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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

Sunday, June 5, 1932.

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

My dear Boys:

This is the hottest day of the year. It's terrible. I write you, therefore, very briefly today; first, to save myself, and secondly, because it is outrageous for me to keep Miss Connor on Sunday such a time as this.

We're working long hours in the senate, and individual members are not only physically fatigued, but mentally fagged. Their nerves are on edge, and I wouldn't be surprised in the next couple of weeks at physical encounters without any cause whatever, but the result of strained nerves that snap at trifles.

I tried during the past week upon the so-called "Economy " bill to eliminate the poorly paid government employes from a salary reduction with the burden ~~thereof~~ to be put, as far as possible, upon those highly paid. I failed in this, and the committee has been sustained, thus far, in its ten per cent cut. I would not be surprised, however, tomorrow at any upset in the committee program.

2.

I begin early tomorrow morning a long siege with the dentist. It is a terrible time to be doing this, but it had to be done, and I might as well get it over before I return. During the week, notwithstanding I have been yapping on the floor, I had an additional big tooth yanked out, and I am now ready, I presume, to have the regular work done that is deemed essential, but which is going to be wearing and disagreeable.

Your Mother's birthday, as you know, is next Saturday. You realize that no gifts are to be sent her, not even flowers. The latter wilt at once here now, and to send them would be a useless expense. She would appreciate, as you know, and as you have, doubtless, in mind, the sweet communications which you both know how to write so well. These you could send, if you desired, by airmail on receipt of this letter, to me, for delivery to her on Saturday morning, or you could send them direct to her, which, possibly, would be the better course, at our home.

It seems obvious now that we'll be here two, three, or four weeks more, but it would be a bold man who would prophecy with any degree of exactness.

With my love to all,

Affectionately,

Dad

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

Sunday, June 5, 1932.

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

My dear Jack:

Yesterday morning I received your letter about the proposal made to you for an exchange of your farm for lands in Kentucky. Immediately upon its receipt, I copied the description and personally interviewed Senator Logan, a new senator from Kentucky, a rather strange, eerie, shaggy individual, but I think a fairly good man. I sought him out, because upon an examination of his biography I observed that he had been the Attorney General of Kentucky, and also judge of the highest court of that state. After interviewing him, I sent you my wire. He thought from the description, although he said he was not entirely certain, that the lands you described are a part of a very much larger tract, which has been the subject of publicity and turmoil in Kentucky for a long period of time. As he phrased it, if he were correct in his statement, "parts of this land have been peddled all over the world, and generally misrepresented". He said that he thought there had been various accusations concerning the sales of ^{this} land, some of which had culminated in civil actions, and others in criminal prosecutions;

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 2

that, apparently, an abstract could be furnished, which would indicate a title derived from the State of Virginia, that was on the face of the abstract perfect, but which, in reality, was very doubtful. I said to Senator Logan, that one who was very dear to me, without specifying who, was interested in a possible exchange or purchase of the tract. I gave him a copy of the description you sent to me, and stated that it was supposed to be heavily timbered, with possibilities of coal, and that it was claimed to be tax free, because it had never been divided into survey sections. The tax free proposition he could not understand, and he did not think it could be so. He was, however, not clear as to what he related to me, but took my statement of the matter, which I had put in writing, and will endeavor at once to get the facts with exactness, and then advise me. I am hoping he will do this without delay.

In addition to seeing Senator Logan, I sent for Congressman Barbour, the dean of the California delegation in Congress, and gave him a similar statement, asked him to do me the kindness to ascertain what congressman represented the particular district in which the land is situated, and to ascertain from him everything that he could.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 3

Barbour is a very fine fellow, and indebted to me for some little favors, and he said that he would try to ascertain what I desired.

The General Land Office said to us, in response to our inquiry, that Kentucky lands had never been within the jurisdiction of the government. Always they had been within the jurisdiction of the States of Kentucky and Virginia, inasmuch as some of the counties in Kentucky were once a part of Virginia, and that the only way in which we could obtain information as to timber possibilities or coal possibilities would be from the States of Kentucky and Virginia. The Geological Survey, because these had never been public lands, could not give us the information you would wish.

I will pursue these inquiries through the representatives from Kentucky just as quickly as possible. The only obstacle is the horrible stress here, and the possibility that they might wish to obtain any information from their state before definitely advising us. However, I will keep at the matter.

In my note to you and Art today I told you it looked like we would not adjourn here for two, three or four weeks. If we do our work, we ought not to adjourn before July first.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 4

This would make it possible for the boys to come back here at the date you mentioned, the 17th, and be with us for at least ten days, and possibly more, before we start for California. I know it will be tough on you for them to come, but I should dearly love to have them, and even though, the weather is as terrible as it is today, I think they will enjoy themselves. I will keep you advised of the situation here.

With love,

Affectionately,

Dad

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN
WESLEY L. JONES, WASH.
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

June 11, 1932.

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

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

My dear Arch:

I received your very welcome letter of June 7 yesterday. I was very much interested in your description of Rolph. It fits exactly the mental picture I had of him. Even though the reward for your work will not be forthcoming, I hope that you will be successful in your Leach case. I have been wondering the last few months whether conduct such as Rolphs gets by with our people, and I confess, that sometimes I think that it does, and other times, I think that in the long run it will meet its just fate. He has no more conception of the obligations of public office than the Man in the Moon.

I notice that Dick Tobin was at the head of the Tubbs Committee in San Francisco, and that you are a member of his executive committee. I also observe by the press that sixteen of the Republican Central Committees in northern California had endorsed Shortridge. I never bothered particularly about these endorsements, but the fact that they have so generally been given to Shortridge would indicate to me he might have very much

Major Archibald M. Johnson - 2

more strength than you imagine. He has become absolutely senile. It is next to impossible for me to get rid of him since his sickness, when I endeavored to show him the conventional courtesies. I have had to remind some people very sharply here that those courtesies were not political in character at all. I do not know just where I will land in this senatorial contest, and I do not know how ultimately it will develop. I can't conceive that four men in the south will continue to be in the race. If they do continue, some one individual from the north will be nominated.

We're plugging away here with long hours and in a maze. We're all worked out, and I think another week will see everybody extremely glad to quit. There is work, however, before us to which we ought to devote ourselves with some care, and which, ordinarily, would take very much longer than one or even two weeks, but everything will be political in character from now on. When this reaches you, the Republican Convention will be in full swing. Of course, it has no interest for one like myself. The only problem will be what sort of bunk upon the prohibition issue will be presented. On all sides it is admitted that the only effort concerning prohibition will be to provide

Major Archibald M. Johnson - 3

an ambiguous plank which may be read either way, and upon which Hoover may assert he is dry to the drys, and wet to the wets. This sort of thing will answer the purpose of the good Republicans who would rather be partisan than anything else.

I think the Egan case in San Francisco is one of the most remarkable in police annals. I quite agree with you that the detective force there deserves the utmost credit. When you see Dullea congratulate him for me upon what I deem marvelous work done by him, I am more sorry than I can tell you that the fact Egan got away for a couple of days led to a great deal of criticism of the department, which had done so well. I was amused at your mention of the Troy Dye case. That, to my mind, was one of the outstanding crimes of all time. Its history, I observed from one of the papers, has been written. There really are few crimes in all history comparable to what a very popular public administrator of Sacramento County did. I imagine that Egan was engaged in some enterprises which will be startling, if disclosed. You know how many mystery stories I read, and how I enjoy them. The Egan case demonstrates the old adage,

that truth is stranger than fiction. Personally, I can not recall Egan at all, although I must have known him.

There is the same whining here that we have heard the last few months about conditions. We're acting with a lavishness of public funds here for rehabilitation that can only be justified by a calamity and a catastrophe which have been scarcely described as yet. The Lord only knows whether we'll be able to accomplish anything. The administration has just one thought, doing anything, no matter what, which may aid between now and November in re-electing Hoover.

Today is Mother's birthday, as you know. I have some very solemn thoughts as I consider the years, and I need not say to you, very tender thoughts. This morning, there arrived at the house your sweet letter, and letters from the grandchildren and from Jack. You don't know how Mother treasures them all. There is nothing I can do for her on her birthday, because she is so strange that she does not want it mentioned, even in the office here, and I find in dictating, I have broken my promise to her. How the years have

Major Archibald M. Johnson - 5

flown? I am hoping the congress will stay in session for a few weeks yet and that the two grandsons may come back for a brief visit with us.

I hope this day finds you, my dear boy, in as good shape as can be expected, hopeful, and with courage high.

With my love to you and Martha,

Affectionately,

Dad

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN
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BEN WILLIAMSON, KY.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

Sunday, June 12, 1932.

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

My dear Jack:

Yesterday was Mother's birthday. I know with your imagination that you can understand the thoughts that filled my brain and ^{my} tender recollections of a long lifetime partnership. Your letter, Archie's, the two boys, and Miss Schow all came to Mother at breakfast. It was fine that this was do. In addition, she had her wires, and I think probably she was entirely right in her oft-repeated statement of how much better these dear greetings were than any gifts. In the evening she and I took a ride, and save for a bottle of champagne last night, which we required both the Chinese boys to share, our day was not out of the usual. It was unusual, perhaps, only in my reflections. The only thing to do, so far as the trip of the boys is concerned, is to have them start at the very earliest date. You have fixed the 17th. I assume this is the earliest day they can leave. Mother has telephoned while I am here this Sunday asking me to suggest to you that Hiram take his examinations a little earlier so as to get here sooner;

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 2

and no amount of explanation, I'm sure, will convince her that the date of the entire examinations at Berkeley could not readily be postponed, or advanced, in order that they might adjust themselves to our proposed excursion. However, because Mother asked it over the 'phone a little while ago, I am suggesting it to you. If the boys leave on Friday, the 17th, they will reach here Tuesday, the 21st. I assume, of course, that they will have round trip tickets, the price of which, because they are summer round trip tickets will be considerably less than otherwise. You must let me know whether they will come from Chicago by the B. and O., or the Pennsylvania, so that we can be sure to meet them on arrival. Nobody on earth can tell when we are going to adjourn. One set of individuals here fix the date of adjournment about July 4th, another group about July first. The Democrats generally about June 25, and some wise guys next Saturday, June 18. I should not be at all surprised at adjournment at any time now. Everybody is sick, sore, sour, and sullen, and it would take very little for a great explosion, and the end of the whole thing. I made up my mind, however, that whether we adjourn at the end of this week, the 18th, or at any other time,

it was just as well for the boys to come. They can have the pleasure of an eastern trip thus early in life, and can see what they desire historically here. I should remain on so that they could have at least ten days, and perhaps more. Of course, it would be a little more interesting for them if congress were in session, but I am rather inclined to think whether the sessions continue or not after the Republican convention, they will not be very interesting. So Mother and I will be looking forward to meeting the boys Tuesday morning, June 21 at the latest.

A few days ago I gave to the United Press another statement on prohibition. I am wondering whether it carried at all in California. The gist of it was that there was only one way for resubmission of the prohibition question and that was by direct repeal of the 18th amendment, and this I favored. I said that the referendum was the bunk, because after very earnest effort, those of us interested in the subject here, were unable to devise any way by which there could be a real referendum, and the only thing that could be done was a resolution of direct repeal designating that the states pass upon it by the convention system,

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson. Jr. - 4

rather than through legislatures, and in the selection of the conventions thus to pass upon it, getting a sort of referendum, although not a real one. I can not observe that the prohibition question has disturbed any of our brethren in San Francisco who are for Mr. Hoover, and their enthusiasm seems to be just as great whether he remains silent, or whether he has a hypocritical plank upon which, as Postmaster General Brown says, all may stand ~~on~~, or whether he has a plank for direct repeal. Indeed, it is perfectly obvious from reading the local press that Mr. Hoover could be bone-dry or wringing wet and he would lose but few, if any Republican votes in the City of San Francisco.

Your Mother and I can think of little else than the kiddies coming, and I am beginning to fear that they are now so sophisticated that they really won't have a good time. It will be delightful, however, for us, and we're selfish enough to want them for this very brief period. I can feel for you and know what it means to you, but it will be for so short a time that I am hoping it will pass quickly with you.

With all my love, in which Mother joins,

Affectionately,

Dad

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN
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MARCUS A. COOLIDGE, MASS.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

Saturday, June 18, 1932.

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

My dear Jack:

I am writing you this Saturday briefly to tell you how keenly Mother and I are looking forward to the arrival of the boys on Tuesday next, and how we sympathize with you because of their absence from your home. I do hope that they will have a good time here, and I am fretting now for fear that their hopes will be keyed so high they may be disappointed. We have received your telegrams this morning of their departure, and both Mother and I, as you know, wired you yesterday.

I am sorry I have been able to send you so little concerning the Kentucky lands. I imagined from my first conversation with Senator Logan that I was going to be able to give you a great deal of detail. The Senator, however, quite disappointed me. I wrote you what he said, and he seemed to think that conveying to me a very solemn warning about the lands was quite enough. This warning of his I passed on to you, and again emphasize it as he did. Yesterday I took the matter up with Senator Barkley, the other Senator, who is keynoter of the Democratic Convention, and

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr., - 2

has been very busily engaged. He told me that he would see whether he could ascertain anything for me. From the mere statement of the matter he knew nothing of it.

We had yesterday and last night a scene here at the Capitol that probably has never been witnessed before in this city, and which to an imaginative old fellow like myself was intensely interesting. You have read, of course, of the war veterans, who have marched on to Washington, demanding their bonus payment. Yesterday, the matter came before the senate, and they, during the day, marched to the Capitol steps. After exhausting all the space that casual visitors are permitted to occupy in the gallery of the senate, the vast crowd remained until after nine o'clock last night immediately in front of the Capitol awaiting final action by the senate. With my peculiar sensibilities you realize I was torn with conflicting emotions. These men ought not to have come here in the first instance, they should not have swarmed down upon the Capitol, and no legislator should respond to their mere numbers or their veiled threats. They constitute but a small part of the unemployed of the Nation, and but a small part of those whose distress is appealing. Nevertheless, they present a picture of human misery, and if I could have seen any way in which they could have been afforded relief without jeopardizing the whole financial fabric of the

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 3

Nation I would have voted with them. Their presence, although, in my opinion, it threatens no particular ill, is ominous. If the farmers of this Nation who are suffering united, as these men have united, and with the same abandon, started a march upon the Capitol, and joined ranks with those of the city whose souls have been seared with misery during the past few years, it would not be difficult for a real revolution to start in this country. Doubtless, all this has occurred to you, if you have read anything of the scenes here. Thoughtful men in the congress, and we have been so extremely engaged that few have had time to think at all, view the presence of these veterans in such numbers, and their insistence upon a demand, which, in justice to the Nation, could not be accorded them, as evidence of the economic disease from which the Nation is suffering. We're going to try to pass today a so-called "Relief" Bill, which is the product of the Democrats of the Senate. I have little confidence in how much relief it will really give.

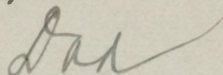
But the big thing with us today is the departure of our dear grandsons. Our thoughts are divided between them and you. You may solace yourself not only with the thought you were doing something for them, but with the thought that you are giving the finest kick and thrill to your old parents that

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr. - 4

you possibly could give to them.

With all my love in which Mother joins,

Affectionately,

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

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIR
WESLEY L. JONES, WASH.
CHARLES L. MCNARY, OREG.
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MARCUS A. COOLIDGE, MASS.

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

Sunday, June 19, 1932.

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

My dear Arch:

We received a wire from Jack yesterday morning saying that our grandsons had left Friday night to be with us for a short visit here. Your Mother and I are looking forward with the keenest anticipations to their arrival Tuesday. I have some misgivings. Because of the sophistication of these dear grandsons of ours, I am fearful, surfeited with every luxury as they are, they may be rather blase' about the things we do here, and their visit, instead of being a great adventure for them, may be to them a sore disappointment. What I suggest to you, however, is just a vagrant thought. The big thing is that they are coming and their grandmother and I are both anxious to see them.

We keep long hours here trying to get through. The great body of Congressmen want to end the session next Saturday night. I simply do not see how it can be done if we really half way perform our work, but experience has taught me that very suddenly will come a moment when all will unite in an endeavor to adjourn. We're weary enough so that the moment may not be very far delayed.

Major Archibald M. Johnson - 2

I presume you have read more or less about the bonus army here. Officially their peak was reached during the week with between fifteen and twenty thousand. They were a pathetic and a tragiz sight. Of course, they had no business here, and equally of course, their demand was wholly an illogical one, which could not be complied with, and certainly one which could not be met in the face of a threat, either expressed or implied. I am perfectly frank in saying to you my heart was with them. I kept my mouth shut during the debate, because I went through a battle with my heart and my head, which in one with my experience and long service was really perfectly absurd. I would like to have voted for them, not upon the theory of paying the bonus, but with the desire of relieving distress that was physically present, and that my eye could see. To do this, however, to a small group, while there was an immensely larger one which required assistance would of course have been unjust. In another aspect, however, the thing gave me food for thought. There was no danger this past week, and I do not think there is any danger in the weeks to come from these veterans who are here demanding the bonus. If they change their cry, and if they put their demands solely upon the ground of the right to work and the right to live, and the right to eat, and if they are without any fault on their

part without jobs, as is undoubtedly the fact, and if they can bring here to the Capitol of the Nation some hundreds of thousands of those similarly situated, who are merely begging for bread today because jobs are denied them, and if with these the agrarian population losing now their farms and facing ruin unite, then old cadavers like myself in the halls of congress will be pretty roughly tossed upon the common in front of the Capitol, and the Englishman sitting in the White House and governing us upon the theory of relieving the misery of Europe, will betake himself with celerity and an alacrity most amazing to another and a healthier clime. What saves us in this country is the farmer's love for law and order. This, doubtless, arises from the fact that he has something in the shape of a shelter over his head, and something in his yard, and his field, that he may gather for food for himself and his family. When he reaches the depth of despair that the urban worker ^{fast} is/reaching in this country, and when feeling as the city unemployed do, he unites with them, we can say goodnight to the present government. None of this will happen doubtless, because we are turning that eighty seventh corner, so often proclaimed by Hoover and will meet prosperity before the contingencies suggested arise.

The little I have heard of the National Convention is

Major Archibald M. Johnson - 4

that it was a flop. The only interesting thing in it was the prohibition contest, and that was decided by the federal office holders, who were delegates and the purchased negro delegates from the southern states. What an amazing turn has occurred in the prohibition matter! It came almost over night. Hoover, as usual, adopted a prohibition plank, which is the bunk. You can take that plank of the platform look at it intently, as you gaze into a crystal, and you have a perfect picture of the Hoover mind, - timid, weak, vacillating, uncertain, ambiguous, indirect, deceitful, uncandid, and dishonest. This, however, will not permit the good Republicans of California headed by the San Francisco Chronicle, the Reques, the Hales, the McNabs, the Rolphs, and the like, from crying on one side of their mouth, wet, and on the other side, voting with Bishop Cannon and the Anti-Saloon league.

With my love to Martha, in which Mother joins,

Affectionately,

Dad

HIRAM W. JOHNSON, CALIF., CHAIRMAN

WESLEY L. JONES, WASH.
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JOSIAH WILLIAM BAILEY, N. C.
MARCUS A. COOLIDGE, MASS.

M. A. CONNOR, CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE

Sunday, June 26, 1932.

Major Archibald M. Johnson,
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My dear Arch:

I received your telegram yesterday asking about a New York attorney. Of course, I know a number of New York attorneys, but I would hate to take the responsibility of recommending those whom I know, for the most part only casually. Perhaps, I have something of the suspicion of the hick for the city smart Alec, but my experience with New York attorneys has not added to my appreciation of their ability, or my esteem of their integrity. At any rate, I had something to do with the old firm of which Elmer Schlessinger was a member, Stanchfield and Levy. I know Levy very well. He is a smart Jew, who knows his law, and better, knows the modes of circumventing it. He is now the head of the firm and runs it. I spent two or three days with the chief representative of the Cromwell firm in the Goldman Sachs matter. He is a fairly young man, of good address, of ability, and energy. He boasted of having ninety members of the bar in their office. I bumped into a Jew, who is a

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a socialist, but a man of very great ability, and I think of some considerable practice, named Morris Ernst. Like many jews, and many intellectual socialists, he thinks he knows all about everything, and while I think perhaps he could render you very good service indeed, I think within a very short time, he would be telling you how to conduct your office, and your client, how to conduct his intimate personal affairs. There are some others that I know there of different kinds and different characters, but I was fearful of sending you a personal recommendation of any. I went to Senator Copeland, however, with whom I am on quite intimate terms, and asked him if he had a personal attorney. He told me he did, and that the man was not only reliable, but an energetic lawyer, C.P. Williamson, who, he says, is really now the head of an old established firm of Alexander and Green, 120 Broadway. I wired you his view. If I can catch Wagner tomorrow, who has been on the bench in New York, I will see if I can send you another wire .

Our grandsons arrived last Tuesday morning. We have been delighted to have them with us. They are the most presentable young men that I have ever seen. I hope

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they have had a good time. I know that we have been more than delighted with them. I have not had much opportunity to get about with them, because of the tremendously long, fatiguing, and heart-breaking hours we have been sitting here, but they have gone about with Mother, and yesterday I was able to take them down to Mount Vernon.

You can imagine the interest with which I am watching the proceedings at Chicago. The rotten leaders of the Democratic Party, just as rotten as the leaders of the Republican Party, are endeavoring to arrange things so that we'll have two Hoover candidates. The fight upon Roosevelt by the people who are conducting it, seems to me, a demonstration of his fitness. The Smiths, the Raskobs, the Hagues of New Jersey, representing really the House of Morgan and the international bankers, are trying to prevent Roosevelt's nomination, and they are proceeding in a fashion calculated to prevent his election, if he is nominated. What a rotten lot these so-called leaders of ours are! If God endowed me with a large fortune, I'd like to do nothing else the remaining few years of my life but expose them and denounce them.

With love to Martha, in which Mother joins,

Affectionately,

Dad