

October 8, 1906

MY DEAR SHERMAN:

Since you left this morning I succeeded in getting hold of the letters to which you referred, and I send you a copy of Governor Odell's letter to me of December 10, 1904.

As I am entirely willing that you should show this letter to Mr. E. H. Harriman, I shall begin by repeating what you told me he said to you on the occasion last

week when you went to ask him for a contribution to the campaign. You informed me that he then expressed great dissatisfaction with me and said, in effect, that as long as I was at the head of the Republican Party he would not support it and was quite indifferent whether Hearst beat Hughes or not, whether the Democrats carried Congress or not. He gave, as a reason for his personal dislike of me, partly my determination to have the railroads supervised, and partly the alleged fact that after promising him to appoint Depew Ambassador to France, I failed to do it; and I understood you to say that he alleged that I made this promise at a time when he had come down to see me in Washington, when I requested him to raise \$250,000 for the Republican Presidential campaign which was then on. Any such statement is a deliberate and wilful untruth — by rights it should be characterized by an even shorter and more ugly word. I never requested Mr. Harriman to raise a dollar for the Presidential campaign of 1904. On the contrary, our communications, as regards the campaign, related exclusively to the fight being made against Mr. Higgins for Governor of New York, Mr. Harriman being immensely interested in the success of Mr. Higgins because he regarded the attack on Higgins as being really an attack on him, Mr. Harriman, and on his friend Governor Odell; and he was concerned only in getting me to tell Mr. Cortelyou to aid Mr. Higgins as far as he could, which I gladly did. He also (I think more than once) urged me to promise to make Senator Depew Ambassador to France, giving me in detail the reasons why this would help Governor Odell, by pleasing certain big financial interests. I informed him that I did not believe it would be possible for me to appoint Mr. Depew. . . .

So much for what Mr. Harriman said about me personally. Far more important are the additional remarks

he made to you, as you inform me, when you asked him if he thought it was well to see Hearstism and the like triumphant over the Republican Party. You inform me that he told you that he did not care in the least; because those people were crooks and he could buy them; that whenever he wanted legislation from a State legislature he could buy it; that he "could buy Congress," and that, if necessary, "he could buy the judiciary." This was doubtless said partly in boastful cynicism and partly in a mere burst of bad temper because of his objection to the Interstate Commerce Law and to my actions as President. But it shows a cynicism and deep-seated corruption which make the man uttering such sentiments, and boasting, no matter how falsely, of his power to perform such crimes, at least as undesirable a citizen as Debs, or Moyer, or Haywood. The wealthy corruptionist, and the demagogue who excites, in the press or on the stump, in office or out of office, class against class, and appeals to the basest passions of the human soul, are fundamentally alike and are equally enemies of the Republic. I was horrified, as was Root, when you told us to-day what Harriman said to you. As I say, if you meet him, you are entirely welcome to show him this letter, although, of course, it must not be made public unless required by some reason of public policy, and then only after my consent has first been obtained.

Sincerely yours

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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