

June 29, 1944

Dear Felix:

Had I not been called away last week, this memorandum would have reached you before your departure yesterday afternoon. It is nothing important, but I do want to rebut an inference (I know it was only in fun) in your note of June 12 transmitting the copy of the memorandum to your colleague written in 1924. Certainly if there were not some things about which our minds did not change in twenty years we would have very little of stability, governmental or otherwise, here or elsewhere. And, while words are tricky and for some people "mean what we want them to mean," if that were true of all words and of all people, we would have only anarchy in language. Speech would be wholly guesswork. There are languages of precision, and while that of mathematics is more that way than that of law, there is of course some law language that is precise. Our effort should be to make more of it that way. Maybe that is why I write such long opinions, often I fear without adding to the precision for which I strive, but I think the struggle worth while now and then.

Finally too I have gotten around to reading your "I am an American Day" address and I enjoyed it. I had seen newspaper excerpts but not the whole thing before. Thanks for sending me the copy.

I am returning for your files the copy of Judge Denman's address before the 1943 Ninth Circuit conference, which I have just read. I think his argument unanswerable. I wish it had been effective to get the legislation it sought and I hope it still may be. I suspect you agree with this hope.

I have no doubt there are other memoranda of yours to which I should have replied but you are on vacation and I assume will be, so the kinder thing will be not to burden you with whatever belated response I may have to make.

I hope you have a fine summer, both of you, and return refreshed for the work this fall.

Sincerely,

Mr. Justice Frankfurter