TO R299 P45

FROM

EMARKS:

Magazine
Logan County Ark.
which is in
4th District
Rep Ben Cravens,
Dem 1 Fort Smith

Sen John E. Miller Ark

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CHAIRMAN'S OFFICE

Magazine, Arkansas.
December 26, 1938.

Hon. Marriner S. Eccles,

Washington, D. C.

My Dear Sir:-

The chances are a thousand to one that you will never read this - you are a busy man, and your staff of secretaries will see to that - but as a man in a high position, as a leader that many people look to for guidance, I think you should be liberal enough to look upon both sides of a question now and then - whether you agree with the other side or not.

A man in your position naturally comes in contact with a great deal of good done by Government spending, but your natural instinct for a fair deal ought to tell you that it is equally true that a lot of the harm done is kept completely hidden from your eyes. I simply mean that there are men and women all over America who have had no Christmas, and in spite of the President's assertion of recent years that no one shall be allowed to go hungry, we have gone hungry, and are going hungry today! And if you are the man most of us think you are you will not have to go outside of your own city to see that hunger, in the eyes and pinched faces of men, women and children. We are hungry physically and we are far more hungry for an opportunity to work! We do not blame you, we do not always blame the president, but we do blame an autocratic political system, as bad under Republican rule as under Democratic rule, which spend millions uselessly, and put a heavy penalty on those that try hardest to keep their heads above water.

This is not to criticise your recent letter to Senator Byrd; I do not know him, and I doubt if his statement is going to curb

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either the government spending, or help those of us who really need help the worst. As an able man who has always had the ability to find work, you state that the basic right of all is that to live, and next to that the right to work . That sounds fine, Mr Eccles, but to those of us who are crippled, who are defeated by the depression, the first right is the right to work, and then we could take care of the right to live, by our own efforts. Never having been unemployed, you will doubtless find it hard to understand that, but let me assure you it is true.

My case is only one of hundreds - I do not tell you to seek aid, bitter experience has taught me how futile that is - and they exist by the thousands in every state. I am an ex service man, 48 years of age, crippled for two years with arthritis, unable to get any government relief because I had pride enough to work for and make a living as long as I was able, and yet too young to get any old age relief. I am still able to do a lot of mental, indoor work, yet have been refused on two or three Civil Service lists, as being unable to do physical work necessary, and yet not crippled enough to draw compensation. An appeal to the president would never reach him, you know that far better than I; as you doubtless know how many thousands are sent him; an appeal to my state or local authorities is useless because I have no political power - I voted right of course, but the past week when a committee from this community asked for help in supporting an orphan, they were told that they need expect no help, they did not vote right last month - and that from a Govt. worker spending W. P. A. or other Govt. funds!

If you can face the truth here it is; there are hundreds in

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my state and county today, worse off than they were in 1933 - some of them made that way by political spending, instead of merit spending, and the others because they have been taxed until they no longer have funds, and will slowly be added to the relief rolls.

Today's paper carried the story of the suicide of two ex-service men in this state - in their forties, no longer wanted, crippled or desperate, and the Government spending does not reach or touch them as long as they have any pride left. May I tell you that in America today there are almost 500 000 of us, one out of six, still living, who risked everything in 1917-18, and yet living, who face actual starvation or the short quick way out! As a thinking man I ask you what shall we do? Our liberty to live is not disputed, our liberty to work is only an empty claim, and so long as that remains true, the greatest menace to America is not outside, in foreign isms, but here at home; discontent, unrest, uncertainty, A government spending to help with one hand, and robbing those in actual need with the other!

I ask for nothing for myself - I shall doubtless be out of it all long before anything can be done, but I am an American for almost three hundred years of heritage, I love her as you do, and unless men in your position, and with your power, are able to turn the tide very soon, this America will cease to exist as surely as tomorrow's sun shall rise. May God speed your efforts, and grant you that which millions of us will never know - a Happy and successful New Year.

Sincerely,

R. C. Bowden

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January 4, 1939.

Mr. R. C. Bowden,
Magazine, Arkansas.

Dear Mr. Bowden:

I have received and read with care your letter of December 26th which was prompted by my recent reply to Senator Byrd. I am impressed by your earnestness and evident sincerity.

The situation which you describe both as to yourself and to others has aroused your indignation as it does mine, but it certainly does not call for despair. I am taking the liberty of writing both to Senator Miller of your State and to Representative Cravens of your district, enclosing a copy of your letter, and I feel confident that it will not be ignored.

You ask nothing for yourself, and I shall not ask you to accept any assurances from me beyond the fact that I am interested and I shall not be content merely to acknowledge receipt of your letter. You have been a soldier. I do not imagine you are ready to give up the fight.

In the meantime, just let me thank you for writing to me frankly.

Sincerely yours,

M. S. Eccles,
Chairman.

ET:b

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January 4, 1939.

Dear Mr. Cravens:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter from an ex-service man in Arkansas who writes with such evident genuineness and sincerity that I am sure you will be interested, as I have been, in what he has to say. I think it is a very intelligent and temperate letter.

If the facts are as he states, then his case is certainly deserving. He asks nothing for himself. I am wondering what might be done to rescue him from apparent hopelessness and despair. I knew you would be concerned, as I am, and, therefore, that I need not hesitate to pass this human document along to you for whatever consideration you feel it may merit.

I am sending a copy also to Senator Miller.

Sincerely yours,

M. S. Eccles,
Chairman.

Honorable Ben Cravens,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D. C.

enclosure

ET:b

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January 4, 1939.

My dear Senator:

I am enclosing a copy of a letter from an ex-service man in Arkansas who writes with such evident genuineness and sincerity that I am sure you will be interested, as I have been, in what he has to say. I think it is a very intelligent and temperate letter.

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I am sending a copy also to Representative Cravens in whose district the writer of this letter lives.

Sincerely yours,

M. S. Eccles,
Chairman.

Honorable John E. Miller,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

enclosure

ET:b

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON MILITARY AFFAIRS

January 6, 1939.

Honorable M. S. Eccles,
Chairman, Board of Governors,
Federal Reserve System,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Eccles:

Thanks for your letter of January 4, with its enclosure.

The correspondent, Mr. R. C. Bowden, has well stated the case of a great number of citizens, especially veterans, who are unable to prove their present disability to be service connected and yet because of their actual physical disability are unable to obtain employment by the Works Progress Administration or other Government Agencies. There is actually a class of citizens whom we have not yet reached and his case is typical.

I hope that we may be able to do something to reach that class.

With best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

Jno. E. Miller
John E. Miller

JEM:ss

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Magazine, Arkansas.
January 9, 1939.

Hon. M. S. Eccles,
Washington D. C.

My Dear Sir:-

If you understand human nature as your courteous letter which reached me yesterday, indicates, you realize of course that my letter to you on December 26th was only the despairing gesture of a crippled, perhaps a dying man - otherwise it would never have been sent.

By that irony of fate which prevails so often in the world today, your natural desire to help, sincere as it was, only made my case more hopeless, if such were possible. Congressman Cravens has ten calls for help to one that he can possibly assist. In 1933 I was No. 1 on a list of eligibles for Postmaster in this town. The Republican postmaster, who had given 12 years of unusually satisfactory service, was second on the list - others held 3rd, and possibly 4th and 5th places. After he was on his dying bed - unable to appear and defend himself - charges of inefficiency were brought against him, his name was removed from eligible list, and a man, whose rating and position on list are still unknown, was appointed! The appointment was held up for five months until the necessary changes were made with Civil Service Commission - Politics! Legal? Probably so, but no more justice than the worst graft in Tammany Hall, or Kansas City! I got a better place on a merit appointment a month later - Educational Adviser in a CCC camp - and two years later was removed by the same political pressure because I refused to contribute to campaign expenses! My case is not unusual - I vote Democratic, as my people have since the time of Jackson - but it may help you to understand how futile such political help must be, because such cases exist by the hundred in this state, and thousands over the nation.

Before me today, is a carbon copy of the letter sent to you by Senator Miller. He probably has a thousand ex-service men in the state today, who need help as badly as I do - and he of course is honest enough to admit that he can only hope to do something. I am doubtless "typical" as he says, but those of us who have paid our own way for twenty years, and are no longer able to do so, cannot see such injustice and not raise a protest. Director Hines, in his annual report last week, said that there were over 440, 000 of the ex-service men unemployed in June. My own estimate of half a million was based on my own state and community.

The above mentioned things do not matter now - the spoils system has always existed. But the one thing that could matter with me now - medical attention while there might be some hope, is almost as futile, because of the

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prevailing red tape in a Government that we risked everything for, just twenty years ago. Your letter encourages me to believe that perhaps there is some reason to keep up the fight a while longer, but you realize that even a soldier gives up, when there is no longer any reason to fight. Why fight when there is nothing to fight for?

If this should reach your desk, may I thank you sincerely for your courtesy - it is the first ray of sunshine or promise in what has been a bitter, cruel year. I did not expect anything for myself - I would have been selfish if I had; but I still trust that you, and men in positions of influence with you, may combine to fight some of the injustice that now prevails. Make no mistake about these facts; thousands of us ARE hungry today - and that hunger is not killing us as fast as the mental despair that comes from idleness, unemployment, doubt! Some of you who still think for yourselves should tell the President that such despair cost the Administration almost two million votes in November - and may cost far more in 1940.

Not counting the three millions on the WPA rolls, there are still eight or nine millions of us unemployed, crippled, still too proud to beg, but slaves in a free Democracy - many of us doomed to die as helplessly as the Jews in Germany today! You can't help me, but you can combine your position and influence with others to prevent such a condition reaching the majority of our people - if it does Freedom will no longer exist in America, in fact or in name.

May I again ask your indulgence for daring to intrude upon your valuable time. I have not written a public official such a letter since 1933, but your address was the one thing in that daily newspaper which made me feel that I had to reply, even in my feeble way. To be frank I never expected it to reach your desk, but it did give me something to pass the time - and that helps so long as one has the sanity left to think about such things.

Wishing you and yours the best this year may offer, and Godspeed in your work I am,

Respectfully,

R. C. Bowden

R. C. Bowden

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