



DEFENSE SAVINGS STAFF

# TREASURY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

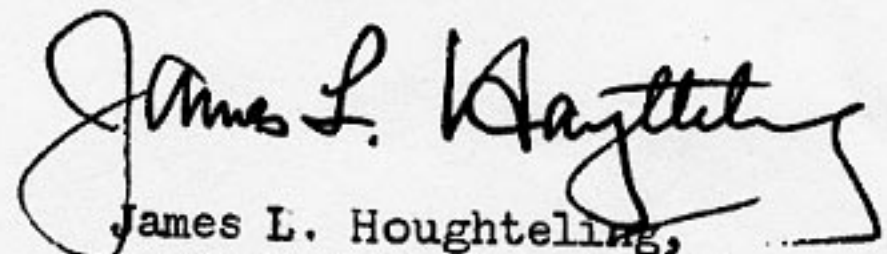
December 10, 1941

Honorable Marriner S. Eccles,  
Chairman, Board of Governors,  
Federal Reserve System,  
Federal Reserve Building,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Eccles:

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter received by my assistant, William C. FitzGibbon, from The First Presidency of the Mormon Church, outlining the position of The First Presidency toward the Defense Savings Program, and also expressing a considerable lack of sympathy with the policies of the present National Administration. This is the letter about which I told you at Ernest Draper's last night.

Yours sincerely,

  
James L. Houghteling,  
Assistant to the Secretary.

Enclosure

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Office of the First President

Salt Lake City, Utah.

October 11, 1941

The Honorable  
William C. FitzGibbon,  
Defense Savings Staff,  
Treasury Department,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. FitzGibbon:

Your more than gracious letter of September 30, 1941 has been received. Your generous commendation of the Church, its membership, and the achievements of the Church and its members is most gratefully appreciated.

You are kind enough to say: "Help us now to teach our citizens everywhere how to preserve and perpetuate our freedom,—freedom to govern ourselves, freedom of speech, and freedom to worship God according to our own light."

It would be our dearest joy if we might be able to help to the ends you name. But as we go over the field we are aware of the difficulties involved, and are persuaded that for now at least perhaps the best we can do is to tell you briefly what lies back of our own achievement, however modest it may be.

The Church has a very complete and in some respects intricate organization through which it works, and no organization which is not equally well set up would be likely to be even as effective as the Church is, and that is not completely effective. There are numbers of the Mormon people who have not fully responded to the



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teachings of the Church nor to be tenets of its organizations, and who are, therefore, lukewarm in the support of the Church, its policies, principles, and doctrines.

But behind the Church organization there are spiritual values without which the organization would be ineffectively operative. The Mormon people as a rule have deep religious convictions. Certain of their beliefs are fundamental in guiding their conduct and attitudes. It would probably not be advisable to go into the details of all these beliefs nor would that be essentially helpful or useful to you. (We may say parenthetically that we have been trying for practically a century now to convert the people of this country and of the world to our religious beliefs and tenets, with the result that even now, with our increase by births, we have only something over 800,000 members--men, women, and children--in all the world.)

Perhaps the fundamental principle that gives unity and direction to the action of the people is this: One of our Articles of Faith (which are more or less equivalent to the creeds of other denominations) declares:

"We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof."

Another Article of Faith declares:

"We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God."

The people therefore believe that the President of the Church

his Counselors, and the Council of the Twelve Apostles have a right to the revelations of the Lord as to the conduct of the Church and the members thereof; that the Lord actually speaks through them as the result of the revelations which He gives them; and that therefore the members are under obligation, when the President of the Church speaks, to follow his advice and counsel. With the great bulk of the people this is not merely a lip loyalty; it is a thoroughly engrained belief. The result is that when the President of the Church speaks, those who are faithful in the Church accept his words as divinely inspired and seek to guide their lives accordingly.

You will readily perceive the force and effectiveness of such a concept as applied to the organization of the Church and the conduct of its members, and you will also easily see that the unity of action and aim and purpose of the Mormon people could hardly be duplicated in any society which did not have such a conception.

In the first place, we should tell you that it is a part of the doctrine of the Latter-day Saints, as much a part as any other tenet of their religion, that the Lord Himself "established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood", and that this Constitution "should be maintained for the rights and protection of all flesh, according to just and holy principles."

Our people believe they have a special relationship to the Constitution and its preservation.



The revelation from which the foregoing is quoted was given in 1833, and two years thereafter the Church issued a Declaration of Belief regarding governments and laws, the three opening paragraphs of which read as follows:

"We believe that governments were instituted of God for the benefit of man; and that he holds men accountable for their acts in relation to them, both in making laws and administering them, for the good and safety of society.

"We believe that no government can exist in peace, except such laws are framed and held inviolate as will secure to each individual the free exercise of conscience, the right and control of property, and the protection of life.

"We believe that all governments necessarily require civil officers and magistrates to enforce the laws of the same; and that such as will administer the law in equity and justice should be sought for and upheld by the voice of the people if a republic, or the will of the sovereign."

The balance of this Declaration deals in major part with the relationship between religious societies and the government and the respective fields of each.

In a revelation given to Joseph Smith in 1831, among other things the following principles were announced:

"Wo unto you ~~rich~~ men, that will not give your substance to the poor, for your riches will canker your souls; and this shall be your lamentation in the day of visitation, and the judgment, and of indignation: The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my soul is not saved!"

"Wo unto you poor men, whose hearts are not broken, whose spirits are not contrite, and whose bellies are not satisfied, and whose hands are not stayed from laying hold upon other men's goods, whose eyes are full of greediness, and who will not labor with your own hands!"

In another revelation given in 1842, the Lord said:

"Let every man be diligent in all things. And ~~the idler~~ shall not have place in the church, except he ~~repent~~ and mend his ways."

At another time Joseph Smith received a revelation (1831) which said:

"Now, I, the Lord, am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idlers among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness; they also seek not earnestly the riches of eternity, but their eyes are full of greediness.

"These things ought not to be, and must be done away from among them."

Brigham Young in the early days said:

"My experience has taught me, and it has become a principle with me, that it is never of any benefit to give out and out to man or woman money, food, clothing, or anything else if they are able-bodied and can work and earn what they need when there is anything on earth for them to do. This is my principle and I try to act upon it. To pursue a contrary course would ruin any community in the world and make them idlers."

"To give to the idler is as wicked as anything else. Never give anything to the idler."

Along side of these principles the Lord gave Joseph Smith several revelations regarding the care of the widow, the orphan, and the poor. One of the most direct and brief statements that have been given on the duty of the Church towards such people reads as follows:

"All children have claim upon their parents for their maintenance until they are of age.

"And after that, they have claim upon the church, or in other words upon the Lord's storehouse, if their parents have not wherewith to give them inheritances.

"And the storehouse shall be kept by the consecrations of the church; and widows and orphans shall be provided for, as also the poor."



Thus according to the Gospel plan under which the Church is established and operates, the care of the widow, the orphan, and the poor, is a Church function, it is a part of the brotherhood of man which underlies our whole social and religious life. As God's children all, and as brothers and sisters in Christ, we must as a matter of spiritual responsibility and pursuant to positive divine command care for the helpless, the unfortunate, and the needy. Furthermore it is essentially a neighbor to neighbor obligation. It is not a function of civil government. This is fundamental.

Furthermore, in 1833 Joseph Smith received a revelation which we know as the Word of Wisdom and which taught the people that they should not use alcoholic beverages, tobacco, hot drinks, (which has been interpreted to mean tea, coffee, and other drinks containing habit-forming drugs) that meat should be eaten sparingly, and gave other health suggestions.

The Mormon people as they are today are the result of a century of teaching and practicing of the foregoing principles. It has only been by the urgent insistence upon these principles by the Church leaders during this whole period that the people have been brought to the place they are today. Their achievements have been the result of their ordering their lives, albeit more or less imperfectly, in accordance with these principles. A result of this sort cannot be achieved in a day, a week, a year, nor in many years, and could not be achieved except for the fundamental belief that the leaders who are directing the people are inspired of the Lord.

You also should understand, as probably you do, that the leaders of the Church consider it within their province, and the people have the same view, to advise the people generally and as individuals, not alone on matters purely religious but in their temporal affairs. The lowest ecclesiastical unit in the Church is called a "Ward" and the presiding officer in that Ward is a "Bishop," who has to assist him two counselors. The Bishop is considered to be the "Father" of the Ward, and a good Bishop (and we consistently try to pick the best men in the Wards to be Bishops) is consulted by the people of his Ward regarding their personal matters, their business affairs, their spiritual problems and relations, and all of the problems of life.

As to the office of Bishop, the Lord has declared that "the office of a bishop is in administering all temporal things", "having a knowledge of them by the Spirit of truth". Bishops are "to have it given unto them to discern all those gifts lest there shall be any among you professing and yet be not of God"; they are "to keep the Lord's storehouse; to receive the funds of the church. . . to take an account of the elders as before has been commanded; and to administer to their wants, who shall pay for that which they receive, inasmuch as they have wherewith to pay; that this also may be consecrated to the good of the church, to the poor and needy. And he who hath not wherewith to pay, an account shall be taken and handed over to the bishop of Zion, who shall pay the debt out of that which the Lord shall put into his hands." The Bishop "should travel round about and among all the churches, searching after the poor to administer to their wants by humbling the rich and the proud."



It may be observed in passing that the whole male body of the Mormon Church from twelve years of age and up bears some degree of the Priesthood. We have no regular ministry. Any good man may be called, and practically all good men are at one time or another in their lives called to do work for the Church. All such serve gratuitously. There are fewer than twenty-five offices in the Church that might be regarded as life offices, and these compose what are known as the General Authorities of the Church.

The officers other than General Authorities are changed at intervals so as to give more men the opportunity to serve. There are women's organizations also. Of the total body of the Church there are perhaps as many as 25% who are constantly in active gratuitous Church service, and since the bulk of these may be replaced, it is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that as many as 60% to 70% of the whole membership of the Church, men and women, have at some time during their lives an opportunity to have a position of office or trust in the Church government. Thus the great bulk of the people, men and women, have opportunity both to serve and to direct, to be ruled and to rule. This is a priceless experience for any people.

You ought also to have in mind that the Church is supported principally by the tithes of the people. Every man and woman earning money is supposed to pay a tenth of his annual income into the Church. As stated above, our total Church membership is not in excess of between eight hundred and nine hundred thousand people. There

are somewhere in the neighborhood of seven hundred and fifty thousand in the United States. Our annual budget for building church edifices of various kinds, for schools, hospitals, the maintenance of houses of worship, maintenance of temples, Church Welfare Plan, missionary service, etc., etc., totals about five millions of dollars.

In addition to the tithing we have fast offerings. On the first Sunday of each month, each member is expected to fast for two meals and to give the cost of these meals to the Bishop of the Ward for his use in taking care of the poor. The people make other contributions for building their chapels and for maintaining the General Welfare Plan.

When our people first came to Utah under the leadership of Brigham Young, they came as refugees from mob drivings, plunderings, and outrages first from Ohio to Missouri, then from Missouri to Illinois, and then out of Illinois to the West. They traveled to Utah from the Missouri River by ox-team. There was no railroad west of the Mississippi River when they came here. For many years, indeed until after the Civil War, such food, clothing, etc. as they brought from the outside had to be brought by ox-team more than a thousand miles over plains, mountains, rivers, and deserts. Of necessity the people had to become self-supporting and produce practically everything which they consumed. The hardships of pioneer life thus built into the warp and woof of the grandparents and parents of the present generation the sterling qualities of thrift, industry, honesty, integrity, sobriety, independence, love of liberty, and all



the sterling virtues that go to make up a great people. The support of "home industry" was one of the cardinal principles of the great commonwealth they were founding. We were to be essentially self sustaining and self contained.

From their earliest days here Brigham Young sent out colonies to build up communities all over this intermountain area. Each of these communities had first to be practically fully self supporting, and they did not cease, for very many years, to be interdependent among themselves.

Brigham Young established in those early days many industries--some of which afterwards disappeared: the silk industry, the iron industry, woolen factories, the raising of cotton in the southern part of the state, and many other things. President Grant as a boy carried a surveyor's chain in surveying the ditch for diverting water from the Virgin River to irrigate the first cotton in Utah's "Dixie."

Later, under President Woodruff the sugar industry was established. The Church fathered and built, with the help of some private Mormon capital, the best sugar industry in the West. They built the first beet sugar factory that used sugar machinery wholly built in the United States. In the effort to set up this industry President Heber J. Grant lost over a hundred thousand dollars of his own personal funds at a time when the purchasing power of the dollar was very much greater than now. This beet sugar industry was established in order that the farmers might be helped through

raising a ~~small~~ crop.

Moved by the instructions quoted above as to the duty and responsibility of the Church to care for the widow, the orphan, and the poor, we recently intensified our efforts in this direction, though under plans which have, in fact, been in the Church for a hundred years, by setting up what we have called our General Welfare Program. The primary aim of this Program is to provide for the material wants of faithful members of the Church who find themselves now in difficulty, to rebuild them spiritually, and to restore to them the proper concept, pride, and appreciation of American citizenship. This Plan has as a fundamental concept on the material side that no one shall receive help who, being able to work, does not work. We are trying to provide work for the needy to do. This has not always been easy, but the effort has been and is continuous to bring this about. The great bulk of the material used in this work of caring for the poor is produced by the Welfare Plan itself, and in greatest part by the gratuitous labors of Church members--both those who receive the help and those who do not need help. The distributions which we shall make during the remainder of this year, and until harvest time next year, will have been gratuitously produced by the Welfare Plan up to as much as perhaps between 70% and 80%. All the Church organizations collaborate in this Plan. As we said to you in an earlier letter, we have, through this Plan, been able to help tens of thousands of our people all over the western part of the United States, and indeed in the East. We visualize, if present tendencies



continue, that our problem may be immeasurably intensified when the World War ends and the nations sink back into the depression which seems certainly to follow. It is our earnest hope, and indeed belief, that we shall be able so to stabilize our people under those circumstances by mutual helpfulness, by the building up of an actual sense of brotherhood among men, that our people will be able to stand the test which then comes, without slipping too far back in all those humanitarian principles and sterling virtues upon which our present civilization is based.

No effort has been spared to teach the people to be self reliant, independent, to take a humble, righteous pride in being, individually and as communities, fully self supporting. They have been taught the principles of uncorrupted government through their activities in a gratuitous Church service. They have learned to love liberty and they have been taught by dire tragedies what all the freedoms mean, especially freedom of conscience. Through everything that has been done and behind everything that has been accomplished by the people were the great spiritual principles to which we have alluded above.

We have spoken above largely of the material matters, but along cultural and spiritual lines the people have been equally devoted. Within three years from the time of their coming here they set up what was called the University of Deseret. From that time until this the Church has encouraged education and culture. Of their musical culture the present Tabernacle Choir stands as the best known and outstanding example, but in art, in literature, and in science they are equally

proficient. Some of our early buildings are noted among architects the world over as constituting some of the most beautiful architecture in all America. Today practically one-fifth of our annual budget is devoted to education, music, and the cultivation of the fine arts. The Brigham Young University doing regular college work has more than three thousand students. In addition to that the Church has established at college centers in Utah, Idaho, Wyoming, California, Arizona, a series of Institutes where religion is taught and cultural activities engaged in. It has established Seminaries where the same sort of instruction is given adjacent to high schools all over the State of Utah and in some parts of the adjoining states. More than thirty thousand students attend these Institutes and Seminaries. The result of this attitude towards education is that Utah stands practically at the head of the list of all the States for literacy, although it is still in many respects a frontier community and statistics available indicate that there are proportionately more men and women who have obtained sufficient national prominence to be included in Who's Who than any other State in the Union, and the great bulk of these persons are members of the Mormon Church.

These things have been told in order that you may have a background and understanding of what we are now to say.

Viewing all of these things it will be easy for you to understand that the Church has not found it possible to follow along the lines of the present general tendency in the matter of property rights, taxes, the curtailment of rights and liberties of the people, nor in general the economic policies of what is termed the "New Deal". The great bulk



of what these people are trying to do is, in final analysis, absolutely contrary to the fundamental principles of which we have spoken. It is the considered, long considered opinion of President Grant and those who are associated with him, that our nation cannot be preserved if the present governmental policies shall continue. We do not believe that any other great nation or great civilization can be built up or maintained by the use of such policies. As we see one liberty after another encroached upon, we look with deepest anxiety toward the possibility of an attempt to take away religious freedom from the American people. We went through this experience in our early days. We know from the stories of our fathers and our grandfathers what it means to be deprived of the right to worship God according to the dictates of our consciences, and of the hardships and tragedy that accompany such a denial. We face this situation and this possibility, we repeat, with deepest apprehension.

As we see it, there is no way in which we can, to use your own words, "preserve and perpetuate our freedom—freedom to govern ourselves, freedom of speech, and freedom to worship God according to our own light," except we shall turn away from our present course and resume the normal course along which this great country traveled to its present high eminence of prosperity, of culture, of universal education, and of the peace and contentment which we enjoyed prior to the inauguration of the "New Deal".

These things are not matters of partisan politics with us. We care nothing as Church leaders about partisan politics as such, nor about the dominance of one party or the other. We grant to every man the right to vote as he wishes, and we would not control his vote even

if we could. But we do reserve to ourselves the right to tell our people what we think is right regarding politics as affecting the fundamentals of our governmental system, to warn them of the dangers that lie under the present course, and to try to persuade them that their peace, their happiness, and their security do not lie along the path of the present trends of government.

Truly, we do not believe that--again to quote your own words--we can "preserve and perpetuate our freedom--freedom to govern ourselves, freedom of speech, and freedom to worship God according to our own light" unless we turn squarely about and return to the old-time virtues, and reenthrone our liberties and free institutions.

We have done in the past, we are doing now, and we shall continue in the future to do everything within our power to secure this turning about of which we speak. We confess to you that it has not been possible for us to unify our own people even upon the necessity of such a turning about, and therefore we cannot, unfortunately, and we say it regretfully, make any practical suggestion to you as to how the nation can be turned about. But the President of the United States could do it in good part if he were willing to exert his effort along that line, but this he appears not to be willing to do.

We pray--and when we say we pray, we mean we offer a supplication to our God and your God who we believe can hear and answer prayers and does do so--that wisdom will be given to our national leaders to the end that we may face about and return to the old virtues. We shall continue our supplication and to our supplication we shall



add such works as we are able to do, to bring this about.

Now we have said all of the foregoing with a complete understanding in our own minds that we have said nothing or little of anything that may now be of practical value, but this much we feel we can definitely say, that unless the people of America forsake the sins and the errors, political and otherwise, of which they are now guilty and return to the practice of the great fundamental principles of Christianity, and of Constitutional government, there will be no exaltation for them spiritually, and politically we shall lose our liberty and free institutions.

Returning to your original letter and our reply thereto regarding the selling of Defense Bonds. The Church as a Church does not believe in war and yet since its organization whenever war has come we have done our part. Our members served in the war with Mexico, not so much in the Civil War because we were so far away, but our members went into the Spanish-American War and they went into the World War, and the records will show that they acquitted themselves honorably. But, nevertheless, we repeat, we are against war. We believe that international difficulties can and should be settled by peaceful means, and that America's great mission in the world is to bring this about. We believe that our entry into this present war by sending our men abroad (and this seems now to be deliberately planned) would constitute not only a mistake but a tragedy. We believe that the present war is merely a breaking out again of the old spirit of hatred and envy that has afflicted Europe for a period of a thousand years at least. We do not



believe that this war will settle anything when it is over because we believe that the peace, whoever dictates it, will be primarily the outgrowth of hate, and hate never settled anything righteously.

However, we do thoroughly believe in building up our home defenses to the maximum extent necessary, but we do not believe that aggression should be carried on in the name and under the false cloak of defense. We therefore look with sorrowing eyes at the present use to which a great part of the funds being raised by taxes and by borrowing is being put. We are much impressed with the views of those military and naval men who say we are not militarily threatened. We believe that our real threat comes from within and not from without, and it comes from that underlying spirit common to Nazism, Fascism, and Communism, namely, the spirit which would array class against class, which would set up a socialistic state of some sort, which would rob the people of the liberties which we possess under the Constitution, and would set up such a reign of terror as exists now in many parts of Europe. We feel that our defenses should be built against this danger even more than the touted danger of foreign military invasion which many responsible military men tell us cannot come.

Perhaps we might close with a statement that should be unnecessary to make. We love America; we love the Constitution; we love the Government that has been established under it; we love our liberties and our free institutions; we believe in them; we believe that God actually ordained this in order that we, the Mormon people might be set up and established, for our revelations declare we hold the true



plan of ~~life~~ and salvation. We wish to do all that is humanly possible to do to ~~pre~~serve our free institutions and this Constitution and the Government ~~as~~ it was set up under it; we do not wish knowingly to do one act or to ~~say~~ one thing that will tend to destroy these divinely given privileges ~~a~~nd blessings.

We trust you will pardon this long letter, but we feel we must say ~~that~~ you invited it.

Trusting that the Lord will point out some way, will somehow bring about a rejuvenation of the American spirit along with a true love of ~~freedom~~ and of our free institutions, and for Constitutional government, we are,

Faithfully yours,

Heber S. Grant

J. Reuben Clark Jr.

David O. McKay

The First Presidency

January 30, 1942.

Dear Mr. Houghteling:

I trust you will pardon this late acknowledgment of your brief note of December 10 with which you enclosed a copy of the letter from the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to Mr. FitzGibbon relating to the Defense Savings campaign.

Your note reached me just as I was leaving for a brief Christmas vacation and upon my return there has been so much pressing business that I have only recently gotten around to reading the enclosure you sent me. As you can surmise, I found it every bit as unenlightened as I had expected.

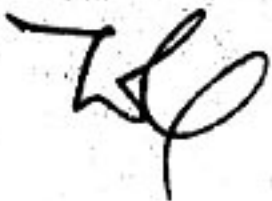
Thanking you again for your courtesy in this matter, and with kind regards,

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) M. S. Eccles

Mr. James L. Houghteling,  
Assistant to the  
Secretary of the Treasury,  
Washington, D. C.

LC:hbw





March 2, 1942.

Mr. James L. Houghteling,  
Assistant to the Secretary  
of the Treasury,  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Houghteling:

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed editorial from the Deseret News of February 21, which a fellow Utahan sent me the other day.

As you may know, the Deseret News is a daily newspaper of general circulation that is owned and controlled by the Mormon Church. If the editorial policy of this paper reflects the attitude of the Church authorities, as one would naturally expect, this editorial indicates that the Church leaders have greatly changed their views respecting support by their members of the Government's financing program, in particular the distribution of savings bonds. The contrast with the attitude expressed in their letter to the Honorable William C. FitzGibbon, a copy of which you kindly sent me sometime back, is quite striking.

With best wishes, I am

Yours sincerely,

M. S. Eccles,  
Chairman.

Enclosure

LC:hbw







# TREASURY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON

DEFENSE SAVINGS STAFF

March 12, 1942

Hon. Marriner S. Eccles,  
Chairman,  
Board of Governors of the  
Federal Reserve System,  
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Eccles:

I am greatly obliged to you for sending me, under date of March 2, the clipping of the editorial in "The Deseret News" of Salt Lake City, for February 21, which very ably endorses the Defense Savings program of the Treasury. I am particularly pleased to get this fine endorsement from the admirable newspaper owned and controlled by the Mormon Church. It represents a most favorable contrast to the isolationist attitude expressed by the First Presidency of the Church in a letter written to Mr. FitzGibbon of my office a few months ago.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

James L. Broughton,  
Director,  
National Organizations Division.

FOR DEFENSE

BUY  
UNITED  
STATES  
SAVINGS  
BONDS  
AND STAMPS

