

1152
GENOVA 44
MEXICO CITY
MEXICO, D. F.

Personal

Dear Dannie:

H. 8123
9.2.53
February 6, 1953
Messersmith

I have just received your note of February 2 referring to the telephone conversation which we had concerning John S. and also concerning the telephone conversation which you had with Mr. White. I do not think that there is any doubt that White and John S. are good friends, but I did not know that they were such good friends. In any event, in view of the fact that White has taken this initiative and as John S. would make in I believe so many respects a desirable member of the Board, I am myself entirely prepared and willing to propose such action and I feel sure that we can carry it through.

As the membership of the Board as now authorized is full, to elect him as a member would either involve the resignation now of someone or increasing the membership of the Board. I do not know just what action this requires, but I know that the matter of increasing the number on the Board was discussed once and it is a very simple matter, but whether it can be done before June I do not know. I am writing a letter to E. A. Graydon simply asking him to tell me what has to be done to increase the number of members of the Board.

We have a good Board now and the only person on the Board whom we could ask to resign or not reelect so as to find a place for J.S. without increasing the membership would be Dawes. You know how I feel about that matter but I also respect your feelings about it, and I doubt whether you would wish Dawes to be dropped. I do not see any other member of the Board whom we would wish to drop or not reelect, so it means really increasing the membership of the Board if we take on J.S.

I gather from your letter that White has already written to J.S. This makes it almost necessary for us to write him directly ourselves. I had intended to write him a letter in any event to tell him how much I wish him well in his new job with the Willys-Overland. Now I could write him and ask him whether he would be interested.

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in joining the Board of Mexlight. I think in writing him I would and should refrain from making any mention of the intervention of White. J.S. will know about it in any event as White is apparently writing him or has already done so. I do not know what White meant by "a special sweetening". There is only one thing we could do beyond making him a member of the Board and that is to elect him a Vice President. I would be quite agreeable to this, but unless we drop Van Zeeland as a Vice President we would have to increase the number of Vice President and I do not think that that is too good an idea. We at present have two, Graydon and Van Zeeland. I really do not see why we should continue Van Zeeland as a Vice President, but I have not raised the question recently. I think that so far as he is concerned, we are doing enough if we keep him on the Board. If anything is to be done beyond making J.S. a member and we make him a Vice President, then I think Van Zeeland should be only a simple member of the Board.

We have to think more and more of the overhead expenditures of Mexlight and I don't like the idea of three Vice Presidents. I really cannot see what White had in mind when he spoke of "a special sweetening" for J.S. There would not be any possible basis for anything that we can properly do for J.S. except to make him a member of the Board or a member of the Board and Vice President.

In any event, I do not see that it is so urgent or even advisable to do anything before the election of the new Board which takes place after the Annual Meeting in June. However, I see no objection to electing him a member of the Board before that if we can create a vacancy or increase the membership of the Board, but either one of these two things has to be done before we are properly in a position to offer him definitely a place on the Board, or at least to elect him.

I recall that you have several times in the past spoken of J.S. as a desirable addition to the Board and I have always been and am now quite in agreement. I am very fond of him personally and he made a good Secretary of the Treasury and I think it is recognized that he is a capable and honest man and he has many friends not only in his own political party but outside. I think it is generally recognized among Republicans as well as Democrats that he made a good Secretary of Treasury and certainly he conducted himself as such in an effective way.

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I have a deep personal affection for him as well as respect, so that whatever we do in this direction that we can properly do, I am completely in favor of.

I am sending you a copy of a letter which I have written to Graydon which is self explanatory. I shall await a reply from him as to the formalities before i write to J.S.

With all good wishes,

Cordially and faithfully yours,

GSM/cbc

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. S.', written in a cursive style.