

May 11, 1934

Dear Father:

The political situation is looking up. We will have Olson with us again next year and a completely Farmer-Labor legislature with consequent bad times for all, but I think the reaction will be strong enough to make that the last legislature. They moved assiduously and very successfully building a strong machine, principally with taxpayers' money, but the recent platform which was frankly radical in its nature and Olson's endorsement of it which he is unsuccessfully trying to whittle down has hurt the party very much. In addition to that there is apparently strong resentment throughout the country with the Farm Administration in Washington which to some extent is identified with Olson, and with the more informed farmers there is a strong resentment against the Farmer-Labor Party as being a labor party. This coupled with the deadly effect that three terms as Governor has always had in Minnesota makes it look as if this will be our last really bad Legislature. It of course will be the worst because through the last term the Senate still had a substantial number of conservatives who held over, and their slender and uncertain majority was able to dampen the efforts of the state administration.

A great deal depends upon how well the Republicans and Democrats can pull together. We still have the Bremer wing of the Democrats who believe in fusion with the Farmer-Labors and work closely with them. Its prestige has not increased. We also have some of the right wing Democrats who are of the die hard variety as far as Republicans are concerned. In addition to that we have the general political ineptness of the Republicans in this State. To offset these disadvantages we have a very strong united sentiment among the conservatives to wipe out the Farmer-Labor Party at all costs as far as disputes between Republicans and Democrats are concerned.

It is interesting to speculate as to the purpose of the radical Farmer-Labor platform which declared itself for public ownership of mines, all insurance, public utilities and factories. The group surrounding Olson and who are chief of staff of the party are sincerely communistic. At the time the platform was drafted the C.W.A. was going strong but its discontinuance was then anticipated and it appeared that there might be trouble over the country as well as here when it was discontinued. Olson is very conceited as well as being very able and possessing a great popular appeal, and I believe his speech in favor of the platform was with national aspirations in mind as a left wing successor to Roosevelt. He has so expressed himself to some people and it is entirely consistent with his ambitions and daring. If we do get into very serious radical trouble he will undoubtedly emerge as the strongest leader. Probably he did not realize that its effect in the State in consolidating opposition against him would be as great as it was, and he also probably felt impregnable this year in any event and with a fairly safe future in running against Schall for United States Senator in 1936. I am afraid he is right about being impregnable this year, but I think that he probably now regrets his speech.

Yours truly,

FDB AW