

## Hook Source

Ferrell, Robert H. *Off the Record: The Private Papers of Harry S. Truman*. Harper & Row, Publishers. New York, NY. 1980.

TO JONATHAN DANIELS (UNSENT)

*February 26, 1950*

Dear Jonathan:

I wonder if you have thought to go into the background and ability of each member of the cabinet and those who sat with the cabinet which I inherited on April 12, 1945. It should make an interesting chapter in your book. Maybe I shouldn't bring the subject to your attention, but as I look back on that situation it makes me shudder. I am sure that God Almighty had me by the hand. He must have had a personal interest in the welfare of this great Republic.

There was Stettinius, Sec. of State—a fine man, good looking, amiable, cooperative, but never an idea new or old; Morgenthau, block head, nut—I wonder why F.D.R. kept him around. Maybe you know. He fired himself from my cabinet by threatening what he'd do to me under certain circumstances. Then there was Stimson, a real man—honest, straightforward and a statesman sure enough. Francis Biddle, attorney general—you make your own analysis. Frank Walker, P.M.G.—my kind of man, honest, decent, loyal—but no new ideas. Miss Perkins, Sec. of Labor, a grand lady—but no politician. F.D.R. had removed every bureau and power she had. Then Henry Wallace, Sec. of Commerce, who had no reason to love me or to be loyal to me. Of course he wasn't loyal. "Honest" Harold Ickes who was never for anyone but Harold, would have cut F.D.R.'s throat—or mine for his "high minded" ideas of a headline—and did. Agriculture's Wickard, a nice man, who never learned how his department was set up. Then there was Leo Crowley, whose sense of honor was minus and Chester Bowles, price control man, whose idea of administration was conversation with crazy columnists. Thank God Fred Vinson was there as O.W.M.R. and Bill Davis as Chairman of the Labor Board.

But, Jonathan, there was not a man in the list who would talk frankly at a Cabinet meeting! The honest ones were afraid to and the others wanted to fool me anyhow.

Am I wrong? Take a look and see how and in what manner they left me. Poor Forrestal, you'll have to evaluate yourself. He never could make a decision. Harold Smith, A 1 conniver.

TO FRANK KENT (UNSENT)

*March 5, 1950*

## Using the Hook Source

→ What challenges does a President face upon taking office?

- How does this letter illustrate this idea?
- Is it important to know that this letter was unsent? Why or why not?
- What does this tell us about Truman and his leadership abilities?