

This is a great privilege. I have been here before as a United States Senator from Missouri - a Junior Senator. It was my good luck to hear President Roosevelt on those occasions express himself at his best. He told you gentlemen of the press exactly what he thought of you - and made you like it. I have not his ability of expression, but I shall tell you what I think of you, of the entertainment, of the food, the country, the guests, etc. I have enjoyed the evening - that goes without saying. I always enjoy myself in your company - whether with the Hard Rockers who are said to be close to Truman or with the Soft Muckers who are said not be so close to him.



I enjoyed Governor Dewey's speech very much. You know I did not have the pleasure of meeting the Governor until October 27, 1945. I met him then on the main deck of the Battleship Missouri, and he took my breath away by announcing ^{publicly} that I had made a good speech in Central Park on foreign affairs and he wholeheartedly approved it. He disagreed with Mr. Luce and Time on that subject. I am returning the compliment to Mr. Dewey.

I wonder if I could cry on your shoulder a bit about public service in reconversion and what happens to a Vice President when ^{suddenly} he falls heir to a great President and two wars' ends all in one fell swoop. You know in wartime men and women are patriotic -

they'll stand hardship, sacrifice, abuse, bullets, foxholes, columnists, editorials and whatnot for their country's welfare. But let the war suddenly cease. These patriots become free men working in a free enterprise struggle and they begin to dip for the gravy. Their skins again become thin and abuse and muck makes them timid. I found as a chairman of an investigating committee that even in wartime some of our greatest industrial and labor leaders could dish out criticism, but when they landed on the taking end, they just couldn't take it. A man in public life has to take it. Now I find none of the big boys want to take positions where the gossip columnists and the know-it-all editors can pick flaws in their public actions. I spend a third of my time begging good men to stay in public service or to come into it.

When the great President passed on, everyone felt sorry for me - big business, little business, the press, the radio, labor, the Congress. Nearly everybody in the United States either came to see me, wrote me, or phoned me that he'd do anything in the world to help, and I'm sure all of you meant it.

Then Germany folded up and Mr. Atomic Energy came along and folded up Japan and scared the rest of the world to death and then the exodus started and the Red Sea parted.

I believe I've made a record - Walter Lippmann has said



I'm great and a damn fool, Dorothy Thompson prayerfully wishes Roosevelt were back, and so do I. Frank Kent yells "Savior" one day and "wolf" the next. I've reached the topnotch in popularity according to Dr. Gallup. Now labor is mad at management, and they are both mad at me. I have made labor mad trying to give them a little public responsibility. Management says I'm worse than Roosevelt - a compliment maybe. Congress is off the reservation so far as I'm concerned. The Navy is mad at the Army, and they're both mad at me. Phil Murray is mad at Sewell Avery, and they'd both like to carry me out. Pat Hurley says he's for my foreign policy, and that I haven't any. Molotov is mad at Bevin, and they're both mad at me. And so are the Arabs, the Jews and the DARS.

If the Gridiron Club would like to give me something for Christmas, I would suggest they send me Dale Carnegie's book, or I may have to start a new war.



But actually, it is a great responsibility and I'm not shirking it. It has fallen to my lot to assume the greatest burden any man ever had, and I'm giving it all I have - it may not be enough, but I can't help that. You know that the most terrible decision a man ever had to make was made by me at Potsdam - it had nothing to do with Russia, or Britain or Germany. It was a

decision to loose the most terrible of all destructive forces for the wholesale slaughter of human beings. The Secretary of War, Mr. Stimson, and I weighed that decision most prayerfully. The President had to decide. It occurred to me that a quarter of a million of the flower of our young manhood was worth a couple of Japanese cities, and I still think they were and are. But I couldn't help but think of the necessity of blotting out women, children and non-combatants. We picked a couple of cities where war work was the principle industry, and dropped the bombs. Russia hurried in and that war ended.



Now we are faced with other equally momentous decisions. On them rest either peace and the greatest age in history or another armament race and total destruction of civilization as we know it. Men, friends, it is a time for prayer and solemn thought. Sherman was wrong. I'm telling you I find "peace is hell" ~~and repeat~~ - and repeat.

In fear & trembling
12/15/45 *Harry Truman*

*To Charles G. Ross.
or Charlie.*