

February 18, 1939.

Hon. Harry S. Truman, United States Senate, Washington, D.C.

My dear Harry

The events in Washington since Congress convened has caused some of us to wonder as to what might be in store for the Democratic party in 1940.

In my opinion the House caucus of last week has served to sharply focus attention on that question. Every one will agree that something ought to be done to try to heal the breach in our party. Perhaps more caucuses ought to be held. It should not be forgotten that Hoover was elected by a landslide in 1928 and then in 1932 the country did an about-face. The Democrats should realize that the country can and may do another about-face in 1940 if the present trend continued.

It appears that many House Democrats have been absent when important votes have been taken, with the result that the Republicans have proven a rather potent minority. To advertise to the country that the Democratic majority is unable to function is doing the party no good. I suppose it all boils down to a contest between the President and Congress.

I am wondering what happened in the House caucus, and whether the results were good or bad. I notice that Joe Keenan resigned. He has been labeled as the chief purger. Has the President begun a purge of the purgers in an effort to remove some of the sore spots? Or did Joe deem it advisable to step out at this time in order to capitalize on his drag with the administration?

All these are interesting questions I should like your views on if you can find the time and feel inclined to dictate a paragraph or two on the subject.

The enclosed clipping is from the Armstrong Herald. Your WPA vote has been somewhat criticised, and in time you will have to say something on the subject. At any rate, I think you ought to say something about it. If you return to Missouri to address the Legislature, that might present an opportune time. I believe I would discuss this subject now rather than wait for it to be raised as an issue against you in the 1940 campaign.

By saying something on the question before 1940, might remove it as an issue in 1940 when an explanation might not be so readily received. Anyway, I am offering this as a

suggestion for your consideration. You may have reasons that make it inadvisable to say anything at this time.

With personal regards,

We noticed that both Senator Clark and Senator Truman voted for the 160 million dollar cut in the WPA appropriation asked for by President Roosevelt, and all the Tory press hailed this majority of one victory in the Senate as a slap in the face at Mr. Roosevelt. Well, we can half way understand why Senator Clark voted as he did from the fact that he has been crossing wires with the President for some time but never before had Senator Truman left the reservation, and when we all must know that the WPA in Missouri has been the Senator's baby since the WPA started, it makes it the harder for us to understand as to why the Senator should desert both the President and the baby he has fostered for so long. Maybe it was the election results last November.

Armstrong Herald, February 10, 1959, Col. R.S.Walton.