

PERSONAL



July 20, 1954

Dear Swede:

For a number of years I have been serving in posts that were considered by the press as possible sources of news. Consequently, I have become used to inaccurate reporting -- I think it is not too much to say that, without checking, I believe no story in a newspaper that involves thoughts, ideas or quotations. I do like to read editorials merely to find out what editors are thinking about and what they believe that America is thinking about. Here, too, I am frequently disappointed by the apparent ignorance of the facts underlying some opinion or conviction expressed by the writer.

With your last letter you enclosed an editorial having to do with the dam that is under consideration for construction in Dinosaur National Park. The statement is made that the place will be ruined for use by the public; that its scenic beauty will be forever lost.

Now I have never visited the area and so I don't want to appear to be as positive of the correctness of the views I express as was the writer of the editorial you sent. But I can't help wondering whether he bases his own opinion on a personal visit and experience or on what somebody else has said.

In any event, the records show that last year, five hundred Americans visited the affected area. I am not going to try to express this figure in terms of percentage of 160 million people, but if you have time to figure it out, you will not be impressed by its size. I am told that erection of the dam, with the roads leading thereto and the existence on the artificial lake of a reasonable number of suitable boats, will make the area truly accessible to travelers. It is believed that the number of visitors will jump from a figure of five hundred to many thousands, and I am further informed that the lake waters will conceal so little of what is now visible as to be unnoticeable to anyone except a crank. Possibly I am misinformed, but I venture that the reports I have are as accurate as those on which the editorialist based his opinion.



He said the principal purpose of the dam was reclamation. It is not. He even suggested that atomic power would make dams and power projects useless. Someday perhaps they will. But at this moment such a statement does not appear to me to be very potent as an argument.

As for the man who wrote the high tariff pamphlet, I hear these arguments all the time.

If it were possible to erect barriers against the trade of particular countries and to encourage trade from others, I could certainly favor some high tariffs. But this is not practicable both because of the existence of the "most favored nation clause" in our treaties and because in actual practice it would scarcely be enforceable.

Without going further afield, let us consider for just a moment the case of Mexico. We are her greatest customer; she must sell to us or her standard of living will go markedly down from even the low level at which it now exists. Already in that country there is a strong communist leaning among certain groups. Included among those individuals with such leanings is one of the most popular men in Mexico, ex-President Cardenas. If we erect barriers against Mexican trade, I know that the possibility of her turning communist would mount rapidly. Our border with Mexico runs from Brownsville to the Pacific Ocean, and it is almost totally unguarded. The "wetback" problem arose out of the fact that we simply cannot provide the means to prevent Mexicans from going back and forth across the border, almost at will. If that country should turn communist, and without considering all the other evil consequences that would follow in the wake of such an event, just think of the job that we would have in closing that border tightly. The financial outlay alone would be colossal.

As of now we do not take too seriously any direct threat from Mexico. She is a weak country. But let her once form a partnership with Moscow and it takes no great imagination at all to see what would happen.

I have taken this one simple example to show that people ignore pertinent facts when they center their attention exclusively upon local matters. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that every