

● PSF

War Food Administration

Subject File

Box 190

4 Items

C. Davis
2-43

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 17, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. JAMES F. BYRNES

FOR PREPARATION OF REPLY
FOR MY SIGNATURE.

F. D. R.

Letter to the President, dated
June 16, 1943, from Hon. Chester C.
Davis, Administrator of the War Food
Administration, tendering his resig-
nation.

PSF: New York Admin
files
2-43

file

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 25, 1943.

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT:

My first suggestion for Food Administrator would be Marvin Jones, for the reason that he is popular with the farm bloc in Congress and with the farmers in the Nation, and Chester Davis has publicly stated that he was the best informed person on agriculture.

When the matter was considered by you before, you offered it to Jones, who at that time declined to take it. I am sure he would accept, provided we do not fill his place on the Court of Claims.

The only other suggestion I have is Milo Perkins and this was given to me by the Budget. I think he is a good administrator. I do not know how his appointment would be received by the farm bloc and by the farmers of the nation.

J.F.B.

F-128

*PSF: War Food Adm. folder
2-43*

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 7, 1943.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

MEMORANDUM FOR HON. MARVIN JONES:

This is a confidential note to me from Gene Casey. Please don't talk about it with anyone, but I would like to have a talk with you about it at your convenience.

F.D.R.

Memorandum for the President, 7-27-43, from Eugene Casey, in which he recommends steps to be taken immediately for benefit of agriculture. Attached is letter, 7-6-43, addressed to H.C. Byrd, Pres., Maryland Univ., College Park, Md. from J.F. McDonald, Commissioner, Dept. of Agriculture, Austin, Texas, re the food front.

WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION

Office of the Administrator

Memorandum

THE WHITE HOUSE

SEP 13 8 44 AM '43
September 10, 1943

RECEIVED

To: The President

From: Marvin Jones

I want to thank you for the note prepared by Gene Casey. In accordance with your suggestion, I have advised General Watson that I shall be glad to talk over these comments at such time as may suit your convenience.



PSF: War Food Admin

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

July 23, 1943

Memorandum to the President:

Dear Mr. President:

Forgive me for going off on a tangent before filing with you the report on the agricultural situation throughout the country, together with causes, effects, origin and the names of the devils who are causing the unrest. This paper is progressing very satisfactorily. I have already made two trips to widely divergent sections of the country and plan on at least one or two more in order that the report may be well balanced geographically.

This memorandum I believe to be so important that I desire to place it in your hands before submitting my final analysis. I trust that it will not be construed as placing the cart before the horse. Nor do I hope that you will believe that I am submitting a conclusion without being possessed of all and proper premises.

Frankly, it is difficult for me to think in terms of Government, agriculture or any of the allied sciences of Government without recognition of political implications. For that I offer no apologies but rather am proud of a bit of political acumen which I believe this Administration to suffer from a dearth of on occasion.

Believe me, Mr. President, I am terrifically worried about the long range in agriculture and I respectfully submit the opinion that all hell will break loose next February and March not so much on the human food angle as the feed supply for farm animals.

I, therefore, in deep humility, with a high sense of personal and public duty to you and a deep consciousness of my loyalty and responsibility to yourself and my country, recommend the following imperative steps that should be taken immediately for the benefit of agriculture:

- (1) Name someone who has the confidence of farmers and of organizations that work with farmers to head the Department of Agriculture. This man should be primarily a good administrator and he should have authority to reorganize and coordinate the various divisions of the department on the most effective basis. Such a man, on taking office, should give out a carefully worded statement admitting past faults, outlining future objectives, and indicating that the President has appointed him with the one injunction to do a job for the American farmer and he proposes to do just that.
- (2) Reorganize the Administrative groups within the Department so that work directly relating to each main commodity be centralized in the same group, with plans for cooperation with other groups whose work affects that particular commodity. Place authority, as well as control, in the hands of the head of each commodity group, and let the responsibility for handling matters in relation to the particular commodity rest on the shoulders of the head of each group, subject

to the Secretary. Great confusion now exists in the Department of Agriculture among the professional scientists, who in the last analysis are the men who must be depended upon to do the job.

- (3) Most important of all things that need to be done is to coordinate the agricultural activities of the Federal Government in each state so that all agencies will be working without overlapping of effort and without conflict of authority, and without each trying to build up a larger sphere for itself. The work of the Federal agencies in each state should be coordinated closely with the State agencies, particularly the Extension Services and the Commissioners of Agriculture, where practicable. On this score, I recognize that I shall be accused of turning the Department of Agriculture over to the Farm Bureau and Grange, yes, even the Republican Party. However, you know Casey would never do either, for that is exactly the trend and conditions he has fought against. As a result of my determined opposition I earned my enemies deservedly. Properly administered, the State Colleges, Farm Bureau and the Grange will be made a part of the program and therefore divested of their freedom to attack every program in a broad long range scheme, with the ultimate aim to defeat at the polls in 1944 the Democratic Party.
- (4) In order to effect the coordination desired under (3), it would be necessary to appoint one man in the Department in Washington, who would have complete authority to direct the activities in the states. That is, he should have authority to determine what sphere of the work shall be carried on by the Extension Services, what sphere of

work by the Farm Security, by the Farm Credit Administration, by the AAA, and so on.

For years confusion has existed in the states because each of these agencies, from Washington, has been trying to build its own organization, each trying to enlarge its own sphere of activities to a point where there has been such overlapping and duplication that the average thinking farmer has become more or less disgusted and has lost confidence in the Federal Department. Such a new man might be called the "Director of State Activities", or it might be this work could be handled by the Federal Director of Extension, provided he be a good administrative officer. A splendid man to head up the Extension Service in Washington or to act as "Director of State Activities" above all the other groups, I am advised, is Dr. Cecil Creel, now Director of Extension at the University of Nevada.

- (5) In order to make effective the above program, whoever might be appointed to do the work of reorganization will have to move to establish confidence among the farmers of the country. This could be done by calling early in the fall a Food Conference in Washington, to which should be invited the Directors of Extension, the Directors of the Agricultural Experiment Stations, the Heads of the State Farm Bureaus, the Masters of the State Granges, the State Heads of the Farmers National Union, the Presidents of all Land Grant Colleges, the Deans of all Colleges of Agriculture, representatives of small business in rural areas, and several

representative farmers from each state. This should be called a National Conference of Agricultural leaders to plan the Food Production Campaign of 1944. The best agricultural leaders and the best agricultural thought could be brought together in such a conference.

You, Mr. President, should address this conference and outline in a very carefully prepared talk the necessities for increased production and state that the only way the necessary food production could be attained would be through the cooperation of all those having anything to do with agriculture. You should speak in general terms and wind up by saying you are going to trust the details of working out plans to fit the different agricultural patterns of various sections of the country to a group of scientists and practical farmers, who would be selected from that group of best agricultural minds. You would then pledge your best efforts to develop the program that would be thus evolved. The committee to work out the program should be very carefully selected, by the group itself, for breadth of view and knowledge of agriculture and its needs. Such a program would be a program of the farmers and of those interested in agriculture; and they would be the ones to present it to Congress if legislation were needed. Properly managed and directed, such a procedure would be very, very effective. But to be really effective, such a conference should operate in democratic form but with control and planning kept among those best qualified to do the job.

(6) Following the general Food Production Conference in Washington, representatives of each state should return to their state with the understanding that they would call a general state-wide conference of leaders from each county. The plan should then be outlined in each particular state. As a result of such a state-wide conference, the leaders in each county should be requested to go back to their counties and have meetings of farmers from each district in that county to outline on a county basis what transpired at the state conference. Then the leaders in each county should go back into their particular districts or communities and call general mass meetings of all the farmers in that district. In this way, virtually all the farmers in the whole country would participate within the space of October and November in small district and community meetings to discuss and lay plans for the 1944 Food Production Drive.

Irrespective of all the other more or less extraneous matters that have crept into the question, the real success of the Food Campaign of 1944 will depend on the individual farmer's planting more, and raising more of the right kind of crops. Such a campaign as here-with outlined would reach each individual farmer and achieve this end. It would develop greater individual interest because it would make each individual feel that he, himself, was a part of and necessary to the campaign.

(7) Following immediately the development of a carefully worked out plan to fit each commodity and to fit each particular section

*Handing
files*

PSF
War Food Adm
THE WHITE HOUSE

*File 2-10
Personal*

WASHINGTON

April 10, 1943

PERSONAL & ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
MEMORANDUM FOR

HON. CHESTER C. DAVIS

The enclosed comes from a
reputable source -- never mind
where. I don't know the truth
of it but the motive is good.
Please read -- show to nobody
else -- and return for my files.

F. D. R.

Enclosure

Undated, unsigned memo - received with
attached from Mrs. R. - re the Mexican
Farm Labor program and it's connection w/
FSA.

of the country, a small simple bulletin should be prepared, outlining what each individual farmer should do in connection with the campaign; and how he could make the campaign a success. A copy of this bulletin should be placed in the hands of every farmer in the country. Such a bulletin should contain a brief, simple message from you supporting the efforts of the general Food Conference.

- (8) Too many red herrings have been pulled across the trail in agriculture. The farmers' dissatisfaction, for a large part, is artificial; therefore, the general Food Conference, at the meeting in Washington, should request that the special committee of Scientists and practical farmers arrange for a meeting in Washington with the Agricultural leaders in Congress to make sure that a proper presentation of the real interests of agriculture would minimize the possibility of red herring developments in Congress and to keep the Congressional leaders' minds on the real problem of their agricultural constituents. For instance, the matter of subsidies has been over done in Congress, as it has little real political significance, as far as farmers are concerned. Properly handled by the right kind of a professional committee, this and similar questions could be held to an almost negligible public discussion; and the mind of Congress and the public kept on questions of real importance to the farmer.
- (9) I have a very definite conviction as to who should act as Chairman of this Food Conference following its call by yourself. Further,

- 8 -

I am possessed of information as to ways and means and details
pertaining to such a conference.

Kindly advise me of your reaction.

Respectfully and sincerely,


Eugene Casey

HORTICULTURAL INSPECTION
AND QUARANTINES
J. M. DEL CURTO, CHIEF
MARKET AND WAREHOUSE
DIVISION
M. S. FRAZE, CHIEF
WEIGHTS AND MEASURES
DIVISION
W. S. BUSSEY, CHIEF
AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS
M. A. MORRIS
CITRUS AND AGRICULTURAL
BONDING AND LICENSING
C. E. MCCORMICK, CHIEF

To Insure Prompt Delivery
Address Your Reply to
State Dept. of Agriculture
Austin (14) Texas.



DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
STATE OF TEXAS
AUSTIN

J. E. McDONALD, COMMISSIONER
CHARLES E. BAUGHMAN, CHIEF CLERK

FIELD SEED CERTIFICATION
DIVISION
R. V. MILLER, CHIEF
SEED LABORATORY DIVISION
LINDEN E. JONES, CHIEF
WYNONA ROBBINS, ANALYST
PECAN DIVISION
W. D. SIMS, CHIEF
CITRUS FRUIT INSPECTION
L. E. PRATT, CHIEF
CITRUS GRADING DIVISION
HART T. LONGINO, SUPERVISOR

July 6, 1943

*Please Return to
Casey*

Mr. H. C. Byrd, President
State University
College Park, Maryland

Dear Mr. Byrd:

Surely every State Commissioner of Agriculture will agree that there has been steady degeneration on one vitally important front — the food front here at home.

Our war effort is being seriously jeopardized by faulty, inept handling of the vital problems of food production, and distribution by the numerous duplicated agencies and bureaus set up in Washington. Many of the men dealing with the food problem have no background of experience for their task. Further, there are others who are actually hostile, in their basic thinking, to the food producers of our country.

Several of the State Commissioners of Agriculture have suggested that the entire food program of our country needs thorough discussion by men and women competent to approach this most serious problem. It is felt that a National Food Conference, called at a centrally located point, for late in August, would be invaluable in clarifying the situation and in evolving remedies that would insure competent handling of the food program and in obtaining maximum production in 1944.

Such a conference would not have a partisan tinge. Those participating would be members of all political parties. Persons experienced in food production and distribution, representatives of the consuming public and officials dealing with the food problems should and would be invited to such a conference, which in a two or three day session could explore the whole complex field and suggest common-sense remedies for immediate application.

It has been suggested that Mr. Frank E. Gannett, nationally known Rochester, N. Y. publisher, who has made long and intensive study of food problems from the producer and consumer standpoints, would be a proper man to call such a conference and assume the tremendous burden of working out its details. I believe Mr. Gannett would be willing to go forward with plans for a National Food Conference, if requested to do so by a representative group of American citizens.

Mr President

This proposed conference has been inspired by my friends and myself. We must move now before anything is proposed which will undoubtedly be at a Republican's call and

*his anti-Democratic and Anti-Roosevelt
Gannett*

-2-

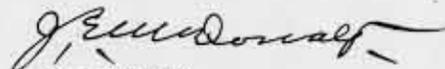
It is my opinion that the Commissioners and Directors of Agriculture, who are the elected or appointed representatives of agriculture in their respective States, should individually petition Mr. Gannett to call the above suggested food conference.

Enclosed is a copy of a petition that I have this day mailed to Mr. Gannett and I am asking that, if you are in accord with the suggestions outlined in this letter and in the petition, you sign same and mail it to Mr. Frank E. Gannett, Rochester, N. Y.

If a National Food Conference is to be held, it is very necessary that preliminary steps be taken without delay. I will be indeed grateful if you will give this your immediate attention and advise me as to whether or not you concur in the necessity of such a food conference and whether or not you have forwarded your petition to Mr. Gannett.

With appreciation and regards, I am

Sincerely yours,


J. E. McDonald
COMMISSIONER

JEMCD/als

Enclosure

PETITION TO

HON. FRANK E. GANNETT, PUBLISHER, ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Food is recognized by all military authorities as a weapon equal in importance to tanks, guns, planes and ships. We all recognize that to win the war it is imperative that those in our armed forces be adequately fed and that there be sufficient food to sustain the health and morale of our civilian population, which is providing the implements of war.

It is a matter of public knowledge and tragically obvious that the programs of food production, rationing, price ceilings and distribution are showing steady day-by-day deterioration. This situation not only threatens hardship to our fighting men but promises to bring about great and inexcusable shortages of life-sustaining food among the civilian population of the greatest food producing Nation on earth.

It is apparent there is bungling and confusion in the war-time food program on the part of the numerous duplicated agencies dealing with this vital problem. This confusion is causing uncertainty, apprehension and distrust in the public mind, thus militating against our Country's war effort.

At this time, there is urgent need for a National Food Conference, at which all aspects of the food situation, including increased production, processing, rationing, price ceilings and distribution, may be OPENLY discussed with the ENTIRE NATION AS AN AUDIENCE. It is imperative that, through this proposed National Food Conference, all aspects of the food problem be completely analyzed and the 1944 food production program be definitely planned.

In light of the above statements, and realizing the gravity of the food situation, I am asking you, who have had varied experience with numerous groups engaged in food production and are recognized as an exponent of common-sense, to assume the leadership in calling and organizing a National Food Conference, to be held at the earliest convenient date at a centrally located point.

Signature _____
(Petitioner)

Title _____

CABLE ADDRESS
SIGNARF



HOTEL ST. FRANCIS
ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREAT HOTELS
SAN FRANCISCO - CALIFORNIA

DAN E. LONDON
MANAGER

MEMO FOR THE PRESIDENT:

Please keep this for my files.
It is for your information as I thought
it important for you to know. This man
has been in Mexico and working in this
whole area for Farth Security. It is a
very dangerous situation and may cause
trouble between us and Mexico.

E.R.

4/7/43

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt —

Attached herewith is the memorandum on the Mexican Farm Labor program. I hope it is clear — perhaps it is too long but it is a complicated problem

hoy I suggest that F.S.A. not be quoted as the source (including myself) but that we can be hurt much more than we already are but — the cause might suffer!

I am hopeful that you can use this material

Sincerely

Lawrence J. Hews, Jr.
Coordinator Mexican Agricultural
Labor Program —

30 Van Ness Ave
City
Hemlock 9800

PSF: War Ford Adm. folder
2-43

OFFICE OF WAR MOBILIZATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

June 19, 1943

James F. Byrnes
Director

*file
Personal
Confidential*

Dear Mr. President:

Much as I regret it, I think it necessary that we handle the Davis matter along the lines of the enclosed letter. The Associated Press story attached shows that action must be taken and I think it must be taken immediately.

If you now pleaded with him to remain, you would have to agree to retreat from your subsidy position and really would have to agree to abandon any control over his determination as to food prices. I am forced to conclude that this action must be taken now or a few months later.

We can stand the criticism of the Farm Bureau Federation supporters and other critics better in the next few days than some months hence. The Labor people, as you know, are opposed to Davis' views. So far as they are concerned, it would be timely. I think, however, it should be accompanied by the announcement of a successor. If you wish me to talk to Jones, I will do it. The Farm Bureau Federation crowd urged Jones' appointment at the time Davis was named. They could not and, I am sure, would not object to his appointment. Davis professes great friendship for Jones. At the same time, the farm bloc is friendly to him. We know that we could rely on him to cooperate and he will not assume to dictate your views.

Sincerely yours,

James F. Byrnes
JAMES F. BYRNES

The President,
White House



Davis for Uniting Authority

WASHINGTON, June 18 (AP)—Chester C. DAVIS, War Food Administrator, has told White House advisers, it was disclosed today, that the present government food program is not working satisfactorily and is in danger of collapse unless steps are taken soon to eliminate divided authority and to allow more flexibility in price control.

His views were given to reporters by official sources who asked that they not be named. Mr. Davis takes the attitude that it is impossible under the present setup to manage the food situation properly because of:

1. What he considers a lack of understanding of the intricacies of food production and distribution among some officials and agencies having authority in the food field.
2. An apparent determination on the part of the Roosevelt administration to wage a battle with Congress over use of subsidies to reduce consumer food prices.
3. What he sees as an inclina-

tion on the part of the White House to postpone action on food problems, particularly adjustments in farm and food price orders, until after the wage dispute with the United Mine Workers is settled.

Mr. Davis, it was stated, has found that the entire food industry, including farmers, processors and distributors, and consumers, are greatly confused by the present situation. He is said to regard this confusion as potentially more dangerous than the threat of a reduced output of farm crops this year.

Mr. Davis was described as feeling that the authority to determine overall food policies, including price policies, should be vested in one central agency, and preferably in an agency charged in the public view with the responsibility of solving food problems.

That agency, in his view, need not necessarily be the War Food Administration. It could be, aides said, some such agency as the Office of Economic Stabilization or the Office of War Mobilization, so long as there was centralized authority.

Sources close to Mr. Davis said that he had no personal ambition for greater power or for centralization of other agencies under his control.

OFFICE OF WAR MOBILIZATION

Washington, D.C.

Copy of letter as dictated to Mrs. Brady over

the telephone.

Dear Chester:

I have given a good deal of thought to your letter of June 16, and your request to be relieved of responsibility for the future direction of the food program.

As you know, I have been trying for some time to coordinate more effectively the work of our war agencies. As a result I have delegated the power to issue policy directives affecting more than one agency, and the power to resolve disputes among agencies, to a few high policy officials not burdened with administrative responsibilities, with final authority resting with the War Mobilization Director, subject to my direction and control.

No one appreciates more than I do your ability in dealing with agricultural matters. You are a man of strong convictions and I appreciate your frankness in expressing them. But I am sure that you will agree with me that effective teamwork is absolutely necessary.

Before the Office of Economic Stabilization was established, differences as to prices and wage policies from time to time arose between the various war agencies which frequently had to be brought to me. The Act of October 2, 1942, directed me to stabilize the cost of living so far as practicable on the basis of the levels prevailing on September 15 and authorized me to exercise my authority through such department, agency or officer as I might direct.

Under that Act, and before you accepted the Office of Food Administrator, I set up the Office of Economic Stabilization and authorized the Director among other things, to resolve disagreements which might arise between the Food Administrator and the Price Administrator and to issue to them policy directives. If we are to stabilize all prices we must place the final responsibility in one official. I know of no better method of coordinating the work of the Food Administrator and the Price Administrator, although that method does require a willingness on the part of both administrators to accept the decisions of the Stabilization Director.

I agree with you that we cannot fully or effectively enforce our price or rationing programs or fully or effectively stabilize the cost of living without an adequate tax and savings program to drain off excess purchasing power. I have emphasized that fact in my budget message, in my statement on the hold-the-line order, and on other occasions. But because the Congress has not yet provided the tax legislation I have requested, I cannot sit back and fail to advocate other measures such as limited

consumer' subsidies which I am convinced can help to prevent the cost of living from getting completely out of hand. Of course you know that I also favor and have advocated such support programs and incentive payments to producers as will enable us to obtain the necessary war production.

I am truly sorry that you feel unable to continue as Food Administrator subject to the coordinated controls which I have established and which I believe essential for the proper functioning of our war effort. But it would be unfair to you to insist that you remain in your position when you feel that, all things considered, you cannot wholeheartedly support the program I deem necessary to hold down the cost of living.

I hope to arrange to have a talk with you next week about the program for next year to which you refer. I do not think it would be advisable for you to finally determine and announce it. Whoever takes over would then be called upon to administer a program which he had no part in determining. I know, however, that I can rely upon your remaining long enough to give to a successor the benefit of your wise counsel.

Sincerely yours,

Honorable Chester C. Davis
Food Administrator
Washington, D. C.