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THE LETTERS OF
Theodore Roosevelt

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Harvard University Press
Cambridge, Massachusetts

1951

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*Distributed in Great Britain by
Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford
University Press, London*

THE LETTERS OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT

VOLUME IV

The Square Deal

1903 — 1905

*Panama: From Acquisition
to Commission, continued*

January 1904—March 1904

SYMBOLS

- < > Single angle brackets indicate material crossed out but decipherable.
- « » French quotation marks indicate editorial interpretations of illegible words.
- [] Square brackets indicate editorial interpolations.
- . . . Three dots indicate a missing word.
- Four dots indicate two or more missing words.
- 0 A superior zero placed after the manuscript source indicates that the entire letter is in Roosevelt's handwriting.
- A, B, C, . . . A small capital, A, B, C, etc., placed after a letter number indicates that that letter was acquired and inserted after the original manuscript had gone to press.

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Personal

Washington, January 26, 1904

My dear Mr. Secretary: In view of the repeated resolutions introduced in the Senate calling for information about the action of the administration in connection with the recent revolution on the Isthmus of Panama, I desire you to lay before me copies of every dispatch or other document sent from or received in your Department since May 1st, last, which has any bearing whatever on the events that have happened on the Isthmus. Be careful to send me every dispatch or document of any kind, sort or description, whether sent from the Department or sent to it, and whether in your judgment it should be kept secret or not, as I wish to have all the information before me.¹ *Sincerely yours*

Washington, January 26, 1904

Dear Elihu, I feel very strongly that this memorandum, unless you object, should be embodied in an order, such as that of Dec. 13th 1899 referring to General Brooke; put it on receipt of Gen. Wood's report.

MEMORANDUM.

The administration of General Leonard Wood, Governor of Cuba, while called military, was so in name only. It was in effect a civil government managed with an eye single to the benefit of the Cuban people, and so far as was possible under the existing conditions, was conducted by the Cuban people themselves, General Wood retaining only such supervision and control as enabled Cuba, when she assumed her independence, to start with the best possible chance of success. In short, out of an utterly prostrate colony a free Republic was built up — the work being done with such signal ability, integrity and success that the new nation started under more favorable conditions than has ever before been the case in any single instance among her fellow Spanish-American republics. This record stands alone in history, and the benefit conferred thereby upon the people was no greater than the honor conferred upon the people of the United States. The Secretary, by direction of the President, thanks General Wood and the officials, civil and military, serving under him, upon the completion of a work so difficult, so important and so well done.

¹ A similar letter was sent to Moody on the same date.

Washington, January 27, 1904

Dear John: I agree with you entirely. I shall see Lodge about the matter at once. Frye is savagely angry with both Root and me for our attitude in the shipping matter,¹ and I think this is one of the causes that have made him announce that he will vote against the confirmation of Wood, and that I am not a safe man to nominate for President. We can do nothing with him.

I took Mrs. Hay in to dinner last evening, and had a charming time. *Faithfully yours*

2947 · TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JUNIOR

Roosevelt Mss.

Washington, January 29, 1904

Dear Ted: Indeed I do understand your interest in all things affecting me, old boy, and I shall write you at length about the political situation. I do not write you such letters all the time because I do not want you to feel that all my correspondence with you is of a stilted and Chesterfield's-letters-to-his-son style.

In politics, as in life generally, the strife is well-nigh unceasing and breathing spots are few. Even if the struggle results in a victory, it usually only opens the way for another struggle. I believe we shall win out in the Panama business as soon as we can get a vote, for I think we shall confirm the treaty by a three to one majority; but they are filibustering and talking every which way in the vain hope that something will turn up to help them. In the Wood controversy also I think we shall win out, although possibly there will be an ugly fight. The only legislative matter looming up concerning which I feel uncomfortable is the service pension bill,¹ which I think is on the whole right, but which contains possibilities of mischief on account of the hostility with which it is regarded by many business people, and by

¹ On December 8, 1903, Frye had introduced two bills into the Senate. The first (S 2259) applied United States coastwise laws to Philippine shipping and trade, including interisland traffic. Interisland shipping was being conducted almost entirely by Philippine and other foreign ships. The Administration and the Committee on the Philippines considered this clause harmful to Philippine commerce. Lodge, opposed by Frye, introduced an amendment, which was passed, striking the provision from the bill. The second bill (S 2263) provided for the carrying of Army and Navy supplies on United States vessels exclusively. Root opposed this in a letter of January 14 to Frye, stating that the government did not have sufficient ships at its disposal and would be subjected to exorbitant prices by individual companies. The amended bill on which Frye did not vote provided that American ships would be preferred and used unless the President found freight charges excessive.

² On January 27, 1904, Cyrus Sulloway, Republican congressman from New Hampshire, introduced a bill into the House lowering age limits for pension benefits from 65 and 75 to 62 and 70. The House failed to enact this measure. The terms of this bill, however, were incorporated into Pension Order 78 issued by E. F. Ware on March 15 with Roosevelt's approval.

lots of good young fellows who do not realize how much the soldiers did in the Civil War, and how much we owe them.

By the way, if I were you I would not discuss the labor-union question from the side that labor unions are harmful. I think they are beneficial if handled as they should be, and that the attack should be made, not upon the principle of association among working people, but upon the abuses in the manifestation of that principle.

As regards myself personally, Senator Hanna and the Wall Street crowd are causing me some worry, but not of a serious kind. I doubt if they can prevent my nomination. Senator Hanna has not kept his promise to me of last June, and has been intoxicated by the thought that perhaps he could either be nominated himself, or at least dictate the nomination, but he will be thwarted completely if he makes the effort, and I think he will grow sullenly conscious of this fact and refuse to make the effort. He has caused me a little worry, but not much. The Wall Street people of a certain stripe—that is, the rich men who do not desire to obey the law and who think that they are entitled to what I regard as improper consideration merely because of their wishes—will do their best to secure the nomination for him, or at least to use him to beat my nomination and secure that of a third person. I think they will fail; and that when they realize that failure is ahead of them they will turn in and support me. But some will try to elect a democrat. A good many of them who are very bitter against me now will come over to my side when the campaign is actually on. I doubt if they can do much against me as far as the nomination is concerned. The election is a different matter. Of course I may be utterly mistaken, but personally I think I have a good deal of strength in the country districts and indeed in the West generally; but in the big cities, and especially in the eastern big cities, the extreme labor-union people and every one of anarchistic or socialist tendencies on the one hand, and the arrogant men of wealth on the other, will probably both combine against me. If the democrats put up a strong candidate upon whom all their factions can unite, I shall have a hard tussle. Nobody can say whether I shall win or lose. In any event, I have done a good many things worth doing while I have been President, and I have had the public service administered with efficiency and integrity.

I am worked very hard at present, and it is only now and then that I can get off in the afternoon for a ride with Mother or a walk with some friend. When the social season is over I think I shall have a little more leeway. *Ever your loving father*

P. S. Be careful not to let any of these letters in which I speak of political subjects lie about where they can be seen by anyone.

2948 · TO ALBERT SHAW

Roosevelt Mss.

Private & personal

Washington, January 30, 1904

My dear Dr. Shaw: I think your last editorials on the Wall St.-Hanna business altogether admirable, and you have stated the case exactly as it is. Moreover, I believe that your editorials are among the causes which, within a comparatively short space of time, will make this Wall Street-Hanna movement against me break down utterly. In confidence, I can tell you that outside all the Southern States I am now as certain as I well can be that if Hanna made the fight, and with all the money of Wall Street behind him, he would get the majority of the delegation from no State excepting Ohio; and from the South I should have from a third to a half of the delegates, and most of the remainder would have been pledged to me and would have to be purchased outright against me. I believe that the best advisers among my opponents themselves see this and have very nearly made up their minds to give up the contest. In a few weeks I think that most of the Wall Street republicans will have concluded that they have to, however grudgingly, support me. So much do I believe this that I am a little uneasy lest our opponents may then raise the cry that I have made terms with them. Fortunately, my nomination has become assured, in my judgment, before they give up the contest. Besides, I do not think even such rather thick-headed people as my opponents would venture to try to make terms with me now, although there was a tentative effort in that direction in October and November last. I shall treat them with scrupulous fairness anyhow; and in no event would I have done either more or less. *Always yours*

2949 · TO JAMES BRANDER MATTHEWS

Roosevelt Mss.

Washington, February 1, 1904

Dear Brander: Thank you so much for the two volumes. You are awfully good to have taken such trouble. I am interested and curious in reference to the translation of *New York*,¹ and the LeMaitre I shall read with real pleasure. I am rather amused that I, who have always championed Dreyfus, or to speak more correctly, reprobated the attack on him, should be selected as a club by an anti-Dreyfus man. *Always yours*

2950 · TO BENJAMIN BARKER ODELL

Roosevelt Mss.

Personal

Washington, February 1, 1904

My dear Governor: I had a very satisfactory letter from Stranahan about his talk with you, and also a very satisfactory visit from Nicholas Murray Butler. He will have two or three things to tell you from me when he next

¹ A translation of Roosevelt's *New York*, by Albert Savine (Paris, 1903).

sees you. I have written the Senator that I think it inadvisable to put up any candidate in the district lately represented by McClellan in Congress.¹ It would be a hopeless contest and it seems to me very inadvisable to go into it.
Sincerely yours

2951 • TO JOSEPH BUCKLIN BISHOP

Roosevelt Mss.

Personal

Washington, February 2, 1904

Dear Bishop: Many thanks for your letter of the 1st and enclosure. In the first place, I absolutely agree with what you say about the Foraker amendment.¹ It contains an element of good and an element of bad. But it was such a foolish and mischievous thing to introduce it at this time that I got Knox to make public his repudiation of the same proposal a year ago and to say that we still stood where we did then.

By George! What rascally dishonesty the *Evening Post* people stoop to, not merely in politics but in business. *Always yours*

2952 • TO WILLIAM DREW WASHBURN, JUNIOR

Roosevelt Mss.

Washington, February 2, 1904

*My dear Mr. Washburn:*¹ I have found out just about what I anticipated from the Department of Justice in reference to the matter you spoke to me about. You stated that "an intimate friend" of mine in Minneapolis had asserted that he knew that Mr. Timothy Byrnes had made twenty thousand dollars by securing pardons of federal prisoners during the last year. Those pardons are all gone over most carefully by Attorney General Knox in person, after a preliminary examination by Mr. Easby-Smith, the pardon attorney of the Department of Justice. I then pass upon them.

Most of the pardons granted have been for offenders with no money

¹ William Bourke Cockran succeeded McClellan as congressman from the traditionally Democratic Twelfth District of New York. Cockran, a Gold Democrat, had supported McKinley in 1896 but returned to his party in 1900. In 1904 he was temporarily in the good graces of Tammany. With Olney, Cleveland, Belmont, and other conservative Democrats, he supported Judge Parker for the Presidential nomination. In Congress he quickly reassumed his role as the grandiloquent spokesman of the Democracy.

¹ Foraker's proposed amendment to the Sherman Antitrust Act restored the common law meaning of "reasonableness" in antitrust suits. The senator argued that such a change was necessary because the courts, particularly in the Trans-Missouri Freight Rate case, had perverted the intent of the framers of the measure. He maintained that his amendment was in keeping with the suggestions of Knox's Pittsburgh speech. On February 1, however, Knox announced that the President and the entire Cabinet opposed the amendment. It was designed, he warned, to nullify antipooling provisions and precedents.

¹ William Drew Washburn, Jr., son of the senator from Minnesota.

whatever — men who could not pay anybody. Attorney General Knox informs me that Mr. Byrnes has never appeared before him or to his knowledge borne any relation whatever to any pardon case. So far as I remember he has never appeared before me, or written or spoken to me, about any pardon case. He has never mentioned a pardon case to anyone in this office. Mr. Easby-Smith, the pardon attorney, informs the Attorney General that he has never heard Mr. Byrnes' name; that Mr. Byrnes has never appeared before him; and that he cannot find any record in which Mr. Byrnes has taken any part either as counsel or petitioner for any prisoner.

In other words it appears that this man, who states that he is an intimate friend of mine and that he knows the facts, has been guilty of repeating not merely a piece of injurious and scandalous gossip, but a downright lie without one shadow of foundation in fact. I regard such conduct as in its effects criminal. You are entirely at liberty to show this letter to the gentleman in question, whoever he may be. I wish he had had the manliness to give you his name. Moreover, I ought to add that, as this was the only specific accusation alleged in reference to Mr. Byrnes, it seems to me that you should ponder well whether all the feeling you have against Mr. Byrnes is not based upon equally idle and malicious gossip.

It was a pleasure to see you the other afternoon. Give my regards to your father. *Sincerely yours*

2953 · TO ALICE HEGAN RICE

Roosevelt Mss.

Washington, February 4, 1904

*My dear Mrs. Rice:*¹ Your letter gives me real pleasure. Indeed, I shall welcome receiving the books from you and Mr. Rice. I am old-fashioned, or sentimental, or something, about books! Whenever I read one I want, in the first place, to enjoy myself, and, in the next place, to feel that I am a little better and not a little worse for having read it. You recollect what Oliver Wendell Holmes says in *Over the Teacups* apropos of some French books? It is to the effect that there are certain sights and sounds which if seen or heard leave an indelible stain, so that the man or woman is never quite as clean afterwards, and that this is doubly true of whatever appeals to the imagination. I do not want people to shirk facts or write what is not so, and it is often necessary to dwell on painful things; but I feel that they should be dwelt upon in proper fashion and not for the sake of giving a kind of morbid pleasure.

Give my warm regards to Mr. Rice. I hope we shall see you both. *Sincerely yours*

¹ Alice Hegan Rice, author of *Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch* (1901); wife of Cale Young Rice, poet and dramatist.

Personal

Washington, February 4, 1904

My dear Colonel Harvey: I am not only pleased but I am very much touched at the editorials in *Harper's Weekly* on the Wood and Miles cases. I had not the remotest idea that you would find yourself able to say what you have said, and I wrote to you chiefly because during our last talks together I had become very much interested in and attracted by you, and thought I would like to have you know the facts. Believe me, I appreciate your generosity in the matter. Not the least service you have rendered me is that you have enabled me to write to Mrs. Wood, who has suffered terribly, and show her what you have said. I have minded General Wilson's testimony most of all because I have had a feeling that Wood might himself conclude I really had said something upon which Wilson based it.

With hearty regard, *Sincerely yours*

2955 · TO THEODORE ROOSEVELT, JUNIOR

Roosevelt Mss.

Washington, February 6, 1904

Dear Ted: I was glad to hear that you were to be confirmed.

Secretary Root left on Monday and Governor Taft took his place. I have missed, and shall miss, Root dreadfully. He has been the ablest, most generous and most disinterested friend and adviser that any President could hope to have; and immediately after leaving he rendered me a great service by a speech at the Union League Club in which he said in most effective fashion the very things I should have liked him to say; and his words, moreover, carried weight as the words of no other man at this time addressing such an audience could have done. Taft is a splendid fellow and will be an aid and comfort in every way. But as mother says he is too much like me to be able to give me as good advice as Mr. Root was able to do because of the very differences of character between us.

If after fully thinking the matter over you remain firmly convinced that you want to go into the army well and good. I shall be rather sorry for your decision because I have great confidence in you and I believe that in civil life you could probably win in the end a greater prize than will be open to you if you go into the army — though of course a man can do well in the army. I know perfectly well that you will have hard times in civil life. Probably most young fellows when they have graduated from college, or from their postgraduate course, if they take any, feel pretty dismal for the first few years. In ordinary cases it at first seems as if their efforts were not leading anywhere, as if the pressure around the foot of the ladder was too great to permit of getting up to the top. But I have faith in your energy, your perseverance, your ability, and your power to force yourself to the front when you have once found out and taken your line. However, you and I and

mother will talk the whole matter over when you come back here on Easter.
Your loving father

2956 · TO JEAN JULES JUSSERAND

Roosevelt Mss.

Washington, February 8, 1904

My dear M. Jusserand: Herewith I send you back the *Chanson de Roland*. I have enjoyed it particularly because it is the first copy I ever read which had the old French and the modern French interpaged; so that I was able to read the old French, which I could not otherwise have done. There are a dozen points that I want to talk over with you, and as soon as the social season is over I shall get Madame Jusserand and you to come around to lunch.

Do you regard the Venetian manuscript as being as authentic as the older English manuscript? I hope so, because I particularly like a certain generous side to that description of the Moorish king, Margaris, who "would have been so great a baron if he had only been a Christian," and who seems to me to have more individuality than any of the other characters, after the three great heroes of the epic and Charlemagne.

It seems to me that it is somewhat doubtful to put the poem after the Norman conquest, and by an Anglo-Norman, on so slender a ground as the mention of the conquest of England; for Poland and Byzantium are also mentioned as having been conquered.

With hearty thanks, *Sincerely yours*

2957 · TO WALTER LOWRIE FISHER

Roosevelt Mss.

Washington, February 9, 1904

*My dear Mr. Fisher:*¹ Before I received your protest I had made the appointment and issued the following statement about it:

"After the bill creating a naval officer at Chicago was signed by the President and the Senators from Illinois suggested the nomination of Mr. Jamieson, the President stated that as he did not know Mr. Jamieson personally, he would like the recommendation of some businessmen on his behalf. Senator Hopkins asked the President if the recommendation of Mr. John M. Smyth would be satisfactory, and the President replied entirely so. Accordingly the President sent the following telegram to Mr. Smyth:

¹ Walter Lowrie Fisher, Chicago Republican lawyer, conservationist. A follower of Pinchot, Fisher succeeded Ballinger as Secretary of the Interior in 1911. He was also special counsel for the city of Chicago in local transportation matters, 1906-1911, 1914-1935, and a member of the United States Railroad Securities Commission, 1910-1911.

Accusations, but with nothing specific, have been made against Jamieson. Are you sufficiently well acquainted with the facts to tell me that in your judgment Jamieson is an honest man who will do good service as naval officer? Answer.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

and received the following reply:

I know Mr. T. N. Jamieson intimately. He is honest, able and worthy of trust. He will perform his duties with fidelity and intelligence. I do not think you can make a better selection than Dr. Jamieson, and I earnestly hope for his appointment.

Respectfully,
JOHN M. SMYTH.

The President has also received strong endorsements which run as follows:

From ex-Comptroller Eckels:

I have known T. N. Jamieson, personally, a number of years and I am certain he will make an excellent officer and I heartily approve appointment.

From John C. Black, President, Continental National Bank:

Regarding the appointment of Mr. T. N. Jamieson as naval officer at Chicago, I will say that I have known him intimately for thirty-eight years and I am entirely sure that he will in all respects fill the office proposed for him in a manner that will be a credit to the government and to himself.

From John J. Mitchell, President Illinois Trust and Savings Bank:

I wish to commend the appointment of Dr. Jamieson to the position of naval officer at Chicago. I believe him to be qualified, competent and honest. Letter follows.

Also from Charles G. Dawes, Armour & Co., Frederick M. Blount, Vice-President Chicago National Bank, B. M. Chattell, Cashier, Illinois Trust and Savings Bank, Siegel Cooper & Co., Rothschild & Co., and from a score of other businessmen and firms."

I never heard of Mr. Jamieson until his name was suggested to me. I received protests against him, but not one specific accusation. If the above mentioned businessmen, including Eckels, Dawes, Smyth, Black, Mitchell and Armour, have not told me the truth, I really hardly know where to turn.²
Sincerely yours

² The sharp protests against the appointment of Thomas N. Jamieson as naval officer at the port of Chicago were the product of the continuing factionalism in the Republican party in Illinois. Jamieson, the "Harmony Leader" of William Lorimer's Chicago machine, was at this time supporting Frank Orren Lowden for the gubernatorial nomination. Senator Hopkins, Representative Mann, John M. Smyth, and Eckels also supported Lowden. The opposition to Jamieson came largely from those Republicans who preferred Charles Samuel Deneen or Yates for governor. Patterson, of the *Chicago Tribune*, a Deneen man, considered Jamieson "the most disreputable politician holding a prominent position in the Republican party of Cook County," and called Eckels the "most completely stocked verbal hothouse in town."