

TELEPHONE—LINN CREEK 1930

WILLIAM M. LEDBETTER
LAKEWOOD COTTAGE
15 MALIBU BEACH
ZEBRA, MO.

Oct. 1, 1935.

Dear Major Stark:

Just received Mrs. Stark's gracious note and your memo of Sept. 29, in which reprint from Louisiana Press-Journal of K.P. Middleton's story in K.C. Journal-Post is enclosed. You ask me if you should send this reprint to 3000 XX names on your list. I certainly would not advise you to do this, as there are several things in the Journal-Post story that I do not like. That is to say, they may be all right for the J.P. to run, and are certainly gratifying to us on the inside, as showing the way the tide is running, but when we pick up the story and send it out as propaganda, we to a certain extent endorse it. For that reason, I would not advise you to send this story to your XXX list or to the newspapers. Some of the latter will pick it up anyhow, and that is all right, as we are not responsible for what they do of their own accord.

The things that I dislike about the J.P. story are these: It assumes that Cross was until recently the leader in the race for support of the K.C. organization; that you were, in fact, an outsider in this contest, and that by some hook or crook you have won favor and effected a "switch" in the situation, all to your advantage.

This is certainly not the platform we have been putting forward to our friends, who have been told right along that we were confident of the K.C. support, and considered it our due. A good many of them may misunderstand, if we now send out this Middleton story. Another, and even more serious objection to our circulating the story is that it virtually gives Bennett Clark all the credit for bringing about the supposed switch. Even with Bryson's rather mild disclaimer at the end, one gains the impression that Bennett pulled

a fast one on the old man, and the further harmful statement that both of you are from Pike county is thrust into the picture. And right after you have assured Bill Kemper that you and Bennett are as far apart as the poles. Why go out of our way to publicize this fiction of an imaginative reporter by giving it wider circulation? Bennett has lots of friends, it is true, but he also has plenty of enemies, and the latter are more apt to notice this story and make use of it than the former.

Finally, I dont think the circulation of this story by you will do you a bit of good with Pendergast, because it gives all the credit for his support of you to Clark, instead of making him (T.J.P) appear as the dictator of the choice, as he really is and will be, when he decides.

In view of the above reasons, I hope you will reconsider your determination to give any wider circulation to this Middleton yam than it has already received. We are sitting pretty, with a decision almost in sight. Why overplay our hand, or run any risk of doing do at this stage?

Sincerely Yours,
W. W. Ledbetter