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SAINT LOUIS
CABLE ADDRESS "FOLITE"

May 27th, 1931.

Personal.

Hon. James A. Reed,
Telephone Building,
Kansas City, Missouri.

Dear Senator:—

I have been reading the Kansas City papers closely to see whether you are back in Kansas City but I have been unable to ascertain. So I am sending this letter to your office on the theory that if you are not there it will reach you on your return.

I was sorry that I did not get to see you on the day you started to Washington. I waited until late in the afternoon in an effort to catch you at leisure. Then a phone call caught me to say that my wife was not very well and I had to hurry back to Excelsior Springs.

Since I saw you, you have doubtless seen Hawes' positive announcement that he will not be a candidate and my positive announcement that I will. I made this announcement on the theory of the old fellow in a play I saw once: "If you are going to cross the Rubicon, go on across. Don't wade out in the middle of the creek and stop; if you do, you will catch hell from both banks."

I have made up my mind to make the race, win or lose, sink or swim, survive or perish. The only contingency which would alter this determination would be for you to change your own mind about going back to the Senate, in which case I would, of course, support you as enthusiastically and gladly as I have always done.

The day after you left, I had a long and fairly satisfactory talk with Tom Pendergast. A good deal of it had to do with that Sedalia business and I explained the facts of my connection with it to him just as I did to you. I told him that it was my belief based on

hearsay that no one mixed up with the matter had had the slightest intention of slighting Jim Pendergast, and that so far as I was concerned my only connection had been that I had been requested by a committee appointed by Jim to introduce you and had had no knowledge of the slightest friction until just before the meeting started. In the end Tom seemed perfectly satisfied with this matter, although I do not know him well enough to judge accurately as to this. I had already talked to young Jim and he assured me that he had never suspected me of responsibility in the matter but did believe that Elmer Jones had deliberately arranged to slight him.

So far as the senatorial race was concerned, Tom Pendergast said that contrary to the general belief he had never gotten anybody in a campaign for any state office but had uniformly pursued the rule of supporting any Kansas City candidate who did not happen to be personally offensive to him. He stated that as between the governorship and senatorship, the former was of far more importance to him than the senatorship, but that he was not starting any candidate for either. He said that if a Kansas City man ran for Governor he would support him, if more than one ran he would make his choice between them. He said that if Howell ran for the Senate, he would support him. If Howell did not run and some other Kansas City man did, he would support him. He said that if no Kansas City man ran, he had told you and would tell A1 Gossett in my presence that he would support me. He added, with what I thought was great significance, that he knew that Kansas City could not have both the governorship and the senatorship and that if they ran candidates for both, they would both be defeated and ought to be defeated. That was the way the matter was left.

In the meantime, I understand that Howell is moving to form an alliance whereby Russell Dearmont would be the candidate for governor, thus opening the way to the senatorship for western Missouri. In view of Dearmont's general record of animosity toward you and his relentless pursuit of Mike Casey in the State Senate, it is hard for me to see how he would be acceptable to the Kansas City organization.

Charley Hay has told several fellows lately that he is not disposed to run against me in a two man race but that if Howell gets in, he figures that it makes a set up for him and will get in too. Hay has also talked somewhat about being a candidate for congressman-at-large.

My particular purpose in writing this letter is to assure you that I do not want to embarrass you in your Kansas City relationships. As I said before I have made up my mind to run if I only get five thousand votes in the State. Having gone as far as I have, I think it would hurt me less to be defeated than to quit. I believe that I can beat either Howell or Hay in a two man race. In a three-cornered race, I believe the advantage would be with Hay. In either event I intend to go after them from the tap of the gong. At the same time, I do not want to complicate your personal and political relationships. I think you know how greatly I prize your friendship and how anxious I am for your support and influence. I realize fully how tremendous and widespread that influence is. I am fully aware that I don't stand much chance to be either nominated or elected without your support. I want you to know, however, that I have sense enough to understand that the situation is an embarrassing one for you, and that if through the local situation you should find it necessary to support some one else, it will not make the slightest difference in the close friendship which has so long existed between us.

I have scrupulously refrained from undertaking to speak for you in this matter. When people have asked me about it, I have merely said that we have been close personal and political friends for twenty years and that naturally I hope for your support but that I am not authorized to speak for you. I mention this matter because I have seen newspaper gossip that you are for me and because Howell has been telling it around that you are for him. I have not repeated to any one your conversations with me nor have I repeated to any one the fact that you had had conversations with Tom Pendergast on the subject. Tom Pendergast himself told Al Gossett that you had been talking to him about me and Jim Pendergast told several people the same thing.

I am going to speak at Albany on Sunday afternoon at a Memorial Meeting and will be in Kansas City Saturday on my way there. If you are in town and can spare a little time I would like very much to talk to you about the whole situation.

With kindest regards, I am, as always,

Your friend,

Bennett C Clark

BCC:MR