

Confidential

Memo on conference at the White House with the

President ----- August 4, 1939.

I said to the President that I had wanted to have a talk with him before I went home, but I knew that he had been very busy, and I had been busy also.

I said to him, columnists and others might carry various stories concerning me and my attitude toward him, and I wanted him to know first-hand just exactly how I felt.

I told him that Senator Norris had talked with me a short time ago, and that the Senator had said that he wanted to ask me a question. That the question he was propounding was entirely on his own initiative, and that no one else had suggested it to him. Then Senator Norris said: "Would you run for Vice President with President Roosevelt?"

I told the President that I said "No." "That I would not run for Vice President with anyone, and that I thought he (George Norris) should not encourage you to run. That I thought it was a mistake for you to seek a third term." President Roosevelt at this point interrupted me by saying, "of course it would be a mistake."

I told him I felt it would be a mistake for him personally, and it would be a mistake for the Democratic Party as well, and that all of the New Deal legislation would be eliminated in his fight over the third term issue, and that if he lost, it would then be considered as a repudiation of all of the New Deal legislation which he had put upon the statute books.

I stated to him, "Mr. President, I am worried about the future of this country, and I am worried for fear that some reactionary republican, or some reactionary democrat will come into power.

While I feel you would make a mistake running for a third term, nevertheless, if you are nominated, I will take off my coat and work for your reelection."

I also told him that I would not be a stooge for the reactionaries or for the big interests, and I said to him, "many of them believe because I was against you on the court issue, that I will be against you on everything else," and I said "of course that is not so."

"I am for seeing the Democratic Party nominate a liberal candidate, and it is the only way we can win."

He said, "I do not want to see a reactionary democrat nominated." The President said, "I love Jack Garner personally. He is a lovable man," but he said, "he could not get the nigger vote, and he could not get the labor vote," and I added, that I was very fond of Jack Garner, but that I doubted he could get the Irish vote, and called his attention to the fact that a friend of mine from Boston, when I suggested to him that Garner might be nominated said, "It would be a mistake." I asked him if he couldn't carry Boston, and he answered by saying, that if the Pope would come over there, and make a speech for him, I doubt that he could carry Massachusetts.

Then he spoke of Bennett Clark. He mentioned Jim Cox. He said Cox played with the reactionaries. He mentioned John W. Davis, and said he didn't

want anyone of that type to be nominated or to get control of the Democratic Party. He said, "I am getting too old to go out and fight for a ticket that cannot win, and I want to see a ticket that can win.

He said, "I supported Bryan. I was young and got into the Bryan campaign for the experience. I supported Wilson, and he won." He said, "if Champ Clark had been nominated in convention he could not have won." He said, "After Wilson, I ran with Cox. I said to Cox, of course, we have got to go along with Wilson's League of Nations. We have got to be good sports. If we do go along with it, the anti-League people are going to be sore, and if we do not go along with it, all of the Wilson forces are going to be sore. So I said to Cox, we will go along and be good sports, and after it is over, you will go back to Ohio, and I will go back and practice law in New York, because we cannot win."

Then I told him that I had gone along with him on almost everything else excepting the court. He interrupted me by saying, "Burt, I would like to have you do one thing. I would like to have you make a speech, or a statement (I forget which) and state that while you disagreed with me on the method of reforming the Supreme Court, that you agreed with me on the objective, and that the Court had now been liberalized, and that I won my objective." He said, "this would help you, and it would help me." He had previously asked Secretary Wallace to ask me to make the same identical statement. Secretary Wallace wrote it down, and saw me a few days later in his office to tell me of the President's wishes in the matter.

Now he said, "Burt, I think we can win, and I want to win in 1940." He said, "we will go along until January, February or March, we will get together then. We will sit around and take up different combinations, and try and pick out one that can win."

He then talked about labor and John Lewis. He said that John Lewis was an able fellow, and that if he would not do something(I forget the language he used) he would be an excellent labor leader. He said, "If Sidney Hillman was the leader of the CIO, I could settle all differences in the labor movement in a very short time, but we took \$600,000. from Lewis' CIO, and he has never gotten thru boasting about it. " He said, "we made a mistake . We never should have taken the money."

Now, he said, "Lewis made a mistake. It was a mistake for him to say what he did about Garner." Now he said, "you are strong in eastern Montana, and the endorsement of you by Lewis would not help you in eastern Montana, because there are no strong labor unions over there."

I then told him the story of how I ran for Governor and was defeated with the endorsement of the Non-Partisan League and Labor League in 1920, and how I fought to keep the League from endorsing me in 1922, because I knew the League would be the kiss of death for me, but I got the support of most of them, notwithstanding the fact they didn't endorse me.

He talked with me about railroads. He said, "you and I have done everything we could to help the railroads, but", he said, "some President is going to come in here in the not far distant time, and is going to take over some of these railroads, and I dislike to see it done, but I do not see any other outlook," but he says, "you know it as well as I do." "I want to help them and am willing to help them as far as I can on a reasonable basis."

He said he was going to be in Montana in October, and he said "around the 12th." I told him I had a long standing engagement at Hudson, Massachusetts on the 12th, and I probably could not be there. He said he would like to have me there, and I said the only way I could be there was to have this date changed, and he said, "see if you can't have it changed."

I stated to the President during the conversation, "another thing I want to say to you is that Farley, when he visited me, never mentioned a third term, nor did he say anything in the slightest way which was disrespectful to you. He did say that McNutt was one person that could never have the nomination if he could prevent it. He did complain about Tommy Corcoran."

The President then said, "I know that Jim is very bitter against McNutt, and I know that he does not like Tommy Corcoran. He said, "I never see Tommy Corcoran more than once a month, and I told Jim this, and I told him that a lot of things that Tommy might say, I didn't know anything about, and that the newspapers gave Tommy credit for a lot of things that were not so."

He said, "I had a very fine talk with Jim. He wants to run for Vice President, and because of his large acquaintance over the country, he feels he should have the nomination," but he said, "A Hull-Farley ticket could not be elected," or words to that effect.

I said to the President someone told me that Mrs. Hull was a Jewess, and I said that the Jewish-Catholic issue would be raised." He said, "Mrs. Hull is about one quarter Jewish." He said, "You and I Burt are old English and Dutch stock. We know who our ancestors are. We know there is no Jewish blood in our veins, but a lot of these people do not know whether there is Jewish blood in their veins or not."

Cardinal Mundelein said that some day we are going to have a Catholic President, but he should not come in by the back door, and then he stated, "they could not nominate Farley or Murphy for Vice President with the idea that they were going to become President." He said that the catholic who they would elect would have to come out of the West, and not from the sidewalks of New York.

Then the President said, "if we had a catholic today like Tom Walsh was in 1924, a young man and vigorous, we might possibly elect him President today."

When I left he said, "well, I will see you in October."

The President said the Northwest was all right (meaning all right politically). "There is only one bad spot, and that is Oregon. There, on account of ex-Governor Martin, the situation is not good."

Keep

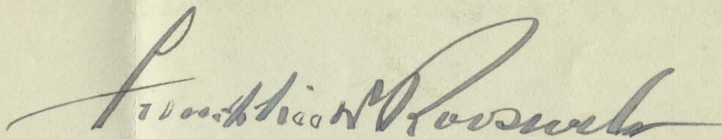
THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

May 17, 1933.

My dear Senator:-

Thank you much for your note about my old and close friend Senator Wheeler. My difficulty is that I can only take one Democrat for the Delegation and that should be the Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. I know you will understand.

Very sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which appears to be "Franklin D. Roosevelt". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the typed name of the recipient.

Hon. Jonathan Bourne, Jr.,  
705 Stoneleigh Court,  
Washington, D. C.