

Negotiations involved in the preparation of Utah for Statehood.

From a letter addressed to President Wilford Woodruff, dated Dec. 14, 1895, and written by a James S. Clarkson, who had considerable correspondence with George Q. Cannon and the other members of the First Presidency during the 1890s. He was evidently a power in the Republican National Committee and was involved in the statehood application for Utah at that time. This letter is in the file of George Q. Cannon's papers, MS-4777, and reads as follows:

"Dear President Woodruff: The last time we met I promised you that when the decisive day should be reached in determining Utah's future in the choice of Senators I would write you out of the friendship of my heart a confidential letter. That time is now come, and with a heart anxious that you and your people shall make no mistake at the threshold of entering upon national power ^{and} that you shall not miss the alliances of friendship that are open to you and that will be protective to you and your people for the next twenty years, I address you as a son would a father, knowing how much wiser you are, how much more competent to decide, and yet solicitous of placing before you what I know, as a help to you in making up your judgement. I have waited, before writing, to attend the recent meeting of the national committee. Every member of that body, except from your own territory and one or two others, was present. In addition, there were from five to twenty or more leading Republicans present from every state. I spent two weeks in Washington. Many of these men came on in advance of the committee to confer with myself and other officials of the national committee. As I took the responsibility in 1891 of ousting the Liberal Party from membership in the national committee, and as I was selected by the national committee after an interview with chairman Carter and President Cannon to represent your interests before President Harrison as to amnesty and other matters, and as I was selected by the national committee afterwards to represent its organized force and power in securing Utah for statehood, all these Republicans naturally now turn to me to express their wishes to your state and its relations to the Republican party.

In addition to these members of the committee, chairmen of state committees and others, I was also in conference with Speaker Reed and the leading members of the House, and all other leading Republicans in the Senate on this question. All of these men reminded me that when I urged upon them the propriety of admitting Utah as a state, they were making me responsible if, in admitting a great power into public affairs, it should be used against Republican ideas, ambitions and principles, I never gave them any other assurance than that I believed your people, believing in protection and sound money, human rights and good government, would eventually come, in large part, to support the Republican Party. I said that many of your leading men were right on these subjects, that your first Prophet and leader, and all subsequent ones had taught ^{protection} home rule and sound money, and without being partisans, were advocates of the landmark Republican principles. Many of them expressed serious doubts, and I found yesterday a letter from Senator Davis of Minnesota, who is on the territorial committee, in which he says, 'I have your letter in which you advocate the admission of Utah, and say we can trust their people, both as citizens and Republicans. I have served long on the Territorial Committee and have directly contrary views to yourself. Yet as you have been selected by the ~~Republican~~ party to investigate and manage this matter, I ~~will~~ accept your opinion, will act as you advise, and hold you responsible for the results'.

I have letters from other senators and also from Speaker Reed and others in the same vein. With these serious obligations resting upon me, after a conference with Pres. Cannon, General Clawson, Colonel Trumbow and Chairman Carter and myself at the Plaza Hotel in New York in 1892, I have constantly proceeded to the one end of getting justice for your people, statehood for Utah, and the largest benefit for the honest principles of the Republican party. Nearly my whole time, and at least the greater part of my time, has been devoted to this end, far more than you in your faraway home can comprehend, I have had to deal with it in detail with all our leaders, with all the Republican papers, with the leading ^{held} magazines and all the intelligent forces controlling the public thought and conscience of this nation, and all agencies, indeed, that could be reached through Republican influence. Day by day I took on new responsibilities and in the end found myself ^{held} responsible by my party and by the newspapers and by large elements of Christian people and religious bodies for the result. I have

never wavered in it, for I have always believed in the patriotism, intelligence and good citizenship and righteous ambitions of you and your people. Now they are all anxious to know who is to come into the United States Senate to represent the new state and to prove to the people of the nation and of the ~~new~~ world the character of the Mormon people. The actual admission of the state of Utah and the patriotism of its people. President Cannon, as you will remember, in an interview we had in your council chambers when I was last in Salt Lake, clearly stated that if we and our friendship and influence and power as a party gained amnesty for your people, statehood for your territory, restitution of property, etc., and the Republican Party in Utah should win, we should be advised as to the men chosen for these positions, and that I for having taken up the contest for the national committee, first when I was chairman of it and next when I was made its representative, should be the one to make known to you our wishes as a party. I have found unanimity wherever I have talked with the national committee, with the Republican senators, with the leading Republican editors, with Speaker Reed and the leading men of the House, and indeed with all their people in the belief that for yourselves, for the nation, for your state and for our interests, you should send to the Senate to represent you, the strongest men you have. And of the hundreds of leading men who I have talked to there has ~~not~~ been one person who has dissented from the view that preeminently before all ^{other} men is President Cannon.

Our people have committed themselves to friendship and faith with your people, and having taken responsibility in making Utah a state, now have the main ambition that you shall send a man as your leader who will justify all that we have said in behalf of the patriotism, intelligence and good purposes of your people. They believe, as you must believe, that this should be one who for your sake and for ours, represents your whole history and career as a church and a people; someone who crossed the desert, shared in the hardships, endured the persecutions, and who, in whatever he may do in the United States Senate, will be accepted by your people, and in every state and throughout the world, and be accepted by the people of the nation at large as representing the past as well as the present of your people and of your purposes. No one else in your fold has the ability to do this, no one else has the friendship and faith of the leading men, generally, of the nation, no one else can command the approval of your people everywhere, and, in short, no one else can possibly combine the elements of strength at all points that President Cannon can. A younger man who does not represent the first years of the Webber people, who has not the affection and the faith of your people everywhere as the older men have, could not, however able, bring to the Senate the power for you that Pres. Cannon could. Your people do not follow young men as they do old. The whole history of your people is represented in President Cannon. Its history is not represented in young men. Youth does not mean to your people what an older man would mean. It does not mean to us who have taken the responsibility of being your friends and gaining you statehood as a party what President Cannon would mean. A younger man could not mean to you what he would mean. You have suffered persecution for two generations. Vindication could not be so complete in any other man you could send to the Senate as it would be in President Cannon, and those of your people who are dead and gone, who have gone through the conflict and have passed to their reward, would have a vindication in him that they could not have in any young man. No one else could certify ^{to} the future and gain the faith of the world in the good intentions of your people as President Cannon could in the Senate, for he represents it all, past present and future, and he has that remarkable power by which he could stand the peer of anyone on the floor of the Senate, by which he could stand on any tribune with the strongest men, and be the equal of the greatest men. Thus for your own sakes, for your own vindication, for the purpose of gaining to you the greatest possible power now and hereafter, for the purpose of security for the principles which our party stands for, we all feel that ~~is~~ it is your duty to send President Cannon, and that it is President Cannon's duty to accept. I have talked with him, I know that he is disinclined to accept it, and that he shrinks from it, yet I believe solemnly that under ^{all} the most honorable conditions of men and under direction of the Higher Power that just as much of a mistake would be

made in not sending President Cannon to the Senate to be your first senator, as it would have been for Utah, by your act, to have been kept out of statehood. I may add, although words could add nothing to the fervor and the power of the wish that I represent of all other people that there is not only this universal wish to see President Cannon in the Senate, but as universal an expectation that he will be chosen. I do not believe that all the strong men in the nation could be moved to unite in this idea unless there was a controlling power supremem above politics, far and away above any political influence directing it all.

Trusting and taking it for granted that your people must feel in regard to this as all the outside people feel, and that you realize with a spirit none of us can ever comprehend how the duty rests upon you to see that no mistake is ~~made~~ made for your people in this most serious juncture, and realizing, also, that as President Cannon has ~~been~~ several times been elected to the Senate when he could not be seated, that it is due to him that he be elected now when he can be. I would like to add a word as to the other senator, This is always discussed in connection with the first place and there is nearly the same unanimity on the outside with Colonel Trumbow for this position that there is for President Cannon for the first. Although, of course, the expectation and wish does not have the same fervor, spirit and power that exists as to President Cannon, but all these leading men, national committeemen and others know that Colonel Trumbow was the evangel, the missionary, the herald who went before throughout the nation, went to the door of every Republican leader, and beyond that to the door of many a Democratic leader, and by his peculiarly winning personality gained the confidence and paved the way for the rest of us to talk to these men and gain their support. Colonel Trumbow is a great deal of a mystery to me, he was when I first knew him. He has even more as I have constantly known him since. He represents a power and a capacity to make friends and to make headway peculiar to him over any other man I have ever known. . . (some additional details concerning Colonel Trumbow omitted from this transcript). . . There were reports in Washington, made by Lannin publicly on the authority of Frank Cannon, that Judge Goodwin of the newspaper which has been the archenemy of your people and which has sown this land and the world with scandals against you that will live after every Mormon who is now living is dead, is to be chosen as the second senator. I have not seen one public man, Republican or Democrat, who believed that this could be true. I cannot believe it possible myself. Everywhere I have gone, with the thousands of people I have talked to in your behalf, pleading for justice, asserting your patriotism, I have met every time the accusations and slanders of this man and his newspaper. All history made up ^{against} ~~by~~ your people rests on the constant slanders that have been spun daily and incessantly by this newspaper. I have said to every man who has quoted them to me, to senators, to congressmen, to newspaper editors, to editors of religious newspapers, editors of magazines, women at the head of women's organizations, that this man and his newspaper pursued you with the venom of an enemy. But in the days of your weakness he was willing to see you ruined as a people, your leaders in prison and left to die in prison; that he was incapable of fair dealing to you; that possessed of a great ability in writing he hired it out to men like Lannin, ~~who~~ and others, dealt with ^{you and} your people ~~like butchers~~ with the conscience of butchers and the fury of enemies, and that fair men everywhere should reject his statements offhand because of the venom which always went with them. Having denied this man's slanders at the doors of every public leader and great editor, I would feel that if he should be sent to the Senate, I would, by that act, be put in the light of a perjurer to all these people.

In stating these things I do not want to be considered as speaking against any younger man of your fold having the ambition to be senator. I have for Mr. Cannon, Jr., (Frank J.), the utmost admiration and respect. I took him by the hand when he first came East. It was because I felt his good heart and his great natural power that, as chairman of the national committee, I put out the liberal member and gave the seat to a Republican. I have acted with him every day since. I have believed in him. I have helped promote his interests everywhere in the East, and have put him in friendship with the best men that we have in every state. I believe in his

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future, I have an affection for him. He has great power in himself and in the influence he has built up, and his future is certain. He is young enough, and I am sure he is filial enough in his affection, to say that his great father should be honored and his father's great power should be utilized for his people before any other man's. I can understand how President Cannon in his deep and affectionate nature feels the coercion of the son's ambition, but I am satisfied that he has given out of his loins no son who does not place the cause of the Mormon people, living and dead, above any personal ambition of his own. There is no service I would not render to Frank Cannon. I feel for him much as I do for the nearest friends of my own boys and whatever influence I have in life or in politics he can command for any service I can render him. But just now you stand, and I stand, where we dare not allow personal affection to interfere with judgement in the time which touches the supreme crisis in your affairs as a people. We feel as a party that the influence of ~~Frank Cannon~~ Cannon, junior, ^{in the Senate} in the public affairs and with your people in the various states, would not be atithe of what President Cannon's influence would be. Just as we know that in accepting of DuBois, of Idaho, whose friendship to you was doubtful to the last hour, and of Lannin, he is unconscious of what is due to the men who were your timely friends when these men were your enemies. So we feel that we have a right, as we have a duty, to express to you our sense and judgement that, while we do not underrate the Junior, and while we have the utmost regard for him, we still have the right and the duty, as you have the right and we think the duty, to ask for the larger service of the larger man. Beyond this the future holds in its generous store certain and sufficient honors for the son, who is still in the morning of life. All this I write to you ^{from} ~~in~~ a sense of duty. It would have been far more pleasant ^{to} ~~for me~~ not to have written. But having gone into the conflict, having made myself responsible to all the Republican leaders and editors, I would be unworthy of having been trusted by them and by you if I did not at this critical time send you these words, giving you my own opinion and the opinion of others who have a right and a duty to counsel with you.

I may add, although I think Senator Elkins will write you on this line of the subject, that all the people who ^{are} ~~were~~ in Harrison's administration and the President, himself, feel and expect that the men I have named will be chosen for these places. I was sent by the national committee in 1892 to confer with President Harrison on the subject of amnesty, restoration of property, etc. He wanted to know who ^{were to be} the men to come to the front. I told him of these men. I told all his Cabinet of these men. They proceeded on the assumption that such men would come and I think Senator Elkins will make this plain to you as he came to me with other members of Harrison's cabinet while I was in Washington, insisting that I should not shirk the duty of making known to you now what we all think we should, in our duty do to the party request of you.

Sending this with affectionate esteem to you, with ^{an} abiding faith and esteem of President Cannon and President Smith and all your leaders, and congratulating you that statehood and liberty have come to your people while you are yet among us, and hoping that you may be spared many years yet to enjoy the blessings of a vindicated people and a free state, and the utmost liberty as good citizens, and with a message of good will to all who are with you, I am,

Sincerely, yours,

James S. Clarkson

P.S.

It should be remembered in the interest of your people for the future, as well as for the remembrance of friends who came forward in a time of need, that the long contest for statehood and the years of effort in gaining friends to reach success were conducted by President Cannon and Colonel Trumbow. They were the gentlemen who came in contact with the influential men and elements that, at last, brought success. In every state are ~~powerful men~~ prominent and powerful men whose aid was secured through their appeals and assertions. All these influential men and elements entered into this as entrance is always made into all matters in political affairs with a view of alliance and mutual support in the future. For you to have in the Senate two men who knew nothing of

these long struggles nor of the friends who came to your help and brought success with them, and who would not meet these people who helped in the day of need, either with the knowledge of what these others had done or what was due them, nor even with the spirit of friendship, would be costly to you and your state beyond estimate. Men and elements that gave powerful help, others that gave money, all depended on what was then unquestioned that President Cannon and Colonel Trumbow would be the senators. For your own immediate people to be represented by anyone as senator who did not know of these friends who came to your help, nor know of what they did, and for the other senators to have been unfriendly or an enemy to you in your whole career and in the struggle for statehood would impeach all of us who were your main friends as having dealt in false assurance from the day we started in the matter until we finished it. Your future interests, as much as good faith for the past, make it impossible in my judgement for Utah to send to the United States Senate, men who knew nothing of these matters, much less sending any man who was your enemy and slanderer all the days of your persecution as the Church in Utah and who continued his enmity up to the last hour until statehood was gained to you. A sample of the feeling of recoil that would come to you with such men representing you in the Senate, was shown in the meeting of the national committee this week when Lannin appeared as a proxy for the Utah member of the committee. There was but one man in the whole body that he could approach as a friend, and this man got him to make a motion which, if it had been offered by anyone else, would have gained one-third or two-fifths of the votes of the committee. No one would vote for it because every member of the committee knew that this was the man who had persistently pursued your people, who kept up the Liberal Party and used the Republican National administration as a power to injure and rob you, and who, in his paper of the campaign of 1892 opposed the Republican candidate for Congress in Utah. He made himself in Washington and in the committee the spokesman for your people. Such spokesmen as he will quickly lose you all the friends that have been gained to you through your own demonstration of your patriotism as a people, and through the outside friends who early gained faith in you and made valiant battle for you. You cannot keep the friends who were gained to you by President Cannon and Colonel Trumbow by elevating ~~men~~ to the Senate men who, all the time that Cannon and Trumbow were fighting for you, were fighting against you.

I do not know what Colonel Trumbow, if he is made unable to redeem his promises and return to the many people and elements from whom he gained help and substantial friendship in the Senate, will do if he is set aside and some man who fought him all through this service for you is sent to the Senate instead. It will ruin him in reputation among all the men of honor whom he met in the East, and if he shall thus be made unable to redeem his promises and shall still keep faith with them, it will bankrupt him and mortgage his whole life to repay what he owes in honor to these people who came to his help for your sake. I take it for granted that he will accept of his rejection, if he is to be rejected, as a declaration of enmity to him, and that he will be left as an honorable man to defend himself and to care for these men and elements who trusted him in whatever manner he can consistent with self-respect and manhood. He will have these promises to meet, and he will have to fulfil them or be exiled from the common respect of the many strong men and ^{powerful} elements who trusted him as your representative and a man of honor, authorized to speak and to act. To refuse Colonel Trumbow your confidence and favor now is to ruin him and to make of his life a mockery. It is not only a question of Colonel Trumbow. These other men whose help he gained, when they find in the Senate from Utah people who knew nothing of what they did and who will be unfriendly as well, will be lost to you as friends. I do not believe that your people, or any people, can ^{ever} be strong enough to be spendthrift as to friends. Utah and the Webber people, if the right men are sent to the U.S. Senate to represent the new state, are secure in the friendship of the strong men and the strong elements of the nation. If the wrong men are sent and you certify your lifelong enemies to the nation as being worthy to represent you now, and if the most of those who helped you in your last great struggle are ignored, you will have many of your troubles return to you and the splendid and priceless friendship gained to you in the last five years will perish and will have to be rebuilt on other lines and

among other and uncertain elements. The men and elements who came to your rescue and to the help of Utah will nominate and elect the next President of the United States, and will control in American affairs during the first years that the new State of Utah will be establishing its character and place among the American states and American people.

I beg of you all not in any wise to lose to yourselves and to your Church and people, with all their good purposes, any of your friends. I do not believe it is in the nature of your people, and it would certainly be in contradiction of all your teachings to turn from proved friends, to enemies or even indifferent or untried friends in your hours of victory. For my own part, I shall continue with you as your friend and a friend to your people to the end, never changing, never hesitating, and it is as such a friend that I appeal to you all for pause, reflection and the right decision in these, the most critical days of your career. This letter is of so much importance and its certain receipt by you is of so much importance that I wish you would acknowledge receipt of it direct to me so that I may make known to all the strong elements in the party, who have been insisting on my writing it, that my duty has been performed and the letter received by you and the whole situation thus plainly made known to you.

Invoking your considerate judgement on it all, and looking to God and posterity for the blessing due to all who have proved faithful in conflict and sincere in counsel, I am content to leave the whole matter to your own wise and final decision.

Signed: James S. Clarkson