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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

March 17, 1937.

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr.,
Attorney at Law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California.

Sonny Boy:

Please don't be angry with me for not having sent you some word. Miss Connor has been so swamped that I have hesitated to ask her to do anything for me. The letters have just been pouring into the office, and since the Senator's remarks on the Supreme Court more than 25,000 letters have reached the office. The proportion of the correspondence is still ten to one against the President's program. It is utterly impossible for me to write. I can write about a telegram, say fifty words, but after that the arm is so very painful that it is just unnecessary for me to talk about it, but I can't write. I started a couple of days ago to go back to the Doctor's but it is my opinion it is a waste of time and money. I think the arm is as good as it will every be, and I have made up my mind to this.

I have tried very hard to keep your Dad from doing anything of any length on the floor and try to get him away from the office as early as I can in the afternoon each day. Many people think he has picked up. In many ways he is better, according to my own opinion, but he has some way to go yet. I was awfully sorry to hear about Frere and his

ankle. I never used to think much of people that were hurt, before, but with my own blankety-blank arm, which might have been my neck, I find that I am exceedingly sympathetic.

We have had the most beautiful snow I think I have ever seen. Somehow it got in funny places on the trees and bushes, and was so artistic, too. I used to put out the light in my room and look out into the yard and streets longing for a camera. It is like youth, you know, soon gone. This is just a hello note to tell you the reason you have not heard from me and to send you my love. Tell Miss Schow, too, because I wanted to write to her. I think I will try a few words each day and send her a letter in that way. I can't promise though, because the old arm is very painful most of the time.

All my love,

Devotedly,

Mother

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

March 30, 1937.

EDWARD J. TRENWITH, CLERK

JAMES A. WHITE, ASST. CLERK

Dear Sonny Boy:

I thought I had better send you some little word before the office got too busy again and could not attend to my numerous wants.

I can't tell you how happy you made both Dad and me with your lovely flowers, and your Easter thought of us was so lovely. So often the florists send such rotten half wilted flowers that I really thought you should not order them because it is too expensive and heart-breaking to have them come that way, but these were particularly fresh and nice.

Dad is doing pretty well. I don't know whether he is doing too much or not, but he has good days and bad days, and he gets exceedingly impatient because he can not do the amount of work that he did before he was taken sick. But all in all, I think he is so much better, and this I really see, that it will only be a short time before he can do more than the amount of work he used to do. I have purposely kept him from making any speeches until he is one hundred per cent, because it really is a strain, as you know.

How I should love to say a lot of things about this "galoot" up the avenue. The dictatorship is now very formidably presented, and in my opinion, it will not be long before we have it. Your poor, little stupid Mother, told you this long ago before the election but I got sat upon. I want to say to you now, honey, my conscience is clear, and I am not to blame for any of this. I knew it was going to happen, but I did not think it would happen so soon. I do not meet anyone now who does not believe we are on the road to dictatorship. It is common gossip with everyone that I see.

I don't know what to say to you about Frere. I am terribly disturbed about him. When I think of the long, lonely years you gave, so as to keep their home for them with all of its splendid qualities, and I think of the sacrifices that you made, and the marvelous way in which you did it, with never a complaint, and never a look or thought of sacrifice, I just boil when I think of Frere getting up and leaving you now when you could enjoy him most.

Of course I am old-fashioned and full of old notions, and think, of course, this should not be done. I wish you could get him started writing theses on Spain, Italy, France, and maybe he might change his mind and not be so set on China. Of all places in the world to go now the worst is China because everyone who has returned here from China say while it is exceedingly interesting, it is dangerous. If he thinks he is going to "get by" with the Japanese, because he is the grandson of the Senator, he is very much fooled because very easily, when he is in their hands, they could easily do something dangerous to him, poison him, or see that in some way or by accident he was killed, and this is not an old woman's notion. You must remember the very threatening letters we received when your Father was Governor, and even at the Embassy here, they still have hard work hiding their resentment. It really frightens me when I think of his going there. Of course, they know it all, and you can't tell them anything, but all this is for your ears alone. It is too bad Frere can't have a little more balance. The last thing he does is the thing that affects him most. If he had come here and gone to Annapolis or West Point, and then went there by the authority of the Government, I would not feel it was so dangerous, but I have had several friends who have returned from China say that the restrictions put upon foreigners are so drastic, they really spoil a visit. One never knows what will happen next, the country is so disrupted.

I suppose you don't like me to say this about Frere. One of the things I have always been proudest of has been that marvelous splendid sterling courage of yours in being both Mother and Father and how you never failed to give them the proper home and training. It seems to me that Frere wraps up all that in a bundle and tosses it out of the window. He seems to think he has no responsibility or any loyalty to you, or that there is anything expected, except that he just likes to do what he wants. You have never asked anything of him. You have never expected anything of him, except righteousness and decency. You have given everything that anybody could give, and you have been so marvelous that I often hug it to my soul in joy, when I think of what you might have done. There are plenty of Fathers who would have boarded their children out, married again, or done a hundred other things, and let their children take care of themselves, and turn out as they may; but instead of that you gave your whole life to them, and it is as little as they can do to appreciate it. Now, how do you like all this scolding? I am pretty mad though. I do like a little reciprocity in families.

Again let me thank you for the lovely basket. We thought of you and the family all day long. Will write again soon.

Devotedly,

Mother

P:S: This is for you alone. I have said nothing to your Father about writing about Frere

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

April 26, 1937.

EDWARD J. TRENWITH, CLERK
JAMES A. WHITE, ASST. CLERK

Sonny Boy:

You have been a little honey to write Mother without having any word from her for two weeks. I am ashamed, but not so when I see the amount of work Miss Connor has. I think it would be cruelty to animals to ask her to do any work for me. There is nothing happening here. I am in the midst of hunting another louse to drive the car. That is all they are, just a lot of maggots. You can be as kind and sweet and thoughtful and considerate of them as you would of you own son, and then they run out on you. This last louse, I think, next to Erling, is the worst one. I am now trying to locate somebody that really would like the job.

I was very much distressed over Miss Schow, and if Miss Connor gets time, I will have her write a little note for me, telling her how very sorry I am. She is so wonderful, so tireless, so faithful, so sweet, that to have anything happen to her just hurts all the way through. I do hope she is much better, and will escape the hospital. Give her lots of love when you see her and tell her that I don't get a minute to write, and I know she will understand.

I don't believe that I have ever thanked you sufficiently for the Christmas ESQUIRE that comes so regularly and brings such thoughts of you. I sit down and go through them, and imagine you are sitting on the arm of my chair, and we are both enjoying them together. I really think a magazine is the best gift anyone can give. I enjoy it immensely.

Dad has good days and bad days, but I do think he is improving. I get terribly disturbed when people come with all sorts of rumors about his illness. They have him getting a stroke in that direction, a stroke here, a stroke there, and a stroke every place, which of course would bother him if he knew it. I did not think much of Gervin's article. I want to warn you that if you run across something be very careful because any little thing disturbs him. Don't send anything unless it is good, and be damned careful what you write in your letters to me, for after I read them, if they are not perfectly all right,

I don't let him read them. This note is just to say "hello", and to thank you. Tell Hiram he was a dear to write me, and I will write him very soon.

With all my love to you, the boys, and Miss Schow,

Devotedly,

Mother

In relation to Bert Meek, the following, of course, is in the most sacred confidence.

Dr. Russell Lee is in charge of Bert's case, and is a very intimate and warm friend of his, as well as of mine. He tells me that Bert's case is hopeless, and that he would not be surprised to see the end come within thirty days or six weeks.

Bert had been ailing for three or four years, with an infection of the colon. Repeatedly Lee tried to get Bert to have the matter diagnosed accurately and get busy on it. There is a good deal of fog as to why he did not do so. Of course, he has been busy, and of course Laura is a devout Christian Scientist, but, on the other hand, we are all prone to put these things off. I think the most likely reason for Bert's neglect is the last one.

It is definitely cancer.

About six weeks ago they severed the colon and took the upper portion, outside of the wall of the addomen, hoping, after a period of weeks, to perform a second operation on the lower portion, where the infections really was. They hoped against hope that it was not cancer, and some of his reactions were such as to encourage them.

However, two weeks ago an emergency situation arose, and they had to go in again, at which time they definitely discovered the truth.

Bert does not know ~~the~~ whole truth.

He has had a long, hard struggle, and even now he tries to keep in touch with his office daily by telephone. I asked Lee if this was not a mistake, but his response was that it made no difference, and he thought letting him have an interest in matters was far better than condemning him to brood over the probabilities.

I understand that Laura has had a Christian Science practitioner attending him in the last few days.

If you write to him or Laura, please be extremely careful not to disclose your knowledge of the facts.

His office force are under instruction to carry things along and consult him just the same as if he were perfectly well.

Even in talking to me, he is hopeful and buoyant.

I hate to give you the above, but I know your strong affection for him. It certainly is tough to see a real fellow of his type under a death sentence, which Russell Lee tells me was entirely unnecessary.

KEY PITTMAN, NEV., CHA
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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

May 26, 1937

EDWARD J. TRENWITH, CLERK
JAMES A. WHITE, ASST. CLERK

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr.,
Attorney at law,
Mills Bldg.,
San Francisco, California

My dear Jack:

I have just received your letter of May 24. I am sorry but I do not know either of the men you mention. I never have seen Raskob. I remember during the Smith campaign he sent me a long telegram once stating it was the patriotic thing to do to come out for Smith at that particular time. Aside from this I have had no communication with him. The other man, I think, is a man who has been about Washington a good deal, and about whom there was a good deal of speculation. It is all rather vague in my mind, but I could make some inquiries and learn. I wanted to write you right away, so that you would have a response to your letter received this morning.

Affectionately,

Dra

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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

December 13, 1937

HENRIK SHIPSTEAD, MINN.

EDWARD J. TRENWITH, CLERK
JAMES A. WHITE, ASST. CLERK

Mr. Hiram W. Johnson, Jr.,
Attorney at law,
Mills Building,
San Francisco, California

My dear Jack:

I was immensely relieved to have yours of December 10th this morning. The letter should have reached me yesterday, but, for some reason or other, did not. I was at the office, as my letter to you will demonstrate. We also received this morning the three bound copies of the sworn statement of Dr. George Cornet in support of the claim of HERSCHEL G. BUNN, and we are filing them, with letter of explanation, with the State Department.

I hope this note finds you fully recovered from your eye infection. It is a terrible thing, and you want to watch it very carefully.

I am awaiting Mother's return from the Doctor, where she went at 9 o'clock this morning. I will let you know what he has to say.

Affectionately.

Dad