

August 19, 1941

Hon. Harry S. Truman,
4701 Connecticut Avenue, H.W., Apartment 209,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Harry:

I was in Jefferson City last Friday night and until noon Saturday and then I went on to Rolla.

You will recall that a few weeks back Col, Bob Walton had a little item in his paper taking to task certain highups who recently held a secret meeting down on the Lake of the Ozarks. I got the lowdown on this from Dick Nacy. Dick said he found out about the meeting and Forrest Smith sent one of his sales tax boys down there to check up on a sales tax matter. This fellow get into an "argument" and was unable to get the matter straightened out so he had to stay down there overnight. This fellow reconnoitered the meeting to the extent of taking the census of all automobile license plates that were present. A check of the license numbers showed among others the following were present: Lloyd C. Stark, J. D. James, William E. Kemp, Edgar Shook, Andrew Murphy, Col. Claxton E. Allen of St. Louis and Senator Francis Smith of St. Joseph. Allen McReynolds was invited but he did not show up. Later Francis Smith denied being there but he was. Dick said that a day or so after the meeting he and Jim Blair were walking down the street and happened to meet up with Francis Smith and J. D. James. Jim Blair said to J.D. James "Well, J.D., Francis here denies attending the caucus down on the lake, do you deny it?" J. D. said he didn't deny it.

From confidential sources I have learned that Clarence Evans of the Tax Commission is taking a very active hand in laying the ground work for Stark's senatorial campaign in 1944. Clarence says that it is in the bag for Stark right now, that the common people are with Stark and that the ground work is being very carefully laid for Stark at this time. They are very quietly contacting worthwhile people throughout the state in an effort to line them up for Stark. For example, I happen to know that Stark accompanied by Mrs. Stark, called on a very prominent person in St. Louis County and this person was not at home but Stark left his autographed photograph so Stark is attempting to say it with pictures. You can tell Bennett all about this if you so desire.

At the time I talked to Dick Nacy, Kelly Pool was present. Mr. Pool is of the opinion that Marion Hulen has no desire to continue as State Chairman but he agrees with me that no effort should be made to force him to resign. As for timber for State Chairman, neither Pool nor Nacy had any suggestions. They said it would be impossible to get anyone who is a so-called neutral because anyone who knows anything about politics and who would be of any value as State Chairman has had some chips in this Stark matter one way or the other and they have not been neutral. They both agree that Mrs. McDaniel should resign as National Committeewoman; that her holding office is doing neither the Party nor herself any good but they very much doubt that she will resign.

I suggested to Nacy that perhaps along in October we ought to hold a meeting and explore the situation. He agreed that this might be a good idea.

I have given considerable thought to the question of a new State Chairman if and when Hulen resigns. It is a tough job to try to pick anyone. You will recall that I have previously suggested Roy Harper of Caruthersville, but Roy recently was drafted and is now in the Army but since he is now past 28 years old it may be that he will be released from the service. I still think that he would be a good choice.

Another man I have thought of is Roger Sermon of Independence. I realize that Rog, like a lot of others, would draw considerable fire from certain quarters but he has a lot of merit. He has an outstanding record as Mayor of Independence. He and William Southern are very close friends and I think Southern would back him to the limit and Southern through his newspaper connections might be very instrumental in lining up a lot of democratic editors throughout the state. Rog is a country type of boy whom I think would get along well with the rural democrats. He is their type. He knows politics and in my judgment would be a good organizer.

Harper and Sermon constitute the best timber that I can think of at the present time. I did think for a while that Harry Easley would be a good choice but I do not think so now. He is a banker who is very much tied up with a lot of personal affairs and I don't believe he would devote the necessary time to the job.

I am giving you the foregoing information for whatever it may be worth awl I realize it may not be worth very much. Certainly some thought should be given to the matter of reorganizing the Party this fall with a view to carrying on a different campaign in 1942.

I talked to a few at Rolla and they agree that Stark has done more to tear down the Party than anyone else. They agree that he cannot be elected anything and they are not for him.

The first time that you are in Kansas City I hope to have an opportunity to discuss this and a few other matters with you.

Incidentally the consensus of opinion is that you have greatly improved your position and that you are in a very commanding situation. I don't think there is any doubt that you are on top of the world in Missouri at the present time. What a hell of a difference since January, 1940.

With personal regards and best wishes, I remain

Very cordially yours.

WAK:BP