

Chief Executive

(1861)

Springfield, Ill. Jan. 3, 1861

Dear Simon Cameron

My dear Sir

Since seeing you things have developed which make it impossible for me to take you into the cabinet. You will say this comes of an interview with McClure; and this is partly, but not wholly true-- The more potent matter is wholly outside of Pennsylvania; and yet I am not at liberty to specify it--² Enough that it appears to me to be sufficient-- And now, I suggest that you write me declining the appointment, in which case I do not object to its being known that it was tendered you. Better do this at once, before things so change, that you can not honorably decline, and I be compelled to openly recall the tender.

A. L.

Source: <http://memorv.loc.gov>

Abraham Lincoln to Simon Cameron, Thursday, January 03, 1861 (Lincoln will not appoint Cameron to the cabinet)

My dear Sir

Since seeing you things have developed which make it impossible for me to take you into the cabinet. You will say this comes of an interview with McClure; and this is partly, but not wholly true-- The more potent matter is wholly outside of Pennsylvania; and yet I am not at liberty to specify it--² Enough that it appears to me to be sufficient-- And now, I suggest that you write me declining the appointment, in which case I do not object to its being known that it was tendered you. Better do this at once, before things so change, that you can not honorably decline, and I be compelled to openly recall the tender,

No person living knows, or has an intimation that I write this letter

Yours truly

A. Lincoln

P. S. Telegraph me instantly, on receipt of this, saying

"All right"

A. L.

[Note 1 The importance of Pennsylvania to Lincoln's electoral success rendered it advisable that that state be represented in Lincoln's cabinet. After some initial hesitation, then much encouragement by testimonial letters, Lincoln leaned toward including Senator Simon Cameron, only to be further deluged by expressions of opposition to Cameron once that disposition became known.. These letters came from factional rivals of Cameron in Pennsylvania, free-traders opposed to his support of high tariffs, and those persuaded of his corrupt record in business and politics. Lincoln conferred with Cameron in Springfield, drew up a list of the objections and recommendations concerning the Senator and found the pros outweighing the cons, and thus informed him on December 31, 1860, that he would be offered either the position of secretary of war or secretary of the treasury. Lincoln then reversed himself four days later after a meeting with Cameron's factional enemy Alexander K. McClure, in Springfield, at which time documents seemingly damning to Cameron had been presented. Lincoln was to perform another about-face when he named Cameron to head the War Department shortly before his inauguration, after Pennsylvania opposition to Cameron had collapsed. There are many letters concerning Cameron's nomination(s) in the this collection. See also *Collected Works*, IV, 166-68.]

[Note 2 What that "more potent matter" was has never been determined.]

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President John Kennedy holds a meeting in the Cabinet Room with his advisors and Vice President Lyndon Johnson during the Cuban Missile Crisis October 29, 1962.



President Gerald Ford meets with his Cabinet in the Cabinet Room, November 15, 1974.



President George W. Bush speaks during his Cabinet Meeting, Thursday, Dec. 11, 2003. White House photo by Eric Draper.

Sources:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/history/photoessays/cabinetroom/.html>

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