October 8, 1931

My dear Miss Lane:

I have your letter asking me to state in a few words what I think are the most important present issues for study and discussion by American voters.

I limit myself to the one which in my judgeent stands high above all others at the present moment. It is:-

Cutting down trade barriers between the nations of the world. As I look at it the channels of world trade are clogged by tariffs. It is idle to talk about genuine prosperity until trade can flow freely according to the needs and desires of men.

This seems to be a self-evident truth and the question for discussion today should be how can we bring about this freer trade by revolutionary processes? It can be done if the people will set their minds to work. It means a period of sacrifice no doubt and of re-adjustment throughout the nation. It will take sacrifice and a re-adjustment to bring us to a solid foundation. It is the world trade which we must have to keep this country in a prosperous condition.

I heard Henry Ford say once that he felt the great mission of American industry was to give to every man, woman and child in the world the full satisfaction of their material needs and then some of the luxuries. Mr. Ford meant not that we should ourselves supply all these necessities and luxuries, but that we should so lead the industrial movement that the world would be supplied, we being leaders and teachers, not what we have tried to be, holders-up of others.

But such a mission can only be carried out if the channels of trade are free.

Free trade and the need of armaments will slowly disappear. So long as we pile up economic fortifications we will have to build military fortifications to defend them.

So important do I think this is, dear Miss Lane, that all the other issues in which I am interested in, seem so secondary that it is hardly worth talking about them in the short space that I have.

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One other matter, however, I do think voters should consider in connection with the discussion of trade channels is the International debts. It seems to me clear that we should have a good long moratorium that would give us a chance to re-establish world commerce and then we could consider more intelligently what would be best to do about debts.

Perhaps I should say instead of when trade is really free, when we see that we are on the right road to make it free, then we can go back to our debts.

Hoping that this is not too far afield for your purpose, dear Miss Lane, believe me

Faithfully yours

Miss Gertrude Lane
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