

August 8th 1945

Dear Ones,

I got up at about quarter of seven and turned on the radio; at seven when the news came on I was shaving. Art had awakened himself and we were waiting for the promised news of the effectiveness of the atomic bomb. It was a good thing that I did not have the razor on my face at the time that the newscast started or I undoubtedly would still be nursing a slash - the six words we heard brought Art out of bed like a shot - Russia has declared war on Japan. The pace of the news of this week is magnificent; the bomb even had to come second in the news today - it is proved success. We saw yesterday's Auckland paper this morning and that had the first hand stories of the research and the work that the atomic bomb represents; the magnitude of the work, the building of plants, the degree of accuracy required in the experimentation, the limited quantities of the uranium base which were available for the project, the secrecy with which the whole effort was cloaked are causes for justifiable pride. The timing of the Potsdam conclave was apparently perfect; first the ultimatum, then the bomb, and now the Russian declaration; certainly it would appear now that the Soviet move came at exactly the right time. On the light side: I hope that the Japanese Ordnance department is ready for an emergency issue of Hari-Kari knives. I wonder if we will ever lose our awe of the atomic bomb long enough to give it a nickname - say the "up 'n atom" bomb?!!

There is little point in guessing what the military results of the Russian move will be. I don't think that Uncle Joe and his cohorts would have taken the step until their re-deployments were completed and they were ready to move ahead against the Japs in North East Asia and Sakhalin. Politically I think that the declaration clears the air; first of all, it was obvious that Russia would have a say in the Far East whether she went to war or not in that theatre - now any doubts on that score are settled. Secondly, it means that China will become a rough equivalent of Poland in Europe and the world spotlight will be on the solution of her current splits. There is no sense in denying that the Chinese Communist forces will find themselves in a key position, and Chiang and the Luces and the anti-Russian school in America are going to find that we will not fight the Russians to preserve the current Koumintang in Chungking. It is important to remember that we are fighting fascism and not communism and that the anti-comintern line is not necessarily the pro-democracy tangent. Thirdly, it should be reassurance of Russia's readiness to cooperate fully with us, although the Hearst press may see it not in terms of a speedier end of the war or a saving of men's lives but as a Russian grab for power.

We saw "FWTBT" last night at a Naval theatre where the sound is better than at our own; it is an excellent picture; the acting is finished right down to the nth degree - and the same standard applied to the direction and the photography. For my money Ingrid Bergman is all sweetness and light. The only trouble is that now I can't look forward to seeing the picture for the first time! I got the Alumni Bulletin yesterday; it had an excellent summary of the Bretton Woods agreements.

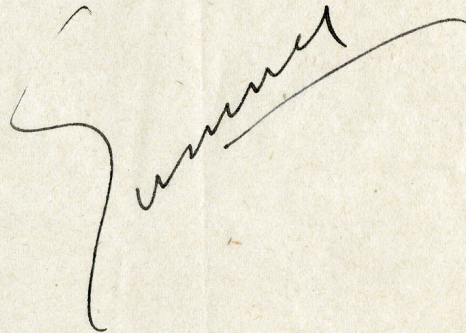
Now to your letters: The revelation of German plans for the enslavement of England should end any doubts as to the seriousness of the Nazi plans for world conquest. The TIMES certainly gave good coverage to the British elections - thanks for sending along the front page it was like a touch of home to see the full page. Did you know that New Zealand papers are like English papers in that the first pages are all advertisements and that the news and headlines appear in the center pages? a strange contrast to our eye-catching leads. Your letter on the election: I guess that you grudgingly admit, Daddy, that in the choice between "ingratitude" and a Churchill peace government, the British made the correct choice even though it hurt. Our analyses of the affect on British world position pretty well agree. And I am glad to see that you keep your mind open and do not condemn British socialism; I hope will you will take the same attitude toward similar currents in the American political-economic flow. I don't think that there is much point in discussing the "no reflection on Roosevelt" point any further; we don't seem to be able to strike a common ground for discussion.

The Advocate articles on the Nationalistic, anti-Semitic, isolationist groups that are swinging into action again are hardly encouraging; it is something that Seldes in IN FACT has pointed out for years. Pearson and Winchell level their sights at Reynolds and his crowd every now and then, and of course UNDER COVER was more or less entirely devoted to such native movements. I am glad that Scripps-Howard is publicizing its revelations; I hope that their facts are brought home throughout the country. Men like GLK Smith, Carl Mote, Dethearage, Reynolds, Pelley, the Coughlin and Bund crowds, the many Mother organizations, McWilliams - all require closest scrutiny and continual exposure. They appear in new guises, they take new tasks, but the seed of intolerance and hate is there and it must be constantly rooted out. No matter how slight their strength they cannot be ignored.

That sort of covers what there is to cover in one batch of clippings - I will get to the others in future sessions.

All my love,

Regards to Doris.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "G. Seldes", written in dark ink on the aged paper.