PSF Subject File  White, William A.

PSF
Box 194
PERSONAL

June 14, 1939.

Dear Bill:-

That is a perfectly joyous letter of yours. What a mess! And I might add: What a menace!

You and I are often in the same fix as my Dutchess County brickyard colored "pussoon" who took $4.00 from the Republicans and $2.00 from the Democrats and almost voted the Democratic ticket on the ground that it was the more honest, but ended by staying away from the polls altogether after he was given a pint of liquor by the Prohibitionist leader.

It sounds to me like a situation in which the President of the United States cannot help in either Party either way -- at least for the moment.

Knowing T. R. and F. D. R. you will realize what a momentous admission that is!

In any event, let me know at any time if you think I can help -- sub rosa or out loud.

I am off on a cruise in July and I know the old health is holding up because I have not bitten off the heads of any of the office staff for months.
I like that editorial of yours. Can't you bribe the New York Times and the Herald Tribune to run them occasionally?

My best wishes to you,

As ever yours,

William Allen White, Esq.,
The Emporia Gazette,
Emporia,
Kansas.
PERSONAL & CONFIDENTIAL

June 10, 1938.

Dear Mr. President:

Here is the Kansas Senatorial situation: I have been afraid of Winrod for several years. He has all the elements of danger. He was a tent Evangelist and knows the tricks of Father Coughlin, Huey Long, and Billy Sunday. He is a nice blend of the three, temperamentally, intellectually, morally. Until six or eight months ago, he was selling Jew-baiting literature in a little seventh day millennial paper which he circulates. He sold, for instance, the "Protocols of Zion". I have made it my business to read his Weekly for several years. And when I saw the advertisement of the Jew-baiting literature dumped out, I was scared. It was about the time that he loomed into some slight national prominence in the fight on your Court Bill. The political hookup was obvious. He has all the money he needs for the radio, which is expensive, and he has been sending out, for more than a year, about sixty thousand weekly letters well stuffed with printing-circulars, mimeographed addresses, etc--indicating that he has support--and lots of it. I heard the other day that he dropped a one hundred dollar bill in the plate at a negro church meeting after one of his own rabble-rousing address. He speaks well, either on the radio or to an audience, and is a strapping, handsome, smooth-talking man much like a medicine vendor or a soap-peddler. His religious angle is interesting. He is four degrees sub-Baptist, more fundamentally than Bryan, believes in all the prophecies of Revelations. The Methodists in Kansas are uneasy about him for
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he is violently anti-Methodist. They are too liberal for him. It is important to know this in any estimate you may make of his political strength. For one cannot assume that he is dishonest. He really believes it.

His political appeal is deeply reactionary. In the primary he is gaining headway. Unless we can change the Republican situation, he will win the primary.

Now for the Republican Senatorial situation in this state which you have a right to know: I am supporting Clyde Reed, but Reed is a sick man and cannot make a campaign. Reed's strength is his platform appearance. He has got to depend on a hand-shaking campaign. As a hand-shaker, he is worse than old Henry Cabot Lodge. He can pile up the votes in a Court House meeting and lose them when he marches down Main Street trying to be amiable. He has a tough-fibered brain. He knows what it means. He is courageous and he is fundamentally honest. Given his normal energy, he could lick Winrod; for this is after all a liberal state. Running against Reed and Winrod in the Republican primaries is an amiable, hand-shaking Cheshire cat named Dallas Knapp who still thinks in terms of Blaine and Logan. He will garner a few votes from Winrod but he is comparatively unknown.

Reed's friends, and I am one, are trying to get him out of the race and get another more competent liberal in the race, or a good middle-of-the-roader, like Congressman Clifford Hope, or Homer Hoch, former Congressman, or Frank Carlson. But Reed is sick and stubborn and we are up against a terribly hard proposition. And the time is short.

Now about the Democratic situation: So far, McGill is unopposed for renomination, as you know. But a
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strong group of Democrats who more or less control the Democratic political machine, do not like McGill. They are not entirely reactionary, nor conservative. They are offended Democrats. They wanted Harry Woodring and then they wanted Dudley Doolittle to run, but they feel cheated and impotent. They are not strong numerically, but they are powerful politically. What they would do if the race lined up between a clever rabble-rousing conservative like Winrod and the rather colorless Democratic nominee like McGill is almost unpredictable. It is not as simple as you think, and I am scared stiff. My present feeling is that I shall support McGill against Winrod with vigor and enthusiasm, which, considering that I am on the Red Network along with our First Lady, may not help McGill. It may chase off his conservative Democratic support. But I don't know. I am puzzled and of course the weather is the X of our political equation. A good wheat crop at a good price, though you may not believe it, means Republican votes. This is normally a Republican state. The minor state officers survived your landslide. So did both Houses of the Legislature, and so did the Court Houses.

And when the Republicans are feeling fat and sassy with a crib full of corn and a corral full of cattle, they revert to type and you cannot make them grateful. So they might vote for Winrod in spite of my screams.

I am satisfied that Dudley Doolittle can beat Winrod. It is a question whether McGill can do it because he has no personal strength, no charm, no pulling power. You can carry Kansas, (but hardly for a third term). Your personal popularity is strong, unblemished. But in a hot political fight, with all the money that Winrod can command, with
President Roosevelt. 
good crops, good prices and a normal Republican swing-back, 
McBride is in doubt.

Homer Hoch could beat him under those circumstances easily, and you couldn't do much about it. You might even hurt him by a personal appeal if the tide happened to be running against you. By tide, I mean crops, prices, business conditions and a thousand little things that magnify themselves in the last sixty days of a campaign.

It is hardly more necessary for me to mark this letter confidential than it is for you to mark yours. If John Hamilton puts me up against the wall and Jim Farley stands you up beside me, each of us for trafficking with the enemy, I hope someone will lend us a flag so that we can hold it up and tell the world that we died for our country and to hell with the party: A swell bunch of last words.

In the meantime, permit me to repeat the only message I would give you on your present job at your present age: Watch out for your prostate, the fate of a nation hangs on it. Just to give you an idea of how I am thinking, I am sending you today's editorial about Iowa.

Sincerely yours,

Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt, 
President of the United States, 
White House, 
Washington, D.C.

WAW/MY.
June 6, 1938

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Bill:

Do you want to do a fellow a confidential favor? I cannot make much sense out of the Kansas situation in the Republican primaries—all I get here is a lot of rumors that a man named Winrod of whom I want to speak admit, I have never heard, stands a chance to beat Reed whom I used to know when we were both governors.

The story I hear is that Winrod is openly a fascist and in addition to that, is showing KKK tendencies. Would you drop me a line in really strict confidence, putting it in a separate envelope addressed to Miss LeBlanc—or else send me verbal word by somebody you trust? Needless to say, anything you tell me I will keep (cross my heart) between your honorable self and my honorable self.

Very sincerely yours,

William Allen White, Esq.,
Emporia,
Kansas.
TELEGRAM

The White House
Washington

3wuh 96NT.
EMPORIA, KANS., Dec. 9, 1940

STEPHEN T. EARLY:

Will you kindly get word to the President that I feel strongly that the appointment of Winants to London would entirely remove the imprint of Joe Kennedy's Judas kiss? Winants is so completely the opposite in temperament, method and spiritual outlook of Kennedy that the British would understand his appointment and the appointment of a career diplomat with less political and moral flare might be sad disappointment to London. I hope that the President can see this as we, his friends, who are supporting his cause understand the British ambassadorial situation. Kennedy's exit was pretty terrible.

W. A. WHITE.

12:22 a.m.