To: Clifton for Fitpatrick

From: Frank Hollington (Wexford)

Oct. 28, 1968

In addition to the remark sent you yesterday, we would like to call your attention to the one device that would serve to give other parties a look-in on the South. That is J.D. Long's proposed constitutional amendment which would give proportional representation in the electoral college. Under this amendment, the electoral vote would be cast in proportion to the popular vote. For example, a state with 10 million voters, in the election, it voted 700,000 Democratic (presuming it is in the South) and 300,000 Republican. On this basis, in the electoral college, 7 votes would be cast for the Republican, 1 for the Democratic nominee. Through this device, Republicans would have a cut at the South. Conversely, it might work to the deficit of such strongly Republican states as Nebraska, Maine, the Dakotas, Illinois, Pennsylvania, in crucial years, where there is a strong Democratic vote. It cuts both ways, but it is the one thing that can serve to break up the traditional Democracy of the South, more than any third party or labor movements are concerned.
In figuring the possibility of a breakup of the Democratic party,
there are some other points to remember.

A strictly labor party has never got anywhere in this country, because
farmers and labor (the former a tremendous bloc in Congress) always work traditionally
at economic and political cross purposes. The South is strongly anti-labor union,
and yet pro-labor Northern Democrats need the South's support to come anywhere
near capturing a national administration. The same applies conversely.

We think it should be remembered, always, that minority parties have
for a hundred years served their most valuable function in impressing their
viewpoints (such as are worthwhile) upon the major parties. For example: civil
service, direct election of senators, abolition of the lame duck congress,
public regulation of utilities beginning with the railroads, anti-nepotism.

Lodge's amendment would help the Republicans to gain inroads on the South,
give a more representative result from the now thoroughly questioned electoral
college. But it would not of itself split up the Democratic party; might tend, indeed,
to solidify it.

We simply can not count the Democrats a dead party on the basis of this
election. In fact, it would be bad for the country if it should happen. We need two
strong, opposing political parties, always.