

April 5, 1941

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Almost constantly since I finished up with my work at the Fair, I have been assigned to work in connection with our defense production. I have been in many of our plants and it has been most interesting to see the progress being made - I keep thinking constantly of Mr. Kettering's recent article in the Saturday Evening Post, "Guns Aren't Windshield Wipers," which dealt, of course, with the time element of retooling, building factories, etc.

Yesterday I had the most interesting day, I think, I've experienced. We all know, of course, that hundreds of new plants are being built for defense, machines and tools are being rushed, men are being trained to run them - everything moving at top speed.

Yesterday I went to Saginaw, Michigan, where a new machine gun plant is being completed by G. M. What I saw in six hours made me realize fully for the first time what "American top speed" really means. My purpose in going to Saginaw was to make pictures of the new plant and of some of the first machine guns being turned out. I went out to the plant about 10 A.M. to look it over and to see what pictures might be made. The plant is beautifully designed - about 650 feet long and 350 feet in width.

On entering the plant at one end I could hardly get through for the scaffolding and maze of workmen that seemed almost to be running. Great excavations were being dug and filled - cement mixers were in action - above, workmen were putting in pipes and fluorescent lighting fixtures - carpenters hammered and sawed - all of this extended perhaps 150 or 200 feet into the plant which was one vast room. In this section the floor was dirt - all this was at 10 A.M. in the morning on Friday.

Making my way through the debris and mass of workers, I suddenly emerged into a scene of orderliness and the busiest industry and workmanship I've ever seen - only