

June 27, 1944

Dear Sumner:

The fight between the forthright advocates of a strong foreign policy and the platform makers of the Republican party has just begun to sizzle. From the enclosed clipping taken from this morning's Boston Herald you can readily understand the significance of this battle. It is the old story: To write a platform that will mean all things to all people or to be forthright, courageous and clear and distinct in what is proposed. Unfortunately the Chicago Tribune is still a strong power within the inner circles of the Republican party and the isolationists, though not as enormous as the non-isolationists, still have sufficient strength to make their weight felt. It would be far better for the future of America if we could drop the political designations of Republican and Democrat and have a new alignment which would give the people an opportunity to decide between the forces which believe that the policies of the twenties are those to which we should adhere and the forces which have broader and more forward looking ideas. In that way the issues could be clearly resolved and presented for the vote of the people. To be sure, there would still be a fringe which would belong to neither of these two new parties but which perhaps ought to form a separate and distinct party of its own. That fringe would undoubtedly be headed by Wallace and his group. It would be interesting to speculate on where you would find President Roosevelt if such new alignments were made.

Personally the coy tactics of Dewey make no more appeal to me than those of Roosevelt. What probably has happened is that Dewey has taken a leaf out of Roosevelt's book and he finds it working just as smoothly. Roosevelt you know, was not a candidate for a third term, but was "drafted". He is not a candidate today; "nobody" knows officially whether he will run for a fourth term. Well, that is the vogue now. I wish we could have had a straight out and out contest between Roosevelt and Willkie. It would have been an interesting battle to watch: The one, the consummate politician who will do and say anything to attract votes. You were too young in 1932 to recall what Roosevelt said when he scuttled the idea of a League of Nations, but you ought to remember when he assured every mother and father in the last election that their sons would never be sent into war across the ocean. Definitely you must recall his unholy alliance with the Hague gang of New Jersey and the Kelly gang of Chicago, not to mention the notorious St. Louis gang. The other, who does not know the meaning of the word politics in its sordid sense, traveling across the country and speaking with a courage and boldness and sincerity that startle people because of their novelty in a political campaign. To me Willkie is still the right man for the Presidency and what a chief executive he would have made. With his warm heart and keen mind and with his forthrightness and courage he would have been one of our great Presidents; but, I fear, lady luck will not smile on him. It may yet come to pass, however, that he will become one of our great national figures, if an opportunity be afforded to him to enter the cabinet in a position which would give him full opportunity to make use of all of his tremendous and attractive faculties.

If Willkie scuttles the Republican ship, it will be because the leaders of the Republican party have not risen to their opportunity. He will take with him millions of intelligent citizens who will prefer Roosevelt to a Dewey, if Dewey in his acceptance speech uses weasel words and does not take a definite stand on the vital issues of the day. Personally I am for Willkie; if he strings along with Dewey so will I and millions like him.

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