FYI Man

Young goes to the General Electric:

Gordon Abbott of the Old Colony Trust Company was one of the men whom Coffin consulted before inviting Young into the G. E. Abbott had had a good chance to know all about the kind of man Young was for from the first of his connections in Boston he had been connected with the movement to re-organize the New England Untilities ruined by the panic. A company was organized, which if I understand it, it was called the New England Illuminating Company. (Think this is not right.) Coolidge was one of the directors. C. Cotting was the manager - Tyler was chosen as counsel. These Illuminating properties and the street railroads were of course all mixed up, so that from the first Abbott was thrown into ~~the~~ relation with the General Electric. Payne was another director.

Apparently they were more or less associated with Young from the beginning. He speaks of something known as the United Electric Securities Company. Suppose this was a company organized at this time to take over the defunct utility securities. He speaks of Coffin as a brilliant and powerful man.

In the Dallas operations of Stone & Webster as well as of the General Electric, rather I should think of the G. E. Abbott was concerned ~~turned~~ from the first. When Young went over to the General Electric he had of ~~course~~ all the knowledge that Stone & Webster association had brought him but the two seemed to have worked together and Abbott to have complete confidence in Young. He is interesting in his analysis of him

"He has a mind that is clear as crystal," he said

Digital Image, 2011. The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

"no angles in it which reflect wrongfully. He deals with people as folks. when he has made up his mind - is convinced - and the thing has got to go. Evidently Abbott gave Coffin a fine recommendation.

Abbott thinks Y. would make a wonderful President. "Might kill him," he says, "but he would do it if he thought it his duty. He might be able to handle it because he is a master hand at delegating work. He holds the theory that if a man can function at one hundred percent and can find two people each functioning at fifty percent to turn over his tasks to, so that he can give his one hundred percent to something else, then he has got two hundred percent done. That is what he would do if he was President."

Very interesting, these speculations of these men who know Young well about what he would do in the Presidentcy.

There seems to be a general feeling that it might kill him - that was Uncle Abe's theory. Those who dispair of anybody being able to function very well as President of the United States scoff at the idea. He better stay where he can do something effective.

Then there are those with enormous confidence in his ability to get others to do things which of course is one of his great powers - the delegation of effort - the inspiring of it.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.

Most of these men have felt their own capacity increased - their courage sustained - their field enlarged by his contact. "One of the ablest of ~~him~~ Boston men I ever met- a really powerful man." Says "knowing Owen Young has been the greatest experience of my life."

"That is all very well," I tell him. "You tell me what a wonder he is. Somehow when you get through I do not see an iron man - one cannot always work by persuasion."

He looked at me a little pityingly. "Always work by persuasion? Owen Young has got the hardest wallop of any man I ~~now~~ know."

Well, there I had reached the point that was troubling me. I tell him frankly. "I believe it - ~~in this man~~ but I cannot put my finger on the proof of it."

"No," he said thoughtfully, "that is difficult. But isn't it something like this? If you feel a big wallop in a man you are afraid to give him a chance to try it out on you. You know somehow that he is the bigger thing. You don't give him a chance to whallop you. Isn't that a greater thing to make men feel your power than it is ~~to~~ force them to to demonstrate it by knocking you down? It is.

Digital Image, 2011, The Ida M. Tarbell Collection, 1890-1944, Allegheny College Pelletier Library.