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Correspondence, John C. Stennis, March 18-25, 1948

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PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY

EUPORA, MISSISSIPPI

March 18, 1948

Honorable John C. Stennis
United States Senator
Washington

Confidential and Personal

Dear John:

Was just contemplating writing you congratulations on your "maiden" speech when I received your letter. It was wonderful in all its phases, its diction, its exposition of legal facts, and especially in its good argument. Your friends back home are very proud of you.

Of course there's a lot of hullabaloo going on about President Truman's Civil Rights business down here in Mississippi. It may do some good. I hope so. However I cannot help but believe that calm, thought-provoking appeals such as you made in the Senate are of more value than waving (figuratively) a Confederate flag and trying to fight the Civil War all over again. Especially convincing was your declaration that pressure groups will soon undermine the Constitution and destroy the Bill of Rights "bit by bit and line by line." It gave your Northern senatorial brethren the suspicion that perhaps their own house was being endangered.

Although I am in favor of fighting Truman's position with every weapon at our command, it is impossible for me to believe otherwise than that something pretty terrible is going on in Mississippi politics today. I abhor not having confidence in some of our leaders, but that's just the way I feel. And incidentally I happen to know that a number of these fellows are not wasting any love on our junior United States Senator or anyone else who might happen to be outside a rather rigid Bourbon circle. We are nearer political bossism today in Mississippi than at any time since I came to the state 21 years ago. Mr. Bilbo, with all his disadvantages, served as a balance wheel as long as he was living. Tom Bailey tied the throttle down to a sensible speed until he passed away. But today the paucity of real Democratic leaders is

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demoralizing. And in my humble opinion, things look as if a very narrow little circle of men are going to run things for some time to come. Your election rather startled them. Many of them still can't understand how it happened.

Please pardon this letter which I know is getting too long. I appreciate you writing to me, and want you to know that I think your deportment in the Senate has been ideal. If at any time, now or in the future, Hazel or I may render you any service, please call on us.

With every good wish, I am

Your friend,

[REDACTED]

P. S. Please give Senator Holland my regards. N.

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON
RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

March 25, 1948

Honorable [REDACTED]
Eupora, Mississippi

My dear [REDACTED]:

You can hardly know how much I appreciate your fine letter of March 18th, nor can you know how encouraging it was to receive such a fine letter from you. Your observations are most illuminating and helpful to me. What I need is a chance to talk things over at length with you and I am going to avail myself of the first opportunity to do so.

I certainly agree with you that Senator Bilbo served a purpose there of a kind that you and I did not see and recognize at the time. I shall never forget that it was the plain people of Mississippi that caused our election and I am setting up my plan of work here with that in mind. I am not going to try to run the affairs of Mississippi, but at the same time there is no individual nor group that is going to run the affairs of this office so long as I hold it, and there is no one there that has any strings on me except the people. I am not boasting of this, but merely repeating it to you, a special friend, that this is the situation.

Please give my special regards to Hazel and to your daughter Jane. I am enclosing a copy of my speech for each of them and a few extra copies that you might see fit to pass out to some special friends. I appreciate so very much what you had to say about the speech, which was received here as being a new approach to an old subject.

With very best wishes and kind regards, I am

Your friend,

U. S. S.

JCS:eh
Enc.