Dear Dares,

Many thanks for your note and your letter.
I am so glad to hear your opinion.

Other
Aug 10, 1947

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

I expect that by now the newspapers and radio have made it clear to you that Senator Ferguson's investigation hasn't turned out as planned.

Ferguson hasn't got the brains and integrity to plan a proper investigation or the ability to make it stick. This was plain in his handling of Perlman's nomination for Solicitor General; as that was of little public interest he almost got away with it; also Perlman didn't fight back as he should have.

It was bad luck for him when Brewster got caught in the wringer. Brewster is cold and pious and cunning; however he was effectively benched.

It's hard on the Senate but there it is. I should think the Republicans would be a little sick. A smart man could do a lot with that committee.

Elliot had no trouble with it. He made a good showing, always polite and plenty articulate. I think he rather caught them by surprise; they had probably believed all they read about him. His press conference went well too. I believe he is profiting from a feeling that it's been laid on him pretty thick.

The Democrats ought to be satisfied. The present showing will convince people that it's all politics and even when, if ever, it improves they'll be apt to dismiss it as such.

I hope you are getting a rest. Please do ask me about anything, any time. When I can do anything for you, it is a privilege.

Always affectionately,

Paris
INTERESTING BUT UNESEEMLY

It will be two weeks Monday since a Senate subcommittee, headed by Senator Ferguson of Michigan, opened its hearings on a $40,000,000 item of expenditure in a war that cost the United States more than three hundred billion dollars. If this item had been impartially selected because it was typical of a large class of similar items, if preliminary inquiry had indicated that it involved gross corruption; if there was hope that the examination would throw light on better ways of procuring military necessities; if the hearings had been calm, dispassionate, impersonal and judicial—if these requirements had been met the time would not have been wasted. But these requirements were not met.

The hearings have been a circus. They have been a circus in which none of us could help being interested—they were so rich in drama, so vivid with personality, so teeming with clashing emotions. But the spectacle was not edifying. It is not edifying when a brave and distinguished soldier has to admit that he accepted lavish hospitality, however innocently, from a man who through him was seeking a contract with the Government. It is not edifying to learn that this hospitality was something of an accepted system. It is not edifying when a Senator and a witness indulge in public wrangling. It is not even edifying when a Senator withdraws a charge he has made against a witness—he should not have made a charge he could not sustain. It is not edifying when a Senator admits that he has had even one free ride from persons interested in government contracts.

We may give this spectacle its due and say that it is a phenomenon that could occur only in a democracy. Our mistakes, our rivalries, our rancors explode into publicity. The accused becomes the accuser. No one, however eminent and powerful, is free from the responsibility of having to defend himself. No one, that is, except the dead, who, perhaps, will find defenders among the living. We would not have this exhibition suppressed by anything except the participants' sense of dignity and fitness—in both of which perceptions almost all of them seem to be sadly lacking.

Behind the scenes of this drama the public has been aware of another element. It was not chance that brought Elliott Roosevelt into it. It was not chance that caused so much attention to be given to a case in which there is certainly evidence of blundering, bad taste and indiscretion, but no evidence whatever of corruption. We think the American public would have more respect for the Brewster committees and the Ferguson subcommittee if they would confine themselves to investigating the conduct of the war and stop thinking, at least in the committee room, of next year's election.
PASS THE PEANUTS, PLEASE

It may be that Howard Hughes' propaganda pilot, Johnny Meyer, crashed not because he spent unwisely and too well. Maybe his good-will flight wasn't gassed with enough martinis.

This may amaze those who live in more sedate environs. But some of Washington's hotel men told our reporters yesterday that they are shocked at the size of Good-Time Johnny's expense accounts. They're shocked because they were so small.

One keeper of a certain flossy inn here allowed he just couldn't see how Good-Time Johnny even made a safe take-off with only $5000 of good-will gas. Why, this boniface said, a certain medicine man patriotically blew $5000 on just one party.

He's right, too. It wasn't unusual. Anybody who commanded or battled thru those wartime Washington cocktail fights knew you couldn't have too little, for a small army of willing propagandists always stayed too late. Lord help you if you failed to keep passing out the ammunition.

And so Pan-American served Sen. Brewster ham and eggs! Shades of those hotel chicken patties and early June peas! What were they thinking of?

No, there was hardly a hostelry without several bubbling oases manned and stocked by wartime industry to hearten and refresh those brave souls who saw embattled Washington thru its finest hour. And there must be a goodly company of chicken colonels today on a milk of magnesia diet for inner wounds incurred in the line of duty along the Potomac.

Lives there a Pentagon warrior, a weary statesman, a modest lobbyist or a member of the chronically parched contingent of the working press with a palate so dead that he fails to gulp as he recalls those wartime well springs? Let us not now ungratefully point the finger of scorn.

For it's been going on for a long, long time. Whoever heard of a cloak-and-suit that failed of a free evening at the Stork Club on a New York buying trip? When was an ocean liner's launching not followed by a payless shakedown cruise? Even liberty ships taking the water called for a hotel lunch for from 20 to 40 more or less distinguished souls. And when does an intrepid airliner first blaze a new sky trail without a batch of travelers aboard for free? That goes for brand-new trick trains, too. It's an old American custom.

And during the war, the taxpayers paid for a lot of it.

This is just to remark that while the revelations of Good-Time Johnny's, Howard Hughes' and Elliott's free feeds make fruity reading, the taxpayer is paying for the revelations, too.

And a lot of it is peanuts. Exploiting the trivia gets an investigation of unconscionable war profits out of focus. We'll bet a tired stuffed olive there's a lot larger loot somewhere than cost-plus cocktails.