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December 9, 1942

Hon. Stephen Early
Secretary to the President
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Early:

I do not expect that the enclosed copy of my letter to Edward J. Flynn, Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, with reference to the causes of the Democratic defeat, will ever be seen by the President, but it occurs to me that the letter contains material which you and other persons close to the President may wish to know.

As one of the original Roosevelt men (before Chicago), I vigorously supported him in 1932, 1936 and 1940, and expect to do likewise in 1944 if he should see fit to again become a candidate for the Presidency. I consider Mr. Roosevelt to be one of the world's greatest statesmen.

Sincerely yours,

William L. Josslin

WILLIAM L. JOSSLIN, Secretary
Oregon Democratic State Central
Committee

WLJ:GK
Enclosure

OF 300
Democratic National Committee
Oregon
1939-45

OF 300 Oregon 1939-45
Democratic National Committee

December 9, 1942

Hon. Edward J. Flynn, Chairman
Democratic National Committee
Mayflower Hotel
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Flynn:

On September 19, 1942, I wrote you fully with reference to the status of the Democratic campaign in Oregon at that time. No doubt you have learned the disastrous results of the November 3 election in this state. I enclose a statement of the official returns as to the major offices. Only one Democrat was elected, Rex Putnam, incumbent state superintendent of public instruction, who was running unopposed on a non-partisan ticket. Pluralities against the Democratic nominees in the state-wide contests ranged from 20,323 for labor commissioner, to 157,627 for governor. With a Republican margin in registrations of only 16,839, the Republican candidates were entitled, on the basis of a 54% vote, to a margin of not more than 8,500. I enclose a list of registrations by counties for your information.

The officers of the Democratic State Central Committee wished to know the causes of this crushing defeat. On November 11, 1942, we sent the enclosed mimeographed letter to 270 of the leading Democrats of Oregon, including all state committeemen and women, county chairmen, executive committee members, nominees for major offices, principal Democratic officeholders -- federal and state, Democratic county judges, and representative Democratic county commissioners, sheriffs and clerks, and to other prominent Democrats in all of the 36 counties of Oregon. I have before me a sheaf of letters in reply, and I have also discussed the situation orally with a large number of Democrats. The substance of their comments I now pass on to you without any attempt at justification for the stand they have taken. I will discuss them under the ten heads listed in our mimeographed letter of November 11, 1942.

(1) It is the concensus of opinion that the 190,000 Oregonians who voted two years ago but failed to vote November 3, 1942, were almost exclusively Democratic registered or Roosevelt voters. It is believed that a very large proportion of the men in the service from Oregon are Democrats, as our Party has drawn great strength from the younger voters. It was pointed out that thousands of working-class persons have moved from their old homes to other localities for purposes of employment in war industries, and it is believed that a very substantial part of such persons failed to vote in the recent election. A number of those giving their opinions, stated that they felt there was little hope for the Party in Oregon until after the war, and declared that even those able to vote were making so much money that they saw no reason to take any interest in politics. All of our available information

Hon. Edward J. Flynn - 2

December 9, 1942

indicates that, except as to a few offices, union labor failed to support the Democratic ticket. The same is true of the old-age pension groups.

(2) Opinions given very generally indicated dissatisfaction with the conduct of the war. Several correspondents stated that had the North African campaign opened one week earlier, it might have made a substantial difference in the election. Observers, generally, indicate that the post-election war developments have materially strengthened public morale and public confidence in the National Administration. Investigations made here tend to show that persons of German and Italian stock voted almost solidly a straight Republican ticket. There is no doubt that anti-war sentiment still lingers.

(3) A great deal of dissatisfaction with rationing, censorship, and other wartime regulations was noted. One writer stated: "The main dissatisfaction that I have been able to ascertain from the general public is rationing in 'a land of plenty', and the absolute absurdity of the rubber situation." In this connection, it should be noted that in Oregon the OPA and other federal agencies dealing with the war effort, are solidly Republican-controlled. For example, in the OPA, only a handful of politically inactive Democrats are maintained as "window dressing." The federal organization for the sale of war bonds was used to effect the election of the Republican nominee, Robert S. Farrell, as secretary of state. With a very few exceptions, not a single Democrat has been permitted to participate in the wartime effort. These Republicans have no motive to present the National Administration in a favorable light. One correspondent cited activities of the OPA as instances of sabotage of the New Deal, and declared that this agency is being so operated as to infuriate hundreds of persons against the National Administration.

(4) The overwhelming opinion of those consulted was that the handling of federal patronage in Oregon since March 4, 1933, has been a source of great weakness to the Party here. The following statement of causes of our defeat seems to express the general feeling: "Early failure of the Administration to recognize -- or even extend courtesies to -- war horse Democrats who, without hope or wish of reward, fought and bled for the Party; the recognition and rewarding of Johnnie-Come-Lately (Dolly Varden) radical (even Communistic) so-called Democrats; ball playing with the Oregon Commonwealthers and similar ilk; the turning the entire war program personnel over to the Republicans and the exclusion of Democrats from participation in any manner -- with or without pay." Another person expresses it this way: "The second reason is the absolute failure of the big shots in Washington to play ball with the State organization in passing out the jobs. More Republicans by far, have landed key jobs than Democrats, and why we don't know; and this situation is getting no better fast. The continued ignoring of the State committee and national committee in the matter of patronage has caused the organization efforts, and everything that goes with it, to be shot to hell. There is absolutely no interest whatever in party organization, and why should there be? War horses get mighty tired working year in and year out for glory and then seeing their efforts rewarded by giving jobs galore to the Republicans." It is generally known that the endorsement of

Of 300 Oregon
Democratic National Committee

1939-45

Hon. Edward J. Flynn - 3

December 9, 1942

Senator McNary carries greater weight in many quarters in the national capital than that of Oregon party leaders.

(5) There was a very general feeling that the Democratic ticket was weak, and that the Republican nominees for senator and governor, Charles L. McNary and Earl Snell, were unusually strong. Several correspondents pointed out the repeated efforts of the National Administration to build up Senator McNary, amounting almost to an endorsement. By a strange irony, Senator McNary and Congressmen Angell and Mott have been able to take credit for years for obtaining for the state from the Democratic National Administration, things that they could never have obtained from a Republican National Administration -- things, in fact, secured independently of their efforts. With the Republicans in control of federal patronage in Oregon, they have been able to use this control to build up present or future Republican nominees for state and local offices, -- the classic example being Robert S. Farrell for secretary of state. It is a very general belief that every federal job filled by a Republican could have been filled by one or more Democrats possessing superior qualifications. It is felt that the Democrats of the state have not been given a chance to prove their capacities, and thus when they become candidates for office they are unknown to the voters.

(6) Comparatively little interest was taken in the "Democratic Charter for Oregon", -- the first state party platform since 1910. Approval of the platform among Democrats was general, but it was felt that our platform lacked "punch."

(7) One correspondent states that the Hatch Act has bankrupted the Democratic Party. Another declares, "A Democratic officeholder under the Hatch Act is a political eunuch." It is generally recognized that the most effective Party workers for some years have been immobilized by the Hatch Act and the Federal Civil Service Law. The result is that the Party machinery is now in the hands of the less efficient and less experienced Party workers. Another element in the situation pointed out very generally by commentators, was the lack of financial support given to the Democratic ticket by the federal officeholders. I enclose, for your information, a list of contributors to the Democratic State Central Committee during the 1942 general election campaign. By checking the federal officeholders in Oregon, you can readily determine those who failed to recognize any obligation to the Party responsible for their livelihood. The situation as to the larger salaried federal officeholders carries right on down to the small post offices, with few exceptions. How can the state committee be expected to carry on an effective state-wide campaign among over one million people, in a state of 95,607 square miles, with only \$1,800.00? Only a fraction of that amount was contributed by the federal officeholders. And if federal officeholders receiving \$5,000.00 to \$10,000.00 a year are unwilling to give a cent to their Party organization, what contributions can be expected from those who are under no obligation to the Party?

(8) The state committee endeavored to have the picture of President Roosevelt published in the Oregon Voters' Pamphlet. In a mandamus suit, a Republican judge, formerly a partner of Senator McNary, upheld Secretary of

Of 300
Democratic National Committee
Oregon
1939-45

Hon. Edward J. Flynn - 4

December 9, 1942

State Earl Snell in his refusal to publish the President's picture in the Pamphlet. It is generally felt that the suit was a mistake, but that it had little or no effect upon the election.

(9) It is generally recognized that the Democratic Party organization in Oregon is exceptionally weak and is badly disorganized. This is due principally to lack of recognition of deserving Party workers in the distribution of federal patronage, and, secondly, to lack of funds to perfect the necessary organization. For many months the Republican State Central Committee has maintained headquarters with a monthly budget believed to be over \$1,000.00. Their executive secretary, Carl Moser, is said to receive \$375.00 a month and is being continued on a permanent basis in preparation for the 1944 campaign. It is estimated that over \$100,000.00 was spent this year in Oregon in behalf of the Republican candidates. Our state committee was not organized till August 1. It was able to maintain headquarters with one stenographer during the last two months of the campaign. The stenographer was on a part time basis until the last two weeks. The state headquarters was closed immediately following the campaign. It is generally recognized that our Party should maintain permanent headquarters, with a full time executive secretary and adequate staff, but there is no indication that any funds will be available for that purpose. The officials of the Party in Oregon are compelled to earn their own living and it is simply not possible for them to devote to the Party work the time necessary to effect a proper Party organization. The failure of the National Administration to recognize the duly elected Party leaders in the distribution of federal patronage in Oregon, does not encourage any very extensive work to build up the Democratic Party in this state. As to the national party organization, one of our nominees for Congress states: "There seemed to be no punch or energy put into the campaign from National Headquarters, and the Campaign Committee of the United States Senate and the House seemed to be principally interested in retaining the members already there. Perhaps this is natural but if they are to work on that plan the National Committee should not turn over to them all of its funds. There was a slowness and ineffectiveness on the part of the National Committee. For example, I received from them some very good copy for release on Election Day, which should have been here at least a week or ten days earlier to be of any service. After the Primaries I heard from Jim Farley long before I had any word from the National Committee."

(10) Other causes listed by various correspondents were: (a) Dissatisfaction with the domestic policies of the National Administration, particularly growth of the federal bureaucracy, and the waste and extravagance of non-essential governmental agencies; (b) "the alleged shameful waste of manpower and material in our war industries" due to unreasonable union regulations and to the greed of employers operating under cost-plus contracts; (c) the hand taken by the National Administration in bringing about the defeat for renomination in May, 1938, of Governor Charles H. Martin, and its other meddling in state elections; (d) "going overboard to gain support of labor and old-age pensioners"; (e) "the driving of self-supporting and intelligent Democrats out of the Party, and the courting and favoring of 'dogies' and misfits"; (f) "the nomination and election of incompetents, drunks and communists to the Legislature"; (g) ineffectiveness of and lack of interest and organization in

OF 300
Democratic National Committee
Oregon
1939-45

OF 300 Oregon 1939-45
Democratic National Committee

Hon. Edward J. Flynn - 5

December 9, 1942

the Young Democratic Clubs of Oregon, the Jackson Club, the Willamette Society and other Democratic groups; (h) ineffective campaigning and start of campaigning too late by many of our candidates; (i) the President's Labor Day speech; (j) the feeling, rightly or wrongly, of the businessman, small and large, that the National Administration does not have his interest at heart; and, finally, undue reliance upon the remarkably pleasing personality and demonstrated vote-getting abilities of the President,-- coattail riding.

The correspondents were closely divided on the question of whether or not Franklin D. Roosevelt is "through" in Oregon. It was generally felt that if the President were to seek election after the end of the war, he would court crushing defeat.

Correspondents had few, if any, suggestions to offer as to future activities of our committee. Many favored the maintenance of permanent headquarters, but only one or two had tangible suggestions to offer as to raising the necessary funds. Several suggested the raising of large sums to be used to purchase key newspapers in the state. In general, the feeling was that the Democrats would have to await future developments, and that Party success would depend to a very great extent on the successful prosecution of the war, and the return of the thousands of Democrats now engaged in war service and other wartime activities.

The state committee would appreciate very much having your comments on the foregoing material, and particularly your suggestions as to our future activities. We wish to work with you and with the other leaders of our Party, national and state, to build a strong Democratic Party organization in Oregon and throughout our country. We must have the courage to search in the ruins of defeat the lessons which will bring future victory.

For your information, I was one of the original Roosevelt men (before Chicago), and supported the President vigorously in 1932, 1936 and 1940. I still believe that he is one of the greatest leaders of all time.

Cordially yours,

WILLIAM L. JOSSLIN, Secretary,
Oregon Democratic State Central Committee

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Enclosures