

3238 R Street, N.W.
Washington, D. C.
May 11, 1934

Dear F.F.:

(1) I showed your letter to Isaiah. He still thinks it's important for you to come home as early as possible; he instructed me to send my cable of today about making future engagements before the arrival of this letter which might stand in the way of a decision to come home. Although all the talk on the Hill is June 15th, Ray says that the Skipper is determined that Congress shall adjourn by June 1st. The Skipper will then leave town on June 15th for a six weeks' vacation and trip to Hawaii and through the West that will bring him back to Washington about August 1st. Both Ray and the Skipper agree there will be a rather complete examination and realignment of policy before September 1st and that possibly it will have been entirely thought through before August 1st, i.e. before and during the trip to the West.

Ray thinks that the Skipper will be comparatively inaccessible during the trip and that it might therefore be a waste of your time to be here until August 1st. But Isaiah thinks that it would be a good thing for you to be here as soon as possible for the chance that in some way you might get in on the shaping of affairs prior to August 1st. It's very hard for Ben and myself to pass judgment whether the chance that you might get in a word during a sure formative period before August 1st is worth the certain sacrifice of what you would acquire of a better knowledge of the European situation if you carry through your original plans except to telescope them to get back by August 1st.

I talked with Ray after talking with Isaiah and I'll send you another letter as soon as I talk with Isaiah again.

(2) If Ray is any barometer of what's going on in the White House mind, the plan of battle is to avoid any further attempt at reforms that might bring down more criticism during the present Congress, arrange a "truce of God", reorganize the machinery down here to help along a business recovery this summer, and in every other way postpone all other considerations to the necessarily primary objective of winning the Congressional elections. I think Ray is really nervous about the sort of thing summed up in this Hearst editorial -- particularly afraid of the anti-Semitic angle. The other day when he wasn't able to eliminate completely some chiseling which Jim Byrnes wanted to do on the Securities Act, he spoke a little sharply about the three of us pushing reforms too hard and too fast and burst into a real tirade against Jerry Frank (with which, to you, I thoroughly agree). Ray thinks your protege, Frank, is the evil angel of, and responsible for the troubles of, his friend Tugwell.

Ray also observed when I told him that eventually any satisfactory re-statement of policy would have to come back to L.D.B.'s attitude, that Ray could not agree with L.D.B.'s conception of an "Indian war" with a suit against a banker in the hands of every purchaser of a security -- that we had to be less solicitous about keeping fools from being fools, etc. This is not criticism, but reporting. Ray has been absolutely wonderful through this Stock Exchange business. His nervousness is simply an indication of a certain battle-weariness and a certain unsureness born of that weariness which is very characteristic in many places right now and very important to notice.

(3) Jim is all right. Considering the problem he has been up against and the almost utter isolation in which he has had to work, and the deep sea-pressures from the Treasury, Lew Douglas, Chambers of Commerce and all the other anti-Securities Act crowd under which he has to live in day-by-day decisions, he's done remarkably, at least from my worm's-eye view. Your hysterical patron, Mr. Stimson, hasn't helped particularly -- last week, for instance, he told Mrs. Canon Stokes, whose son works for Jim, that he thought Jim "the most dangerous man in the United States" and the amount of that general sort of thing Jim has to put up with is unavoidable.

(4) The ticket for the Stock Exchange Commission on which the Skipper has secretly smiled is Jim - Democrat, Ben - Democrat, Judge Healy - Republican, Matthews - Republican and your friend, Joe K. in Boston - Democrat. The last is particularly "deep well", comes straight from the Skipper through Ray. The Stock Exchange Bill with Securities Act amendments will pass the Senate tomorrow and ought to get out of conference and finally passed during the week of May 20th. The degree to which the Skipper goes through on the ticket at that time will give us a much more concrete idea than we now have of just where we stand.

(5) Barney has plans for reestablishing Ray in Washington unofficially, to replace the personal machine which is rather cracking up on the Skipper. The connection with "Today" will be retained -- by taking advantage of the fact that the cessation of classes at Columbia will give Ray more time. Ray demanded help -- asked for me and an economist for which I immediately picked Ben. There have been rumors for some time that my crowd and myself would be detached as a flying squadron to help someone on the general staff like Frank Walker and also to help at headquarters during the campaign. At first I thought that Ray's proposition was permitting me to stay with rather than have to leave the Government. But as the proposition was tentatively put forward the other day I was to leave the R.F.C., join the staff of "Today" at a much higher salary paid by Barney with the understanding that I was to run an intelligence service for Barney.

I don't like the smell of it and asked Isaiah who advised me to stay right where I am at least until you come back. I don't know how I'm going to get out of this situation with Ray and I very much feel that he should have all the help he can possibly be given, particularly for the months just ahead, since he is the only coordinating influence there is. But we'll

find some way to adjust things.

Don't write Ray about this.

(6) Still trying to make George Franklin Undersecretary of the Treasury and Dean Acheson Solicitor General. I know Dean would take the job and I think that the offering of it to him would heal a very unfortunate breach at very little cost.

(7) John Burns is very much in the running for Governor of Massachusetts. The Irish old line politicians are as usual equally ambitious and unable to "sacrifice" to each other — a repetition of the Boston mayoralty situation when Nichols got in — and Ely is so thoroughly hated at the White House that it looks as if John might be handed the nomination on a platter as a dark horse compromise. Anything you can do to help with the Skipper, who knows about the situation and John, partly through Jim, partly through Ray through me, will be "greatly appreciated".

(8) Gardner Jackson's all right now — all domestic affairs straightened out — but likely to have a little rough going along with the whole Jerry Frank-Tugwell crowd, for whom we're afraid there's a showdown not too far away. Tugwell and Berle have been trying very hard lately to tie our crowd into a general Brain Trust unity on the basis of some compromise in name which will be their philosophy in fact. We've ducked. All the rest of the crowd will somehow hold over well enough until you come back.

To the nicest lady!

Yours,

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I am still alive

Ben