

Reading, [Lady] Stella
1946-52

Reading

May 26, 1947

Dear Lady Reading:

I quite understand your feeling about taking the chairmanship of the International Council of Women. I think you are doing the right thing to stick to the very important job which you are doing within your own country. Your problems seem to me tremendously difficult to face and I think it will require every bit of brains that can be brought to bear on them for solution.

The great trouble about the project which you and I talked about, is the fact that the State Department is not really interested in doing much about women. It is so upset about its own program and contacts with the USSR, I think it can give very little thought to anything else.

If I get an opportunity to talk to anyone again, I shall do so, but my last conversations with the State Department gentlemen were so discouraging that I decided it was best not to try.

I think of you often with great affection and concern, and admiration for the gallantry which you and the British women are showing.

Affectionately,

WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICES

41 TOTHILL STREET

LONDON
ENGLAND

Air Mail

President: H.M. THE QUEEN

Chairman: The Dowager MARCHIONESS OF READING, G.B.E.

SR/MJ

21st April, 1947.

Belle brought me a lovely box of chocolates from you and I cannot tell you how excited I was to get them. I had finished the very last sweets I had, which had had to be shared with the children, because Easter having come, and the sweet ration having been cut down, obviously the adults couldn't eat any at all, and I am afraid I immediately attacked your box of chocolates and enjoyed them so much, and also felt stimulated and better for them! It is curious if you don't smoke or drink, how much you enjoy eating sweets, and at present drink, sweets and tobacco have all been so fearfully cut that the stimulation from any of them is negligible beyond words!!!

I was going to write to you anyhow, and now am doubly glad to be able to do so, because I wanted to tell you that I had been offered International Chairmanship of the Council of Women, which I had very much hoped to be able to accept. The nomination came as a surprise to Great Britain from the Scandinavian countries and the existing Chairman, who is a Belgian, flew over from Belgium to try and

/persuade

WOMEN'S VOLUNTARY SERVICES *Reading*

41 TOTHILL STREET

LONDON

ENGLAND

President: H.M. THE QUEEN

Chairman: The Dowager MARCHIONESS OF READING, G.B.E.

SR/MJ

29th August 1947. *WV*

Frank Roosevelt -

I am just finishing up my summer holiday, so am taking the opportunity of writing to you to say how much I hope you are well, and hope that you yourself have had some sort of a rest this summer and have benefitted by it. I have been extraordinarily lucky, I have had four weeks, the longest holiday in 9 years, and I have enjoyed it enormously, although I must say, very slothfully. I have slept and slept, to an extent that I never knew anything but a salamander could and I have enjoyed it very much, and hope I have benefitted sufficiently to be of some use in the months ahead.

We anticipate that there is going to be a tremendous amount of work to be done of every sort and kind in this country, and we know that we are going to need to use our voluntary services just as energetically, just as thoroughly, and just as unselfishly as we did in the war. We are looking into the many angles in which part-time service can relieve full-time workers, and we are hoping to be able to help just as functionally as we did in the war-time but, of course, in people's minds there is a great confusion between war and peace, and emergencies and crises seemed so different when bombs were falling and when nothing but chaos threatened.

the presence of someone at home and, therefore, I must

25/1/72

Сиринус : Дир Директор ИВРЧНИО
Братство : ИВР THE QUEEN

МОНЕИ.2

I must admit from our point of view, I am very stimulated by the amount of help available. Never have we in WVS had to refuse any single job for want of personnel and I can safely say that that is true today and there is no scheme which we could, or might be asked to undertake, which we have to refuse because we felt we had not got sufficient people to operate it.

What we are looking at from the broad point of view is, that we will undertake those statutory undertakings which are necessary, both on a peace-time and on an emergency basis, for instance, we will do everything in the conservation and preservation line, in the social services from the voluntary side integrating into the statutory obligations, and in the stimulation of more production, whether from the point of view of growing food or from any other point of view at all. We calculate that the care of the old people, the extra care of the children, the lifting of domestic burdens of every sort and kind, is a form of alleviation of burdens for those who are at full-time production and is a very great help to absenteeism.

One of the things that always worries me so much is the confusion there is in the minds of the public, between voluntary absenteeism and necessary absenteeism; with women the necessary absenteeism is so much higher than one could ever legislate for, especially after a long term of strain such as we have had. I often notice that in the list of causes for absenteeism, are all sorts and kinds of people who really are absent without a health certificate because they are not fit to undertake the gruelling work of a particular operation and, therefore, are unable to do it, and also, again and again, a woman is absent because of illness in the home, or some trouble which necessitates the presence of someone at home and, therefore, the
is going to be putting these women, and their /woman

woman has to remain. In all these ways we are hoping to do a great deal of work, and I shall write to you a little later, to show you exactly how the programme is working out.

I had always thought that the balloon would go up about October or November and so from the 1st May to the 1st August, I did an intensive tour of Great Britain, I travelled just under 9,000 and made over 90 speeches, and in consequence, I am glad to say that our machinery is all set and ready and we can take the burden that is coming to us.

Last night the full volume of our new austerities was broken to us, no more basic petrol, which means no more cars for anything except business and work, necessary work, only 1/- worth of meat a week, and of that, 2d. worth will be canned or corned beef or something of the sort, and it looks very much as if we will go down to 1 pint of milk per week, which when you think it has to do for cooking and coffee and tea and everything else, is not very much. I recently had two people staying with me who had come over from Holland and they were complaining bitterly about their milk - they were quite shocked to realise that under our ration at that day, which was double what it is going to be, they had exactly twice as much milk a week as we had, and then one of them added naively, "and, of course, the Black Market is there so we can always get as much more as we want, and we do".

So far, thank God, the Black Market has been kept well strangled in this country, and I hope it always will be, but people are getting very, very tired of everlasting restrictions, and I must say my heart quailed last night when I listened to the things to be done and thought that my task for the next so many months is going to be putting those across, and trying to keep
/people

people cheerful when they are feeling very, very far
from cheery.

We are all looking forward so much to your coming
over to the unveiling and I do hope that you are
looking forward to the visit.

Ever yours affectionately
Stettin

Chairman

Mrs. F. D. Roosevelt,
Apartment 15-A,
29 Washington Square, West,
New York City 11, N.Y.
U.S.A.

The Dowager Marchioness of Reading
41 Dathell St
London - Eng -

Airmail

Dear Lady Stella:

I have been especially
pleased that I am a delegate -
to the next Gen Assen which
meets in Paris on Sept
13 on the American

My grandson, Curtis Bailegh,
aged 18 has graduated from
military school & instead of going
to college this fall he wants to
go to Paris with Tommy & me.

I am trying to arrange it &
if I can do so, I would
like to send him to London
for a visit. Will you be
there in Sept & Oct? I
hope to get to London myself
during the session if we are
not too busy.

This summer is fun
with 10 children here. It is
like a camp!

Much love