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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

GEORGE W. NEVILLE, CLERK

Sunday, June 4, 1933.

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

My dear Arch:

In a note that I sent you last Sunday I spoke of the possibility of an employment in San Francisco. What I had in mind then was that the administration was seeking to take charge of the oil business of the country with Ickes as czar. Under this it would be possible for the employment of an attorney in San Francisco, and in a matter with which I believe you to be wholly versed. I had little doubt that with the the success of the measure I could have obtained this sort of employment as attorney in your own state from Ickes. It looks as if the bill has blown up. There is tremendous opposition to it as well as enormous support for it, but the opposition seems to have won. I shall, therefore, before my departure take up with the Federal Trade Commission your employment in San Francisco with that Commission. I have written you about this heretofore, and I am assuming it would be, if it could be accomplished, a satisfactory employment. I would be glad if you would send me your views respecting either upon receipt of this note.

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I am extremely weary and would like to get home at the earliest moment. I don't know just when we can leave. Your Mother has a terrible cold, and physically is not fit to do anything for the next few days. Moreover, she is not anxious to leave here under existing circumstances.

Affectionately,

Dad

HUBERT D. STEPHENS, MISS., CHAIR
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COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

GEORGE W. NEVILLE, CLERK

Sunday, June 4, 1933.

My dear Boys:

Long hours of sessions, dreary interviews with innumerable Californians, constant effort to whip a weary intellect into activity have made the past week or two extremely hard and disagreeable. We're going at top speed in order to adjourn early. This adjournment has been fixed tentatively for Saturday next. I am inclined to think we'll be driven to it. I may add parenthetically that I am having the same difficulties preparing to come home that you are familiar with in each trip I take either going or coming. Roosevelt wants the Congress out of the way. He is losing a little of his astounding and remarkable poise, and I rather think a bit of his extreme good nature. There is a revolt in the air in the Congress, too. Men have followed him upstairs without question or criticism. Some individuals even have been mute concerning their most cherished ideas in order that they might contribute what little they could in aid of the President's efforts in this economic crisis. These men have about reached the limit of their endurance. Roosevelt, clever as he is, senses that fact, and before there is an actual break, he wishes us out of the way. I think he is wise

in his decision. Personally, I don't know how much longer I could restrain myself from talking about Norman Davis and Ambassador Bingham. Davis is doing exactly what I said during the Hoover campaign had been done in our foreign affairs for many years, negotiating, manipulating, and controlling our relations with other countries for J.P. Morgan and Company. Confidentially, I tell you that the President and those close to him assure me he exceeded his instructions at Geneva, and none of them, apparently, like Bingham's speech made before he had even warmed his seat on his arrival in London. It may be that Davis did exceed his instructions, but when it developed that he was just a Morgan puppet, as some of us long ago suspected, he should have been instantly recalled.

Yesterday, the so-called "Gold Bill" came up. I have not had time in the multiplicity of things I was doing to study this measure with any degree of care. I listened therefore intently to the debate, and then concerning one part of the measure I questioned those who were sponsoring the measure. I could not rid myself of the idea that while we had the power to do for the future and retroactively what this Bill did, the propriety of doing it retroactively was very doubtful. Bad faith is so repugnant to me, and I have such delicate sensibilities concerning the honor of my country, that finally I voted against the

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measure. I hope that the Bill will be fruitful of benefit, but I do not think its consequences can be at present foreseen.

The passing of the days has confirmed me in the decision I made about going to London; but I would not have you think from this that I am without regrets. I would have loved the trip, and I would have loved to have been a part of the pageantry and the proceedings. The enjoyment I feel sure in these things would have been outweighed by the mental agony I would have had in being one of six whose wings were clipped before the proceedings started, and I would have been in a painful minority of one from the beginning to the end. Of course, I could have kicked up an awful row, but it would have meant a row, not only with five other delegates, in which the whole country would have considered I was a pestiferous and an impossible negotiator, but it would have meant a row as well immediately with the President, which would have been welcomed with chortling glee by every Morgan Row^{ell} and every skunk partisan in California and elsewhere. After I declined, the President invited little LaFollette to go, and I was quite interested in finding that his reasons for refusing were not dissimilar from mine. I never spoke to him upon the subject until both of us had refused. Subsequently, Couzens went, and this was^a perfectly natural thing for him. Couzens is a man of absolute integrity and quite independent. He is the richest man in the

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senate, and this gives him an assurance that many do not have. He was born in Canada, and while I consider him a good American, he has never forgotten where he was born. He wants the prominence, the parade, and pictures for himself and his wife. I think he will try to do his duty, but this may be tempered, in his instance, by his proximity to the great and the near-great of the world.

Last Sunday we had Moley and Bullitt to dinner with us. Both of these men are in the intimate confidence of the President. Both have gone to London. They are infinitely more bitter toward Norman Davis than any of us who have made the long fight to keep this country out of European wars. They seemed to me in their conversations not only very antagonistic to Davis's policy, but there was bitterness and a personal hatred. Indeed, they were ready to furnish me a decision from the United States Supreme Court and the Supreme Court of this District deciding that Davis, in some transaction, was a fraud and a rogue. I noticed during the week Congressman Tinkham made a speech upon the subject in the House and put the decision in the Record. But beyond this, they insisted that Davis had butted in on Roosevelt when he came here to see Hoover, and by constantly butting in, he had eased himself into his present position. They were both very critical about what would happen at London, and expressed a deep regret

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that I was not going with them to be a sort of mental pugilist, who would metaphorically knock down and drag out one after another of the foreign conferees, and I am not very clear but what they would have taken a malicious pleasure in having someone like myself kick the whole conference into a cocked hat. Of course, they did not say this, but I was extremely interested and amused by the implications of what they did say. It is a funny game, this. And I can well imagine these two young men, anxious to see somebody break up the whole show, and then lifting their hands in horror at the desecration and destruction by a wild man of a gathering for economic recovery and in the name of holy peace.

Your Mother has contracted one of her horrible colds. I feel so sorry for her, and yet so little can be done. I am sailing along as usual but actually with only half of my ordinary efficiency. How I would love to go and bury myself some place for a month, and do nothing but slumber and dream!

With all my love, in which Mother joins,

Affectionately,

Dad

HUBERT D. STEPHENS, MISS., CHAIRMAN
DUNCAN U. FLETCHER, FLA.
MORRIS SHEPPARD, TEX.
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

GEORGE W. NEVILLE, CLERK

Sunday
June 11, 1933.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr.,
Major Archibald M. Johnson,
Attorneys at Law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California.

My dear boys:

It was the expectation that we would adjourn last night, but after a somewhat exciting session, wherein a few of us very vigorously opposed adjournment until we had really completed our work, we recessed until Monday morning. We may finish Monday night. Thereafter I will probably be detained here a week or so, cleaning up, and then we'll be upon our way. I tried to start Mother packing a couple of weeks ago, but without success, and I am up against the usual thing when it comes to departure.

I will not try to write a letter today. We have been running twelve and fourteen hours a day, of late, and of course we are all of us tired, and with ragged nerves.

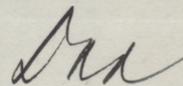
This is Mother's birthday. I am trying to have a little dinner for her tonight, but it is so infernally hot I fear it will not be particularly enjoyable. The past week has been simply hell here. Fortunately there is a cooling plant for the Senate chamber, and it has been something of a haven, notwithstanding the work, to be there

instead of in our offices.

Miss Connor's mother died day before yesterday,
and we feel very sorry for her.

With love to all,

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'D.H.' or similar initials, written in dark ink.

B

HUBERT D. STEPHENS, MISS., CHAIR
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

GEORGE W. NEVILLE, CLERK

June 16, 1933.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr.,
Major Archibald M. Johnson,
Attorneys at law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California

My dear Boys:

We adjourned last night sometime after one o'clock. I am writing you this note, merely that you may know I am coming home as soon as possible. I do not think I can leave for a week or ten days, and of course I will write you as usual until just before departure.

The latter part of this session has been terrible. We're all tired and many are disgruntled. The last fight was on veterans. The Bureau of the Budget has acted in the most shameful, outrageous, and cruel manner. The attempt was made by the Senate to right this, not by a return to old expenditures, but reasonably. Something has been accomplished, but not what is right. The Director of the Budget is a young man, Lewis Douglas, of Arizona, born to the purple, loves the English and their ways, and has a heart of stone.

The foreign debt proposition, in which Roosevelt has been anything but frank, leaves a bad taste with most of us. There is such a thing in this world as

2.

being too smart. The great balance, however, in the Roosevelt administration is favorable, and perhaps we ought not only to discount, but to forget the other side of the ledger.

I feel scarcely like moving today, and of course mentally I am as rotten as I am physically.

With my love to all,

Affectionately,

Dad

HUBERT D. STEPHENS, MISS., CHAIRMAN

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WALLACE H. WHITE, JR., ME.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

GEORGE W. NEVILLE, CLERK

Sunday, June 18, 1933.

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

My dear Jack:

I have received this Sunday morning yours of June 16. My expectation now is to be home just before or just on the first of July. I can't tell definitely for I am having the same struggle I always have when we start for home or leave home. I agree with you, I would rather live in the old home at 857 Green Street. My lease has expired. I have asked the Tillmans to let the matter run about three months more, so that we could, after the adjournment of Congress, pack up all of the things belonging to us there. Very decently they assented. My recollection is the lease expired on the 31st day of May. If I could get the same kind of arrangement we have, I would like to go back to the old house, but the objections are: first, that I probably can not make the arrangements of the same sort, and secondly, your mother's disinclination. I would like to be back at the old house, because I think I ought to be prepared, if necessary, to take up my residence permanently now in San Francisco again. I am under no illusions about next year.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 2

I was very much interested in what you said about the fight on the benefits that have heretofore been granted to veterans. I really started that fight by a speech that I made on May 31. We then expected merely to protect the men shot to pieces in combat. The contest broadened then to include the tubercular, as it ought to ~~include~~, and then subsequently the Spanish War veterans and presumptives, although there was no effort to make the amounts unreasonable, and we specifically provided for the purging of the rolls of any undeserving. The trouble with the situation has been the administration of the Economy Act. A young man named Douglass, who ~~was~~ born to the purple, but who has a heart of stone, instead of administering the law fairly and justly, took a real pleasure out of the suffering of men who deserved consideration. It took all of the power of the administration to prevent the passage of the Steiwer-Cutting amendment, and then the administration only succeeded by compromising to liberalize its rulings, and finally the difference in saving between what the President agreed to do, and what we sought to do was only thirty millions of dollars. You can imagine how I could have run the changes on the last day had my situation been otherwise. That day there came to us Neville Chamberlain's speech in the House of Commons

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr/ - 3

where the House of Commons cheered to the echo the receipt by the President of the so-called "token" payment.

The parallel/^{that} could have been drawn between the British cheers in the House of Commons and the tears in American homes, would, I think have been devastating. The fact of the matter is there is an absolute conspiracy in the press to prevent an honest account of what has happened to the veterans. They are in great degree responsible for this themselves because of the course they have pursued in the past, yet, nevertheless, the greatest injustices have been done and the utmost cruelties practised.

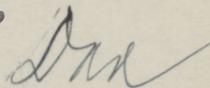
Over the radio was the announcement some weeks ago of Martha's residence in Reno. Over the radio Monday night was the statement that she had commenced action for divorce on the ground of cruelty. Write me, on receipt of this, please, and tell me whether the divorce has been granted, and if you know what she is doing, and what the situation is generally. I have not asked you before, and I have respected your reticence. Naturally, Arch has had little to say about it, although he did advise us in the beginning. Mother and I shrink from the radio announcements and the publicity, but of course with everybody doing it from the children of the President down, perhaps we ought not to be bothered. We're so old-fashioned, though, that it affects

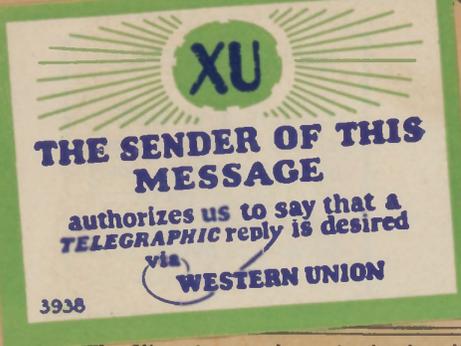
Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 4

us very, very deeply.

With the love of Mother and myself to all
of you,

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'Dad', written in dark ink.



WESTERN UNION

SIGNS
DL = Day Letter
NM = Night Message
NL = Night Letter
LCO = Deferred Cable
NLT = Cable Night Letter
WLT = Week-End Letter

COMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

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MINUTES IN TRANSIT	
FULL-RATE	DAY LETTER

MAJOR ARCHIBALD M JOHNSON=

ATTORNEY AT LAW MILLS BLDG SFRAN=

DO YOU KNOW REQUIREMENTS AND DUTIES SUFFICIENTLY ATTORNEY
 FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION SANFRANCISCO TO ADVISE DEFINITELY
 IF YOU WISH ME TO GO AFTER IT STOP HAVE DONE WHAT NECESSARY
 PRELIMINARILY WOULD NOT CARE MAKE FINAL REQUEST WITHOUT YOUR
 DEFINITE DESIRE WIRE COLLECT TODAY JUST YES OR NO MOTHER
 JOINS LOVE=

HIRAM W JOHNSON.

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
DOMESTIC	CABLE
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DAY LETTER	DEFERRED
NIGHT MESSAGE	NIGHT LETTER
NIGHT LETTER	WEEK END LETTER

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COPY OF WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

Hiram W. Johnson Papers
Bancroft Library

June 22, 1933.

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

AM ASKED TO ENDORSE EMPHATICALLY WATER PLAN FOR CALIFORNIA AND TO AID IN INTERESTING ADMINISTRATION IN IT. PLEASE WIRE ME NIGHT LETTER COLLECT YOUR VIEW OF PLAN AND WHETHER I SHOULD ENDORSE IT.

HIRAM W. JOHNSON

O B STRAIGHT FAST WIRE

Send same wire to

Charles K. McClatchy,
Sacramento Bee,
Sacramento, California.