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October 25, 1937

The Hon. Lloyd Crow Stark,  
Governor of Missouri,  
Jefferson City, Mo.

My dear Mr. Stark:

In view of your recent admirable and estimable handling of the O'Malley and the Jackson County election board matters, may I be among the first to congratulate you for the action you have taken?

The change, effected in insurance commissioners, in one immediately evident as being "for the better", and the subsequent actions of Mr. O'Malley, as recorded in the press, bear out the wisdom of your policy of removal. While I have not followed the insurance rates settlement muddle, with its long litigation, sufficiently close to be familiar with the details of the case, I can see that the compromise arranged during Governor Guy B. Park's administration is not and can not be satisfactory and fair to all the parties involved.

The gross inefficiency of "Parkian" officials is more visible here in Jackson County where the election board, and principally Mr. Aylward and Mr. Bellemere, took care that no evidence of voting frauds was unearthed to soil their impeccable consciences! It remained for the federal grand Jury under the able direction of Judge Reeves and Judge Otis, and with the assistance of United States District Attorney Maurice M. Milligan, to show the extent of corruption, permitted under local politics.

I have no doubt that the new election board will do much to remedy the situation. The

character of the men appointed, and their political history or lack of it, show that they have been selected without favor to any particular political organization, and really direct disregard to any. This defiance of machine rule is particular fine, when on the part of the chief executive of a great commonwealth. The action taken upon the tangled condition of the social security program by you is also impressive.

I realise that most or many of the reform measures you have instigated have been resisted by the Party leaders. This is, of course, not uncommon as an occurrence for Grover Cleveland, Charles Evans Hughes, Robert LaFollette, Hiram Johnson, Woodrow Wilson, Gifford Pinchot or Franklin D. Roosevelt as governors encountered the same strict opposition. On nearly every occasion they carried every essential item in their legislative and executive

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program. Evenso, greater centralization of administrative power and unity of effort are still desirable.

Now, as governor of Missouri, you are making a remarkable record; one not equalled in the late annals of state history. In slightly over ten months of office, you have achieved more personal popularity with the people of the state than had Mr. Park in the previous four years, or than has Senator Bennett Champ Clark in the last five. You possess the two necessary qualities for a successful governors executive ability, and popular appeal and salesmanship. In my opinion, neither Senators Clark or Truman possess them. When the Executive leads his party, he is the strongest influence in the state, for the control of the party and of the government are inseparable. In most states, it must be admitted that the governor occupies a subordinate position, being invariably under the thumb of a great party chieftain who is "the power behind the throne". Being young and ambitious, you have revolted against such a position and demonstrated your desire to gain undisputed power, control over the affairs of the state, and the right to make appointments as you see fit. This is extremely commendable.

I believe that it will be possible for you to wrest control of the state Democratic Party from the Pendergast-Shannon-Clerk faction which has previously dominated politics by giving Missouri good government and advertising your administration. Those last three words are important. The secret of success lies in the ability to dramatize, Along this line, I might add that the metropolitan press is extending you tremendous aid.

Now, I intend to get to the real point of this letter. With your good administration dramatized, the attention of the entire nation will be focussed upon you. What can be accomplished with this spotlight?

I sincerely believe that it will place Governor Lloyd Crow Stark in the White House!

Here is the situation. The Democratic Party is searching frantically for a successor to President Roosevelt, although the possibility of a third term in 1940 has not yet been entirely discounted. Eliminated are Governor Frank Murphy of Michigan, because of his Catholic religion; Governor Earle of Pennsylvania, because of his struggles with labor; Paul V. McNutt, because of the Phillipine Islands Fiasco; Senator Clark, because of his New Deal oppositions, and other reasons mentioned before; James Roosevelt, because of the antagonism of the Crown Prince angle; Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia of New York, because of his Republican politics despite certain New Deal leanings.

The labor union leaders and the economic royalists are of course

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unsuitable, because they are representative of minorities.

But the Governor of Missouri would be as strong a Presidential candidate as could ever be found. And in this statement, I am absolutely sincere.

In writing this letter, my main purpose has been to sound out any Presidential aspirations. While it may seem early in the campaign to organize a Stark-for-President Club, there are sound reasons behind it. The first Landon Club was organized in 1934, and it started the boom that put Alf at the helm of the Republican Party. A good campaign structure must have well- laid foundations.

I intend with your approval to commence the organization of a Stark-for-President Club in this state. I have already stated above my reasons for doing so. Your recognition of Edgar Shook has won you the support of the Fusion Democrats in Kansas City, and your other policies the support of the outstate Democrats. I believe there are bigger things ahead for you. If you do approve of any of the plans I have mentioned in the foregoing part of this letter, I would sincerely appreciate hearing from you. Your sympathies are extremely important.

Before closing, I would like to like to add that my own own opinions and plans have no connection to the newspaper with which I am associated. While support may be expected from it, the initiative that has been taken has been entirely mine. In doing so, I have not previously consulted my edirots or any political faction.

I am hoping to receive an answer.

Yours very respectfully,

Robert Locke,  
Science Editor,  
The Journal-Post,  
Kansas City, Mo.