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1204

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Ship Radiogram

A. N. WILLIAMS
PRESIDENT

NEWCOMB CARLTON
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

J. C. WILLEVER
FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

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4 KH X 40

ST LOUIS MO 1125A MAR 22 1943

MARRINER S ECCLES

UP RR TRAIN NO 104 CITY OF LA
GREENRIVER WYO.

IF JIM BYRNES REACHED YOU BY TELEPHONE SATURDAY YOU WILL UNDER-
STAND WHY I AM SO ANXIOUS TO TALK WITH YOU. UNDERSTAND IT WILL
BE POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO TELEPHONE ME FROM CHICAGO TOMORROW. HOPE
YOU WILL DO SO WITHOUT FAIL.

CHESTER C DAVIS

1105A

TELEGRAM
Board of Governors
of the
Federal Reserve System
Leased Wire Service
Received at Washington, D. C.

1943 MAR 24 PM 3 58

WA78G49WASH H101 STL 24-250

ECCLES BOARD

TALKED TO BYRNES WHO WOULD BE GLAD TO SEE NARDIN WITH YOU

DAVIS.

FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
OF
ST. LOUIS

OFFICE OF
THE PRESIDENT

March 24, 1943

AIR MAIL - SPECIAL DELIVERY

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

Dear Marriner:

Justice Byrnes called me by telephone this morning and intends to talk to you on your arrival in Washington. After talking with you yesterday, I wired him and then air mailed a letter, a confidential copy of which I am enclosing. My wire read:

"Have studied problem intensely since leaving Washington. Proposed plan has some fundamental defects concerning which I am writing airmail tonight. Hope nothing final will be done until you have studied my letter."

The President has talked with Wickard and told him what he intended to do without mentioning the man he proposed to name. That is as far as it has gone. According to Byrnes, they are just waiting for me to say when.

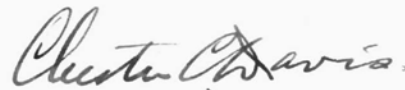
Bill Nardin reaches Washington this morning and will be at the Carlton Hotel. I would like for him to hear first hand from Byrnes how this thing developed. It will help immensely at this end if this can be done. I would like best of all to have you and Bill see Justice Byrnes and Marvin Jones together while Nardin is in town. When it comes right down to the point of decision, I am going to have to be a soldier. I am not much of a hand to bargain for position. I believe my letter to Byrnes sets forth the truth; if they insist in spite of it, I will go down and do the best I can. The hell of it is there is so little time. Things cannot be left up in the air with April 1 nearly here.

Another thing I wish you would be thinking about: We will have to move fast on all imported labor from Mexico, Latin America and some of the islands that we can get. See if you can think of someone out of the West who has had a lot of experience in recruiting, receiving and transporting Mexican labor and other imported labor - a man who is practical enough to get things done fast but is high class enough to act as an agent of the Government.

Honorable Marriner S. Eccles.

There is a lot I want to say but the particular point is
I hope you will arrange to see Byrnes with Nardin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Chester C. Davis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Chester C. Davis.

March 23, 1943

Honorable James P. Byrnes,
Director of Economic Stabilization,
White House,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Justice Byrnes:

There was no time for reflection or judgment during my hurried visit to Washington Saturday. Since then the fundamental defect in the program you discussed has become increasingly clear to me, and I want to set it out plainly before it is too late.

If that Executive order is issued, the Secretary of Agriculture will resign, or, if he does not resign, he will be extremely bitter about the change.

If he resigns, then the administrative situation becomes altogether different from the one the order is designed to correct, and another course might be more desirable. You would have a fairly clear sheet of paper to write on.

If he does not resign, but continues as the head of the Department of Agriculture, the Cabinet Member and the member of your Committee and of War Production Board, consider the situation of the Administrator under the proposed arrangement.

The Administrator and his staff will either have to rely on the Secretary and the personnel of the regular Department for essential services, or attempt to set up duplicating services. I refer to such routine but important matters as provision of personnel, provision of space, printing, multigraphing, supplies, etc., information and press service, legal staff, and other details.

It will not be humanly possible for the Secretary and his friends to give the proposed Administration close and friendly cooperation; on the contrary, he and his friends will hope for it to fail. I lived in Washington long enough, and had enough experience with the Department of Agriculture to feel absolutely certain that the incoming Administrator would have a fight on his hands with the Secretary and the Secretary's forces from the minute he landed in Washington. Sooner or later the arrangement would blow up. I think it would be very soon.

Honorable James F. Byrnes.

The job is so big that the Administrator should be able to devote his full time to it, without having to devote increasing attention to an internal row.

It may be argued that the order gives, or can be made to give the Administrator all the authority he needs regardless of the attitude of the Secretary of Agriculture. This overlooks the enormous statutory and institutional powers which the Secretary possesses and has strengthened during over two years in office.

Two years ago as a member of the Defense Advisory Commission, I urged that steps be taken then to organize for a clean-cut Food Administration which, as need developed, would occupy the full field, with all the authority necessary to do the job concentrated in the single agency. I do not think the proposed order accomplishes that purpose, but that it adds another layer of complications to an already confused situation.

I am not seeking to run out on you or to dodge a tough assignment. There are other complications in the split authorities in the field of farm prices and manpower which I think are general handicaps to the present Food Administrator, but I haven't raised them because the factor I have discussed is so packed with trouble that the others seem relatively easier to get along with.

Sincerely yours,

Chester C. Davis.

Received in
Chester C. Davis's Office

MAR 22 1943

RECEIVED TO DIRECTOR
MAR 10

RECEIVED TO DIRECTOR
MAR 10

CCD:AF