

July 18th

Dear Ones,

Last night the bridge game was pretty mediocre - but here was a freak hand: I had eight hearts to the AK, three spades to the KQ, and two little Clubs. I opened with 3 Hearts, my partner responded four diamonds, I said four hearts and was doubled. We went down two - all five hearts against me were in one hand! my partner had the AK fourtimes in Diamonds and nothing else and the other opponent held the nine remaining diamonds! It was really a rare case of freak distribution - they pop up every now and then.

Things are fairly quiet today. One of the Trends you sent had a note on the British reaction to the suggestion that we loan England \$5 billion. The British Financial News opposed it since it would eat up Britain's credit reserve of dollars and since it ~~would~~ <sup>be to our advantage to create a big export trade for us through British purchases.</sup> What occurred to me is that ninety nine out of one hundred Americans would probably oppose such a loan too, though hardly for those reasons. My hope is that we know enough now to have escaped the errors in thinking that led to such things as the Johnson Act. One indication will be the decision on Bretton Woods which is being made in Congress now.

PM's criticism of Byrnes is not entirely unjustified - although I agree that Lerner does ~~not give a truly~~ balanced picture of the man, the job, of the alternatives which Truman had. However, the first point that the Secretary of State is a member of the executive branch is an important one; Congressional accord is ~~a~~ key concern, but the policy making impetus should come from the Chief Executive. Unlike PM I do not feel that there is anything in Byrnes' record to show that he will "entrench himself behind Congressional earthworks" against the wishes of Truman. The second point, namely Byrnes' lack of vibrant liberalism, is not to be denied; however better indications as to the nature of Byrnes' position will be the men he choses as his assistants. What is said about Byrnes' now is very similar to what was said about Black when he was appointed to the Supreme Court. In all of these questions there is a delicate balance to be maintained: Congress has to be kept in line and behind executive policy, the Executive must reflect the national temper and spirit, the people have to be kept informed and alert, the press must be fair in its presentations. In any case, Byrnes seems to have been a logical and likely choice; we will have many opportunities to judge him and his work. This morning's paper carried the word that Truman had named Vinson to succeed Morgenthau; the appointment of a successor to Roberts will certainly be critical in relation to the spirit of the court in view of the tendency toward 5-4 decisions within the past year or so.

For the first time since we have been out at the depot, it has rained during the day; we were very fortunate not to be deluged during the bulk of our work. We have one big advantage over the other Pacific islands like the Canal and that is our coral; if it does rain, there is no mud left to bog us down for days and days afterward. Just out of curiosity I think I would like to visit Santo in about ten or fifteen years; by that time all the GI roads will have become overgrown with greeppers and the undergrowth and life will be limited to the very shoreline again. Before the Army came, all travel was done by boat - where there now is a road and a five minute ride, the natives used to have to take a boat around the shore since there was little or no penetration of the island.

That sort of covers things for today -

I received "What about Howard"  
today.

All my love,

Sumner

Regards to Doris

PS please tell me when my books arrive and in what sort of shape they are.