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CABLE ADDRESS "FOLITE"

December 28, 1931.

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

Dear Senator:

I should have sooner answered your letter of the 11th but as you know, I was away from home for several days immediately following its receipt. I had expected to be in Jefferson City to talk to you personally but for various reasons this has been impossible. Due to the fact that Genevieve will return here early next week, it now appears that it will be several days before I can get away from here.

In your letter you use the term "resentment" as an expression of my feeling in the present situation. The term "hurt" used in my letter to you much more accurately expresses my feelings. I said in my letter of December 10th that I was hurt to the heart. I was, and am, and with good reason.

Of course, I know that you have privately been doing everything you could to further my interest. I am certain that in your heart you are for me. This enhances rather than diminishes my chagrin at your open proclamation of neutrality.

You and I have been associated for many years with a group of men and women who did not stop to count the cost in adhering to their views and expressing their opinions. I am proud to have been one of the fighting force which looked to you as chief. If Mr. Howell's name ever appeared in the order of battle in the desperate fights of 1920, 1922, and 1924, I cannot recall it and, I think you will agree, I was rather intimately familiar with the shock troops of those contests.

If I thought for a moment that you really hold me in as slight esteem as I have frequently heard you express for Mr. Howell, both privately and in the presence of many others, I would hold bitter resentment to my dying day. I have had too many

manifestations of your friendship and confidence not to realize that you entertain no such opinion of me.

Knowing your private feeling, it is therefore the more distasteful to me to have you publicly put me in the same class with Mr. Howell. If you really felt close to Howell, even if you felt close enough to him to declare for him, if you considered him in your heart a suitable man to carry on the great tradition of Missouri Democratic senators, I could bear my personal disappointment with infinitely better feeling than I can the present situation. The thing that hurts me most is that it is not like you not to express your real sentiments.

I am certain that I do not misunderstand my own feeling, when I say that I am much more affected by hurt on the side of our personal relationship than by any fear of the resultant effects of your attitude on my candidacy, important as I know that to be. I believe that I can win, despite Howell's candidacy and despite your neutrality. But if I were certain that defeat lay ahead, my wounds would still be to my affections rather than my interest.

The Clarks have been defeated before. And we have taken our punishment standing up and without whimpering, although no method has yet been devised of making us say we like it. I feel a good deal like General Cockrell must have felt at Shiloh when he hopped up on a breastwork and yelled: "Come on, Old Second Missouri. You've died once and you can die again!"

We loyally supported Wilson in 1912, and if you and Tom Pendergast nominate Charley Hay in 1932, no man in Missouri will tear his clothes for him harder than I will.

I am happy in the support of nearly all of the crowd who were willing to face the guns for you. Mr. Howell's interests in several counties are in the hands of your bitterest enemies. In the county where you are now trying a lawsuit, Howell's cause is being sponsored by Howard Cook in resentment of the fact that a week before the primary in 1922 Curly Ristine and I volunteered to whip the whole Cook family and all their friends. In Greene County, Mr. Greenwade, who sent you an insulting telegram after your nomination predicting your defeat in the general election, is Howell's manager.

I have no regrets for the sacrifices I made in your great contests. I am perfectly willing to abide the animosities I incurred in those battles. I thought you were right and time has completely justified you. You were a superb leader and I am

proud to have ridden knee to knee with you to every assault. I deeply regret that in this crisis of my own political fate we are not again to go up to the charge together but it affords me great pride to know that most of the fine old comrades with whom we both served will follow my standard.

In any event, I am going to do my damndest. I can assure you that if my ship goes down, it will take the plunge with flags flying, bands playing and the crew standing to quarters.

Your friend,

Bennett C Clark

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