

1965

SATURDAY, APRIL 3

Saturday, April 3 was not, however, a restful day in the beginning. Over us hung the cloud of Prime Minister Pearson's speech in which he said there should be a cessation of bombings in Vietnam for a period of time-- apparently, I guess, to set the stage for negotiations. This came at a most ~~inappropriate~~ ^{inappropriate} ~~auspicious~~ time because Lyndon had been readying a speech to be made on Monday at Johns Hopkins with accent on possible constructive economic aid along the lines of the Mecon River Project that could be undertaken if peace could be reached. Now, how could you make that speech without seeming to be taking dictation or yielding to the demands of an Ally? Too bad he didn't make his own speech in Ottawa and not Philadelphia.

The day was bright blue and gold although the thermometer was in the 30's and the outdoors so inviting but no chance for Lyndon to enjoy it until after the visit. The Prime Minister arrived at 12:30, preceded only by a little while by George Reedy and McGeorge Bundy, ^{u.p.m.} most genial and charming of most all of the foreign heads of State that I have known. It was too bad that we met again under these ^{strained} ~~strange~~ circumstances. I have never had a more hilarious meeting than the last one with him at the ranch. This time the five of us--he and the Ambassador, Lyndon, McGeorge Bundy and I sat down in the lovely dining room of Aspen Lodge. We looked out over the valley below and he said he was a Civil War buff and of the years he had spent in Washington, many weekends he had spent exploring Civil War battlegrounds. I told him about Dick Russell's story about the valley that

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lay below us, a copy of Lee's order to one of his Generals lost in the forest, found by a Union Sergeant, delivered to his General in Charge, taken as a hoax and a chance for a major victory shortening the war lost.

They talked about Lake Erie pollution, some air contracts and then just after dessert came in, thinking perhaps they had rather talk hard facts about his speech without my presence, I excused myself and went off to my room to read "Hurry Sundown". A self-indulgent thing to do, but I should have been more on the ball as a hostess because I emerged just five minutes too late--gauging my time by their voices--to say goodbye to the Prime Minister.

It was a little after three and the sun still high and I went for a walk with only Jerry Kivet, my Secret Service Agent, out the entrance of Camp David and down the hill, meeting four little children who were on a nature hike, neither of us knowing who the other was. One little girl showing me the seed pod she was taking home and the little boy the moss he had picked up for his salamander's box. We walked straight downhill and straight uphill, across rough terrain--Bill Douglas Country--through woods bare of any leaf but later to be full of dogwood I think, occasional vistas of Thurmont opening up in the valley down below and back at the highway only to find that my pedometer registered a disappointing two and one-half miles when my legs said ten. The car was there waiting for us and we drove back, joined the guests and went bowling. In fact, this was a bowling happy weekend. Lyndon's first ball was a strike and this,

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I think, put an end to the troubles of the day and set the tone for just fun. He was a delightful host, an amusing ~~recommender~~ ^{raconteur} making, I believe, a memorable weekend with the Chancellors and Marianne Means, and a happy one for the staff and me. My score was nothing to cheer about.

Back at the main lodge, Lyndon took his place in the rocking chair and we all gathered around him in talking about what Church to go to tomorrow. He called the Episcopal Church "that Brooks Brothers Church". They have been giving him a hard time here lately for not being active enough in the Civil Rights movement.

Each meal here at Camp David is as though we never expected to eat again and the creme brulet was a Roman feast. The Marvin Watsons arrived after dinner and I made the acquaintance of the most adorable member of their family, Bill, fifteen month old cherub, blonde, grinning, reaching out for everybody's arms, the most engaging personality of the weekend.

Lyndon went to bed right after dinner and the rest of us watched a murder mystery, "Murder most Foul" was the name, which was so full of suspense it kept me away from Gunsmoke until about 10:30. Then I luxuriated in the last of that favorite program and before midnight curled up in bed by Lyndon for what I hoped would be a long night. What with Selma and Vietnam, long nights have been hard to come by this Spring.