

July 16, 1944

Dear Ones -

Nothing special - Worked on the tent last night; reading "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn", so far very enjoyable. I witnessed an accident yesterday: a jeep rolled over, a couple of men badly hurt; it was not a pretty sight.

I have just reread all the dope on the Republican convention, the platform, and Dewey, which you have sent to me. First of all, the platform must be the point of departure because it stinks, to put it bluntly. Unless Dewey disavows the platform publicly without the Hardingesque touch he should be defeated. So far Dewey has said nothing specific in any of the speeches I have read; he has talked in glittering generalities. Read Harding's speeches: he constantly talked of "America's playing her role etc etc ad nauseam. Although Willkie lost in Wisconsin, his campaign tactics created a standard of political honesty which makes this no ordinary campaign. Dewey can not stay on non-committal ground between McCormick and Willkie; he must make a stand. This he has not done. He is not in Roosevelt's position with the proven record of cooperation at Teheran, Moscow. Dewey must be definite - we must not depend on what we read into what he says. Another thing: everybody talks about the marvelous administrator Dewey is, but I've never read anything specific except that he heads a well-oiled political machine. He has shown no proof of national stature; he stands primarily against FDR, not for anything clearly positive. Dewey is on the horns of the Chicago Tribune-Willkie dilemma: he must declare himself. His opposition to the Federal soldier vote is not a good sign; his continual refusal to be anything but sphinxlike, when it comes to direct interview, is not good. Either Dewey purges himself of the old guard schools of thought or his election would be a mistake. If he decides not to disavow the forces of reaction in order to hold their votes at the polls, how can we trust him? If he is sincere and sensible he will make this disavowal and swing to Willkie's position; politically this would not be too bad since the Old Guard certainly won't support FDR. If he does not, if he stays on the vague shifting middle ground without commitment where both the old guard and the progressives can see elements of what they seek, then the future of the ~~unfortunate~~ US and perhaps the world may well depend on his defeat. We must forget party and partisan ways; we can't win the peace and plan its structure on shifting sands.

Really not much news - I'll add a line in the AM.

all is well - finished "A Tree etc." extremely good. Set to attend an inquiry on that accident. Will I have to pay an income tax under the new tax bill? OK for now - Love + kisses -  
Jim off fees of the guard tonight. Summer