

Transcripts of Letters to Hoover

April 26th, 1930

Mr. Herbert Hoover-President
United States,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hoover:-

I am writing in regard to a program which we are trying to put over here. For many years we have been trying to secure a High School building for the colored children and at several attempts the project failed. At this time it has come up again and we are most sure we will get the school with a little help. I feel that you would be interested in this program because you know the problems the colored people have to undergo. The building will cost \$5,000.00 without being equipped. The money that has been given is as follows: The Julius Rosenwald Fund, \$1,750.00 and the County, \$2,250.00, making the total \$4,000.00. I have been selected as one of twenty to secure the balance of the money needed to complete this project.

If you are interested in helping us secure this building which is very much needed, please send donation to the Central High School Fund, First State Bank and Trust Co. Mr. J. F. Aden-Vice President (White). I am sure the people here would be proud to know that you aided in securing this building for the colored children of this city.

Thanking you in advance for your donation,

Respectfully yours,

(s) Dave Travis

August 18, 1931.

The President,
The White House,
Washington,
District of Columbia.

Dear Mr. President:

In a recent speech at Detroit, copy of which I enclose, I called attention to what I believe to be the inescapable fact that the hungry cannot be fed during the coming winter without Federal assistance. In support of my belief I beg to transmit herewith a report upon the actual situation in Pennsylvania, which is widely regarded as more fortunate in this emergency than some of the other States.

This report, prepared by a committee of experts, and based upon Federal and State official figures, presents conclusions which I have no doubt are substantially correct. Briefly, some of these conclusions, as of June, 1931, are as follows:

The total number of unemployed in Pennsylvania is more than 900,000, or nearly one-quarter of the whole working population; wages are decreasing; distress in many counties is acute; many children are suffering from partial starvation; because of unemployment the hospitals are overburdened, and the demand for charity shows no decrease this summer over the high record of last winter.

In the face of this calamity Pennsylvania is by no means lying down. Social agencies in the State raised \$11,200,000 for 1931, and special unemployment relief funds added \$6,000,000. Every effort will be made to raise \$5,000,000 more this fall.

Mothers' Assistance Funds were increased in my budget by \$1,360,000, and State contributions to hospitals were lifted to the highest point ever reached.

In addition, the largest road program ever undertaken in any State is already employing over 19,000 men, and by September 1st will employ at least 25,000. Other very extensive State construction work has been begun.

We intend to neglect nothing in Pennsylvania to secure every possible penny from private charity and community assistance. But when that is done to the limit of our ability, hundreds of thousands will go hungry next winter unless the Federal Government steps in. And if they do go hungry, the consequences will not stop with those who are allowed to starve.

A situation like this, in a State like Pennsylvania, leads many to believe that the present emergency is as vital to the people as the Great War. Local private charity cannot meet the need. Local public relief, which should carry the bulk of the load, is hampered or hamstrung, like relief from the State, by constitutional limitations upon appropriations and borrowing, and by the inability of tax payers to pay.

Under these conditions I am compelled by the necessities of my people to urge that you call an extra session of Congress.

The regular session does not meet until December. After the two Houses have organized, many subjects of grave and pressing importance, including relief for people across the sea, will demand immediate attention.

Because of them, Congress may not be able to consider with promptness, much less act quickly upon, the question of Federal help. But even if appropriations for relief at home could be debated, passed, and approved by Christmas, they

would still be too late for the machinery of distribution to be organized throughout the Nation in time to prevent widespread suffering and the probability of serious disorder.

For these reasons I urge upon you, with all the emphasis of which I am capable, not only the calling of an extra session of Congress for the purpose of meeting this national emergency, but the calling of it at the earliest possible date. Already the time is very short.

The calling of an extra session will be opposed by politicians as inexpedient. It will be condemned by large tax payers as likely to cost them money. It will be deplored by those who refuse to admit the obvious facts of the present situation. But every such consideration is swept aside by the urgent need of our people.

You have yourself asked for appropriations by Congress for relief of the needy in distant parts of the world, and, having obtained them, have supervised their expenditure. It would seem to be most appropriate that you should do no less for our own needy here at home. Only an extra session can empower you to do so in time.

Because this question is of grave consequence to millions of our people, I have taken the liberty of making this letter public.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Very respectfully yours,

(s) Gifford Pinchot