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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

February 8, 1931.

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

My dear Arch:

How sweetly sad it was to sit and dream after midnight on the fourth when we talked to you over the 'phone! It was fine to hear your voice and Martha's. I hope you had an enjoyable birthday. We enjoyed it, because we talked to you.

I think that we are going to get out in March. I have mixed feelings about returning to the law. It is a grind that I know will leave little in me, and it possesses few charms for me. I am responsible, however, for the circumstances in which I find myself, and therefore I will go ahead with it with such courage as I can muster.

There has been a hectic time here of late, in which I have not participated. I knew it was the "bunk", and that Robinson, Caraway and Borah, amid their tears and their cheers, were seeking some face-saving device for agreement with the Administration. This agreement now has been made, and as Wheeler remarked yesterday, is discreditable alike to the

Major Archibald M. Johnson - 2

President and the Senate. It is all so absolutely silly, too, for to the ordinary mind, if people require to be fed, they ought to be fed, and the mode of feeding is of secondary importance. I find myself fighting a growing cynicism, and I don't like it. Father used to say that the most uncertain ^{animal} ~~man~~ created by God was the two-legged animal, and I think he was entirely right.

I have not heard the details of Jack's accident. When we read finally one of the newspaper reports, we feared it might be more serious than at first we thought, and we wired him, but beyond a reply that he was all right, we really know no details. If you care to, I should be very glad if you would write me what time it occurred, whether his companion was seriously hurt, and what generally is common knowledge respecting it.

I am still like a child looking at the daily entries at Agua Caliente, and have been disappointed during the past week to observe that BRIGHT HOPES has not started. I hope she is not sick again.

I have been in hearings of committees for the last two weeks, and they are much worse than court sessions. The principal ones have been conducted by

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If you care so, I should be very glad if you would
write me what time it occurred, whether his compan-
ion was seriously hurt, and what generally is common
knowledge respecting it.
I am still like a child looking at the daily
entries at Aunt Gallente, and have been disappointed
during the past week to observe that ERICHT HOPES
has not started. I hope she is not sick again.
I have been in hearings of committees for the
last two weeks, and they are much worse than court
sessions. The principal ones have been conducted by

Major Archibald M. Johnson - 3

my own committee, and of course I have had to be on the job. There is nothing particularly showy, and nothing that carries a great deal of publicity in these hearings, but they are very essential in legislation, and they are the foundation really of the work that is done here. I did a good job, against great odds, for the oil people. It will not, in my opinion, however, result in legislation, because of the opposition of the east to anything in the nature of a limited embargo or a tariff upon ^{the} a commodity, which they get more cheaply from Venezuela.

I hope you succeeded in getting Smith out of his difficulties. He is not one whose intellectuality would commend itself to you, but there is nothing unlikable about him, and more important still, he is your client, and so I wish him success. I hope that you have all kinds of business, and that you will keep so at it, that your thoughts are wholly occupied. Beyond all this, I do hope you take care of yourself physically.

With love to Martha and yourself, in which
Mother joins,

Affectionately,

Dad
I sent you the other day Edgar Wallace's latest, "The Ranger Returns". I find so
much of Wallace that I give him credit. He became an interesting back. He
comes back in his book of short stories and I got a real kick out of
some of them. Read them at your leisure.

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 so at it, that your thoughts are wholly occupied.
 Beyond all this, I do hope you take care of yourself
 physically.
 With love to Martha and yourself, in which
 Mother joins,
 Affectionately,

I hope you will be able to get Smith out of his difficulties. He is not one whose intellectuality would command itself to you, but there is nothing unlikable about him, and more important still, he is your friend, and so I wish him success. I hope that you have all kinds of business, and that you will keep so at it, that your thoughts are wholly occupied. Beyond all this, I do hope you take care of yourself physically. With love to Martha and yourself, in which Mother joins, Affectionately,

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

February 8, 1931.

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

My dear Jack:

Committee hearings the past two weeks have kept me not only busy during all day long, but worse than that and much more irritating, they have kept me off the floor, where I like to be during the proceedings. Because of this, I have not written you during the past week. I am trying now on Sunday to catch up with my correspondence, but only measurably succeeding. There is one disadvantage in living where we do. I am so close to the office that I work now on Sundays, and I am very certain, although she is too good to say so, Miss Connor wishes we were out in the country, far removed from the Capitol.

I received during the week your long letter about Hiram and his entry into college. The fraternities evidently are conducted very differently than they were when I was there. I can't conceive of members of the faculty keeping their hand upon these fraternities and advising students as to their relative merits, and I am not at all sure that it is a good thing.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 2

The professional^{ocial} outlook might be very different from that of the student, and what would constitute excellence from the one standpoint, might be quite the reverse from the other. However, Hiram has made his step, and I have very great confidence in his judgment. He is such a remarkable boy that I think he can be trusted to make his own selections from his own viewpoint.

I was very sorry to hear that Mrs. Bowles was so ill. As I said to you in my last letter, the GOLDMAN-SACHS matter is now left with you and Theodore. I presume long before this reaches you, you will have learned whatever there is to be learned from DEVLIN and WILLIAMSON. I repeat, if her situation is such as the GOLDMAN-SACHS people believe it to be, and as WILLIAMSON described it, she would be unable to do anything.

We have had a great deal of excitement here the last couple of weeks over drought relief. My long experience taught me it was the "bunk", and it was only a question of a few days until some face-saving device was adopted. I could not get very excited, therefore, over this so-called grave controversy, and the events of the past two days have justified the feeling that I had.

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Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 3

I am looking forward with mixed feelings to my return in March. I am so used to this life now that I wish I was so circumstanced I could devote myself to it as I would like. However, that is another story, which while constantly in my mind, ought to be kept there.

On Arch's birthday we telephoned to him at midnight the usual felicitations on the day. It was a great pleasure to hear his voice. The Lord has fashioned us all in his own peculiar way, and while we may quarrel with the mode, we can have a great sympathy for individuals who encounter difficulties following the course of which we might not approve.

Mother joins in love to you and the boys.

Affectionately,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to be 'H.W.J.', written in dark ink.

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN
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W.A.

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

February 15, 1931.

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

My dear Jack:

I think with reasonable certainty I can say to you now that we'll be home in March. I have never thought we were going to have an extra session, but the peculiar attitude of some of the people here, shook slightly some of my confidence once or twice. There is still the possibility, but I think it only a possibility, of an extra session. If half a dozen men really desired one they would not have the slightest difficulty in compelling it, but the few people, who, like Borah, say one is necessary, have not the stamina to go through.

We got through yesterday with the so-called fight over drought relief. Those principally fighting were play-acting. The question did really present a definite issue, which ought to have been understood by the country, but those concerned in it were more concerned in concealing what was at stake than in presenting a clear-cut question. Fundamentally the issue that should have been made, and that really was involved, was whether in time of great emergency and sudden

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 2

catastrophe, the Government should appropriate money to feed the suffering and starving. Of course, to me there could be only one side to such a question.

Hoover, however, took the position, which his satellites have endeavored to obscure, that feeding the hungry citizens constituted a dole, that they should be relieved in but one way, by private charity. Notwithstanding the constant lying of the newspapers, and notwithstanding the vote brought about by the Demicrats, I think Hoover has driven another nail in his coffin by his action, and that when the thing is discussed so that our people know what it is, as it probably will be in the ensuing campaign, he will be in a particularly defensive position.

Your Mother has **not been** well during this session. I perhaps have likely told you in one or two letters that she had the gout. Whatever the cause, it has continued, and I can see a gradual increase in its inroads. Mother thinks that it is due entirely to her toph, which she will have to have removed some day in the far future. Because so firmly she believes this, I can get her to do nothing to aid herself, with the result that she has had a very unpleasant time. I am at my wits' ends, because I don't know what to do, and I am utterly unable to persuade her to do anything. We're in exactly the same sit-

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 3

uation we have been every year now. She does not want to return next month, but I must. Lord know, I would like to take a month or two in roaming about on a vacation, but it is impossible. I dread now the packing for departure. It seems but yesterday that we packed to come here, and packing is a time of trial and tribulation.

Tell Hiram that I hoped long before this to have written him in response to his fine letter to his Grandmother and myself, but it has been quite impossible of late, and perhaps I must defer writing, but look forward to talking with him next month.

Mother joins in love to the boys, and yourself.

Affectionately,

Dad

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

February 21, 1931.

My dear Boys:

I am writing you now together in the fashion that I used to, because we're so near the end of the game here, and I am really so pressed for time. I think I have told you constantly that I did not think an extra session would be had, and there were but one or two days that I thought it within the realm of possibility at all. The chief proponent of the extra session was Borah, who yelled about it a great deal, but whose outcries, I have learned in the past, were meant principally for publicity, and who seldom goes through. The events of the past week, I think, have made very clear that there will be no extra session, unless Hoover breaks faith. There is always that contingency, and the only doubtful thing about the extra session is that Hoover has promised there should be none. My expectation, therefore, is to get out of here a week or so after the adjournment. It is with mixed emotions that I see the end of the session. I have done some real work during this last three months, none of it spectacular, but much of it useful and important. This is because of the Commerce Committee, which functions under my chairmanship, and in which, by virtue of the chairmanship, I have some little authority.

2.

Before we adjourn, if I get the opportunity, I am going to make a brief speech in the Senate on the times and customs, and point out some of those things that I think have been developed in the last year, that indicate a departure from our old traditions. For the Senate to ask by what old Boss Rhoades would call a Janas-faced resolution, a Cabinet officer, inferior indeed to the Senate, how that official would administer a legislative enactment being considered by the Senate, struck me as an abdication of independence and self-respect, and had I, at the moment been familiar with the matter, I would never have permitted it to be considered. Singularly enough, no one else has such a view. Yesterday, Couzens began holding up business until he got a promise from the President that he would veto the Soldiers' Bonus Act in time for the Congress, if it desired, to pass the bill over the veto. Couzens has been the strongest adherent of the measure in the Senate. He was assured, privately, that this was so, but declined to accept the word of the President, unless it were publicly expressed. Well, you can imagine what you or I would have done had we been in position of power, and such a threat with such imputation had been conveyed to us. The President of the United States, however, meekly authorized his messenger, Reed of Pennsylvania,

3.

publicly to announce upon the floor of the Senate, that he would veto the Bill Thursday next, so that the two Houses of Congress, if they desired, would pass it over his veto. I remarked that this did not indicate a yellow streak, but it should be painted all yellow and of the deepest yellow hue.

I hope you are both well physically. After all, that is the thing that counts most. Your Mother has not been well during this session. When I say that, I do not mean that she has been confined to the house, but she has been constantly ailing, and most of the time very miserable with the gout and an aching tooth. I am hoping, after we get to California, she will feel herself again. I am looking forward to my return ^{as I have said,} with mixed emotions.

The love of Mother and myself to all of you.

Affectionately,

Dad

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

Sunday, March 13, 1931.

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

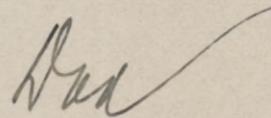
My dear Arch:

Just before nine thirty last night I received your telegram from Los Angeles. Immediately I wired you, and wired Wrigley. In financial matters, Wrigley is extremely canny; in all other matters stupid. He did not go through with me in 1924 as he agreed, but the pressure brought to bear upon him was very great, and he did lose a very considerable sum of money in backing me. I was not entirely clear how much I could aid, but Mother and I together worded our telegram to him in the hope that it might be of some value to you.

This is the last note I shall write you. I have my transportation for Wednesday, and it is my expectation that we'll be home, God willing, Saturday evening.

Love to Martha and yourself, in which Mother joins,

Affectionately,



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WESTERN UNION

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J. C. WILLEVER, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

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MAJOR ARCHIBALD M JOHNSON=

ATTY AT LAW MILLS BLDG SANFRANCISCO CALIF=

I HAVE LATELY BEEN A LITTLE UNDER THE WEATHER AND TODAY
 MOTHER AND DOCTOR THOUGHT THEREFORE OUR TRIP OUGHT TO BE
 DEFERRED ONE WEEK STOP ALTHOUGH I THOUGHT IT UNNECESSARY AS
 PURELY PRECAUTIONARY MATTER I YIELDED AND WE WILL NOT HOPE
 TO LEAVE HERE WEDNESDAY THE TWENTY FIFTH AWFULLY SORRY FOR
 DELAY LOVE TO ALL=

HIRAM W JOHNSON.

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Hiram W. Johnson Papers
Bancroft Library

March 20, 1931

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

Dad visited John Hopkins for inspection Wednesday
Everything all right Better today Is Arch in
town Have not heard from him Love

MOTHER

STRAIGHT FAST WIRE
PERSONAL

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN
WESLEY L. JONES, WASH.
CHARLES L. MC NARY, OREG.
PORTER H. DALE, VT.
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HARRY B. HAWES, MO.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

Sunday, March 22, 1931.

My dear Boys:

I am rather fearful from your telegrams that we may have given you an erroneous idea of our situation here, and so I am writing you this note that you may have it before my arrival. Mother has a rotten cold, and I am hoping it will be all right by Wednesday, and we can go on without another postponement. I am not sick, and physically I am O.K. I had the infection I've described to you, which was very painful. Locally, Dr. O'Malley of the U.S. Naval Hospital (probably their best general practitioner) was looking after me. He brought their great skin specialist to see me. Both of them were perplexed, and I feel very grateful to Dr. O'Malley for his frankness and honesty. Wednesday last, he told me candidly he did not like the situation, and that he was fearful he did not thoroughly understand it, and asked me if I would go with him to Johns Hopkins University Hospital in Baltimore, to see Dean Lewis, who holds perhaps the highest chair in America for surgery, and in peculiar infections like I was being troubled with. Of course, I went with him. Lewis looks more like a hail fellow, well met, than a famous surgeon, but the moment he rolled up his sleeves and took hold of me, there was no doubt of his ability or skill. Within fifteen minutes, he had extracted the bullet, some miserable hard thing the size of a

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large almond. He told me he thought my situation would clear thereafter, and gradually heal. Friday, while in Washington, Lewis came to see me again. He told me I was getting on splendidly. I am perfectly certain he is correct, and that by the time I leave for California, I will be practically all right. At any rate, there is none of the discomfort and acute pain since the extraction. I am telling you all this, because I don't like to talk about the matter, and that you may both know concerning it, ^{and} that I will be spared explanations on my return. Funny, isn't it, how some of us shrink from talking of our physical disabilities or illnesses! Otherwise than this disagreeable and horrible infection, I have increased in weight, and look better than I have looked in years.

We got worried about Arch, and so wired asking if he was in San Francisco. Jack's good telegram, and Archie's night letter received this morning, relieved us.

Six days only now until we're home, God willing. I can't tell you how I long for the time I may step again into San Francisco and see my dear ones.

Mother joins in love.

Affectionately,

