

June 12, 1942

[Rubber Problem]

FDR Speech File

1422

Recording of my reading when marked

for recording the disk - marked
up later for news reel

recording June 12

To: The President

From: A. MacLeish

Subject: Draft of a speech on the rubber collection campaign
to be recorded

For Broadcasting - 6:15 p.m.

Friday, June 12

I want to talk to you about rubber - about rubber and
the war - about rubber and the American people.

When I say rubber I mean rubber. I don't mean gasoline.

Q&A

Gasoline is a problem only in certain sections of the country. —

is a serious problem in those areas but a problem which the people
and the government are solving together.

J.P.M.

Rubber is a problem everywhere - from one end of the
country to the other - in the Mississippi Valley as well as in
the East - in the oil country as well as in the corn country or
the iron country or the great industrial centers.

Rubber is a problem for this reason - because modern
wars cannot be won without rubber, and because 92% of our normal
supply of rubber has been cut off by the Japanese. □

That is serious. It would be more serious if we had not built up a stock pile of rubber before the war started; if we were not now building up a great new synthetic rubber industry. *That takes time. So we have an immediate need.* ~~either the stock piles, nor the synthetic plants~~ ^{we bring} which ~~is~~ now ~~built~~, nor both together, will be enough to provide for the needs of our great new Army and Navy plus our civilian requirements as they now exist.

The Armed Services have done what they can. They have eliminated rubber wherever possible. The Army, for example, has had to replace rubber treads with less efficient steel treads on

~~many of its tanks. Army and Navy estimates of~~ *use of rubber* ~~has~~ ~~have to be curtailed~~ ~~all along the line.~~

That
But there is a limit to ~~possible reduction of military~~ ~~needs.~~

You and I want the finest and most efficient Army and

Navy the world has ever seen - an Army and Navy with the greatest and swiftest striking power. That means rubber - huge quantities of rubber - rubber for trucks and tanks and planes and gun mounts - rubber for gas masks and rubber for landing boats.

But it is not the Army and Navy alone which need rubber. The process of production also needs rubber. We need rubber to get our war workers back and forth to their plants - some of them far from workers' homes. We need rubber to keep our essential goods and supplies moving.

All this adds up to a very serious problem - a problem which is a challenge to the sound judgment of the government and to the ingenuity of the American people. It is a problem we Americans are laboring to solve - a problem we will solve.

But there is one unknown factor in this problem. We know what our stock pile is. We know what our synthetic capacity

will be. But we do not know how much used rubber there is in the country - used rubber which, reclaimed and reprocessed, can be combined with our supplies of new rubber to make those supplies go farther in meeting military and civilian needs.

Specifically, we don't know how much used rubber there is in your cellar - your barn - your stock room - your garage - your attic.

There are as many opinions as there are experts, and until we know we can't make our plans for the best use of the rubber we have.

The only way to find out is to get the used rubber in where it can stand up and be counted.

And that precisely is what we propose to do.

We are setting aside the two weeks period [from June 15 to June 30 - from 12:01 a.m., June 15 to 12:00 midnight, June 30 -

to get the old rubber in.

We have asked the filling station operators - the thousands upon thousands of citizens who operate gas stations and garages from one end of the country to the other - to help. And they have generously and patriotically agreed to help; they and the oil companies which serve them.

They have agreed to take the old rubber in and to pay for it at the standard rate of a penny a pound - an amount which will later be refunded to them by the government.

I know that I don't need to urge you to take part in this collection drive. All you need to know is the place to take your rubber and the time to take it there - and the fact that your country needs it.

We do not want you to turn in essential rubber that you need in your daily life - rubber you will have to replace by buying

new things in the store. ~~But~~ we do want every bit of rubber you can possibly spare - and in any quantity - less than a pound - many pounds. We want it in every form - old tires, old rubber raincoats, old garden hose, ~~old~~ rubber shoes, bathing caps, gloves - whatever you have that is made of rubber. If you think it is rubber, take it to your nearest filling station.

Once the rubber is in, we will know what our supplies of used rubber are and we will make our plans accordingly. One thing you can be sure of - we are going to see to it that there is enough rubber to build the planes to bomb Tokyo and Berlin - enough rubber to build the tanks to crush the enemy wherever we may find him - enough rubber to win this war.

Here are two simple rules for this rubber emergency.

1. Turn in all the old rubber - anywhere and everywhere.

2. Cut the use of your car - save its tires by driving slowly and hitting tires.

I know the nation will respond!

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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June 12, 1942

CAUTION: The following address of the President MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE until released.

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 6:45 P.M., E.S.T., today, June 12, 1942. The same release of the text of the address also applies to radio announcers and news commentators.

CARE MUST BE EXERCISED TO PREVENT PREMATURE PUBLICATION.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

I want to talk to you about rubber - about rubber and the war - about rubber and the American people.

When I say rubber I mean rubber. I don't mean gasoline. Gasoline is a serious problem only in certain sections of the country.

But rubber is a problem everywhere - from one end of the country to the other - in the Mississippi Valley as well as in the East - in the oil country as well as in the corn country or the iron country or the great industrial centers.

Rubber is a problem for this reason - because modern wars cannot be won without rubber and because 92% of our normal supply of rubber has been cut off by the Japanese.

That is serious. It would be more serious if we had not built up a stock pile of rubber before the war started; if we were not now building up a great new synthetic rubber industry. That takes time, so we have an immediate need.

Neither the stock pile, nor the synthetic plants which are now being built, nor both together, will be enough to provide for the needs of our great new Army and Navy plus our civilian requirements as they now exist.

The Armed Services have done what they can. They have eliminated rubber wherever possible. The Army, for example, has had to replace rubber treads with less efficient steel treads on many of its tanks. Army and Navy estimates of use of rubber have had to be curtailed all along the line.

But there is a limit to that.

You and I want the finest and most efficient Army and Navy the world has ever seen - an Army and Navy with the greatest and swiftest striking power. That means rubber - huge quantities of rubber - rubber for trucks and tanks and planes and gun mounts - rubber for gas masks and rubber for landing boats.

But it is not the Army and Navy alone which need rubber. The process of production also needs rubber. We need rubber to get our war workers back and forth to their plants - some of them far from workers' homes. We need rubber to keep our essential goods and supplies moving.

All this adds up to a very serious problem - a problem which is a challenge to the sound judgment of the government and to the ingenuity of the American people. It is a problem we Americans are laboring to solve - a problem we will solve.

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We do not want you to turn in essential rubber that you need in your daily life - rubber you will have to replace by buying new things in the store. We do want every bit of rubber you can possibly spare - and in any quantity - less than a pound - many pounds. We want it in every form - old tires, old rubber raincoats, old garden hose, rubber shoes, bathing caps, gloves - whatever you have that is made of rubber. If you think it is rubber, take it to your nearest filling station.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

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Specifically, we don't know how much used rubber there is in your cellar - your barn - your stock room - your garage - your attic.

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I know that I don't need to urge you to take part in this collection drive. All you need to know is the place to take your rubber and the time to take it there - and the fact that your country needs it.

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STATEMENTS FILE

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