

FRANK W. BOYKIN  
FIRST DISTRICT  
ALABAMA  
  
ALPHEUS LUCAS  
SECRETARY

HOME ADDRESS:  
MOBILE, ALABAMA

COMMITTEES:

ACCOUNTS  
MERCHANT MARINE AND FISHERIES  
PATENTS  
PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS  
RIVERS AND HARBORS

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

June 4, 1942

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D., and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

My dear Dancigers:

I have been neglecting you all terribly but things have been happening so fast it was impossible to stop long enough to tell you about them, but I think we have accomplished what we started out to do, and think it is now time to tell you something about what has happened.

I know I will miss a lot of things but I do like to keep you posted because all of you have worked so hard, and have been so helpful. I will start from last night and midnight and go backwards and try and remember a few things which have happened since I wrote you last.

Jack Danciger has now been with us for about ninety days and he has done a terrific job. I never saw so much energy, and ability before in all my life. He has worked day and night and I think Friday night he worked all night until four twenty the next morning, but what we wanted to try to do was something about this submarine menace on the Gulf Coast, because it has had all of our Ports on the Gulf locked up - in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida.

We have been in constant touch with people from one end of the country to the other, in getting up data and accurate information on what could be done about this proposition. I think I told you all that one of the Aluminum Company ships was sunk at the mouth of Mobile Bay, and that Mr. Roster, Bruce Hoover and I drove all night and arrived at Andy Higgins' house, in New Orleans, at about daylight. Andy Higgins is the man who has the billion dollar contract to build boats and is a genius in every way. Well we started something. Senator Ellender came back with me on the plane from New Orleans to Washington and we saw the Secretary of War, Secretary of the Navy and the President and everybody else, and had talked to over one hundred Congressmen about this submarine menace, which we have figured, and when I saw we I mean Jack and I, with the help of a lot of other people here, to do away with.

6/4/42

#2

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D., and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

Andrew Jackson Higgins arrived here Monday morning. We spent several hours with him - Jack, Senator Bankhead, Joe Starnes of Alabama, and several other people and it was appalling what he told us. Anyway I was told in confidence yesterday, by a man in a very high position, that they had agreed to accept our suggestion about the small boats which it seems can do as much as a battleship, and Andy Higgins can build twenty four of these a day, and said they would put 5000 of them to work at once. Also that they had already started with several hundred men on the plan that A. D. Danciger and Andy Jackson Higgins had about the wires and the telephone under sea. So you see what we did. That is fine, and then the boats is still finer.

We had the full record of how many we could build and how many we could build a month. We had representatives from every yard. We had Mr. Paul Frigg from Miami, a great boat builder. We had them here from Baltimore, from New York, and from all over, and I have talked to over one hundred Congressmen about it, and it just got to going and before we knew it we had accomplished what we had to do, so now we haven't anything to do, so we will report.

Last night Andrew Jackson Higgins gave a banquet and asked me to bring some people and let him show us some pictures of this great boat and tell us about what could be done, in his judgment. I invited the Texas Delegation and the Louisiana Delegation, and the Mississippi Delegation, and the Georgia Delegation, as well as Alabama and Florida, and they were all there. We had a great time and stayed there until after midnight. We were very weary and tired but very happy when we got through. Jack will give you a report on that but it was splendid. I was master of ceremonies and we had for instance the Chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Hatton W. Sumners of your own Texas. We are meeting with him tonight in the Judiciary Committee Room at seven o'clock, to make plans to really and truly press down on the Navy provided they do not do what we think they should do to rid the country of the submarines.

The party last night was marvelous. We not only had a wonderful dinner but Higgins addressed us and so did Senator Ellender and so did many other very prominent men. You will never know how much John Bankhead has done to help us. I think I told you some time ago that I was told in the presence of five of our best friends that we would never build any boats on the Gulf Coast unless it was over their dead bodies of Admiral Vickery and Land. Well that is an old story and as I have told you before there are no dead bodies, but we here in the office, with the help of experts prepared the let-

6/4/42

#3  
Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D., and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

letters which were sent to Admiral Land. To make a long story short we have gotten over four hundred million dollars worth of shipbuilding contracts at Mobile and Pascagoula, and now a billion dollars worth in New Orleans, and Lord knows what we have in Texas, Tampa, and down in that part of the country. Don't forget, we were told that we would have none. They have now decided that that part of the country is the part in which to build them.

I could go on and on on this, but we will have a great meeting tonight and I will let you know what we are going to do if the Navy don't get down to business. Andrew Jackson Higgins will return to New Orleans tonight. He is building there the largest plant in the world and will work 85,000 men; will build a city outside of New Orleans of 350,000. They are buying now over 100,000 piling. That is just a little sample. I hope that some day all of you can see his boats perform. They will run seventy miles an hour or twice as fast as a torpedo will go. He has invented guns that can hit balloons, no larger than my head, every lick, and you know with our anti-aircraft guns it takes 10,000 shots to hit one plane. Jack will have to tell you all about it.

I want to tell you I could not have done this job if I had not had Jack Danciger here to help me. He just works, as I have said, day and night, and has one suggestion right after the other, and with the splendid letters coming in from Dan and Joe and A. D., and with all of my office force helping in every way possible, we have done something that will mean an awful lot to an awful lot of people.

Andy Higgins told last night about visiting the hospital just before he left New Orleans, and seeing the boys with their eyes burned out and the skin coming off, burned with oil as the ships were sunk. Senator Ellender told about seeing, I think he said, ten or fifteen ambulance loads of men being brought into the hospital right near his house. It was horrible. I have a letter from one of my twin sons, Bob, telling me that he was on the Gulf yesterday, right outside of Mobile, and that he saw a submarine after one of our ships, and the ship was zigzagging and was going to run into the beach before they would let the submarine get them, but some planes came along and ran the sub off. It is pretty bad when these subs are right in our own doors, and twenty miles from our home, and here is Germany way away from here, and I doubt if we have a sub anywhere, but don't forget they started out ten years before us.

What all of us have got to do is to get busy and do our part - I mean all of the people, and let them all help, and not try to have this social stuff that

6/4/42

#4

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D., and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

is going on. It seems that a lot of people are trying to do away with Congress. In talking to Senator Bankhead Sunday, he, Jack and I decided that we ought to make these commentators on the radio, and these columnists and all other writers for newspapers, responsible for what they say about a man. It seems a crime to let some irresponsible man that has a glib tongue, talk about men who have put in their whole lives helping this country.

I wish you could see the Post this morning, where a fine Congressman, who has been here thirty years, tells about giving his whole life to it, and now they want to mark him off. I wish you could see the names of the people who want to do this, and who are trying to run this country and do away with our Congress.

I wish all of you would give this some thought. What we want to do is if a columnist or a newspaper or a radio man tells a lie on some good man to make him prove it and if he can't make him pay for it, either with fines or by going to jail. Unless we do that I am afraid something mighty bad is going to happen. I know some things that have happened, by certain people up in Connecticut, that I can't even put in this letter to you, but Jack will tell you about them on his return home.

Well, as above stated, I was told that the Navy now would start out 5000 of these little boats, would start to building them in San Diego and all of the ports all over the country. We have given them our questionnaire that we sent out some time ago, showing how they can get them and what they can do, and everything. I also believe they are going to use our fishermen and hunters so they can help keep them posted, and maybe put these fishing boats, and we have 700 of them alone in Bayou La Batre, to work. Jack has had this translated into Spanish and has sent this same suggestion to all of the South American countries.

I can't tell you how hard he has worked and what good he has done. We are very happy though and feel very fine because we have really accomplished what we started out to do. That is my reason for wiring Joe Danciger very, very early Sunday morning, asking him to suggest that Jack stay here and help me, because it is not what you dream and plan and think of that count, but what you actually do. Of course we all know the greatest satisfaction in the world is to know that you have done a job well. We have left nothing undone and we have accomplished what we started out to do, and I am so pleased about all the suggestions both Dan and Joe have made. Do you know we decided last night that every suggestion that has been made by you all

6/4/42

#5

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D., and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

has been adopted. It seems they don't want to tell anybody, or admit it or anything like that, but what do we care. We don't want any credit for it, nor do we want anybody to know what we are doing about it, but we are going to keep on doing, and we are going to fix it tonight so if these people won't do right and do what they are supposed to do, we are going to try to fix a way where we can make them do it.

Now the most important thing to my mind is this - the suggestion that Joe Danciger has made about this Civilian Advisory Board. I do appreciate ~~of~~ his trying to think of some other way to have it done, besides me, because I really have more than I can do but I can do that too and can put it over so fast it would make your head swim. I don't care about political repercussions or anything else; I don't care if it would run me out of Congress if it would get the results, which I believe it can. If we can get the men we have been talking about, and I have Jack the names of over several hundred men I know exactly what they can do, it would make me the happiest man in the world, so get started on it and I will cooperate in every way, shape or form. It ought to be started and started quick and it should have been started long ago.

Just think this idea I am writing you about was started by a boy down in Mobile, Nelo Gonzales, who suggested it to an Admiral who wrote him back and told him he did not have time to answer civilian mail. I knew it was a good idea and I turned it over to Jack Danciger and he, with the help of his brothers, and engineers, developed the idea. It is a knock out, and I don't care whether they use the Gonzales boats, the Higgins boats or the Frigg boats or anything else, just so they get the results.

You would have been thrilled last night to have heard Andy Higgins, a genius and a human dynamo, inviting his competitors to come in and help. He said he did not care anything about money. He has given this Navy over 200 inventions that he has, but if we can get all of our people thinking and pulling together, there is no telling what we can do.

As I have said, we spent all day Sunday and had dinner with Senator Bankhead Sunday night, or at least he had dinner with us. We talked about many things I think will be helpful. He is a great man and one of my very best friends. He is down at the Washington Hotel right with us where we can work together. He was with us yesterday morning, was with us last night and he has given us plenty of ideas and we have given him all we have gotten; as a matter-of-fact he is going to try hard to go to Mexico when

6/14/42

#6

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D. and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

Jack and I go. I am counting on trying to make Joe go. I want Dan and A. D. to get on him hard. We have a great chance to do something there. I won't try to talk about that now because Jack will tell you about it when he comes, over there.

You can't build these boats without mahogany and this supply has been cut off from Africa and the Philippines. I now plan to be in Mobile for the banquet the folks are going to give me on the 17th. Will stay there about ten days and expect to hit Fort Worth ~~then~~ these ten days are up and spend a couple of days with the Danciger boys, in going over things, not only the Mexican proposition, but anything else we think will be helpful. I don't want the Mexican proposition unless I can have you all right in it up to your necks with me, or equally as deep as me. There are some great possibilities there.

Mr. Bruce Hoover has been here with us every minute and he, Jack and I have talked by the hours. He had us over to Baltimore where they have been cutting this valuable timber and where they showed us that every stick was worth a thousand dollars. Jack will tell you about the boats they are building out of it. It is unbelievable, and the only way you can appreciate that is to hear Andy Higgins talk about it. He says he could sell his mahogany logs, rather lumber he has on hand in New Orleans, for more profit than he can make out of a million dollar contract. Isn't that interesting? There is no mahogany in this country, with the exception of what he has.

Secretary Knox told us they had only a small supply and they wanted any amount they could get.

There are so many things I want to tell you so this letter will be very "jumpy", but I hope it will get some things over to you. I imagine we told you that Jack spent practically all day with the Vice President and his very able secretary Harold Young, who is a Texas boy weighing 275 pounds, and is a knock-out. He is so different from Wallace. Wallace is one of the best educated men in this country and this man has some good old common sense that he can mix around with it. I just wish you could have heard our Vice President and Jack Danciger talking Spanish. I stayed with them a good while, about an hour, but I could not understand a damn thing they said and thought two or three times they were cussing me, because I heard my name mentioned, but I was not sure so I got out the way. Jack was invited back in the afternoon and spent about two hours with Secretary Wallace and they just had a feast talking in Spanish. Jack made many suggestions and he was very thrilled. His Secretary, Mr. Harold Young, had dinner with us that night and Jack will give you that report. I think Jack did an awful lot of good. He told him all about these fishermen and organizing them,

6/4/42

#7

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D. and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

not only here but in South America, all about starting our youngsters to speak Spanish, so we can do this business not only in Mexico but all the South American countries.

As soon as we left Vice President Wallace we went to see the Ambassador of Mexico but I think Jack and that group were cussing me, anyway they talked only Spanish but they said they would cooperate with us, and that night we had the Secretary to the Ambassador and the nephew and niece of the President of Mexico for dinner. We also had Governor Van Waggoner's sister, Mrs. Tufty, who represents thirty six newspapers here in Washington, and is an old friend of mine, and she insisted on writing up the story about Jack's conference with the Vice President and what Jack thought of the Vice President and his Spanish speaking ability. The next day I was talking to a friend of mine representing TIME magazine, and he also said he wanted to write it up.

(of the Williamson Veneer Company),

Senator Bankhead, Mr. Jack Williamson and his wife, whose family has been in the mahogany business for over one hundred years, and I, had dinner at the Washington Hotel. Mr. Williamson has invented a plastic airplane that weighs only 600 pounds, engine and all, which I can carry on my back if I was pretty wed. This can be built complete for less than \$1000.00. I made arrangements with a Colonel in General Marshall's office for this to be demonstrated next week to the Army. It will be the real answer if it works and we all believe it will.

Jack Williamson has done business with Bruce Hoover in the mahogany business for about fifteen years. He gave Bruce an order for all he could get, and Bruce believes he can get out enough to clear \$250,000.00 by January 1st. Williamson would like to have ten times this much mahogany if we had an organization that could get it.

Yesterday at lunch we had an old friend of mine who was an official of the Chase National Bank of New York, but now is Nelson Rockefeller's chief assistant. We also had the nephew of the President of Mexico, as he wants 300 trucks to build these roads through Mexico. Mr. Rovensky, my friend, who is assistant to Rockefeller, believes we can get them. The President's nephew is Romula O'Farrill and is very anxious to cooperate with us if we should decide to go into this Mexican timber proposition, in a big way, which I believe we finally will do, but not until I have personally looked at the timber, gone over the ground and see what the cost of transportation and getting the timber out, will amount to.

6/4/42

#6

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A.D., and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

To my amazement yesterday, Bruce Hoover told Jack Danciger and me that there was an unlimited amount of manganese ore in Mexico that could be sent to the United States by railroad. There is a tremendous shortage of manganese ore in all of our defense plants which use this ore at this time, on account of not being able to have ships to bring it in here from the countries where they have this ore. We only have in this country a limited supply of manganese ore and most of that is in Arkansas - I mean the good manganese. We have manganese ore in a good many different places but it is a very low grade. If this manganese ore in Mexico is as our good friend Bruce Hoover says it is, we can certainly do something wonderful for our Government.

He also told us a good deal about tin in Mexico, and I imagine Jack has told you about the 300,000 acres in this tract that is supposed to have oil under it, and it was owned by the Tidewater Oil Company. They had several million dollars in it at one time.

I do hope that Dan and A. D. will insist that Big Joe go with us. We have got to have mahogany. Make Jack tell you how Higgins at New Orleans uses it in plywood, which makes it stronger than steel, and a lot of other secrets which were told us last night.

When we go to Mexico I will have letters to the President of Mexico, to our own dear Ambassador Messersmith, and many other people.

H. S. Hoover, who was killed in an accident several months ago, had been in touch with Jack for many years, on these great properties, and I believe I have told you that I have crews of men who have been in the logging business all their lives, whom I can move and dovetail in with the Mexicans.

Also bear in mind that up until now we have not had railroads and automobile roads through these properties, but the Government is building them now. I also believe we will be able to get the Government to finance the timber deal, the rubber deal and the manganese deal.

These 2,000,000 acres is almost a kingdom, and I believe the kingdom can be ours if we will just work a little and use some judgment; however, I would not want to do a thing with it until I could personally see it, and then I will know what we can do because I have been in the timber, lumber, livestock and real estate business all my born days, and have succeeded in this business because I know that business like you all know the oil business.

6/4/42

#9

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A.D., and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

The income tax phase of this proposition appeals to me and I think it will to you too after you have the facts.

Senator Bankhead is very anxious to go with us and would if we insisted, but I believe we will be too busy on this trip and will take him on the second trip. Jack will bring with him all kinds of printed information and pictures of these Mexican properties which I want you to read up on before we have our meeting in Fort Worth.

You will recall that I think I told you Secretary Knox of the Navy would buy the ten million feet of mahogany logs from Mexico as the Navy did not have to pay duty, and that would save twenty percent. Jack Danciger suggested to the Vice President that we take off this duty, on everything, and especially cattle, while this war was on.

Monday morning, just twenty four hours after Jack Danciger had made this suggestion to the Vice President, the President, by executive order, did just this thing. I imagine you read about it, so those are some of the things we are doing. I could go on back and tell you about everything. Of course we had our houseing people to dinner, a day or two before that, and the check for the nursery is on the way. We had Alan Johnstone on the phone and his able assistant who went out to California, and he says there is no trouble about that. So that is all past and gone.

I know we are forgetting to tell you many things. Also know that you know we are working every second. The other night at eleven thirty, it suddenly dawned on me that I had not had a mouthful to eat all that day, and Jack and I were just having supper together. I had had my coffee and orange juice that morning, but that is the only way to get these things done - giving it all we have, and I am so thankful we have gotten the results that we started out to do.

Jack tells me he is going home tonight. He is stopping over in Pittsburgh.

I hope Jack has told you, but Lord knows I don't know how he has had time, about the different people we have talked to. We ~~have~~ had the nephew, as above told you, of the President of Mexico, to luncheon with us yesterday, at the House Restaurant, and we had him to dinner the night before. We had the Executive Vice President of the Ford Motor Company with us last night and he said these Higgins boats were the greatest things he had ever seen. I told

6/4/42

#10

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D., and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

him I considered Higgins in the boat business what Ford had been in the automobile business. It is really and truly remarkable and if we can just wake them up and cut the red tape we will get them. Some one has said that if we only had the red tape that we have to knock down and cut through here, we could tangle up all the submarines in the world. The answer to this story is just this. One of the farm hands told a farmer that the rats were eating up all of his corn in the barn, and the farmer said grow more corn. So now that seems to be what the Maritime Commission and the Navy think - just build more ships for the enemy to sink, instead of trying to do something to do away with the rats that keep eating the corn, do away with the submarines. That is a pretty good answer.

I believe we have a solution. I believe these have been the most wonderful three months we have ever put in in our lives, but where they are or not we did our dead level best and we, as it says somewhere in that Good Book, have fought a good fight.

I do wish we had all of the Dancigers here to help and if there are any other people like them on earth or any other place, wish we had them too, but you with your wonderful imaginations, your wonderful determination, your unexcelled ability and billion dollar energy, that coupled with a multibillion dollars worth of loyalty, to this great America, and if we can arouse this with Joe Danciger's idea in this Civilian Advisory Committee, we will have done a good job, and in the end somebody, somewhere will say well done, but whether they do or not, what do we care. We will have helped save this country and helped saved many, many lives of men and women, boys and girls of the greatest country on earth.

I believe now that Jack Danciger really knows his way around here. I have had him right in my private office with me and showed him everything that I could which I thought would be helpful down through the years and things that might be helpful to all of us if I should not be here in the future.

Jack sat and watched us declare war on three countries yesterday and so did the Nephew of the President of Mexico. It was the first time this young man had ever been in the House of Representatives. He was educated in the United States and is really a very brilliant and bright young fellow.

Last but not least another one of our family is a great admirer of the Dancigers, and I am referring to my son-in-law, Riley Smith, the

6/4/42

#11

Messrs. Joe, Dan, A. D. and Mrs. Reina Danciger,

former great football player and All American, but who is now head Coach at Washington and Lee University, at Lexington, Va. He called me up Sunday night while I was talking to Senator Bankhead and Jack, and told me that he and Frances, my daughter, had talked it over, and had decided that they thought he could serve his country better by getting in this war against the Germans and Japs, that he had put in all of his born days training young men, so he came up Monday and volunteered his services to the Navy and was accepted and is being made a Lieutenant. It is a wonderful thing in many ways. Men like Riley Smith and girls like his wife are what make America great, but it is pretty sad in a lot of ways because it is going to break them up and they are going to have to give up their home, and, of course, Frances and her two children will come and live with us until Riley returns from the war.

I want you to know this fellow because he is a real he-man 6'2", who worked his way through school, as his Daddy died when he was three years old, but he has made a very remarkable record, is a hard worker and deep thinker. You will recall I wrote you about Jack and myself spending a week-end with Riley and Frances at Lexington, Va.

I have not told my wife yet about this, because in the last war it almost broke up the Boykin family. Three of my brothers were ruined in the last war and one of them has since died. My three boys are preparing to get in now but here's hoping they will all come home safe. Anyway I still know that everything, absolutely everything, really happens for the best.

God bless you and keep you keeping on, now and always,

Sincerely your friend,

*Walter Danciger*

FEB/3

*head & feet  
has gone to Bob if he  
back to school  
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PSHO