Mr. Carson's Reply

"Hon. Herbert Hoover, the White House,
Washington, D. C.

"My dear Mr. President:

"I have your letter of August 2d, and I thank you for your kind expressions of appreciation of the services of those who have joined in the effort to provide a suitable camp site in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia for the use of the President of the United States.

"Please be assured that all the citizens and public officers of the State of Virginia who have contributed in any wise to the project feel that it has been both a privilege and pleasure to be of service.

"It will give me pleasure to convey your thanks to all of our citizens in Virginia so kindly mentioned in your letter. Our only regret has been that you have not felt at liberty to accept the title deeds to the property together with a suitable building, properly equipped and ready for your use, as an evidence of the hospitality and good will with which the people of Virginia welcome your occasional visits to the State.

"Of course, all the work being done on the roads and trails will rebound ultimately to the benefit of the State and the United States, when the Rapidan Valley road becomes (as it will, in due time) one of the important gateways to the Shenandoah National Park; but the citizens of Virginia would have been glad to furnish both the land and the necessary camp buildings for your week-end visits had you not insisted on furnishing your individual check for that purpose.

Suggests Holding Title

"As chairman of the Virginia State Conservation and Development Commission, permit me also to thank you for your generous offer to turn over this property to the Shenandoah National Park for the use of your successors, or for such other park purposes as may be found proper, and in reply to your inquiry as to how the end you have in view can best be secured, I would suggest that you might either hold title in your own name until condemnation proceedings are instituted, and then turn it over for the use of the park in the regular course of the proceedings, or you can deed the property, in trust, to the chairman of the State Conservation and Development Commission of Virginia, which is authorized by law to accept gifts of real estate within the park area for park purposes.

"The deed of trust could secure the use of the property as a week-end camp site to you and your successors in office, until and unless the Shenandoah National Park has been finally turned over to the Federal Government. I should think that a properly worded deed of trust would furnish the simplest and most convenient method of dealing with the situation.

"Command me if I can be of any further service and believe me, very faithfully yours,

"(Signed) Wm. E. Carson."

Address of

PRESIDENT HOOVER

Delivered on

MADISON DAY

August 17, 1929

In response to welcoming speech

on behalf of the people of Virginia

Made by

Governor HARRY F. BYRD

BOTH Mrs. Hoover and I feel greatly honored by the generous reception you have extended us today. It is a welcome as one of your neighbors, and it is as a neighbor that I participate with you.

In the early years of our Republic, Virginia was the home of Presidents, and it would seem appropriate that with the changing years, the President should at least have a week-end camp in Virginia. There are other sound reasons why such a connection should be maintained between the Presidents and Virginia. The fact is that those strong Virginians who selected the site for our National Capital were apparently impervious to heat and humidity or at least they were unaware of how much pavements and modern buildings can contribute to raise the temperature. But Virginia herself now offers the antidote in the wonderful mountains which you have dedicated to a National Park and the access to it that you have provided by your newly improved roads.

Becomes a Habit

It has become a habit and a necessity for our government officials who have the major anxieties in national affairs to seek some other place from which to conduct their work for prolonged periods in the summer time. But the press of public business and its execution in the National Captial is so necessary that we must face the fact that these periods must gradually be shortened. Therefore I have thought it appropriate to accept the hospitality of your citizens and your mountains for one or two days each week and thereby combine both relief and work without cost to either. And I have discovered that even the work of government can be improved by leisurely discussions of its problems out under the trees where no bells ring or callers jar one's thoughts from the channels of urbanity.

You have demonstrated yourselves good hosts and good neighbors with that fine courtesy for which Virginia is known to the whole nation. I often think the test of good neighbors is whether one can always be sure when the family meets an emergency it can cheerfully borrow a half dozen eggs or a few extra dishes. In this emergency you have proved this sentiment of neighborliness by lending me a part of your park, by improving a road, by securing the fishing rights on a beautiful mountain stream and even providing me with fishing tackle. I, on my side, am glad to lend my services as a good neighbor to you by acting as a sort of sign post to the country of the fine reality of your proposed new National Park.

Fishing An Excuse

I fear that the summer camp we have established on the Rapidan has the reputation of being devoted solely to fishing. That is not the case, for the fishing season lasts but a short time in the spring. It is a place for week-end rest—but fishing is an excuse and valid reason of the widest range of usefulness for temporary retreat from our busy world. In this case it is the excuse for return to the woods and streams with their retouch of the simpler life of the frontier from which every American springs. Moreover, I have learned that fishing has an important implication and even sounder foundation of such an excuse from the presidential point of view. I find that many Presidents have joined the ranks of fishermen only after their inauguration as President, although I can claim over forty-five years of apprenticeship—that is, in fishing, not the Presidency.

I have discovered the reason why Presidents take to fishing—the silent sport. Apparently, the only opportunity for refreshment of one's soul and clarification of one's thoughts by solitude to Presidents lies through fishing. As I have said in another place, it is generally realized and accepted that prayer is the most personal of all human relationships. On such occasions as that men and women are entitled to be alone and undisturbed. Next to prayer, fishing is the most personal relationship of man and of more importance than the fact itself, everybody concedes, that the fish will not bite in the presence of the public. Fishing seems to be the sole avenue left to Presidents through which they may escape to their own thoughts and may live in their own imaginings and find relief from the pneumatic hammer of constant personal contacts, and refreshment of mind in the babble of rippling brooks.

Moreover, it is a constant reminder of the democracy of life, of humility and of human frailty—for all men are equal before fishes. And it is desirable that the President of the United States should be periodically reminded of this fundamental fact—that the forces of nature discriminate for no man.

But to become more serious, I wish again to thank you on behalf of Mrs. Hoover and myself for your generous and cordial welcome to Madison County. We hope to be good neighbors, and we know from experience already that you will be.

Mr. Hoover's Letter

"Mr. W. E. Carson,
Riverton, Va.

"My Dear Mr. Carson:

"I have received the title deed for 164 acres of land for the camp site in the Shenandoah mountains. This camp has come to have some public aspects due to the many contributions in its making. As I told you some months ago, I should like to put it in permanent form for the use of my successors. Moreover, as it lies in the area of the future Shenandoah National Park, when the park becomes public property it will be desirable that no private property should be held within its boundaries.

"It is difficult to acknowledge all of the generous contributions to the making of the camp. You selected the site, and through you, the residents along the Rapidan deeded their fishing rights to us. The Marine Corps generously volunteered to furnish the labor in erecting cabins and tents, in providing water supply, cutting brush, etc. The power company and telephone company put in their connections without charge, making it possible for us to secure these services. The Shenandoah Park Association, together with the State of Virginia and especially the Madison County supervisors, have advanced the improvement of the road which will form one of the fine openings to the new park; local residents have contributed labor to the opening of fine trails, and this week the engineer corps volunteers to further improve the road as one of its summer exercises.

"All this marks the greatest of interest and kindness in a desire to provide a week-end retreat for the President, for which your own energies in organizing these activities have not been the least of the contributions.

My contribution has been the purchase and preparation of the building materials, &c., together with some labor costs. I desire that the camp shall ultimately become the property of the Shenandoah National Park so that at the expiration of my term of office, they may hold it for those of my successors for a week-end camp, or, if future Presidents do not wish to avail themselves of it, it is at the disposal of the park itself. Therefore, I would be glad to either deed it now or await the transfer of the park to the Federal Government, whichever you think best.

"Yours faithfully,

"Signed: HERBERT HOOVER."