

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Tuesday, February 4, 1964

Mr.

This morning I had about an hour with Ketchum, spending it mostly in our own family sitting room at the west end of the hall - and then in the Queen's Room. I want to get myself in the mood and in the knowledge for tonight's reception - the first of the six coffee hours with the members of the House of Representatives. We only lack a little bit of finishing the second floor - I think two more sessions with Mr. Ketchum and I'll know about as much as I can carry in my head about this floor. From then on it will be reading about its people, anecdotes, soaking up the life that's gone on within the walls.

There were work hours with Lix and Bess but the main effort of the day was concentrated towards ~~the~~ six o'clock - rather because of the debate of the Civil Rights Bill - it had to be changed to 6:30. A reception for House Members, about 130 strong, with the usual grouping to give them a briefing. McNamara, Staats of the Budget, Secretary Rusk, this time Virginia was missing. Lyndon and I stood in the Blue Room and received. It took us about 30 minutes to gather - I had made a few preliminary calls to those on the list that were my closest friends - to sort of help keep things going.

Naturally, I could count on two of my old 75th ~~friend~~ club members, <sup>Mattilee</sup> Natalie <sup>Chapman</sup> Grant and Mrs. Harry Shepherd of California. And there was the lovely and smooth Mrs. James Roosevelt and Mrs. Montoya, <sup>Carrie</sup> from New Mexico who is such a good mixer, and Mrs. MacMillan from South Carolina, and, of course, <sup>my</sup> my own Texas delegation, Helen Mahon. It was a big loss not to have ~~Carrie~~

Davis there because she can always help out if it's business and with the party,

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When most of them had gathered, we had a little ruffle of drums out in the hall by the Marine Band and then Lyndon said two or three simple sentences which is the reason for having them here, that he wanted them to come - not to seduce them, because he knew that there were many who differed with him yesterday and would tomorrow - but to share with him the information that caused him to act as he does act - and that if all the men would join him, and of course, the two or three ladies who are also members of the House, they would go into the East Room and have a briefing. And so, I then said, "Let's us ladies go upstairs", and I had somebody stashed aside - I believe it was Ashton - to make sure that Mrs. McCormack, the speaker's wife, was asked to go up in the elevator because she's a little bit too elderly and it's a little bit too difficult for her to tackle the steps. And also anybody else that would admit to being tired, having a sore leg, and most of us tramped up the hall, up the stairs. We made the same trip that we did with the three Senate groups but this time I think it was almost even more fun, because there were so many of them that came up to me and said, "This is something I've always wanted to do all the years I've been in Washington" - and it's a very pleasant feeling to know that you're giving some joy - sharing some interest, and right here's where I'm glad that I've learned every bit of information that I have from Mr. Ketchum. Although they threw me a few that I couldn't answer. For instance, is Lincoln's bed made out of rosewood? Bess is doing the advancing out in California and sorely missed, but we were extremely well helped out by Liz, Wendy, and Ashton.

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One of their greatest interests, <sup>was</sup> where the children's rooms were, but those I couldn't show them because I had quickly learned that the children do not want me to and besides Luci is still sick in bed with a cold, or perhaps it's a little touch of flu.

I had a nice chance to tell Mrs. <sup>Aranda</sup> ~~Arrens~~ of Illinois, one of the most attractive Republicans, that Eloise considers her the best traveling companion and that I envied them their trip. And I kept on hearing over and over, especially from the men, as they would come in the receiving line at first, nice things about Lyndon and about how he's regarded across the country. With full understanding of how quickly that feeling will melt like mist before the sun as the campaign gets under way, <sup>it</sup> was balm to hear it.

After about 45 minutes we went down stairs to the State Dining Room where the men joined us there quickly. It was a nice working out of logistics. And there the table was spread with some really good - but with my practiced eye I noticed - pretty economical refreshments. There was my chili con Queso - a big bowl of it on one end of the table - everybody helped themselves abundantly - everybody was real gay - it was a happy evening. It had to end rather early for Lyndon - that part of it, that is - because at 8:15 he's having a stag dinner of 32 men upstairs to talk about foreign affairs, headed by Mr. Ball. They were supposed to slip quietly up in the elevator and so they did - at least, I noticed no mingling or juggling and about a little bit past eight, I said goodnight to our Congressional guests and went upstairs to my own room for exercises and signing mail and reading up on things I'd missed during the day.

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Well, that's one down and five to go and if the pocketbook can hold out the muscles surely can -and really I found it fun!

In re-reading - or rather going over what came out in today's paper about the college event yesterday, to some extent I have to rate it a little above the low estimate that I gave it yesterday. It was a nice picture of a great many young people who gathered in the ballroom. Three or four good stories which certainly put the accent on youth. What I would like to know is what those people take back with them to Illinois and New Jersey and Washington State or wherever they came from?