

BREITENSTEIN'S, Inc.

Aurora, Mo.

July 1938

9:09 P.M.

Hon. Geo. A. S. Robertson  
Supt. Mo. Dept. of Insurance  
State Capitol Bldg.  
Jefferson City, Mo.

Dear Mr. Robertson:

Herewith a report of my activities, and the situation in general, as regards the present campaign. It is my intention to brief and exact as much as possible, this may be classified as a "Conservative Report"

This report will cover mostly my home county of Lawrence as well as Barry, Stone and Christian Counties, and before I report on what I actually have done or and accomplished, I wish to make a few remarks as follows: After arriving here a week ago from Jefferson City, I found the County - Lawrence pretty bad shape, Billings having been advertised most extensively throughout. Not only this but other neighboring counties, and it still appears that the Kansas City Boys have "Concentrated" the most on this Lawrence County, and I am positive that Mr. Gene McNatt, County and District Mgr. of this City will bear me out in this statement. The Kansas City outfit has had two people a man and a woman who are known hereabouts, working in this county now for about 5 weeks, they are paid employees of T. J. in fact the woman's sister Miss Helen Craig of Sales Tax Dept. told me so. They and all the others have gotten quite a jump on us. Some of the others of the opposition are as follows: John Adamson, of Miller, Mo. this county, who formerly and may still have a son employed in the State Finance & Banking Dept. at least he worked there during Moberly's regime, also another son who worked at the Prison and possibly some relatives at the State Sanatorium of this County. Mr. Adamson is a close old time friend of O'Malley. About eight weeks ago he

(Adamson) came out with a long list of names on a petition from north Lawrence County it read as follows: We the following leading Democrats of Lawrence County heartily endorse Roosevelt, Champ Clark, James V. Billings and the Pendergast organization of Kansas City—then took this bunch of signatures to Kansas City and showed it to the outfit there and proceeded to get paid (along with the other two I mentioned) for their work in this county. Others who are working for Billings are Guy L. Lloyd our county Representative and other County Democratic Committee members. Others: Raymond (Shorty) Roberts of Pierce City former employee of Forrest Smith and former Sec'y. of State Young Democratic Club, and to top it all off Mr. Harry Mackey, whose real home is in this city and who is also incidentally the Chief of Police of Jefferson City, was down here almost all of last week, working his head off for Billings, and really doing some damage. We told him (Mr. McNatt and myself) that we would run a large insertion in the Jeff City papers reading as follows: "City official leaves Post of Duty" to go to south-west Mo. town, and dabble in politics and campaign for Billings". etc. This seemed to quiet him down considerably, (See Sizer for report on this) Yes, it seems he is also paid at least expenses by the Kansas City outfit and he will probably be down here a day or two next week again. The northern part of this county is still in rather bad shape.

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We are having considerable trouble with the WPA getting lined out. Mr. Frank Lee of Joplin, Candidate for Congress vs Dewey Short is also doing considerable damage hereabouts. The Mert Saunders-deposed Prison Warden Faction have also drifted into this county, also the Tex Roberts faction who are out to beat Gene Frost for State Senator. Some very friendly and over-zealous Republicans. (Example: Mr. Chas. Willis of Cassville, Mo.) who in their eagerness to defeat the Kansas City machine, have been driving around in their cars with lots of "Douglas Car Stickers" all over their cars, & when any ordinary democrat who would ordinarily vote for Judge Douglas, sees those things, and knows the man to be a strong Republican—Well, it sorta turns them against Judge Douglas, or as one man said "Sours their Stomach" with the result that we lose a number of votes that way, This condition has now been pretty well corrected. Other handicaps are apparent rumors and misunderstandings as regards labor and the unions supporting

Billings. Numerous other handicaps to overcome. (So much for the opposition)

As for the good of our cause, will say that I have worked in very close cooperation with Mr. McNatt of this city, County Mgr. and realize that he knows the situation better. He has been on the firing line for quite a long time now in this campaign and up until a week or so ago he was simply the sole and only real supporter and worker in this entire county. We have managed to keep all the Farmers Exchanges well informed on our side and tuned out and sent out by mail and otherwise plenty of literature. Mr. McNatt has put on the pressure on certain Social Security workers and other state workers (Sanatorium) whenever and wherever necessary and for awhile it seemed it was certainly necessary. I have made a number of reports to Mr. McNatt and wish to pay him high tribute for his fine work at a time (2 weeks ago) when it appeared that the whole thing was a lost cause, and the clouds were mighty dark, but it now appears much lighter. As for myself, Monday and Tuesday of this week, I used the Buick Car of Mr. F. P. Sizer, Senior of Monnett, who most graciously consented to my use of it, and he deserves our thanks for the same. With a car full of literature, I started out from Monnett, Mo. early Monday morning and ducked down into Barry county, spending considerable time at Pulaskifield, the Polish and Bohemian settlement, interviewed and I believe convinced about a dozen farmers, most of whom it seems also understand German, also. The Rev. Father Julian was and seemed very pleased and convinced, having previously met Judge Douglas. Hung up several placard posters on both sides of the roads, I stressed the Fraternal and Insurance matters to good advantage, also the embargo on foreign shipments of war materials to Spain and other countries, which also please them very much, I also talked-whenver favorable, the MFA situation and the domination of the Supreme Court by the Pendergast outfit, and convinced them how it might effect them. All in all believe, In fact feel positive that the dozen or so whom I was able to see, will certainly be O.K. and I hope to see the balance of these people within the coming week either at a Picnic or see the balance at Sunday Mass. To make a long story short, I did practically all of the aforementioned at Pierce City, Wentworth, Stotts City, Bowers Mill, Freistatt, Hobert, Mount Vernon, Verona, Aurora and Marionville—all of Lawrence County. I used Mr. Sizers car both Monday and Tuesday all day. I visited all the Farmers Exchanges, and

Catholic Parsonages and always the German and other foreign speaking settlements.

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Whenever time would permit I would make most of the democratic places of business in each town, having already received or been informed on who to interview before I started, as it would be a waste of time to talk to black republicans. In such small towns as Pulaskifeld and Hoberg and Bowers Mill I made half dozen or more residence, with pretty good luck, not everyone were total strangers, but may of them were, and it simply took nerve and lots of it. On two occasions one near Freistatt and one near Hoberg, Mo. I stopped the car, walked across the road and onto the field where half dozen people were hoeing strawberries and plowing ground, and introduced myslef and so on, and then set about my job of convensive salesmanship with indeed surprising results—"Yes, Mr. Adelbert Aufdembring of near Hoberg, Mo. says in part, and I quote" "Fer why they want that Machine Vote Business" unquote. and August Schmitt of near Freistatt, says "I never dink they (the KC bunch help us farmers any. Frankly Mr. Robertson it was really a pleasure and a treat for me to converse with these people. and Oh, yes, I stopped and talked to two separate threshing crews—Frank Birkenbach, and the other Henry Knob near Freistatt, there was fully eight farmers at each threshing outfit, and with a little German and some diplomacy as well as salesmanship, you know a man (in my opinion) do wonders. I venture to say that I got 90 percent of their support. Says Joseph Moskopf, I been fraid of that Bendergast making lots of trouble for many years, and I never voted for his bunch. At Aurora, Mo. the Lawrence, Barry and Stone County Mutual (an assessment Co.) at Freistatt Mo. Farmers Mutual Ins. Co. of Lawrence County, and at Billings, Missouri (in Christian County) the Billings Mo. Farmers Mutual Fire Ins. Co. I made sure to convey the idea that they will be blowed up sky-high if and when O'Malley and his gang ever get back In and mind you, they all admitted that they had been thinking about it before I come. I dont think we will have anything to fear from these County Mutuals as they all—Republicans as well as Democrats are going to vote for Douglas. and again, the Undertakers of this city and of Monett and Cassville have been informed of what will happen to them if Billings wins, and our local man here Finis King is doing all he can to Inform the membership of the Barry County Burial Society about this

race. I wrote Senator Frost and asked if it would be possible to inform the membership of this Burial society which I understand runs up to 15,000 members. Haven't heard from him yet. (I had in mind a sort of personal or form letter to each member) Wednesday afternoon of this week and Thursday and all this afternoon I have been riding my old partner of earlier campaign days, Frank Davis, Examiner of the B & L Dept., who lives here, we are making progress, and there is still lots of work to do. The situation is yet far from satisfactory. I find many many republicans who tell me frankly that they will certainly vote for Judge Douglas if and when he gets on the ticket and quite a number who swear that they are even going to vote the Democratic Primary just in order to beat Judge Billings. (one for instance a prominent republican) Mr. Wm. Wessell of Pierce City, Mo. of this county, formerly county Coroner, and veteran politician and requested me to ask the Governor's office to send a good Douglas speaker to Pierce City, Mo. to get the 1000 votes there including all of the Republicans. Even Mr. Charles Murphy, of this city who was formerly the big Shot of the "Menace" the old anti-Catholic Newspaper of this City. He now runs "The Monitor" a similiar paper in this City. He is of course now working on the Machine Catholics but will have to be

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watched in the general election this Fall, I am not, however, over-looking any support whatsoever, no sir, not at this time, as we simply have to get Douglas in there. I have avoided all arguments all heated discussions and all private and inter-county factional fights. I have so far called on three American Legion Post commanders two of whom I am positive are O. K. Am trying to make all picnics, reunions and small gatherings where the rank and file can be contacted. The Local National Guard Unit being as it is commanded by Chas. R. Stark 2nd Cousin of the Governor, is no win pretty good line for Douglas, and believe the others at Monett and Pierce City are also O. K. Two years ago, the County Central Democratic Committee assigned me exclusively to the job of turning over the vote of the Old Age Pensioners, and/or getting them satisfied or fixed up, there are exactly fifty-two of them who right after I left after the election who received their pensions, and fully a dozen of whom I have just recently met and who have thanked me very much for my assistance and part on their behalf—Well, maybe you don't think I

didn't ask them to now reciprocate and help me out, and vote for Douglas. the balance of the 52 old boys who I could not see or find—I set down and wrote them a letter, asking their support of Douglas. I feel very confident Mr. Robertson, that 95 percent of these old Boys and old Sisters will "Come-Thru" fo they certainly remember me, and they were and still are "Thankful" for what myself and the County Committee did for them. It really makes me sick to approach a man who I know was two years ago very strong against the Pendergast machine and to approach him now, with an idea that here is a democrat who has always been anti-Pendergast, and I'll be damned if those same birds arent now For the Pendergast outfit, I Just cant understand it It seems that they have had Pendergastism preached to them the past 5 yrs, and have now at the worst time—turned on us. A number of the several hundred employees of the State Sanatorium at Mt. Vernon it seems have gone around their town and elsewhere broadcasting the idea or fact that they have had the "Lug" put on them—they have told other possible Douglas voters of this—and have hurt our cause to some extent— our County of Lawrence—in my opinion is still worse off than Barry County which is coming out of it very rapidly, according to Hugh Brixey, Chairman of the Barry County Central Demo Committee to whom I talked to Wednesday Morn at Roaring River Park. Mr. Brixey said that Newton, Macdonald and Lawrence County were the three worst hit counties and out of this bunch he said Lawrence County was the worst of the bunch due mostly to moreor less "Concentration" by the KC bunch—that for two or three weeks before we few State employees arrived on the scene only Mr. Gene McNatt was the only one who was trying single-handed to fight the battle. Bennett C. Clark Mr. Robertson, will not get anything like the support he did six yrs. ago, I find a number of Democrats who will not vote for him due to what they mostly say - was failure of him to stay with the President. I have received considerable literature from Clark Headquarters which I am trying to properly dispose of and save the balance for the later campaign as I cannot hope to properly distribute it now. I still must visit the eastern half of both Barry and Lawrence Counties and all the coming week. Wednesday morning I made three other central Barry County towns, with a good success. I must also spend a few hours in Galena and Crane of Stone County, and also Butterfield and Billings, Mo. of Christian Counties, but have had orders to spend a most all my remaining time to this my own County.

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As stated previously in this letter—BOOK, even our county Campaign Mgr. will concur with me that this County is the worst hit of the half dozen neighboring counties. However, understand we are not standing still, but have been and are daily cutting-down that big handicap, which at one time looked like from three to five to one for Billings, Mr. McNatt has expressed to me privately that we would be lucky to carry this county for Douglas, but we still have not only hopes, but lots of work and good efforts to put forth yet. I try to keep as much as possible, the Governor's name out of my talks, as many people seem to be plenty peeved at the Governor, While it is probably is impossible for Douglas to again visit this County, we hope and trust that we can get at least a few good speakers in our county on Douglas's behalf before the Primary. As it is now, Gov. Stark will be in Monett and Cassville of Barry County next Wednesday, and Billings I understand will surely be again in Aurora of this County sometime next week. Senator Clark will be in Monett also tomorrow night. Inas much as Barry County is much better off than this County—wish we could have Clark and Stark in this County this coming week.

I am still hoping that Judge Henson of our Dept. will show up for a few talks in this his home county next week. We need him bad. and especially the northern part of this county, whom it seems is canvassed only by one man for Douglas and that is Johnny Webb of the Prison force in Jeff City, who was given a vacation at this time. I want to go to that part of the County, but Mr. McNatt insists at least for several more days that I remain in this central and Eastern part.

My observation in Christian County-particularly the Western part, gives me the opinion that that county is better than a 50-50 shot. as for Stone County and especially Galena, the County Seat, and the home of Dewey Short, it ought to be 90 percent for Douglas—that is "What fe Democrats" you'll find in that county, however, you will be surprised to know that here again you will find numbers of Republicans voting even in the primary for Douglas.

The present state of affairs, would indicate that this county and a few other neighboring counties, will certainly go Republican in the General Election this fall.

I realize that this report is rather gloomy, but I am not over-estimating it, nor am I over-confident but rather conservative in predictions. But frankly, Mr. Robertson, as the situation is as of today I will be very very surprised if Lawrence County pulls out just a scant edge over Billings, at least I cannot see it as of today, nor can other Douglas Managers, including Mr. McNatt, We have yet another good full week in which to cut-down the odds and make plenty of hay while the sun shines and I can and will promise you now that I am going to be busy every hour of the day and many hours of the night in trying to attain a victory. Despite the four or five weeks head-start that the Kansas City outfit had in this County and despite the apparent Concentration of their forces in this county, and the money they have spent here and the Precinct organisations it is still very possible for us to win. I am rather worn out and tired today, also wrenched my back in lifting a heavy box here at home but will be O.K, and ready to go and get them tomorrow, a big day. Will write you a very short letter in a few days, am using a portable typewriter excuse the length of this report—but it is complete. With best regards and luck I remain  
JOS N. BREITENSTEIN      BREITENSTEIN'S STORE  
AURORA, MO.