

Address by
George Lehleitner, a Private Citizen of New Orleans, Louisiana
January 23, 1956

Mr. President, honored delegates, guests, and friends, I very much appreciate that sort of welcome. It is quite the warmest I have ever had, and I hope I can live up to it. Mr. President, your invitation to place my views before the Convention is an honor that I really appreciate. May I tell you, and this is with complete sincerity so I can speak quite extemporaneously, that I have been immensely impressed with the dedication that you ladies and gentlemen as delegates have put into your work. I am certain that it will show up in an end result in a model state constitution.

Probably every speaker who has thus far appeared before this assembly has compared it with the Federal Constitutional Convention that met in Philadelphia in 1787. It is proper that they should have done so. However, I would like to think of you as being, in a sense, a composite of that assembly and an even earlier assembly that also met in Philadelphia. And I have reference to the assembly that sat in Philadelphia in the summer of 1776 and framed our Declaration of Independence. So, Mr. President, I earnestly believe that it lies within the ability of the delegates of this Convention, not only to draft a constitution for the government of the State of Alaska, but to take an action which will make it possible for you to put that constitution into effect in the near future and thus bring to an end territorialism, which is unfortunately our American synonym for colonialism.

Historians and political scientists are in agreement on the interdependence of our Declaration of Independence and our Federal Constitution, for it is obviously true that had there not been a Declaration of Independence there would have been no occasion for the delegates to meet and draft the Federal Constitution 11 years later. Perhaps then you won't consider it presumptuous on my part if I point out that should you Alaskans decide to use the Tennessee Plan and obtain statehood, as a consequence of its use, the Tennessee Plan ordinance that you enact for that purpose, will bear, in a sense, a significant relationship to the constitution in the sense that the Declaration bears a very definite relationship to the Federal Constitution. I am quite certain that no member of this body will feel that the mere drafting of a splendid constitution will in itself insure the grant of statehood. We only have to look to the example of Hawaii to see the fallacy of such an assumption because that sister territory also drafted a fine constitution and that constitution has been collecting dust in the Hawaiian Archives Building for almost six years.

Similarly, all of the patient labor, knowledge, skill that I am sure will be reflected in your finished document will have gone to waste if Alaska doesn't become a state. It is also my firm belief, in the light of known facts, that you and I simply wouldn't be adequately realistic were we to fail to recognize that statehood is in reality not apt to be achieved in the foreseeable future if we only continue to use the to and the methods that so far have failed us. You see, I am not among those who believe that we are steadily inclining closer to statehood. In candor I must tell you it is my honest opinion that the two

Territories today are further away from the realization of statehood than they were four or five years ago, and as concrete evidence on this point may I cite the fact that only last year the House of Representatives, which on four prior occasions had passed the statehood bills for either Hawaii or for Alaska, for the very first time killed a statehood bill. The reason for my beliefs are simply these.

Every postwar Congress has, as you know, been very closely tied together in partisan numbers. In such a situation it is practically impossible to get any measure that has any taint of partisanship to it through the Congress against the wishes of the opposing side. Nor is that situation apt to change very materially in the future because every political analyst that it has been my privilege to speak to has expressed the opinion that the next Congress and the Congress after that, barring some unforeseeable event, is also going to be rather closely divided along partisan lines.

Now, Mr. President, that is a situation that is made to order for any tightly-knit group that acts with cohesiveness and puts a lot of effort into any program they hope to either achieve or to block, and unfortunately we now know that the opponents of statehood for Hawaii and Alaska fall into that particular category. In the present Democratic Congress, anti-statehood Southerners, although they number only about one-quarter of the membership of the House and of the Senate, control 11 out of 16 key committees in the House and 7 out of the 12 key committees in the Senate, and those of you who are in the legislature know how very much power the committee chairmen wield in even those bodies. I can assure you that power is amplified many times over in the Congress of the United States. Moreover, the Chairman of the all-important Rules Committee is an opponent of statehood and I know I am not spreading any news when I say that the present Speaker of the House also falls into that category. Now, therefore, should the Democratic Party retain control of the Congress of the 85th Congress it seems to me a little bit less than realistic to assume that the situation will be vastly different than it is now, was last year, or has been for the past ten years. Even were those opposed Southerners who now hold important committee posts to pass from the political scene, and they don't do that very often from the section I come from, there would not be very much relief in sight, because of the 28 basic congressional committees, 16 of the number-two spots are also held by opposed Southerners, the reason being, of course, as you know, the fact that committee chairmanships are determined entirely on the basis of seniority, and the South's single-party system gives them a decided edge in that respect.

I would like to, also, while covering that point, to disabuse the minds of any who may be inclined to feel that that Southern opposition to statehood for Alaska would melt if Alaska returned a completely Democratic delegation to the Congress once admitted, because it won't make one iota of difference to those opposed whether you send three Democrats, three Republicans, a split delegation, and, if on top of that, Hawaii does identically the same thing, sends men of identically the same persuasion. I am speaking of course of the opposed Southerners because their opposition is not founded in the fact that they expect that you are going to send to the Congress men of a different political persuasion than they, but they are of the opinion that when you send or Hawaii

sends men and women to the Congress they will find their legislative strength diluted by the new additions, and it isn't the position that is new for the Southerners, it is a position that goes way back into American political antiquity, because you will recall that even before this war between the states the men from my section of the country invariably opposed the expansion of the Union, and they did simply because they felt that any expansion of the Union, that is political expansion thereof, would represent a threat to the things they considered to be important to their ways of life.

Should the Republicans capture the next Congress and/or the Presidency would it not seem logical to conclude that a majority of the members of Congress in that party, the President and the present minority leader, Mr. Martin, who in all probability would then become the Speaker of the House, will continue to obstruct Alaskan statehood just as they have in the past, and if you add to their opposition the known opposition of the Southern block I have just been talking about, I think you can begin to understand why I say in complete candor that we are actually not moving closer to statehood, we are inching farther away from it.

Now, it so happens that the latter-day territories, seeking their just entitlement of equality in statehood, are up against a number of handicaps that the earlier territories simply didn't have to contend with. For example, in the early days of our country the unit of population for each representative in the House of Representatives was 33,000 people. In the Senate the ratio was approximately 150,000 persons for every senator. This, plus the primitive transportation that prevailed in those days and the lack of communication, as we now understand communication, meant that the average representative and senator simply had a lot more time to devote to studying the circumstances of the applicant, and as a consequence, those earlier senators and congressmen knew a lot more about the qualifications of Iowa, Michigan, Louisiana, than they now know, unfortunately, about Alaska and Hawaii. And unfortunately it is so completely true that our human natures are such that we tend to oppose those things that we don't understand. Perhaps that may help you understand why the fear of Alaska's and Hawaii's noncontiguity is raised by so many Congressmen. True, that is only a smoke screen for many who raise it.

Some, however, have conscientious feelings that that is and will continue to be in perpetuity a barrier to statehood for either Alaska or Hawaii. Now, you perhaps will be inclined to wonder how any member of either body could still feel apprehensive on that particular score in the face of the very illuminating debate that took place, for example, in the last session of Congress when the House returned the bill to committee. I dare say your wonderment would change to amazement if you could but study the Congressional Record of that particular debate and find the number of times in which it was necessary for the presiding officer to issue a quorum call simply because there weren't enough congressmen in their chairs to conduct the business of the house. Now, were those absent congressmen just frittering away their time? The fact is that today with the average congressman having to look after approximately 400,000 constituents, those men who were absent were probably on long distance attempting to explain to some constituent that they would do their best to try to have this son or this brother-in-law or

somebody else sent overseas, or they were probably engaged in some other piece of business that had no direct connection upon the legislative matter then being discussed.

Another handicap Hawaii and Alaska must hurdle is this: when new states were previously added to the House of Representatives the question of making room for the new representatives was very easily disposed of by simply expanding the membership of the House to the extent of the new representatives being added. But back in 1929 House membership was permanently frozen at 435 and thus it is that before a representative, if he lives in an area that is on the thin edge of being reapportioned after the next census, thus it is that when a representative from an area of that sort is called upon to cast a vote, before he answers "aye", he must ask himself the question, "If I vote 'aye' am I willing to face up to the fact that it may cost my state one or more seats, and perhaps my own?" Of course, it could be argued that that could be changed by a bill of Congress. That is true. The membership could be expanded beyond 435. But although it has been tried on several occasions since 1929 it has never been successful, and I might also point out that it is also possible for the Congress to pass a statehood bill, but they never have. So, the mere fact that something is mechanically and legally possible does not eliminate it as a barrier, and it would be my considered judgment that the infrequency with which that objection is heard in the debate is no conclusive evidence of its importance to the issue. That has cost us many more votes in the House in particular than we have had occasion to realize, and the insidious thing about a barrier like that is this: that the mere passage of time isn't going to cure it, because if Alaska continues to grow at its present rate, it is quite probable that in another 10 or 20 years, instead of being entitled to one representative you would be entitled to two or three or four, and the bite is going to be deeper and harder when reapportionment rolls around as a consequence of that.

But by this time you are probably saying to yourselves, "Well, gosh, that is the most left-handed presentation of statehood I have ever listened to." If it so seems, and I don't honestly believe that I have in any sense of the word attempted to underestimate the enormity of the problems you and Hawaii must face before you accomplish statehood, if I presented with bluntness I do so for one reason only, and that is because I honestly believe that many of us who favor statehood, in the past have made the tragic mistake of underestimating the size of the real opposition, and that is a tragic mistake in any game. But as bleak as this analysis does paint the scene, I think I should hasten to add that there also appears to be a decidedly brighter alternate route to statehood if Alaskans will only take it. I say that because an intensive study of the case histories of other territories of former years who had difficulty convincing the Congress that they were ready for or entitled to statehood have shown the way with an approach, that while different from the orthodox, has nevertheless been successful in every single instance in which it has been used. And it has been used successfully, I might add, on seven separate occasions. In each of these cases the citizens' plea for the constitutional self-government they felt they were entitled to as American citizens had also fallen on either deaf or ineffectual congressional ears. And then something happened and that something was the calling of a constitutional convention and the writing by the delegates to the constitutional convention into their constitutions a proviso that gave

them, without a single exception, statehood within less than two years after the action had been taken. The states in question are those that you are already familiar with.

For the information of the gallery I think I should call attention, however, to the fact that they were, first Tennessee, and because Tennessee was first to use the plan it has been designated as the "Tennessee Plan"; then Michigan, Iowa, Oregon, Kansas, Minnesota, and California. What happened, precisely, was this: Tennessee became convinced that the Allegheny Mountains would serve as a permanent barrier to their participation in the full rights and privileges of American citizenship unless the territorial status was changed to one that would give them representation in the national Congress so the Territorial Governor, William Blount, was prevailed upon to call a constitutional convention and into that document was drafted a proviso that 60 days after its formal acceptance there would be held an election for the purpose of selecting the representatives to Congress and the state legislature in order that that body might, as the constitution called for in those days, select the two United States Senators. That was done and the senators-elect, William Cocke and William Blount, departed for Washington with their credentials. The Senate understandably refused to accept them because Tennessee had not been admitted as a state, but those men did such an admirable job of lobbying their state's case that within less than 90 days following their arrival in Washington both houses of Congress passed an admission act and Tennessee became our sixteenth state. Thus, for the very first time a group of Americans had themselves set into motion the events that brought them statehood. I think it is interesting to point out that even prior to the election of their state and federal officers the Tennesseans wished to make it very clear they were through with the hat-in-hand approach. They believed that as American citizens they were entitled to the sovereignty that statehood alone could give them and that they were entitled to it without undue delay, and as a consequence, Territorial Governor Blount, who also served as President of the Constitutional Convention, wrote the United States Secretary of State, February 9, 1796, three days after the final draft of Tennessee's Constitution had been completed, and here is what he wrote: "As governor it is my duty and as President of the Convention I am instructed by a resolution of that body to forward you a copy of the Constitution form for the permanent government of the State of Tennessee. The sixth section of the first article will inform you that the first general assembly of the State of Tennessee to be held under this Constitution is to commence on the last Monday in March next." That was the next month. "The object of the Convention in determining on this early date is a representation in the Congress of the United States and before the termination of the present session."

The next state to use the Tennessee Plan was Michigan. It followed an almost identical procedure, and Michigan also attained statehood after a delay of approximately 17 months. I might point out that it was delayed longer than that of Tennessee partly because of a boundary dispute with Ohio. And thus again a little bit less than 17 months from the date the American citizens of Michigan had exercised their fundamental rights of self-determination by approving a state constitution, there was demonstrated the power of the people when their cause is just and they approach it with sufficient determination. That was done by Oregon; it was done by Minnesota; it was done by

Kansas; and it was done by Iowa. But I think perhaps the most outstanding example of the power of the use of the Tennessee Plan is that found in the case history of California. Because California had been vainly petitioning the Congress for several years to grant them territoriality - they weren't even a territory - we had inherited California by virtue of the treaty of peace after the war with Mexico, and as far as Congress was concerned, the remoteness of California and her relative absence of resources, at least in the opinion of Congress of that day, simply didn't make her a proper candidate for even an organic act and territoriality. Instead, the Congress of the United States authorized through the War Department the sending to California of General Bennet Riley, and in addition to his commission as commander of the troops for the military district of California was a footnote, "And you shall also be the governor of California, the military governor of California." That did not suit the Californians any more than it would have suited any group of Americans. They protested to the Congress, but without avail, and then after gold was discovered and a flood of settlers came from the populous areas of the East and the South, things began to happen because those men were not the frontiersman or the farmers or the trappers who had populated most of our Western lands up to that time. They were the lawyers, the doctors, the businessmen, clerks, and artisans from the populous cities, and they had been living in states and they had known the blessings of full sovereignty under statehood, and when they learned that some of the older residents of California were willing to settle for territoriality they took the bull by the horns and they said "Nothing doing, we don't want to take a step backward." The delegation called on General Riley, prevailed upon him to call a constitutional convention, and that body included in its constitution substantially the same proviso that had been incorporated by the predecessor territories that had achieved statehood under the Tennessee Plan. The two senators and the two representatives got into stagecoaches just a few days after their elections and presented their credentials to a very surprised Congress of the United States. I say "very surprised" because here was an instance where in the opinion of Congress those folks weren't even advanced to the point where they justified territoriality, and these California ruffians had the audacity to demand statehood. But just as had happened with each of the other areas, the elected representatives and senators by dint of doing an excellent job of convincing the Senators and the Congressmen of the justness of their cause and perhaps, might I say, by some horse trading as well, were able within a period of 10 months to accomplish the impossible and California became a state in the Union.

I think it fitting that I should conclude the recital of the historical background with the reading of a section of the letter of introduction that California's senators and representatives carried with them when they went to Washington. The memorial they carried read in part as follows: "A state government and such a system of measures as a state legislature alone could enact was imperatively necessary. It was the neglect of Congress that forced California to form such a government. We do not present ourselves as supplicants, neither with arrogance or presumption. We come as free American citizens, citizens by treaty, by adoption, and by birth, and we ask only for a common share in the common benefits and common ills and for an opportunity to promote the general welfare of the United States."

The deeper I have probed into the historical precedence, the deeper has become my conviction that the use of some similar program presents Hawaii and Alaska with their most effective road to statehood. In addition to the fact that you would have three able lobbyists presenting your case in the form of your elected senators and representatives, you would get the benefit, it seems to me, that would come from our modern methods of communication. It would be news, and big news, and the justness of Alaska's case would, it seems to me, move from the editorial page to the front page, and if your story is going to become known to the vast majority of men and women in American homes, I am afraid that it is only so completely true that that information must be picked up from page one. But in addition to that, can anyone question the salutary effect that calls upon senators and representatives by the elected senators and representative from the people of Alaska, can anyone question the effect of those calls if your men, in making those calls, point out that once seated they will be casting Alaska's voice in the Congress of the United States, and I might add, votes that will be felt on numerous bills in which the gentlemen called upon will have some interest. While realism prompts the feeling that many Southern opponents will remain such to the end, it seems equally realistic to expect that such face-to-face conversations will surely help to at least alleviate some of the fears those gentlemen have regarding the representation Alaska would send to the Congress of the United States.

Of course, I am not unmindful of the fact that in each of the seven instances cited, instead of success there could have also been failure, and undoubtedly there would have been failure had the peoples of those areas not had the good judgment to send men with the proper qualifications to plead their case. It is highly essential that the men or the women who are sent to the halls of Congress not only be men and women possessing all of the potentials of statesmen but they must be men and women possessed of discretion and most important of all, they must be men or women willing to work and work diligently and even enthusiastically. There will also be a similar burden upon the people, all the peoples of Alaska, because I can assure you that should the Tennessee Plan ordinance be adopted, the mere sending of any men or any women to the Congress of the United States is no sure guarantee of success. I can also appreciate the fact that it is also possible to fail, but even if it would fail I think it must be conceded that the publicity that would result, the good work your senators and representatives would surely accomplish in their contacts with the members of Congress could not help but further advance Alaska's statehood case for the immediate future.

But I don't believe it would fail, I don't believe it would fail for the simple reason that we have, in the instances of the seven areas mentioned, a complete and unbroken chain of success, but more importantly, I don't believe it would fail if you sent the right men and they did the proper work and received the proper enthusiastic support from Alaskans, I don't believe it would fail because it is right and it is just and I believe that once you inform the American people completely, enthusiastically and intelligently of the justice of your case, you will be heard and you will get results. Of course, there will be protests, there will be protests both from within and without Alaska. Some will perceive to see in the Tennessee Plan the seeds of anarchy, and others will base their objections upon

the fact that it is irregular. You have already seen that it is not irregular because seven of the present states came into the Union by using it. And neither is it illegal, for the very first article of the Bill of Rights of our Federal Constitution, you will recall, guarantees that the Congress shall make no law prohibiting the right of the people to peaceably assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances. It is in its very essence a forthright and logical form in which to petition the government and simply because the grievance is real and stubborn it requires an action that is vigorous and dramatic. For those reasons the Tennessee Plan has always succeeded in the past.

When I was here in October several Alaskans wondered what the reaction would be of some of the Territory's friends in Congress if Alaska elected to use the Tennessee Plan approach. You gentlemen took a very long step in the direction of reassuring yourselves on that score when you posed the question to Senator Knowland on his recent visit, and I am sure it was just as heartening to you as it was to me to have that fine American say that he didn't see where you would have a single thing to lose by using the plan, and further, if you used it he would support it even if it meant a change in the control of the Senate of the United States. It was a grand statement by a grand American, and I think you will draw similar comfort from some of the letters that I hold here from other outstanding members of the House and of the Senate. I shan't read them all completely, in the interest of conserving time, but I would like to read in its entirety the first letter which is from the Honorable Clair Engle, Chairman of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of the House, and a good staunch friend of Alaska's. Congressman Engle wrote me as follows: "December 30. I have read your letter of December 23, 1955, and the attached statement regarding the Tennessee Plan with a great deal of interest. Inasmuch as I agree with your basic premise that we are really slipping further away from statehood, rather than gaining more strength, I cannot see how either Hawaii or Alaska would have anything to lose by adopting the Tennessee Plan or taking any other action short of open revolt and secession. Sincerely yours, Clair Engle."

The second letter is from another staunch friend on the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of the House, the Honorable Wayne Aspinall. He said, "I have received your letter of recent date together with the letter and statement which you prepared for delivery to the members of the Alaska State Constitutional Convention. I have read over the papers very thoroughly. You have brought to my attention a new approach as far as Alaska's progress for statehood is concerned, although I can advise that I have known enough history to appreciate the fact that the approach is entirely factual, it is my opinion that you have evaluated Alaska's chances for immediate statehood under the usual processes quite accurately. I can see no reason why if the people of Alaska should accept the responsibility of the procedure which you suggest that it wouldn't have the possibilities of securing to them their objectives quicker than any ordinary procedures. At least I cannot see where they would have anything to lose. Most assuredly they should not gain additional opposition because of following a new method. The precedence heretofore established should be sufficient for the presentation before the Congress. As you know, I am wholeheartedly a supporter of immediate statehood for both Alaska and Hawaii, and I don't care what route they

choose, but I do hope they will do something and do it soon. With best wishes I am sincerely yours, Wayne N. Aspinall."

Then an excerpt from the letter of John P. Saylor, the minority-ranking member of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, and he goes on to say, "I personally feel that the plan can do no harm. In fact, it might be the means of attracting sufficient national interest to the problems of Alaska and Hawaii to make statehood a reality." And from Congressman Dawson, "I personally would not be offended if Alaska should take the action proposed by you." And then from the deep South, from Representative Bennett of Florida, "Thank you for your letter of December 23 in which you ask if I would be personally offended if the people of Alaska by way of a local Constitutional Convention set into motion a procedure for Alaska to be taken in as a state. The answer to this is that it would in no way be offensive to me." And from the Honorable Frank Bow, Ohio, "Thank you for your letter of December 23. I find it very interesting and you have my sincere compliments on it. The delegates at Fairbanks will profit thereby. As to the effect of choosing two senators in advance of statehood, I doubt that it would be offensive to anyone and it might very well help."

Perhaps I had better, in the interest of time, not give the congressmen all the publicity but switch over to some letters from the other house, or the other body rather. Here is an excerpt from a letter received from the Honorable James E. Murray, Chairman of the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, and he says, "Thank you for sending me copies of the material you propose to submit to the Alaska State Constitutional Convention. I cannot speak for other friends of Alaska in Congress, but I do not at this time see any reason why the action you propose would prove offensive to me. You have presented the legal precedence in a very convincing manner. Thank you for letting me know of your proposal. And another letter from the South, from a gentleman recently a visitor to Alaska, the Honorable Kerr W. Scott, Senator from North Carolina, "The procedure you have suggested for Alaska and Hawaii to follow in their efforts to win statehood is certainly not objectionable to me. As you know, I am strong for granting statehood to both Alaska and Hawaii, and I hope that our work to this end will ultimately be crowned with success." And from Paul Douglas, Illinois, "While I have unfortunately not had time to examine your proposal in complete detail, I certainly believe that the Tennessee Plan for entering into statehood has withstood the test of time and see no reason why Alaskans, should they so decide, might not follow suit. I hope that you will extend my greetings and best wishes to the Convention delegates." And another friend from Kentucky, the Honorable Earle Clements, "I can assure you that as far as I am concerned it would be difficult indeed for the good people of Alaska to alienate me in their cause to gain statehood. It goes without saying that I feel strongly that Alaska should be admitted to the Union. The value of educating the public to the worthiness of Alaska's pursuit of statehood is of course an important element of her undertaking and doubly so as most folks will not have had occasion to visit Alaska, as I have, and to know the situation first hand." Another letter from Senator Lehman of New York, "You ask specifically whether or not such action as you outline would prove offensive to me. Certainly not. I am for statehood for Alaska and I want the people of Alaska to work for statehood in every constructive way open to them," And a West Coast friend, Senator

Neuberger, "As a resident of the State of Oregon who is familiar with Oregon's history, I share your view that the so-called Tennessee Plan would be of potential help in alerting the nation to the justice and equity of Alaskans' Claim. As you know, of course, Oregon used the Tennessee Plan and by this method hastened its own entrance into full membership in the United States. In view of the stalemate which now exists concerning Alaska's claim to statehood, it seems to me no possible harm could come from the election in Alaska of a slate of representatives and senators in Congress who could then further the cause of Alaskan statehood. For these reasons I intend to issue a statement supporting the proposal you have so successfully advocated and promoted." And for a few concluding letters from the House members, and then I am through. From the Honorable James Roosevelt, California, "In my opinion only by such an approach can Alaska and Hawaii hope to achieve statehood." From another friend, Iowa, the Honorable James I. Dolliver, member of Congress, "Having examined the proposal made in your letter of December 23, I see no reason why the steps proposed should not be taken by Alaskans. The pattern set by the Tennessee Plan is a historic one and has been used repeatedly with success by other states seeking admission. Having had more than an ordinary opportunity to study and examine the situation, I am firmly convinced that Alaska should have statehood and the sooner the better." And from my own Congressman, Boggs of Louisiana, "I can certainly say this to you, and that is that what you propose would not offend me in any way. Perhaps this isn't at all helpful, but it is honest advice if you ever got any." And from another Louisiana Congressman, along the same lines; from a Texas Congressman another letter along the same lines, and then I would like to conclude with this one from Congressman Sisk, California. He said, "I want to offer my highest compliments upon your excellent analysis of the situation confronting the people of Alaska. Your analysis of the present situation in Congress respecting statehood proposal and your advancement of the Tennessee Plan is offering the best possibility of Alaska achieving statehood. I am very much impressed by the facts and historical material assembled, and my only comment is that you must be sure to most strongly urge this message upon the members of the Constitutional Convention. My conviction is that Alaska should be admitted as a state, and it was reinforced by my recent trip there. I want to assure you that I will do all in my power toward earliest action and for action, if your proposal is executed, and what in effect would be, an established state as presented to Congress for admission during the current session. I want to express my gratitude for the opportunity extended me to further familiarize myself with these facts."

Mr. President, there are letters from friends of the Territory in the North, in the South, in the East and in the West. They all express a similar sentiment. The rest is in your hands. Thank you so much.