

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, May 4, 1964

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Early this morning, I talked to Bess about music, refreshments, general logistics of the tea on May 7th, ~~took~~ a look at my list of acceptances, finding it gratifyingly high. . .

Called Bill Walton of the Fine Arts Commission, to see if there was anything in the fine print that said I couldn't move the Waterford chandelier from the family dining room, ~~back~~ down to the Green Room where it hung originally and he said there wasn't, so I got Mr. West busy moving it right away. But alas, it looks like such an involved job! The one in the Green Room will probably be in place tonight for the Labor dinner, but the one transferred up here, ~~I~~ can't be fully assembled and in place.

Then at 11, ~~I~~ Mrs. Wrightsman came. She's one of Mrs. Kennedy's closest friends and according to everybody who tells me about it, ~~one~~ of the chief motivators and contributors in the whole White House renovation project. She was slim, exquisitely dressed, rather brittle, I thought, and very, very knowledgeable about furniture and decoration.

From the trend of her conversation, I believe she thinks not only is the job mostly done, although she mentioned Jackie's hope for new drapes and new chairs, ~~I~~ in the State Dining Room, but she feels that additions will come, not from major gifts, but from the sale of the guide book. And she warned me that those revenues, ~~I~~ should not really be tied up in ordinary upkeep, with which I thoroughly agreed.

So close was her relationship with Mrs. Kennedy, ~~I~~ that I doubt that I

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shall ever have the same degree of interest and commitment from her, but I'm very grateful for what she's already done and that I wanted to let her know. And do my best to be friends with her.

We had lunch shortly after she left. I talked with Jim Ketchum. He's getting Mrs. Marshall Field's picture moved to the East Hall above the sofa, and I told him I would ask for the loan of the Remington and the Russell for Lyndon's business offices.

And then Clark Clifford came, with a full report from the White House Historical Association. The new guide book goes to the printer in June. About one out of four persons, going through the White House, buys it. It will soon go on sale in certain select stores and it's already on sale in many National parks, as well as two places in the White House. One, where you enter, and one where you leave.

He gave me figures on the maximum number of tourists passing through the White House. It was one Saturday in April, and was, I believe, some 26,000!

We make about forty-seven cents off of each paper back guide book sold, and more off of the hard backs.

Later I worked at my desk, and then got ready for tonight's dinner, which is a counterpart of the dinner for business last week.

This time, it's the labor leaders of the United States. Also black tie, 7:30, about 139 in all.

Once more, as we stood in line to greet our guests in the Blue Room, the following Cabinet Members were on hand - the Dillons, the McNamaras,

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the Hodges, the Wirtz^s, and Walter Heller. I'm getting to feel that I know David Dubinsky; the David McDonalds, the George Meanys, and the Walter Ruether^s very well. And, of course, the unique Mr. Jacob ^{Potofsky} Patowsky, ^{Ch sp} with his white goatee. And Alex Rose, who causes me to wear hats now, more often than I practically ever have. And Jim Suffrage.

But I should begin learning more of the others. Andy Beumiller, director of the Department of Legislation at the AFL-CIO, came to Congress when we came to the Senate in '48. He's always on hand with them.

And I met William Ball, of the United Mine Workers of America, the successor of that old lion of labor, John L. Lewis; and I guess ^{Welly's} ~~Willie's~~ boss.

And a very aristocratic looking negro, Mr. A. Philip Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and, incidentally, the only negro present.

But at each of these, I should really try to learn something about at least three or four more of the other couples.

After we had greeted everybody, Lyndon took the men into the East Room for the briefing, just as he had the businessmen last week. And the ladies went with me, upstairs for a tour of the second floor.

I guess Margie and Phyllis are getting to feel like they could go through it blindfolded now.

We had hustled all the pieces of the unhung chandelier into a closed ⁺ in the family dining room and lighted candles, so that it too could be included.

When we went down to dinner, I found myself with George Meany and my

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right and Walter Reuther on my left. Walter Reuther's a delightful dinner companion.

We talked about the economics of Europe and the political implications of France's intransigence. He used the expression that Germany had only a thin veneer of democracy, actually it had just been a series of independent states until late in the 19th century, and democracy is not deep in its blood; whereas Britain has a 800 year heritage of democratic practices and convictions, the implication being, I suppose, that Britain's position as a leader of Europe, must not wane.

Lyndon raised an eyebrow at me and sent me a note by Jack, so after the singing violins had passed through, and coffee was on the table, I rose and said, "May I propose a toast to the Labor leaders of our country. They've added to the strength of our economy and the staunchness of our character. What they have done and the cause they have led, has made this a better land, and a better world."

Walter Reuther has spoken with obvious admiration of Germany's economic brawn. He's an intellectual but pragmatic sort of a man. I like him, and find him fastinating to both talk to and listen to, though I feel sure that he and Lyndon will be at variance in the future as they have been in the past, because his constituency is homogen^{ous}ous, I guess, in a way - and now ours, is the whole 190 million. And more than anything, I think, Lyndon means

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that when he says that he wants to be President of all of the people.

We went to the East Room and danced, and danced, and danced. About 11:30, I took up my position at the door, and after several tries at Goodnight Ladies, *I* on the part of the band, with Lyndon keeping right on dancing, getting a new partner as quick as an aide came up and made off with the one he had, the guests all departed about 12:00.

Jesse had been our house guest, leaving about 4:30, and my conscience hurt me that I had spent so little time with him. If there's anybody in all the world, *I* we are obligated to comfort now, it's Jesse.