

Clarence C. Dill to Harry S. Truman, May 12, 1948. President's Secretary's Files, Truman Papers.

May 15, 1948



Dear Senator:

I can't tell you how very much I appreciated your good letter of May twelfth and your suggestions I think are exactly in line with what I had proposed to do.

You were very kind and thoughtful to take time out to write me as fully as you did. It will certainly be very helpful to me on the trip to the Northwest.

Sincerely yours,

**HARRY S. TRUMAN**

Honorable Clarence C. Dill  
Hutton Building  
Spokane 8, Washington

*Gave copy of file to Mr Clifford. 3/18/48  
RMC*

LAW OFFICES  
OF  
CLARENCE C. DILL  
HUTTON BUILDING  
SPOKANE 8, WASHINGTON

THE WHITE HOUSE  
MAY 14 8 27 AM '48  
RECEIVED

May 12, 1948

Hon. Harry S. Truman  
President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.



Dear Mr. President:

Since Governor Wallgren told us here at the Democratic State Convention on April 24th, that you are coming to the Pacific Northwest, I have been thinking of effective things you could say about the Administration's Columbia River program. This development marks the opening of a new West. It will take 50 to 100 years to build the great agricultural-industrial empire based on cheap electricity from the Columbia River.

Governor Dewey has just outlined a 10 point program in Oregon for the development of the Pacific Northwest. Every item in that program is already being carried out by your administration. The only hindrance has been caused by the refusal of the Republican Congress to appropriate the amounts of money recommended by you through the budget. However, he leaves out the most important feature, namely, the transmission of the cheap electricity from the power houses on the river to the consumers, without profit. His fifth point provides that the electrical energy shall be sold "at the lowest possible self liquidating rate".

The Republican leadership in Congress wants to sell that power at the bus-bar so that the private power companies can make profit on the transmission of the power to the consumers. They want to turn the Bonneville Power Administration over to the private companies. That is the very thing that will destroy most of the value of the Government's production of cheap electricity here. It amounts to a proposal to use the taxpayers' money to produce this cheap power and then allow private power companies to profiteer on the delivery of that cheap power. Under your policy, the power is delivered without profit for production and industrial development by individual users.

As an illustration, the rate of two mills per kilowatt, at which power is furnished the big aluminum plants in the Northwest, is what makes it possible for them to operate. If that rate is raised one mill per kilowatt hour, it will close every aluminum plant in the Northwest. No private power company would or could deliver power to the aluminum companies at two mills per kilowatt hour. Yet the Bonneville Power Administration delivers it and

makes enough to amortize the cost of the dams and transmission lines over a period of years.



The Pacific Northwest has no oil and little coal or gas. This cheap electric power of the Columbia River is our raw material. Its delivery to big industrial users and to publicly owned distribution systems is the greatest incentive to private enterprise in the far Northwest. Because of this cheap rate for power, the new industries built in the Pacific Northwest and operating during the war, 1941 to 1947, actually paid into the Treasury of the United States \$300,000,000 in income, corporation and excess profit taxes. I quote these figures from Dr. Paul Raver of the Bonneville Power Administration. That was new tax money.

During the War it would have been impossible to have produced the aluminum produced out here, anywhere else in the United States, because there was no coal nor oil available, and no man power to dig coal. The same was true of the electro-chemical industries. Today the income and corporation tax payments directly traceable to this cheap power amount to from \$25,000,000 to \$35,000,000 per year. These amounts are federal taxes, not amortization payments. The amount paid to the Treasury by the Bonneville Power Administration to amortize the investment in the Grand Coulee and Bonneville Power dams and power plants, is six to eight years ahead of schedule. In addition are the local taxes which amount to \$600,000 per year on these plants alone.

I think you can strengthen yourself greatly in the country if on this trip West you do not attempt to make long speeches or propose new political panaceas. The country doesn't need them. Just talk to the people about their particular sections of the country and their problems. You can point out that the Ship of State has weathered the dangerous period following the awful storms of war and that the nation is heading into an era of peace and prosperity.

I sometimes think that the slogan which the Democrats should use after the National Convention is -

Preparedness and Peace abroad.  
Production and Prosperity at home.

I appreciate that you did not ask me for the advice I am giving you which is all the more reason you are at liberty to throw it in the waste basket. I only hope you will consider these suggestions and emphasize any of them you think valuable on your trip across the country.

I believe your political stock is rising and that the rise of your popularity can be timed for victory in November. With best wishes, I am,

Sincerely yours,

*Clarence O'Dell*

CCD:fpd

*F.S. I enclose some remarks of Woodrow Wilson I once heard him make etc*

SOME IMPROMPTU REMARKS

by  
Woodrow Wilson



"As I sit in my office in Washington, there are windows on only one side of the room. These windows look out upon a park and the Potomac river, and the shores of Virginia on the other side.

"I cannot see Washington from those windows, because Washington is behind me, but I want to tell you the difference in what the two scenes suggest.

"Washington is seething with the voices of special representatives of little things. They are almost storming at my office doors.

"But that scene out there through the windows suggests the cool, large spaces of the United States. Sometimes I think I can hear the murmur coming from the hills and woods, the farms and factories, where the people are rolling out production for the prosperity and happiness of the nation, and then that murmur seems to me to be the voice of the common people.

"I would rather listen to the whispers coming in at those windows than listen to the strident arguments of those who come in at those office doors."