

24 October 1945

Dear Ones,

Yesterday there was a glimmer of hope, a little airmail came in and although I did not get any, I am encouraged by the prospects and the fact that some mail has come. As I told Major Thorpe, I am going to have to take a day off when the mail does come in, in order to be able to read it all. The Colonel set up a schedule of dates on which the eligible officers and men will leave for the separation center at New Cal, and that put an end to a lot of the complaining and the long faces; attitudes change immediately when the indefiniteness is gone and the fellows have something specific to shoot for. Rudy Lewsen left for home the other day; I did not get the chance to see him before he left but I trust that if he goes to Portland he will look you up; I think he now lives in Manchester or Nashua, New Hampshire.

The pace of world events is certainly keeping up; the French referendum and final voting on the make-up of the constituent assembly are signs of the times. De Gualle's leadership and the plan for a Fourth Republic got widespread support, but at the same time the Communist Party became the strongest single group in the assembly. How this will affect the formation of the new constitution I do not know; it seems likely, however, that the nationalizing of key industries will be guaranteed. Up to now the split between De Gualle and the parties of the Left has come over the control of the government; in creating a new national framework there ought to be greater common ground, since there is no majority party and in terms of the mechanics of politics all of the factions want similar guarantees. If the voting on the constituent assembly is an indication, the main disputes will come in evolving the representative system and in districting the country. It will be an interesting study to see a modern nation, well experienced in the politics of democracy, and pressed by the need for a prosperous and functioning civil state, go about the solution of its problem. The picture in Venezuela has the old puzzling aspect which comes into all South American civil revolts - the role of the Army. No revolution can succeed without swinging over the Armed forces; Bettencourt can proclaim his democracy - and there seems every reason to believe at this time that his junta is leftist - but his stability depends on the Armed Forces whose loyalty, as his predecessor discovered, is not to be counted upon. I can remember enough of Professor Haring's course on South America to recall that he stressed over and over that even Argentina and Brazil, the two most advanced states, depended on the strength of the armed forces rather than the functioning of their nominal democracies for their governmental stability. Argentina has proved his point within the past two weeks; we are hoping that Brazil will reveal that she has matured into an effective democracy during the coming election period. South America still is pioneer country in terms of education and coordinated economic development, two elements which are pretty essential to effective republicanism.

I certainly wish that I were getting your clippings now - from all reports, the sparring and the preludes are over, and all sides are getting ready to make General Motors the key issue in the readjustment wage-price solution. This will probably be the showdown and the last big fight under the current legislation; there seems little doubt but that the Smith Connally Act will be replaced during this session of Congress and that at the same time Labor unions will be brought under public supervision. Our news reports are inadequate, but from what I gather the Union has asked for a strike vote and indications are that the members will vote for it; the Union's basic argument is that wages can be increased in accordance with overall government policy up to 30% without increasing the price of the GM product. GM of course says that a 30% increase will raise prices and has countered with an overtime system which would maintain "take-home" pay levels. It seems to me that the question of whether the dispute will be a strike or a lockout to avoid damage to plants does not alter the basic issue of the case. After the issues are defined, Truman and the Congress will have to define the governmental position; in some ways the forcing of this question on a major scale now, may help clear up the entire post war readjustment picture one way or the other.

The post war military set-up seems to be the third major consideration of the week; this noon we will probably hear the report on the Truman request. I have a hunch that he will be in the middle and that he will not support the Army one year plan; the compromise suggestion will undoubtedly include reorganization of the National Guard, CMTC, and ROTC to give the nation a coordinated system under War Department jurisdiction. I will soon see how close to



correct my guess is; I hope that his proposals include an extended summer training period if the idea of a year's training is scrapped. The current fight between the Navy and Army chiefs over the "Department of National Defense " is especially interesting to me; aside from the fact that I think that logic and economy would dictate its wisdom, my experience on this island gives me plenty of ammunition to show the lack of consistency and coordination between current Army and Navy policies. The Navy has thrown into the channel literally hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of equipment; the Army can destroy nothing that way - all parts have to be salvaged, all items either sold or shipped to the States or to other depots. I am not saying which policy is correct, I am just pointing out the marked difference between them. The Navy is continuing its promotion system; the Army will promote only those who have elected to stay in the service. There are a hundred and one differences in all the aspects of Army-Navy personnel policies.

I just got an interisland letter from Juj - OK for now -

All my love,

Regards to Doris.

*Sumner*