

dering and ferreting their way among the crowd (what they are doing no one knows). Junior League young socialite matrons of San Francisco dressed up in various fancy uniforms lean beguilingly from innumerable booths marked "Information," but as they charmingly confess they are just "rehearsing" at present and can no more be expected to answer your questions than figures in a shop-window. All the babble of questions goes on to the accompaniment of hammering conducted in all keys by an army of workmen who are putting up partitions, painting walls, eating out of dinner-pails, whistling, sitting smoking with the legs outstretched in the over-crowded corridors. The only thing that is missing in this scene of pandemonium is Harpo Marx tearing through the mob in pursuit of a pair of disappearing female legs.

**28 April 1945.**

Second meeting of the plenary session again in the Opera House with powerful klieg lights shining down from the balcony into the eyes of the delegates, dazzling and irritating them. The session is declared open by Stettinius, American Secretary of State, who comes on to the dais chewing (whether gum or the remains of his lunch is a subject of speculation). His manner is one of misplaced assurance — unintentionally offensive. (Although the newspapers have described him as handsome, he looks like something out of the bird house at the zoo - I do not know just what — some bird that is trying to look like an eagle.) He makes the worst impression on the delegates. He reads his speech in lay-preacher's voice husky with corny emotion. The Chilean Foreign Minister reads a tribute to Roosevelt which being translated consists of an elaborate metaphor (which gets completely out of control as he goes along) comparing Roosevelt to a tree whose foliage spreads over the world which is struck by what appears to be the lightning of death but is actually the lightning stroke of victory so that its blossoms, while they may seem to wither, are brighter than ever.

Then comes along Wellington Koo of China, a natty, cool, little man in a "faultless" business suit who reads a short speech about China's sufferings, written in careful English. After him Molotov mounts the tribune in an atmosphere of intense curiosity and some nervousness. He looks like an employee in any *hôtel de ville* — one of those individuals who sit behind a wire grille entering figures in a ledger, and when you ask them anything always say "no." You forgive their rudeness because you know they are underpaid and that someone bullies them, and they must, in accordance with Nature's unsavoury laws, "take it out on" someone else. He makes a very long speech in Russian which is translated first into English, then into French, and turns out to be a pretty routine affair. The delegates are by now bored and dispirited. Then Eden gets up and at once the atmosphere changes — you can feel the ripple of life run through the audience as he speaks. It is not that he says anything really very remarkable, but he sounds as if he meant it — as if he believed in the importance of the Conference and the urgency of the work to be done. He is quite beyond his usual form, moved outside himself, perhaps, by exasperation at the flatness and unreality of the proceedings.