speaker Byrnes death complicates matters still more and so, naturally, I am loathe to intrude myself right now. On the other hand I feel I have to see him before he leaves so that I can contune with the work in progress during his absence. And as for the immediate information, referred to above, I feel that I should leave it to your best judgment as to how I should present it.

With the exception of from four-thirty to five-thirty when I shall be with Frederic Delano at his apartment, I'll either be at the Shoreham or the Hotel operator will know where to reach me.

Sincerely,

Ben Grey

Miss Marguerite Le Hand,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

PSF: Ben Grey

TELEPHONE DISTRICT 4610

BEN GREY
SOUTHERN BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C.
June 4, 1936

Dear Marguerite Le Hand:

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Sincerely,

Ben Grey

Miss Marguerite Le Hand,
The White House,
Washington, D. C.

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE BEST AVAILABLE. EVERY TECHNICAL EFFORT HAS BEEN TAKEN TO INSURE LEGIBILITY.

labor and [illegible] business.

RELIEF

Administration of unemployment relief by non-political local agencies responsive to community needs and familiar with community problems.

Federal loan to the States for relief of the unemployed to the extent necessary for all actual relief needs which the States are unable to meet.

Federal aid for the development of a practical program of housing for the lowest-income groups to be planned and carried out by States, local communities and individual enterprise.

SOCIAL SECURITY

An honest and workable plan of old age pensions and unemployment insurance with Federal aid to sound State measures.

Revision of the Federal Social Security Act to eliminate provisions which are unsound and unworkable [illegible].

Cooperation with the States in providing opportunities for youth.

LABOR

Maintenance of labor's right of collective bargaining through representatives of its own choosing without interference from any source.

Uniform State laws and interstate compacts for the establishment of minimum wages, maximum hours, abolition of sweat shops and improvement of working conditions.

Abolition of child labor.

Equality of opportunity and equal pay for equal work for men and women.

BUSINESS

Encouragement instead of hindrance to business.

Withdrawal of government from competition with private business.

Removal from business of excessive government regulation.

Voluntary trade associations subject to Federal Trade Commission regulation, to permit organized business to agree on standards of employment and fair competition.

GOVERNMENT FINANCE

Economy in government and a balanced Federal budget.

Revision of the Federal tax system and reduction of the burden of indirect taxes upon persons of small income.

A sound currency, convertible into gold at a rate subject to change only by Congress.

Establishment of an adequate bank credit and currency system based on the recommendations of an expert non-political commission.

TARIFF

Cooperation with other nations to revive world trade and [illegible]

[illegible] gates to the Republican National Convention [illegible]

The undersigned Republican Clubs believe the American people will defeat the New Deal in November for these reasons:

The New Deal is dishonest. It is not liberal except in word and in reckless spending of the people's money. It is buying popularity at the expense of the future of America. It is leading us into national bankruptcy. It is setting up a foreign, reactionary government under which opportunity and freedom will cease. The New Deal has not solved the country's problems.

The people are confused and look to the Republican party for leadership and to its platform for sound principles and constructive measures.

The platform should [illegible]

Pledge that government will see to it that no one in this land shall go without food, clothing, and shelter.

Emphasize the fundamental issue—individual and State independence to prevent Federal centralized control.

Call for self-reliance instead of dependence on government, since

Continued on Page Two