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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**  
**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**

**Series 3: “The Four Freedoms” and FDR in World War II**

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**File No. 1531**

**1944 August 24**

**Toast to President Bjornsson of Ireland**

Only four members of my Cabinet are here tonight, the others are off on holiday or for some other reason, but I am glad to ~~xxxxxx~~ say that half of them have been in Iceland. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Treasury have been there, so they know more personally about Iceland than I do <sup>in having been there</sup>.

However, as I said to the President, I have always been a student of Iceland. ~~And there was put up to me~~ about two years ago the great question as to where Iceland was. Was it in the European hemisphere, or the American hemisphere? And I used the judgment of Solomon, I said it was in both hemispheres, which is true, chiefly for practical reasons. <sup>To be quite frank</sup> in this new world of ours -- not disparaging (?) although we have a great many very fine citizens have come from Iceland. But it belongs in both hemispheres, it belongs to the life of both hemispheres. And in the future, ~~I think this country~~ this is a prediction -- I think that Iceland will always be considered, for certain practical reasons, a part of the Americas, and a part of Europe. ~~still~~ Iceland is necessary we all know. For practical reasons to our defense, ~~which is illustrated~~ some nearly three years ago when there was real danger, when Germany was not only on the offensive but ~~every day~~ was over-running a greater part of the world! And there was the danger in those days <sup>and</sup> when all of us were on the defensive, I am speaking from the American point of view -- that Iceland would be occupied by the Germans. And on that particular occasion, whether it was constitutional or not, the historians will determine a hundred years from now, we took up with the State Department took up with the Icelandic government, which was then closely associated with Denmark, the possibility of our making sure, by sending troops to Iceland, that Germany could not use it as a "fait accompli" against this continent. We were selfish, ~~We couldn't afford to let Germany use Iceland as a base from which to bomb or send~~

STATEMENTS FILE

expeditions against the American continent. / And therefore, because of the cordial relations that existed, we were able to make a perfectly legal agreement with the government of Iceland by which we sent our troops. — We said quite frankly, and we meant it as the President knows, — that when this danger of <sup>a</sup> German occupation of Iceland <sup>was</sup> over and the world will return to peace, we not only would recognize but we would work for the complete independence of what is the Iceland, not of today but of a thousand years back, the Iceland that essentially has always been independent, a nation that goes back -- and this is something that perhaps some people could use to some advantage -- the Irish in ~~the~~ origin. / I was asking the President, who incidentally is the first President of their Republic -- we haven't had many, thirty-two, that's all -- <sup>were</sup> who the first people in Iceland, were ~~were~~ they Eskimos? No, <sup>an</sup> ~~never~~ <sup>were never</sup> Eskimos there. And he said the first people in Iceland were the Irish, which is extremely interesting. Not only the Irish, by the founding of a <sup>4</sup> monastery in Iceland, but the first white people, as we call them, in Iceland were the ~~the~~ Irish, followed after that, after the Norsemen had come -- the Vikings had come -- by another influx of Irish, including the President said, an Irish princess. So there you are. / And from that time on, more than a thousand years, we celebrated the thousandth anniversary a short time ago, we have had an independent nation in Iceland, the oldest of our civilization in all the world, with a parliamentary government, with ~~the~~ complete independence in the best sense of the word, always not only making their own laws but living their own lives, not only their own government but a people's government, who ~~they~~ said what they wanted, and who always had their way, including the right to elect the present President, who incidentally -- probably a good thought, which I won't press -- was elected unanimously.

(laughter) I catch the eyes of Senator Vandenberg. (more laughter)  
But that is the way they elected their first President. And, of course,  
we did, too, in 1788-9. — We elected George Washington unanimously,  
and he is the first and the last that was thus elected. So I warn  
my colleagues for you -- (laughter) -- if he should run for a second  
or a third or a fourth ~~successive~~ term, he mustn't expect to be elected  
unanimously. (more laughter)

And so Iceland is a great deal more than a name in  
mythology. In the last few years, Iceland was a name to us. One and  
eight-tenths ~~is~~ percent of our trade ~~for~~ ~~Iceland~~ to Iceland went  
that way. Things differ from time to time. Today it is 58 percent,  
something like that, due ~~mainly~~ primarily to the war -- we might just  
as well admit that. — But at the same time, and thinking of the future,  
we want to keep Iceland on the map, that is the great point, always.  
The whole of civilization wants Iceland as the cradle of the oldest  
republic that has ever happened. Something to teach the world a  
lesson. You run your own university, <sup>ies</sup> you are friends with all the  
Scandinavians, <sup>and those</sup> who are in Iceland too. But you run into the curious  
fact that last year or the year before <sup>a few years ago</sup>, Sweden issued  
~~an issue~~ of stamps to celebrate the freedom of the Swedes from Danish  
control. Remember that. The Norwegians have insisted on their  
independence from Sweden. The Norwegians and the Danes are first  
cousins. You have Scandinavian blood, with a very good Irish admixture.  
And, on the whole, in the family of nations, the American people  
have a great deal of Scandinavian blood, <sup>in them,</sup> a lot of them, <sup>— there are</sup> a great many  
Swedes, and Norwegians, and some Danish and a few Icelanders. But we  
want the future to look at it from the point of view that we are  
all <sup>of</sup> the same basic stock, fundamentally. And we want inter-marriage.  
I am alluding now to a number of people under the jurisdiction of  
— Several thousand have already —

Secretary Stimson who are related by marriage with Icelandic girls, and who are going to stay in Iceland, if you let them, after the war. It's all right. Now, I don't protest against that one bit. We like it, and we hope that some of their children will come over here and become a part of the American family.

Now on the other things ~~that are~~ more practical, like trade, I was saying to his Minister a ~~very~~ few minutes ago there is an American habit of cocktails, but we haven't yet acquired the Scandinavian habit of the things that go before cocktails. Don't sell us cod liver oil, I don't like cod liver oil -- (laughter) -- but go into the things that pay more money. Send us some smoked salmon, and things of that kind that go well before the cocktails. In that way you can help, and we can help ~~another way~~ by general trade between Iceland and the United States. After all, things are going to go by trade a great deal in the future. It has been easier because of the shorter distance, to send your ~~hors d'oeuvres~~ to England, but they don't know ~~what~~ good hors d'oeuvres when ~~they see~~ ~~it~~ much easier because of the shorter distance. Please send us some, for we are very fond of them. And specialize in them, not the vulgar stuff, but the specials. You can send us wool, for ~~there is~~ a special kind of wool we don't ~~know~~ here. And so ~~the~~ trade, if we go at it from the point of view of building it up on special lines -- Iceland is small, and therefore you have to specialize -- I think it can be done. And in the days to come -- I am not speaking about this treaty or that treaty or the other treaty, they are talking about now, but it depends very largely on the spirit, very much on the spirit. If the spirit is all right behind the objective, greater friendship and greater trade, we can get somewhere. You have your ~~politics~~ politics, Mr. President, <sup>and</sup> you have a legislature, the

oldest legislature in the world, incidentally. I have over here my politics -- I am not taking a very great part in them --, I have a legislature, a very young legislature, it's only 150 -- 160 years old. They learn with age. (laughter) And so I have great hopes that when this thing comes up, the Senate of the United States, which has a great deal to do with foreign policy, will accept a treaty of trade and friendship, inclusive -- all-inclusive -- with the Republic of Iceland, without saying No just because they don't like the President of the United States. Now that's an ideal, and perhaps ~~it will be~~ <sup>my hope by</sup> my hope will be justified ~~any~~ <sup>in</sup> time alone will tell. But, at least, in welcoming you ~~here~~ to Washington, you know that the present President has his heart in the right place.

And so I drink to the first President of Iceland.

(the Toast was drunk)

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: (in English)

Mr. President, I thank you very much for <sup>your</sup> ~~the~~ kind words about my country and my visit here. My people in Iceland are very glad to realize the fact that the United States wants Iceland to be on the map. You have shown it this year, by the way you took the proclamation of the Republic and the inauguration of myself as first President, ~~at~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~it~~ sent a special Ambassador. It has been of great value to Iceland, and I am glad to be here today. It is my first visit outside <sup>my</sup> country since I came into office. I am very glad <sup>that</sup> ~~as~~ this first visit is here in Washington, and that I have the opportunity to bring ~~things~~ thanks from the Icelandic people to the

present government and Congress, and the people of the United States, for their attitude in this question.

The President mentioned a problem which is very difficult to climb out of, whether ~~in~~ Iceland belongs to the ~~area~~ Europe or to the Western hemisphere. And the President thought ~~that~~ the solution was ~~that~~ it belonged to both of them. Then the question only will be -- well, the biggest -- half-past -- by-pass -- will be as they used to say some time ago. You know that I must confess that all in our history Irish -- Excuse me, I must make a by-pass there. <sup>then</sup> The President mentioned that the first settlers of Iceland were Irish, but they left Ireland.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: You know, perhaps, that the first settlers of America and the United States were Icelanders.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. That's right.

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: But they left. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: It is a curious thing how things can happen like that, but it seems to me that as naval people we are proud to ~~be~~ -- we have our historical connections there, and many other things. We have, during this war, got to know more and more of America than ever before. <sup>P</sup> And may I say that three years ago, when this situation was there, ~~that~~ it was to be feared ~~that~~ the Germans would occupy Iceland if there were not made some other precautions. And, therefore, the Icelandic government and the Icelandic parliament asked the United States to take over their defense of America. <sup>P</sup> Then it was because the Icelandic people and the Icelandic political leaders had a real confidence in the people and government of the United States, a confidence ~~in~~ that they would see to it that ~~their~~

think we will run with this small population ~~that~~ they would see to it that this risk would not be to any detriment for the Icelandic people, and <sup>at</sup> the same time a confidence that you were standing for the same ideals ~~as~~ we are so glad to have, that we used to call in the democratic ideals, but it is <sup>in</sup> my conception something more than according to Demos and the present conception of that: It is human -- thoroughly human. That is why we have been so glad for this friendship shown to us from the United States. And I will take the opportunity, when I spoke about confidence in this connection, ~~when~~ there was the question of ~~how there were~~ a great number of ~~soldiers~~ -- foreign soldiers <sup>and</sup> how they would conduct themselves <sup>in a</sup> country <sup>of</sup> ~~was~~ so small <sup>a</sup> population. And after an experience of three years, I am glad to be able to say here that the ~~the~~ general <sup>feeling</sup> ~~conducting~~ of the Icelandic people is that they ~~have~~ conducted themselves so well under the circumstances that we cannot but have still more respect for the American people. <sup>P 2n</sup> ~~But~~ those reasons, and many others, it is up to the future to say how that connection will be, but I have felt that the people in the United States who have seen something of our production, they believe in <sup>a</sup> real ~~trade~~ -- exchange of trade between Iceland and the United States. And we should be very glad to have that in any case, ~~and~~ because we need so much just from the United States, we need all sorts of materials and machinery for developing our agricultural and other things. And how it will be after the war, which you are considering now how to arrange that exchange between ~~our~~ peoples would always be very good, if we would be able to sell much more than we have done until now. <sup>P</sup> I shall not use more words, but you will understand by what I have said that ~~frequently~~ this problem might be, from the point of view of many people, a dangerous thing -- this is a great power like the United States ~~to defend~~ <sup>a</sup> country by its

soldiers without any invitation. I think it has worked, from ~~the~~ our point of view, ~~in~~ in <sup>a</sup> way that we have nothing to be disappointed about, and of the friendship shown to Iceland. And last <sup>but</sup> not least, your wish about when we founded <sup>this</sup> great Republic makes us very thankful to the present government and Congress of the United States.

And may I -- by my leave -- drink to the health of our host, the President of the United States.

(the Toast was drunk)

THE PRESIDENT: As the head of one of the younger nations, may I add this toast to the head of one of the oldest nations in the world, and <sup>that</sup> our eternal friendship may increase. To the President of Iceland.

(the Toast was drunk)

Toast Of The President  
For The President Of Iceland, Sveinn Bjornsson  
State Dining Room Of The White House  
August 24, 1944, 7:30 p.m., c.w.t.  
(With The Latter's Reply)

Only four members of my Cabinet are here tonight, the others are off on holiday or for some other reason, but I am glad to say that half of them have been in Iceland. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Treasury have been there, so in having been there they know more about Iceland personally than I do. However, as I said to the President, I have always been a student of Iceland.

About two years ago there was put up to me the great question as to where Iceland was. Was it in the European hemisphere or the American hemisphere? And I used the judgment of Solomon, I said it was in both hemispheres -- which is true. To be quite frank, chiefly for practical reasons. But it belongs in both hemispheres, it belongs to the life of both hemispheres. And in the future -- this is a prediction -- I think that Iceland will always be considered, for certain practical reasons, a part of the Americas, and a part of Europe.

For practical reasons we all know Iceland is necessary to our defense, illustrated some three years ago when there was real danger, when Germany was not only on the offensive but was over-running a greater part of the world every day. And there was the danger in those days -- when all of us were on the defensive, and I am speaking from the American point of view --

that Iceland would be occupied by the Germans.

And on that particular occasion, whether it was constitutional or not the historians will determine a hundred years from now, the State Department took up with the Icelandic government -- which was then closely associated with Denmark -- the possibility of our making sure, by sending troops to Iceland, that Germany could not use it as a "fait accompli" against this continent. We were selfish. We couldn't afford to let Germany use Iceland as a base from which to bomb or send expeditions against the American continent.

And therefore, because of the cordial relations that existed, we were able to make a perfectly legal agreement with the government of Iceland by which we sent in our troops. We said quite frankly, and we meant it as the President knows, that when this danger of a German occupation of Iceland was over and the world returns to peace, we not only would recognize but we would work for the complete independence of what is the Iceland, not of today but of a thousand years back, the Iceland that essentially has always been independent, a nation -- and this is something that perhaps some people could use to some advantage -- Irish in its origin.

I was asking the President, who incidentally is the first President of their Republic -- we haven't had many, thirty-two, that's all -- who were the first people in Iceland, were they Esquimaux? No, an Esquimau was never there. He said the first people in Iceland were the Irish, which is extremely interesting. Not only the Irish, by the founding of a

monastery in Iceland, but the first white people -- as we call them -- in Iceland were the Irish, followed after that, after the Norsemen had come -- the Vikings had come -- by another influx of Irish, including an Irish princess, the President said. So there you are.

And from that time on, for more than a thousand years -- we celebrated their thousandth anniversary a short time ago -- we have had an independent nation in Iceland, the oldest of our civilization in all the world, with a parliamentary government, with complete independence in the best sense of the word, not only making their own laws but living their own lives, not only their own government but a people's government, who said what they wanted, and who always had their way, including the right to elect the present President, who incidentally -- probably a good thought, which I won't press -- was elected unanimously. (laughter) I catch the eyes of Senator Vandenberg. (more laughter) But that is the way they elected their first President.

And, of course, we did, too, in 1788-9. We elected George Washington unanimously, and he was the first and the last that was thus elected. So I warn my colleagues for you -- (laughter) -- if he should run for a second or a third or a fourth term, he mustn't expect to be elected unanimously. (more laughter) And so Iceland is a great deal more than a name in mythology.

In the last few years, Iceland was a name to us. One and eight-tenths percent of our trade to Iceland went

that way. Things differ from time to time. Today it is 55 per cent, something like that, due primarily to the war -- we might just as well admit that. But at the same time, and thinking of the future, we want to keep Iceland on the map, that is the great point, always. The whole of civilization wants Iceland as the cradle of the oldest republic that has ever happened -- something to teach the world a lesson. You run your own universities, you are friends with all the Scandinavians, and those who are in Iceland too.

But you run into the curious fact that last year or the year before -- a few years ago -- Sweden issued stamps to celebrate the freedom of the Swedes from Danish control. Remember that. The Norwegians have insisted on their independence from Sweden. The Norwegians and the Danes are first cousins. You have Scandinavian blood, with a very good Irish admixture. And, on the whole, in the family of nations, the American people have a great deal of Scandinavian blood in them, a lot of them -- there are a great many Swedes, and Norwegians, and some Danish and a few Icelanders here. But we want the future to look at it from the point of view that we are all of the same basic stock, fundamentally.

And we want inter-marriage. I am alluding now to a number of people -- several thousand have already -- who are now under the jurisdiction of Secretary Stimson, who are related by marriage with Icelandic girls, and who are going to stay in Iceland, if you let them, after the war. It's all right. Now, I don't protest against that one bit. We like it, and

we hope that some of their children will come over here and become a part of the American family.

Now on the other things more practical, like trade, I was saying to his Minister a few minutes ago there is an American habit of cocktails, but we haven't yet acquired the Scandinavian habit of the things that go before cocktails. Don't sell us cod liver oil, I don't like cod liver oil -- (laughter) -- but go into the things that pay more money. Send us some smoked salmon, and things of that kind that go well before the cocktails. In that way you can help, and we can help by general trade between Iceland and the United States. After all, things are going to go by trade a great deal in the future.

It has been easier, because of the shorter distance, to send your hors d'oeuvres to England, but they don't know a good hors d'oeuvre when they see it. Please send us some, for we are very fond of them. And specialize in them, not the vulgar stuff, but the specials. You can send us wool, for you have a special kind of wool we don't know of here. And so trade, if we go at it from the point of view of building it up on special lines -- Iceland is small, and therefore you have to specialize -- I think it can be done.

And in the days to come -- I am not speaking about this treaty or that treaty or the other treaty they are talking about now, but it depends very largely on the spirit, very much on the spirit. If the spirit is all right behind the objective, greater friendship and greater trade, we can get

somewhere.

You have your politics, Mr. President, and you have a legislature, the oldest legislature in the world, incidentally. Over here I have my politics -- I am not taking a very great part in them -- and I have a legislature, a very young legislature, it's only 150 -- 160 years old. They learn with age. (laughter) And so I have great hopes that when this thing comes up, the Senate of the United States which has a great deal to do with foreign policy will accept a treaty of trade and friendship, inclusive -- all-inclusive -- with the Republic of Iceland, without saying No just because they don't like the President of the United States.

Now that's an ideal, and perhaps my hope will be justified. Time alone will tell.

But, at least, in welcoming you to Washington, you know that the present President has his heart in the right place.

And so I drink to the first President of Iceland.

(the Toast was drunk)

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: (in English)

Mr. President, I thank you very much for your kind words about my country and my visit here. My people in Iceland are very glad to realize the fact that the United States wants Iceland to be on the map. You have shown it this year, by

the way you took the proclamation of the Republic and the inauguration of myself as first President, and sent a special Ambassador. It has been of great value to Iceland.

I am glad to be here today. It is my first visit outside my country since I came into office. I am very glad that this first visit is here in Washington, and that I have the opportunity to bring thanks from the Icelandic people to the present government and Congress, and the people of the United States, for their attitude in this question.

The President mentioned a problem which is very difficult to climb out of, whether Iceland belongs to the European or Western hemispheres. And the President thought the solution was it belonged to both. Excuse me, I must make a by-pass there.

The President then mentioned that the first settlers of Iceland were Irish, but they left Ireland.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: You know, perhaps, that the first settlers of America and the United States were Icelanders.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. That's right.

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: But they left. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: It is a curious thing how things can happen like that, but it seems to me that as naval people we are proud to have our historical connections there, and many other things. During this war we have got to know more and more of America than ever before.

And may I say that three years ago, when this situation was there, it was to be feared the Germans would occupy Iceland if there were not made some other precautions. And, therefore, the Icelandic government and the Icelandic parliament asked the United States to take over their defense of America.

Then it was because the Icelandic people and the Icelandic political leaders had a real confidence in the people and government of the United States, a confidence that they would see to it that with this small population they would see to it that this risk would not be to any detriment for the Icelandic people, and at the same time a confidence that you were standing for the same ideals we are so glad to have, that we used to call the democratic ideals, but it is in my conception something more than according to ~~memos~~ and the present conception of that: it is human -- thoroughly human. That is why we have been so glad for this friendship shown to us from the United States.

And I will take the opportunity, when I spoke about confidence in this connection, there was the question of a great number of foreign soldiers and how they would conduct themselves in a country of so small a population. And after an experience of three years, I am glad to be able to say here that the general feeling of the Icelandic people is that they conducted themselves so well under the circumstances that we cannot but have still more respect for the American people.

For those reasons, and many others, it is up to the future to say how that connection will be, but I have felt

that the people in the United States who have seen something of our production, they believe in a real exchange of trade between Iceland and the United States. And we should be very glad to have that in any case, because we need so much just from the United States, we need all sorts of materials and machinery for developing our agricultural and other things. And how it will be after the war, which you are considering now how to arrange that exchange between our peoples, would always be very good, if we would be able to sell much more than we have done until now.

I shall not use more words, but you will understand by what I have said that this problem might be, from the point of view of many people, a dangerous thing -- a great power like the United States to defend a country by its soldiers without any invitation. I think it has worked, from our point of view, in a way that we have nothing to be disappointed about, and of the friendship shown to Iceland.

And last but not least, your wish about when we founded this great Republic makes us very thankful to the present government and Congress of the United States.

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(the Toast was drunk)

THE PRESIDENT: As the head of one of the younger nations, may I add this Toast to the head of one of the oldest

nations in the world, and that our eternal friendship may increase. To the President of Iceland.

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State Dining Room Of The White House  
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~~more or less~~ quite frank chiefly for practical reasons. Not ~~of course~~ in both hemispheres, it belongs to the life of both hemispheres. And in the future -- this is a prediction -- I think that Iceland will always be considered, for certain practical reasons, a part of the Americas, and a part of Europe.

For practical reasons we all know Iceland is necessary to our defense, illustrated some three years ago when there was real danger, when Germany was not only on the offensive but was over-running a greater part of the world. ~~indeed~~. And there was the danger in those days -- when all of us were on the defensive, and I am speaking from the American point of view --

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

published off to Japan  
published to Franklin and to  
the world wide  
in 1945  
  
and I am pleased today especially to welcome on this our occasion  
General Hoyt Vandenberg and Paul W. Nitze both men of high  
ability and whom I consider well qualified for our trip to the  
affectionate protect friends whom we left yesterday except those arrived at the  
moment when I expected us to have I am informed the 2nd and  
I am told to complete a new  
policy and one of the two main points was, one good  
time ago and at the same basic terms of an air corps  
to strengthen and defend the Far Eastern position and to develop  
new air fields -- particularly that of new in China, something  
which I am glad to say has been done and which  
is now in operation. We have  
arranged with the other side of course in particular, for  
and that makes it -- maintains a air side -- which one of the  
other interests which not determine an equal if it shall  
be agreed to bring a long period and to bring a  
transferred of capital will be an enormous liability but  
now that such the case being that necessarily creates the  
and the situation will be that you can transfer funds through  
such and -- probably know this is going to have a balance-revo  
-- and no view as to the how -- yet said in regard but now  
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that Iceland would be occupied by the Germans.

~~My~~ On that particular occasion, whether it was constitutional or not the historians will determine a hundred years from now, the State Department took up with the Icelandic government -- which was then closely associated with Denmark -- the possibility of our making sure, by sending troops to Iceland, that Germany could not use it as a "fait accompli" against this continent. We were selfish. We couldn't afford to let Germany use Iceland as a base from which to bomb or send expeditions against the American continent.

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monastery in Iceland, but the first white people -- as we call them -- in Iceland were the Irish, followed after that, after the Norsemen had come -- the Vikings had come -- by another influx of Irish, including an Irish princess, the President said. So there you are.

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And, of course, we did, too, in 1788-9. We elected George Washington unanimously, and he was the first and the last that was thus elected. So I warn my colleagues for you -- (laughter) -- if he should run for a second or a third or a fourth term, he mustn't expect to be elected unanimously. (more laughter) And so Iceland is a great deal more than a name in mythology.

In the last few years, Iceland was a name to us. One and eight-tenths percent of our trade to Iceland went

that way. Things differ from time to time. Today it is 58 percent, something like that, due primarily to the war -- we might just as well admit that. But at the same time, and thinking of the future, we want to keep Iceland on the map, that is the great point, always. The whole of civilization wants Iceland as the cradle of the oldest republic that has ever happened -- something to teach the world a lesson. You run your own universities, you are friends with all the Scandinavians, and those who are in Iceland too.

But you run into the curious fact that last year or the year before -- a few years ago -- Sweden issued stamps to celebrate the freedom of the Swedes from Danish control. Remember that. The Norwegians have insisted on their independence from Sweden. The Norwegians and the Danes are first cousins. You have Scandinavian blood, with a very good Irish admixture. And, on the whole, in the family of nations, the American people have a great deal of Scandinavian blood in them, a lot of them -- there are a great many Swedes, and Norwegians, and some Danish and a few Icelanders here. But we want the future to look at it from the point of view that we are all of the same basic stock, fundamentally.

And we want inter-marriage. I am alluding now to a number of people -- several thousand have already -- who are now under the jurisdiction of Secretary Stimson, who are related by marriage with Icelandic girls, and who are going to stay in Iceland, if you let them, after the war. It's all right. Now, I don't protest against that one bit. We like it, and

we hope that some of their children will come over here and become a part of the American family.

Now on the other things more practical, like trade, I was saying to his Minister a few minutes ago there is an American habit of cocktails, but we haven't yet acquired the Scandinavian habit of the things that go before cocktails. Don't sell us cod liver oil, I don't like cod liver oil -- (laughter) -- but go into the things that pay more money. Send us some smoked salmon, and things of that kind that go well before the cocktails. In that way you can help, and we can help by general trade between Iceland and the United States. After all, things are going to go by trade a great deal in the future.

It has been easier, because of the shorter distance, to send your hors d'oeuvres to England, but they don't know a good hors d'oeuvre when they see it. Please send us some, for we are very fond of them. And specialize in them, not the vulgar stuff, but the specials. You can send us wool, for you have a special kind of wool we don't know of here. And so trade, if we go at it from the point of view of building it up on special lines -- Iceland is small, and therefore you have to specialize -- I think it can be done.

And in the days to come -- I am not speaking about this treaty or that treaty or the other treaty they are talking about now, but it depends very largely on the spirit, very much on the spirit. If the spirit is all right behind the objective, greater friendship and greater trade, we can get

somewhere.

You have your politics, Mr. President, and you have a legislature, the oldest legislature in the world, incidentally. Over here I have my politics -- I am not taking a very great part in them -- and I have a legislature, a very young legislature, it's only 150 -- 160 years old. They learn with age.

(laughter) And so I have great hopes that when this thing comes up, the Senate of the United States which has a great deal to do with foreign policy will accept a treaty of trade and friendship, inclusive -- all-inclusive -- with the Republic of Iceland, without saying No just because they don't like the President of the United States.

Now that's an ideal, and perhaps my hope will be justified. Time alone will tell.

But, at least, in welcoming you to Washington, you know that the present President has his heart in the right place.

And so I drink to the first President of Iceland.

(the Toast was drunk)

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: (in English)

Mr. President, I thank you very much for your kind words about my country and my visit here. My people in Iceland are very glad to realize the fact that the United States wants Iceland to be on the map. You have shown it this year, by

the way you took the proclamation of the Republic and the inauguration of myself as first President, and sent a special Ambassador. It has been of great value to Iceland.

I am glad to be here today. It is my first visit outside my country since I came into office. I am very glad that this first visit is here in Washington, and that I have the opportunity to bring thanks from the Icelandic people to the present government and Congress, and the people of the United States, for their attitude in this question.

The President mentioned a problem which is very difficult to climb out of, whether Iceland belongs to the European or Western hemispheres. And the President thought the solution was it belonged to both. Excuse me, I must make a by-pass there.

The President then mentioned that the first settlers of Iceland were Irish, but they left Ireland.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: You know, perhaps, that the first settlers of America and the United States were Icelanders.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. That's right.

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: But they left. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT OF ICELAND: It is a curious thing how things can happen like that, but it seems to me that as naval people we are proud to have our historical connections there, and many other things. During this war we have got to know more and more of America than ever before.

And may I say that three years ago, when this situation was there, it was to be feared the Germans would occupy Iceland if there were not made some other precautions. And, therefore, the Icelandic government and the Icelandic parliament asked the United States to take over their defense of America.

Then it was because the Icelandic people and the Icelandic political leaders had a real confidence in the people and government of the United States, a confidence that they would see to it that with this small population they would see to it that this risk would not be to any detriment for the Icelandic people, and at the same time a confidence that you were standing for the same ideals we are so glad to have, that we used to call the democratic ideals, but it is in my conception something more than according to Demos and the present conception of that: it is human -- thoroughly human. That is why we have been so glad for this friendship shown to us from the United States.

And I will take the opportunity, when I spoke about confidence in this connection, there was the question of a great number of foreign soldiers and how they would conduct themselves in a country of so small a population. And after an experience of three years, I am glad to be able to say here that the general feeling of the Icelandic people is that they conducted themselves so well under the circumstances that we cannot but have still more respect for the American people.

For those reasons, and many others, it is up to the future to say how that connection will be, but I have felt

that the people in the United States who have seen something of our production, they believe in a real exchange of trade between Iceland and the United States. And we should be very glad to have that in any case, because we need so much just from the United States, we need all sorts of materials and machinery for developing our agricultural and other things. And how it will be after the war, which you are considering now how to arrange that exchange between our peoples, would always be very good, if we would be able to sell much more than we have done until now.

I shall not use more words, but you will understand by what I have said that this problem might be, from the point of view of many people, a dangerous thing -- a great power like the United States to defend a country by its soldiers without any invitation. I think it has worked, from our point of view, in a way that we have nothing to be disappointed about, and of the friendship shown to Iceland.

And last but not least, your wish about when we founded this great Republic makes us very thankful to the present government and Congress of the United States.

And may I -- by my leave -- drink to the health of our host, the President of the United States.

(the Toast was drunk)

THE PRESIDENT: As the head of one of the younger nations, may I add this Toast to the head of one of the oldest

nations in the world, and that our eternal friendship may increase. To the President of Iceland.

(the Toast was drunk)

(the changes in ink were made by the  
President)