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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

Sunday, May 1, 1928.

My dear son Arch:

There's a great urge upon me this first day of the year to write you — not to indulge in good advice or to suggest new resolutions, but just to write, to commune, as a florid literary would put it, with one with whom I often imagine I have a sort of telephatic union.

We've just returned from an abortive attempt to attend the great New Year's Diplomatic Reception of the Secretary of State. We sallied forth, Mother in her best bib and tucker, father in frock coat and plug hat, only to discover when we arrived at our destination that the reception was 12:30 Jan. 2 instead of Jan. 1. Mother and I have laughed at our silos since, and recalled that once when we were very young and had two little babies (oh, how long ago) we

dressed very quietly one night and surreptitiously (for our babies were tyrants and would not knowingly permit an absence even of an evening) left our home in a hack for Turner Hall for a much heralded local function. When we arrived, the hall was dark, and inquiry told us we were a day early. Thus today probably thirty-five years later, the same ludicrous thing has occurred to us. Fortunately the event was to be held at the Pan-American Building and when we found this closed, we had just a glimmer of common sense and consueted our invitation. Laughingly then, we drove home. It's a helluva way to begin the New Year. I wonder if the year will be a joke or a tragedy to us. The beginning would indicate it may not be a wholly drab affair.

And what of the New Year for you? How I long and pray that it may keep you in health—that's far and away the most

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

important thing. Prosperity I doubt
will be your portion. You have too
many of my imprudent and
improvident qualities ever to have
much of this world's goods. And
then again, you cannot be accused of
the thrift which by care and saving
laboriously puts dollar on dollar
until a competence is acquired.
However, next to your health I
pray for such a measure of pros-
perity for you as will keep you
from worry and give you true
happiness.

I cannot see in the months
to come much of gratification for
myself. Politically the situation
is not encouraging. Otherwise, I'm
nonplussed and perplexed. But it's
of little consequence what may be my
portion, if physically I can reasonably
hold my own, for in some way
I'll carry on and toady through.

Which wants that are not elaborate,
I think I can provide for Mother
and myself, and if we both
retain our strength, I've become
supremely philosophical, to ask little
more.

The last few nights I've read
the Life of Aaron Burr you gave me.
I found it fascinating and after
commencing it, I read it as avidly
as the most interesting novel.

You are now well grounded on our
country's history. These quite re-
markable books, all very readable,
will give you a fair conception
of our early periods. Please do
me the favor to read them. Two
of them are by Bowers, "Hamilton
and Jefferson", and "The purple battles of
Jackson's time" (the latter may not
be exactly the title, but substantially it
is) and the third is Burr's Life to which
I've just referred.

During the week, I'll send you
a couple of novels. I wrote you
Newbegin has fallen down and sent me
but two books since my departure, one

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D. C.

of which was returned because I had had it in California.

And now, goodbye for a brief time, dear boy. My heart is with you this New Year day. My love would give you, were it possible, your most fantastic wish. I can only send it to you and Mawha and write you thus my fervent prayer for your health and happiness.

Affectionately,

Dad.

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN
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M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

January 2, 1928

Major Archibald M. Johnson,
Attorney at law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California

My dear Arch:

I was much pleased yesterday to have your letter. Mother also received hers. They constituted a sort of New Year gifts.

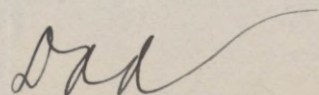
I am glad the holidays are over, for like you, their excesses leave me feeling seedy and dull. It will take me a few days to get back into my old routine. The irregularities and various other things in which we indulge during the holidays are not conducive to an old man's physical or mental condition.

We had yesterday the telegram, too, from you and Martha. Thank you very much for it. I had a good smile at your preparations for Dan's delectation. Apparently he will raise a race of dogs as big as ponies. I would like to see a half dozen or more of them capering around your home. We still have the same trouble with Tubby, only accentuated. He has to remain practically by himself at home. The moment he gets anywhere near either Chops or Spartan there is a fight, and a fight with the latter I constantly fear will result fatally for him.

We resume our sessions tomorrow and will be busy upon the Kellogg Peace Treaty, just a great big piece of American bunk, and the Cruiser Bill.

Love to you and Martha.

Affectionately,



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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

January 2, 1928.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr.,
Attorney at law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California

My dear Jack:

Thank you for your telegram on New Year's Day. I am glad the holidays are over. I am getting too old for the big dinners and celebrations and indulgences of the holiday season. It will take me two or three days, as Harding used to say, to get back to normalcy. With it all, however, Mother and I enjoyed our holidays, and to this enjoyment, our dear ones in California, contributed most, of course.

The time this reaches you, you doubtless will be back in the old groove and the New Year will be on its way. Time passes so quickly with us now. One year merges into another with a rapidity that the younger generation can not understand.

But two months remain now of this session. Whether there will be an extra session, no one here at present knows. The "king" arrives on Sunday next, and then this will be determined. If there is an extra session, it will run, in my opinion, through the summer. Of course, I am hoping there will be none for I want to get back in March and get to work.

With love to all, in which Mother Joins,

Affectionately,

Dad.

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN
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M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

January 7, 1928.

Major Archibald M. Johnson,
Attorney at law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California

My dear Arch:

I received two books from Newbegin this week, one of them a collection of detective stories by Carolyn Wells, and the other entitled "The witness at the Window". I am notifying you of this, so that you may keep track of what Newbegin forwards. I am sending you today, too, in the way I used to, three books, in which will be very brief notes.

The holidays have passed now, and we're back in the old groove. Christmas was a beautiful day. New Years was colder than Kelsey, and for three days at the beginning of this week, we had weather far below the freezing point. Just now it is beginning to moderate. There was a time when I did not care about freezing weather, but I confess it is too much for me now.

We have practically finished the investigation of the Hearst documents. The Government experts, whom I personally procured, started the solution of the whole question, and when the Hearst experts came they were unable to do otherwise than agree with our people. Five experts, two who served without compensation, and represented the Government of the United States, and three - one from New York, one from Baltimore, and one from Chicago, the most famous in the country, hired by Hearst, agree the documents

are spurious. There are some things about them that are very puzzling. I will not, however, go into detail with you in this regard. The bitterness of the rest of the press towards Hearst you can not imagine in the wildest flights of imagination. It sickened me, and particularly was this bitterness of the rest of the press, disgusting, when the testimony demonstrated that the respectable Public Ledger, Mr. Curtis's paper, and the ultra-respectable New York Times, Mr. Och's paper, were both willing to pay to have certain documents stolen from the Mexican official files. The most debasing, degrading, degenerate, and lousy thing that there is in American life today is the American press.

In my opinion, the Boulder Dam legislation has gone by the board for this session. I am maintaining a stiff upper lip and will do the best that I can, but with the states interested united against us, and the great influence of the power companies, the President and the Secretary of Commerce stabbing us in the back, there is, in my opinion, no hope of success. Our failure with this Bill may alter entirely my course of life. I am not insensible to what it means.

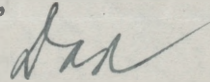
I have a letter from Dick Tobin in which he said he wants to go to Italy, and that there is soon to be a vacancy in the Ambassadorship to that country. I am curious to know if you and he are as intimate as formerly, and I would be glad if you would write me, confidentially, whether you would wish me to go to the bat in every conceivable way to accomplish this desire and ambition of Tobin. I do not know that there is going to be a vacancy, first, and I am by no means sure that I could accomplish anything

in the second place, but if you wish it done, and it would be of any service to you, I will not hesitate to attempt it.

I was delighted to see from your letter and Martha's that you were feeling fairly good, and too, to learn from yours that business was satisfactory. I do hope you keep well, and of course, I want you to have plenty of work.

Mother joins in love to Martha and yourself.

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Dan' or 'Dana', written in a cursive style.

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M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

January 7, 1928.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr.,
Attorney at law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California

My dear Jack:

I received a sweet little note from Hiram the other day asking me about the Nicaraguan question and the Educational Bill. I wrote him at once a preliminary response concerning Nicaragua. I am sending him today, the part of the Congressional Record containing the running remarks upon the subject in the Senate Thursday. These are not very interesting but they serve to show the different points of view. Sooner or later, there is going to be a great deal said about our policy in Nicaragua, and I will try to forward to Hiram anything of interest. The situation there, of course, is horrid, but I feel that we're like the man who had the bear by the tail. What our people forget in discussing the situation is that we have been running Nicaragua with Marines through successive administrations, and that what has happened there of late is no new thing, that we face the alternative of maintaining without justification by force our position in that country, or permitting it to go hang with Mexican influences predominating.

The holidays are over, and we'll settle down to hard work and long hours. Christmas was delightful, but New Years beastly cold, and it has been wretchedly cold since. I can remember when cold had no terrors for me and caused me not the least suffering. Now,

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 2

however, both Mother and I feel it dreadfully. Ex-Senator Sherman was in the office yesterday. He told me that he was seventy years of age, and that he now lives in Florida, to which state he removed from Illinois in 1924. I asked him why in the world he went down there, and he said he had so little time left to enjoy life, that he wanted to be where he could live twelve months in the year. It struck me that he had a mighty good reason for his removal.

I have been hoping to hear something from you or Arch how to take care of our dogs. We have only one way now, and that is to keep them separate, and this we do at quite considerable bother. The other dogs don't like Tubb, and while he and the Pekinese can stay in the same room together, they won't play with him. Now and then, in quite pathetic fashion, he dances around them, and begs them to play, but neither, apparently, wants anything to do with him.

We have all but finished the investigation of the Hearst documents. I insisted upon getting some experts, and finally obtained from the Navy Department and the Treasury Department those who represented them in any question relating to handwriting. Both of them were very remarkable experts. Both, in preliminary reports to me, held the documents to be spurious. We notified the Hearst people we were going to have some experts, and that if they desired, they might hire some who would be given access to the papers. They hired therefore the most prominent experts in the country - one from New York, one from Chicago, and one from Baltimore. These three agreed with our two, and the agreement seems to settle the question. The bitterness, hostility, and hatred of the rest of the press for Hearst was the most remarkable thing to

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 3

me. Outside of the testimony actually taken, this bitterness and hatred has no limits, and I am thoroughly convinced that the rest of the press would commit any crime to fasten one upon Hearst. The attitude of this press, you'll understand as the more reprehensible, when I tell you that the evidence demonstrated that Mr. Curtis's respectable Philadelphia Ledger, and Mr. Och's ultra-respectable New York Times both were willing to pay for burglarizing the official files of Mexico to get papers they wanted. There is little difference in the ethics of these newspaper men. The rottenest and the lousiest thing there is in American life today is the American press.

When you get time write me whether the River Gardens Farm sale fell through. You wrote me once about a possible assessment. Has anything developed in this?

Mother joins me in love to the kiddies and yourself.

Affectionately,

W. Johnson

HIRAM W. JOHNSON
CHAIRMAN

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

January 14, 1928

Major Archibald M. Johnson,
Attorney at law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California

My dear Arch:

I have just received and read yours of January 9. I was very much interested in what you said about the President's statement concerning brokers' loans. I do not understand the intricacies of the stock market as you know, and I was not quite familiar with just what the President did. I found, however, even the ultra-respectable New York Times mildly chiding him for his utterance. I have no doubt it was dictated by the base motives you suggest, but this, at present, is our government, and the kind of government the materialistic period desires.

There is nothing new for me to write you about at the moment. We begin on Tuesday the hearings before the senatorial committee on the Boulder Dam Project. The other states are present in force and smashing from every angle our measure. I have been almost sick with worry about it, but I am trying to get myself in a philosophical strain, although not very successfully. I can not see daylight.

We did a good job in the Hearst investigation. I rather think that the real job was done by myself. It was I who insisted upon the technical examinations in executive session of the documents, and it was I who obtained the first experts from the Navy

Major Archibald M. Johnson - 2

and Treasury Departments. We filed our report in judicial fashion, stating our findings and conclusions. Doing it thus seemed to all of us the appropriate thing to do. The rest of the press, however, was very indignant, and desired us to indulge in wholesale denunciation and excoriation that they might play it up. While I would not permit the Hearst papers, in any way, to shape my course upon the committee, equally, I would not tolerate the malice of the remaining part of the press. If Hearst had any sense he would realize how hated he is, and maintain a high, independent position, instead of truckling as he has done in the last few years, to wealth and power.

(two more came today)
I have received just two books from Newbegins, about which I wrote you. I am advising you of this, so that you may watch his bills.

I hope you are feeling good and that the New Year promises well for you. From my own standpoint I do not like very much the outlook, but who can tell.

Mother joins in love to Martha and yourself.

Affectionately,

Dad

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

January 14, 1928

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr.,
Attorney at law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California

My dear Jack:

I received this morning your letters about Mrs. Gardner. I assume from them that her son is detailed at San Antonio, although I am not entirely clear about this. At any rate I will make the strongest sort of representation to the department in the hope of having him transferred as he desires.

For a few days we have had delightful weather. The change was remarkable from the extreme cold just after New Years to pleasant, balmy days. Indeed, the danger of the climate here is the sudden and extreme changes. It is not unusual to have a difference of 30 to 40 degrees within twelve hours. We're having the usual epidemic of pneumonia in this city, and everybody is afflicted with a cold of some sort. At the Senate Exercise Room recently upon trial we have had an ultra-violet ray, which is supposed to do what you, and the others at the Olympic Club who cherish their pulchritude, accomplish by lying nude in the sun. This ray, however, does the job in about two minutes. I am not very clear but what it is another of the fads with which we become so familiar.

There is a funny incident that occurred recently at which all Washington is laughing. Late at night there was a hook-up all over the nation of the radio broadcasting in behalf of

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 2

Dodge Brothers advertising their new car, etc. The spokesman and interlocutor was Will Rogers in California, and he introduced such stars as Al Jolson, New York, and different ones in different cities all over the country. After Rogers spoke his little piece, suddenly he said he would introduce Calvin Coolidge, the President of the United States, who would say a few words, and thereupon, talking through his nose, he imitated Coolidge and indulged in a lot of nonsense upon all sorts of topics. . . That it was a burlesque most of us of course thoroughly understood. Next day, however, the White House was deluged with letters and telegrams denouncing the President, and protesting against the things he had said the night before, and many of them expressing their deep regret that he had lent himself to an advertising campaign on behalf of an automobile manufacturer. Many newspapers in the East have editorialized upon Rogers' bad taste, and have warned him against any similar act. The thing simply illustrates how extremely careful one must be with the general public. I remember there was a time when Senator Norris made a sarcastic speech "No Farmers need Apply, and None was Fit to Sit in the Congress" He was pointing the wrong that had been done the farming industry, and the way in which politicians treated it. His mail was filled afterwards with protests against his remarks, and complaints because of his denunciation of farmers. The sarcasm had gone clear over the heads of his large audience.

I wrote you during the week sending you the amount of the assessment levied on mother's stock in River Gardens Farm. Some

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 3

day when you recall it, tell me how much stock there is of the corporation, please. I am asking this merely as a matter of curiosity.

We were dreadfully shocked to learn of the death of Mrs. Keith. I don't know what in the world Mother is going to do about the house. Of course, she says she has a lease and she is simply going to sit tight, but this is hardly my way. I do hope, if Mrs. Keith had any family, that they will continue to retain the home and save all of the bother which might result from any other course. I presume Mother has written you, and her desires in the matter will prevail, of course, with me.

I have written Hiram two or three notes, and I thought possibly Frere would think he was overlooked, so I wrote him a little letter by hand the other night, which I trust he received.

Mother joins in love to the boys and yourself.

Affectionately,

Dad

Since dictating the above, I have had up with Maj. Emmons of the Air Craft personnel the Gardner application. The Major was fine but wished in order to avoid the imputation of Congressional influence, to have an application from Gardner, which subsequently I could press. I've just wired you.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION

January 23, 1928

My dear Boys:

All of last week and until late Saturday evening I was engaged with the Boulder Dam hearings before the senate committee. I am not going to burden you with a description of these hearings. They were a tough proposition for me and drove me distracted. Los Angeles, as usual, showed herself inefficient and futile, and if I had not broken the force of the testimony against us, I don't know where we would have been. There is a so-called "defensive and offensive" alliance among the other states of the Colorado River, and stronger even than I believed it to be before the hearings. There is a united opposition by every crook and by every weakling, who is subservient to influence and power. The result is that we're in a most precarious position, and unless we pay through the nose^s, and pay heavily, our bill is doomed. What makes me so infernal mad is that the hero of California, that great statesman, Samuel M. Shortridge, did not deign even to attend the hearings, except on two occasions for a very few minutes.

I received from Bert Meek and from Theodore Roche letters in which they detail what was endeavoring to be done politically in California. Both of them I deem very good friends and I have for them, as you know, a very great affection, and ^{their} whose loyalty, unlike that of many others, is undoubted. They hope by aiding Hoover to aid me. They have a singleness of purpose, I think.

2.

Nearly all of the others who are engaged in the endeavor are kindly and friendly, but naturally they want their place in the political sun, and no act of mine, and no political principle of theirs, would deter them from actively supporting Hoover and shining in the reflected light of the Hoover campaign. That you may know exactly my attitude, I enclose to each of you herein copy of my letter to Bert Meek. I felt that there was nothing for me to do, and nothing I could do, and I wrote him, therefore, that while I would not enter into any political bargains of any sort, I assumed my friends would pursue such course as they deemed appropriate. I think the thing for you to do is what I have done. Let matters take their own course. We could not shape them, if we would, and we could not influence nine out of ten who have been with us politically in the past in the attitude they desire to assume.

I will write you during the week. I have not had a minute to myself of late, but I am going to see that I get some little time this week. A continuous period like I have had of late would be utterly ruinous to me, both physically and mentally.

Mother joins in love,

Affectionately,

Dad

January 16, 1928.

Hon. B. B. Meek
Director, Department of Public Works,
Sacramento, California.

My dear Bert:

On Saturday last I received your hand-written note and a letter from Theodore Roche. I gather from them that in the conference recently held participated in by Messrs. Hinsdale, Rowell, Hale, Gregory, the Governor, Neumiller, Roche, Langdon, and yourself, you reached certain tentative agreements by which all of those named, and generally those in leadership in the Republican Party, should join in an endorsement of Mr. Hoover and Mr. Hoover's candidacy, and thereafter enthusiastically work in his behalf; that a list of delegates should be selected to the Republican National Convention of persons who should be satisfactory to all; and that the campaign of Mr. Hoover in California should be generally controlled by men of standing and probity, rather than politicians of the Benjamin stripe. I assume, although you do not say so, that some, at least, of you were acting upon the theory that a public advocacy of Mr. Hoover by you would lead to a like advocacy by his supporters for myself, if I am a candidate next year for the United States Senate

I realize how very much I am beholden to you gentlemen, who met with Mr. Hoover's personal representatives, for your kindnesses in the past, and your support in numerous campaigns. I want first of all, therefore, to express to you and to all of those who are actuated with the like motive, my deep appreciation and my heartfelt thanks. At the same time, however, I want to make perfectly plain that I would not ask, and I do not wish any man to sacrifice his political principle in even the slightest degree for me or for any candidacy of mine. I do not want to indulge in any banalities with you in this regard, and so I content myself with the statement that I have made, and with adding simply that at this late stage in my political career, I would never forgive myself, if in pursuit of any ambition, I permitted for any personal advantage, a friend of mine to violate his conscience or sacrifice his principle. I think what I have written probably is wholly unnecessary because from the conversations I had before I left California, I felt that nearly all of those with whom I have been associated politically in the past, were very anxious indeed to join the Hoover ranks and aid in the Hoover contest. I do not cavil at this or criticize it in the slightest degree. I wished, however, to make my own position entirely plain. As I told you before I left the State, I do not care, personally, to enter into any political trade or bargain. This I told, as well to Mr. Hinsdale, I said to you, and I repeated it to him, that

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I had no objection to any course that might be pursued by you gentlemen in California, and I repeat - I have no objection to any plan which you may see fit to make, or any course which my friends may pursue. I recognize that if those I have been associated with, enter into any agreement at all, that agreement will be scrupulously observed, and I would wish my friends to carry it out in the utmost good faith. I am perfectly free to say to you that, with a few exceptions, I doubt if those with whom you enter into an agreement would observe the like good faith. I recognize, too, that there is no possible way in which you could be certain of what will happen. The presidential preference primary occurring in May, the incentive for an agreement will be gone, and the gentlemen, who, in the past have violated every tenet of fair warfare will have no reason, when they have accomplished their purpose, save of course, good faith, which they have never observed, to perform their part, I beg you to believe that I am not writing you in bitterness or in hostile criticism of our opponents but I am under no illusions about what will happen this year, and I do not wish you, and a few others, for whom I have an abiding affection, and who I love to think have a similar affection for me, to be under any illusions either.

I really do not care whether the statement to be signed, as suggested in your note, is submitted to me or not, and the only thing that I could suggest in regard to the personnel of the delegation, is that, if you enter into any agreement, you get just as many of your kind of people upon it as you can. Of course, all of those thus put upon the delegation, and they ought to constitute at least half of it, would play the game on the square. But there may come a time during the convention, when having done their full duty and played the game absolutely on the square, the principal will release them, and they may then be able to perform a patriotic duty.

To sum up what I have written I wish, as at present I feel, to let "nature take her course" in California, without agreement or bargain of my own in any respect, and without objection to what my friends may do.

With my fondest personal regards, I am

Yours most sincerely,