

December 20th, 1942

My dearest husband, Frank,

I hope you are doing all right – the children and I miss you dearly. I took the children to Boundary Bay yesterday – where you used to work in the oyster operations industry. The children ask about you a lot and each time I tell them that their father is on the other side of the world and is fighting so that we can be free. I think of you nearly every minute of the day, and I pray every night that you are safe.

So much has changed since you left home.

First of all, like many other women during these times of war, I have a job outside of the home. With so many men going off to war, and so much extra work to be done for the cause, there is a shortage of labour. At first, only women without children worked. However, since the government started offering money for day care, now us mothers are working too. The hours are long and the children don't like daycare, but I feel it is my duty to contribute.

However, not everyone feels the same way. I take pleasure in my work because I know that it is for a good cause but others are more worried about the government taking away power from the unions. During the war, the government tried to avoid strikes by placing restrictions on unions and their ability to demand wage increases. To be honest, I wouldn't be surprised if a union went on strike soon to get the government's attention.

Also speaking of work, many people are finding work in factories in Downtown Ottawa. I personally could not stand to work in a city. Ladner is so beautiful with all of our wonderful agricultural land. I often visit Hawthorn Grove – the Kirkland family's farm – and marvel at how lovely is it.

Looking at the vast, open fields of Delta helps me forget about all the concerns I have about our economy. At first it looked like we were going to have inflation. Prices started rising like crazy and stores had fewer products to sell. (Well, with all of the goods we are shipping over to Britain it's no wonder there are few products to buy!) The government tried to avoid inflation by selling victory bonds, raising income tax and recently, issuing food rationing. Food rationing isn't really too bad.

We are limited to a certain amount of meat, sugar, butter and coffee a week, but the rations are more than enough to keep us from going hungry. At times the children and I have been short on food. Thank goodness Delta is an agricultural town or else we would nearly starve! I often go to Chung Chuck's store for potatoes.

I also heard that people are getting suspicious of the Japanese-Canadians here. There's no telling what could happen when it comes to the War of the Pacific— maybe it could even spread to Canada! Well if the Japanese ever attacked British Columbia, I wonder which side the Japanese-Canadians would take. There's even talk that the Japanese people in our province could be spies. Of course, I haven't really met any of them here in Delta, but nevertheless, it seems suspicious. I guess the government felt the same way because apparently all the Japanese people living on the coast have been re-located to internment camps in the Okanagan. I gather many of the Japanese people living there are very upset by this...

Also, that party you liked – the CCF – is getting quite popular. It seems like people are very supportive of its platform on social change. As a matter of fact, I am actually very supportive of it too! I would like it if the government became more involved in our lives and provided more social assistance. Personally, I think Prime Minister King should start adhering to people's desires by providing some social assistance because CCF Party could take his place.

There's also been a huge controversy in government over conscription. At first, King promised he wouldn't issue conscription – which is largely the reason Quebec voted for him in the first place. Then, King brought in something called the "NRMA," The National Resources Mobilization Act. This act essentially allowed the government to do anything in order to win the war – including issuing conscription for the defense of the home front. Well, to me, that seemed fair. I don't think anybody would want the enemy invading our country without having enough defenses. But recently, a lot of the other parties have been pressuring King to issue overseas conscription. During a meeting a little while ago, all provinces (except Quebec of course) voted in favour of conscription. While, as you can imagine, Quebec is very upset. I received a letter from our friend from Quebec, Emilie, and she wrote that she and her family are furious over the matter. After King saw Quebec's reaction apparently he said something along the lines of "not necessarily conscription, but conscription if necessary." I think he was trying to re-assure Quebec but it didn't work very well. Personally, I'm a large supporter of the cause and I wish everyone was like myself, but I don't think people should be forced to serve if it is against their will. That is why I admire you, Frank, you sacrificed everything voluntarily to serve our country.

I miss you so much Frank. Stay safe and keep fighting.

Love, Mary