

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #361  
Executive Offices of the White House

April 16, 1937, 10.35 A.M.

Q Mr. President, by any chance have you been reading what has been going on about tearing down these beautiful cherry blossom trees to build your Jefferson Memorial?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Have you any comments on it?

THE PRESIDENT: It lies with Congress.

I don't think there is any news this morning. I am milked out. I had the newspaper editors last night for two hours and a half and we discussed everything from to the Newspaper Guild and, if you want any news, I suggest you go and interview the editors and see if they are as good at keeping confidences as you fellows are.

Q Mr. President, are you prepared to discuss the scope of the Supreme Court decision on Monday?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't had time to read it.

Q Have you had a report back from the Attorney General's office on identical bids?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so.

Q Can you give us any idea as to whether the McCarran proposal for just a flat addition of two Justices may meet the situation you had in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: There is a new one every ten or fifteen minutes.

Q Have you talked with the men from the Navy Department about the drydock situation -- about getting lower bids on the drydock?

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, they are working on plans now for redesigning the larger type of drydock and I think also the smaller type with the idea of building a cheaper drydock.

Q Mr. President, there is a report that WPA will be cut by 200,000 to drop seasonal workers?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not know it. I saw it in the paper this morning. You had better check with Aubrey Williams.

Q Is it too early, Mr. President, to discuss the relief appropriation?

THE PRESIDENT: I got preliminary figures yesterday morning and we are meeting again at 12 o'clock today and again tomorrow and probably by tomorrow we will come to what might be called the first tentative decision and then on Monday we will come to a final decision and I will start writing the message.

Q That means that you may have the message some time next week?

Q Did you read anything about the consumers' study?

THE PRESIDENT: That was one of the subjects we discussed

yesterday in that conference. It is a new thing.

There isn't any news on it.

Q It has no particular bearing on anything?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We will meet again probably next week.

Q Have you invited the Belgian Premier over here on June 12 -- Paul Van Zeeland?

THE PRESIDENT: He is coming over, I understand, to be given a degree. I don't know whether that is supposed to be known or not.

Q The story comes out of Brussels that you have invited him here on the twelfth of June?

THE PRESIDENT: All I know is that it is planned for him to come over and receive a degree and naturally I will see him when he comes over.

Q Have you arranged the fishing date as yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I think we will get off about 1 A.M. on the 28th. It means you will have to get on board the night before.

Q Can you say anything about the sitdown strike?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Will you comment on the fact that the Southern Pacific employes have called a strike despite the fact that you have appointed an investigating committee?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any news on that. Have we anything on that?

MR. McINTYRE: No.

THE PRESIDENT: I read it in the paper this morning.

I don't think there is any other news.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.



CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #362  
Executive Offices of the White House

April 20, 1937, 4.05 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Go ahead and shoot -- I have nothing new.

Q What does this message do with legislation such as the  
Housing Bill and the Farm Tenancy Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know yet.

Q It seemed pretty clear that it's knocked them off?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily. In other words, one of the things that we were talking about yesterday afternoon is this: Is it possible to do something for farm tenancy within existing general appropriations for similar things and, the same way, is it possible to do something for housing within existing or proposed appropriations for similar things. That is the thing we are studying at the present time. Well, I will just give you a lead on it and show you what I have in mind. We have this revolving fund you know, in PWA, and it might be possible -- it still is over \$100,000,000 -- I have forgotten the exact figure, but it is somewhere between \$100,000,000 and \$150,000,000 -- it is unobligated and it might be possible to accomplish something for housing along a new plan by using that money instead of appropriating new money.

Q On these loaning organizations that you propose to liquidate, I suppose that is RFC loans, etc. Would it be regarded as permanent or would you still hold that as an asset?

THE PRESIDENT: We have run that as part of the daily Treasury balances right along. The money paid has been going into the Treasury. It has not been a separate fund, ever.

Q Is it your intention to sell some of the HOLC mortgages to banks or insurance companies or for the FCA to sell them back to the Federal Land Banks?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Are you thinking of any existing funds with relation to farm tenancy -- any existing funds?

THE PRESIDENT: No. As you know, the plan, as I remember it -- don't get me over my head on this -- the plan as I understand it is that again this coming year, out of the proposed billion and a half for relief, would be taken the appropriation for that part of Resettlement that relates to rehabilitation and home relief. Is that right? I think that is the understanding.

Q I think so.

Q How much would that be out of that billion and a half?

THE PRESIDENT: Approximately what it was this year -- about \$75,000,000, I think.

Q Mr. President, do you expect that billion and a half to carry you through the whole year?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so. And on that, I will have to give you this as background and not for attribution but, rather, to make things clear, one of the things discussed yesterday afternoon was an alternate approach to the June 30, 1938 figures. There were some of the leaders who thought that perhaps it would be better to appropriate at this time, let us say, a billion dollars or a billion and a quarter dollars with the distinct understanding that if it was not enough we would come back next winter or spring for more money. Well, of course we did that last year and I did not like the method of approach because I don't think that it is quite as clear a way of stating the finances of the Government as it is to ask for what we believe will be the total amount. In other words, the country would like to know now approximately what the balance will be on the 30th of June, 1938. That is why I preferred the method of asking for a billion and a half rather than asking for a smaller amount, with the certain knowledge that we would have to come back for more. I think perhaps it is a little more honest approach to budget figures.



Q Mr. President, can you explain the executive withholding a large percentage of the money appropriated for specific projects?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily for specific projects; it is for running the Government -- all the departments.

Q How far does your authority go on that?

THE PRESIDENT: You remember it, it was given to me at the beginning of the Session in 1933 and some departments that Spring were cut by Executive authority, very materially. You see, in the Spring of 1933 all of the appropriation bills were passed before the following fiscal year beginning in July, before I took office with the exception of the Independent Offices Bill which had failed. So, when we came in and the special session was called for whatever it was -- the fifteenth of March -- the first thing was almost the giving of authority to me to cut those appropriations in order to try to carry out the savings that we said we would make. Now, the suggestion that has been made is that I be given somewhat similar specific authority to do that next year. I probably can do it without specific authority but I would rather have it.

Q That is just what I was asking.

THE PRESIDENT: I think I have that authority now, but I would rather have the specific authority.



Q George Lansberry, after seeing Hitler, wrote a statement in which he said that you favor a conference for world disarmament and economic progress, and so forth.

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid that is a very, very old story. The water was over the dam over a year ago and of course I never talked about any economic conference at that time. I am very much in favor of improving the economic situation of the world and hope that some method may be found of arriving at that result.

Q While you are discussing economics, I notice in the British Star, you have a very interesting story on the British budget. (Laughter) Have you read it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Only the headlines.

Q Twenty-five per cent income tax?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, 25 per cent for arms. Of course, in my message, I did make mention of certain nations of the world that are headed toward bankruptcy and largely because of the armaments race but, of course, obviously, I did not know what Mr. Chamberlain was going to send in when my message was written and, also obviously, I think a distinction should be made, in justice, between those nations which are arming with some intent, expressed or implied, to use those armaments for offensive purposes on the one side and nations which are arming with great

reluctance, obviously, for defensive purposes only.  
I think it is only fair that that distinction should be made.

Q Mr. President, the reports persist that you are contemplating the imposition of a quota on gold imports?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a new one.

Q Or that you will cut the price of gold?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I answered that three weeks ago.

Q Well, it has come right back again.

THE PRESIDENT: It must have gone all around the world and come right back again.

Q Have you studied the Supreme Court decisions enough to say whether they will affect your program for minimum wages and maximum hours?

THE PRESIDENT: I have studied that and cannot answer the last part of the question except to say that we are working on it.

Q What anticipated cut in WPA enrollment will be necessary in order to stay within the \$1,500,000,000?

THE PRESIDENT: It is impossible to tell at this time; it won't be very great.

Q They are running a little over two million now?

THE PRESIDENT: People or dollars?

Q Two million people.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think very substantial cuts are necessary. In other words, it is the original proposition. In a great many places there will be cuts and in some places there will have to be increases.

Q Will the same level of wages be maintained as are now in existence?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q How much of the billion and a half is intended for WPA?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. The only main item that comes out of it is what I talked about for Resettlement, about 75 million dollars. Of course there may be a few small amounts in addition to that.

Q That paragraph in your Budget Message relating to armament: Some people have construed that as a suggestion that the arms program may be curtailed?

THE PRESIDENT: Our arms program?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Can you tell us whether the Navy still abides by the policy in effect before the expiration of the London Treaty?

THE PRESIDENT: We are still trying to catch up with the London Treaty of 1930.

Q How does the Navy arrive at the decision regarding which company to give the steel contract to. They have arrived at one today?

THE PRESIDENT: Did they?

Q We are told they did.

THE PRESIDENT: I wish you would find out, it would be interesting.

Q I was wondering why the usual debt retirement item is left out of the new budget?

THE PRESIDENT: Usual what?

Q The debt retirement item under expenditures.

THE PRESIDENT: What is the use of putting it in on one side and taking it out on the other.

Q It was in in January.

THE PRESIDENT: You can always take it out and put it in. You don't get very far doing it. You are now talking from the point of view of an accountant and not a layman.

Q How does the billion and a half appropriation for the 1938 fiscal year for relief compare with what will be spent this fiscal year?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I have not checked on those figures.

Q It is a smaller figure, is it not?



THE PRESIDENT: It is a smaller figure, yes.

Q In your January budget you mentioned 900 million dollars coming from the Treasury balance and some other sums which would be deducted and thus the total additional debt will be about \$1,400,000,000. How does that stand now?

THE PRESIDENT: Is it down on this last page (indicating)?

Q I noticed some reference in today's message of taking some of those sums from the working balance and deducting them?

THE PRESIDENT: Obviously, these budget things have no relationship to working balances.

Q I thought you said in the Budget Conference last January that that figure of \$1,400,000,000 was, in effect, the real deficit; that it was everything taken out and subtracted. Now, is that approximately what the deficit will be. Is it the addition to the public debt, or has that gone up. Is it still possible to deduct that from the working balance?

THE PRESIDENT: The working balance has absolutely no relationship to budget. It has nothing to do with income and outgo.

Q Can you tell us what the National debt will be on June 30. Will it be over 35 billion dollars?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the vaguest idea. You had best ask the Treasury. And again -- wait a minute on that because that in part answers that question: The National debt might be, conceivably, 45 billion dollars but, if we have 10 billion dollars in the Treasury as a working balance it will be only a net of 35 billion dollars. That is the easiest way of putting it.

Q They haven't computed it yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I don't know what the net will be at that time.

Q Do you know how much the Treasury will borrow from now to June 30?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask the Secretary of the Treasury.

Q Mr. President, does this prospective use of <sup>[WPA?]</sup> PWA funds affect the Pennsylvania allocation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I don't think so.

MR. DURNO: Thank you, Mr. President. (Laughter)

(Mr. Russell Young, as Dean, customarily closes the conferences by his "Thank you". Mr. Durno felt that the Press Conference was running beyond a reasonable time and "jumped the gun" on Mr. Young, which caused the laughter.)

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #363

Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 27th, 1937 - 4 o'clock, P.M.

(There was an exceptionally large gathering.)

THE PRESIDENT: I got, a few minutes ago, the report from the Attorney General which resulted from the study of the identical steel bids. It has not been mimeographed as yet. I will give a copy of it to Steve (Early) and he can have it mimeographed. That is all the news there is on it for the moment.

I will just give you one or two high spots of the two and a half pages. The Federal Trade Commission made a report in June, 1936, reaching the conclusion that collusion in maintaining prices accounted for the identical bids. This was evidenced by the agreement of the steel producers in June, 1935. The question with which the Department of Justice is concerned is whether the administrative remedies in the control of the Federal Trade Commission by way of cease and desist order should be superseded by criminal and civil proceedings to be instituted in the

courts by the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice has conducted an extensive investigation, etc., and, after examining the information obtained, has concluded that the investigation has not produced sufficient evidence admissible in civil and criminal litigation as they have been construed by the courts. They feel that the administrative and quasi-judicial remedies in the hands of the Trade Commission may be better adapted to the purpose. (Reading)

"The identical bids in the steel industry are produced, in part, by the basing point system of price determination. This system, long used in the steel industry, not only affects the manufacturers who utilize it and the consumers who are subject to it, but it also presents economic and social questions due to the fact that communities as well as plants have been located and developed with reference to the price structure developed by this system. The machinery of the courts is not geared to the handling of the social and economic factors necessarily involved; and many persons and communities seriously affected cannot be parties to a court proceeding under the Anti-trust laws. It appears therefore that a problem is presented which can be more satisfactorily investigated and dealt with through the more flexible remedies of the Federal Trade Commission.

"The question before us is broader, however, than that of identical bidding in the steel industry. The type of practices complained of in this instance is widespread throughout many of the basic industries of the country. The



difficulty in correcting this situation raises the whole question as to the adequacy of the present Anti-trust Laws for the solution of the monopoly problem as it now exists in the United States.

"In my opinion, the time has come for the Federal government to undertake a restatement of the law designed to prevent monopoly and unfair competition. This proceeds from the conviction that the present laws have not operated to give adequate protection to the public against monopolistic practices.

"After 24 years' experience with the Sherman Law and its judicial interpretation, the Congress enacted the Clayton Act and set up the Federal Trade Commission. After nearly 20 years' experience, in 1933, the National Recovery Administration was established. Many other laws dealing with phases of the industrial question have been enacted and others are in contemplation. A review of the accumulated experience of the last 47 years would indicate many things to be avoided, as well as many to be accomplished, by a revision of our Anti-trust Laws.

"Moreover, these laws have been subjected to court interpretations which from time to time have limited their application, modified their meaning and imposed upon the government impossible burdens of proof.

"A long experience with the difficulties of enforcement furnishes a sound basis for improving the enforcement machinery. This Department has labored with inadequate means to enforce laws that do not provide sufficient legal weapons to make enforcement effective. In the face of a present tendency to increase prices and a necessity for a corresponding increase in the vigilance of the Department the question is forcibly presented as to whether the country can afford

to leave the enforcement of a vital economic policy so poorly sustained. The present machinery of enforcement through the Federal Trade Commission also should be made more adequate and effective, and the devitalizing effect of some of the court interpretations upon its powers should be overcome by legislation.

"I therefore recommend that there be set up a Committee to study the Anti-trust laws as to their adequacy, their enforcement and the desirability of amendment, extension and clarification. The Committee should have power to enlist the aid of consultant groups both within and without the government, as the studies will naturally cover a wide area including the relation of anti-monopoly policies to such subjects as patents, taxation, commerce, manufacturing, farming and labor."

You will get a copy of the letter and as I said before, that is all the news there is for the moment.

Q Did you say, sir, that such a Committee will be appointed?

THE PRESIDENT: I said that is all the news for the moment.

Obviously there will be something done.

Q There has been much speculation about your letter to the Civil Service Commission yesterday on speculation. Can you enlighten us on any part of it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that it means what it said.

Q Any specific instance that caused this letter?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the good.

Q Any complaints from anybody?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the general good, and a very obvious general good. All the older people in the room know what happened to the American public in 1927, 1928 and 1929.

Q The immediate reaction from the rank and file of Government clerks was, "We don't have enough money to speculate." (Laughter)

Q Or perhaps you meant somebody else.

Q Have you any comment to make on Senator Byrd's suggestion to consolidate the HOLC with the Housing Administration to reduce expenses? They claim that you can save about twenty-five million dollars.

THE PRESIDENT: The thing to do is to add up what they spend now for Administration purposes and see if you can figure it out on the basis of twenty-five million dollars.

Q - There seems to be almost universal approval of your economy movement until you get down to individual cases.

THE PRESIDENT: \* Yes, it depends on whose baby gets the measles.

Q Will Senator Copeland prescribe for that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look - off the record, as V. P. said to me a couple of days ago - this is really off the record - "When it comes to old Doc Copeland, he has two rules: One is to vote for every appropriation and the other is to vote against every tax." - (Laughter)

Q Specifically, what he is interested in is sixty million dollars for flood relief.

THE PRESIDENT: I have forgotten the amount and will have to check. We have an amount for flood relief which is in the budget. I think it is thirty million dollars. Is that right?

Q Right.

Q I notice your itinerary for your New Orleans trip gives you about four hours -- (interrupted)

THE PRESIDENT: We hope it will clean up New Orleans.

Q (Continued) Gives you about four hours. Does that mean you will have a nice, old Creole luncheon before you get on the boat?

THE PRESIDENT: Creole? (Laughter) Ask Mac (Mr. McIntyre); he won't tell you.

Q Any luncheon scheduled there at all, sir? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Are you going with us?



Q (MR. RUSSELL YOUNG): No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is a shame; I would have arranged for lunch if I had known you were going with us.

Q Mr. President, with the rain coming down outside and with thunder and lightning in the offing, may we ask for your plans on flood control this year outside of the thirty million dollars in the budget? Have you any other plans?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think I can tell you that. I have not written the letter yet, but I have told the two Chairmen already what the letter is going to be. I have here in my basket the report of the Army Engineers on various projects that they will ask for a report on. The total of those projects is about eight hundred million dollars and, as I said in my budget message of last week, I hope very much that the continuance of authorizations in large amounts is going to be stopped. We are working, in other words, towards a definite recommendation for an appropriation that can be started within the next fiscal year after they are made by Congress, so this report of the Army Engineers, of course, will be

transmitted to the Congress just the way they made it. However, I am sending the report back to the Army Engineers, asking them, in cooperation with the other agencies of the Government that deal with floods -- Soil Erosion, Reforestation, etc., and so on, -- to let me have a list in the order of priority of things that obviously should be started very soon. That will probably include the various items that would amount up to the thirty million dollars that has just been mentioned, so that that work can be undertaken during the coming year.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us why you asked the House leaders to hold back on legislation -- on price maintenance bills they have up there?

THE PRESIDENT: What is that, the Millard Tydings Bill?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think anybody reading the bill at once has a question in their mind as to whether the bill will really serve the public interest or whether it would strengthen price fixing by monopoly. I think that question ought to be resolved first before we could all agree to the bill. It might have just the

opposite effect from the effect alleged -- effect desired, I mean.

Q When were you last in New Orleans, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: On the way to Houston in 1928.

Q Did you make a trip around the city at that time?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, in respect to the census of the unemployed, do you think that such a census should be taken in connection with the national census?

THE PRESIDENT: Define "unemployed," please. In other words, this whole question goes back to what we have talked about four hundred times before. Nobody is willing to say what they mean by "unemployed", whether they are writing stories, editorials or making political speeches. Now, that is the entire answer today. Nobody, today, in this entire country. As a matter of fact, we have a complete list in every State of the needy unemployed. We know that. We have that complete list. That is just a plain, simple fact. The list is combed every so often to see whether it should be increased or decreased; there is a constant check-up on that. We have, today, the statistics of the needy unemployed or employables.

Q What does that show?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Ask Harry Hopkins. That list is there for anybody to read. If you start to talk about how many unemployed in the country, I have got to say, what do you mean by the word "unemployed"?

Q By what standard do they determine a "needy" person?

THE PRESIDENT: You go over and ask Harry; he will know what it is. That is all perfectly definite.

Q I have a Negro in town. It is very difficult to get him because he is on relief and can only work three hours a day polishing floors.

THE PRESIDENT:—Take the case to Harry Hopkins. What is his name? That is the kind of stuff I want. What is his name?

Q He is a friend of mine; I cannot tell you.

THE PRESIDENT: Come and tell me confidentially afterwards.

Q Mr. President, that list of needy unemployed will show the number who are receiving public relief?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is to say Federal relief.

Q It would also be valuable to have the number of the many hundreds of thousands of young men who have



grown to working age since the depression who have never had a job.

THE PRESIDENT: In addition to that, you have the rolls of the United States Employment Service and those rolls show six million people who are looking for jobs.

Q But those rolls at the Department of Labor show duplications. One individual registered at ten different Bureaus in order to get a job.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and steps are being taken to get those duplications eliminated entirely.

Q Is there any possibility of moving up the taking of the national census, June, 1940, and making it within a year or so in order to get that information on hand?

THE PRESIDENT: What do you want the information for? What does anybody want it for? It is a matter of interest -- what else?

Q To determine how many people there are able and willing to work who are unable to get work.

THE PRESIDENT: We have it somewhere, approximately. Is it going to help this country quickly as to whether

it is five million or eight million?

Q Wouldn't it help to know in what lines there was the largest unemployment?

THE PRESIDENT: . We know that pretty well. It is pretty well determined by regions and lines of employment.

Q And industries?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and industries. It is all there. Go and get it.

Q Do you expect wages and hours legislation to be enacted by this session?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know yet.

Q Going back to speculation for one minute, have you in mind that what is good for Government workers is good for the public generally?

THE PRESIDENT: I have been saying that since 1927. I always remember a little survey that I had made, when I was Governor, of a certain upstate community. In this community there were a hundred and twenty-five families. In 1931, about a year and a half after the smash, it was found by a personal check on those a hundred and twenty-five families that one hundred and five of them were in the market - mind you, that

meant an average of seven hundred or eight hundred people. It was not in Dutchess County, although it might have been so far as the results went. One hundred and five out of the one hundred and twenty-five families were in the market, on margin, and one hundred and four out of the one hundred and five either lost their homes, lost their savings or were very badly nicked, so much so that they were in debt for a great many years. One family came out ahead. He was the baggage boy down at the railroad station and he married a girl at the moment that his brokerage account was fifteen hundred dollars to the good and she persuaded him to draw it out and buy a little house. But a hundred and four families out of a hundred and five that were in the market lost their money and there were only twenty families in the village not in the market. That is only a little experience.

Q Since the speculation you speak of in 1929, the margins have been jacked up to forty-five per cent. Would you do away entirely with trading on margin?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is up to the SEC at the present moment.

Q Do you think there ought to be a higher margin?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know enough about it.

Q Do you wish to comment on your luncheon conversation with President Quezon before he left?

THE PRESIDENT: No, he is going to stop in and see me on his way back. I think he very much pleased with what has been done about this Joint Commission to study the whole economic situation of the Philippines.

Q Are you also pleased with the arrangement?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think it is very good.

Q Will the relief program for the next year follow the same general course it is following now on WPA?

THE PRESIDENT: The same general course, yes. That is to say, putting people to work on useful jobs.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, sir.



Press Conference No. 364

April 29, 1937 - 4.50 P.M.

(Alongside Destroyer on dock  
at New Orleans, Louisiana)

(The Press gathered around the President  
as he was about to leave his car.  
Governor Leche and the Mayor of New Orleans  
were in the car with the President.)

THE PRESIDENT: Good Lord, look what I have here.

(Indicating press). You know, I don't know what  
I'm going to do. (Turning to Governor Leche).

Do you think it is safe to leave this bunch ashore,  
Dick?

GOVERNOR LECHE: We will take care of them. (Laughter)

Q When will we see you again, sir?

A It depends on lots of things. It depends on the  
fishing and the weather and a few other things.

Q Will you make some predictions about the fishing.

A I am leaving that to Colonel Watson.

Q The statement you made on the spillway about the  
leasing of those lands -- is that on the record?

A I think you can use it. I will tell you what I have  
done. You can find out about it officially in a  
few days from the Committee on Flood Control in  
the House. Judge Whittington is the chairman.  
I think it is a thing to spend some money on, but  
not right away. The idea is that if we own the

title to the land and not merely the flowage rights we can probably get an income renting the land, but, at the same time, if we get a flood, people will leave the land possibly instead of what happened opposite Cairo this year.

Q We are trusting you with coverage the next few days, hoping that we will get a very full bulletin and a little light on the fish stories.

A I will appoint a committee to write them, but I will retain the editorship-in-chief. That is, all the news sent out will be censored by me.

Q That is bad news. The worst part of the news is Mr. McIntyre -- if we can get him to receive it.

A Don't let the Wall Street Journal (meaning Claude Mahoney) clean the market while I am away. (Laughter)

(The President then boarded the Destroyer).

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## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #365

Held aboard the Potomac off Port Aransas,  
Saturday, May 7, 1937, 4 o'clock P.M.

(The press arrived aboard the Potomac at about 2.30 P.M. The President was in his fishing launch, having hooked a 77-pound Tarpon off the breakwater and played it to a point in the harbor about half mile off the bow of the Potomac where it was finally brought to gaff.)

THE PRESIDENT: I hear you had a good time.

Q They tell awfully big stories. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What is the news? By the way, who got the fish?

MR. KANNEE: I caught the fish, Mr. President. It was an amberjack and weighed about 30 pounds.

Q Are you planning to send a message to Congress on a uniform power development program?

THE PRESIDENT: That is still in the study stage.

Q Speaking of the disaster to the von Hindenburg, do you contemplate lessening restrictions on our sales of helium?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know because I will have to talk to Secretary Ickes about it first. Do not put it down that I declined to answer -- I would have to talk to him about it first.

Q The Washington papers say that you have the power under the existing law?

THE PRESIDENT: That is what I do not know -- that is why I cannot answer it.

Q How do you feel about dirigibles for the navy?

THE PRESIDENT: The answer on that is that we are continuing to study lighter-than-air ships. The whole field is still worthy of studying and that is about all one can say. I have been saying that ever since I came into office.

Q Would you favor complete abolishment of margin trading?  
(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I announced that before I left.

Q (Claude Mahoney) That is what I tried to tell the office.

THE PRESIDENT: I announced that before I left. I suggest that you ask the S.E.C.

Q How do you feel about prices now?

THE PRESIDENT: What do you want me to say? Are you long or short?

Q No, sir, I am a newspaper man. I haven't enough money.  
(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I cannot go any further than that. You will just have to ask them the question.

Q Washington dispatches indicated that you might take some new aggressive steps in connection with the Court Bill?



THE PRESIDENT: You have been reading the Washington stories since coming down to Galveston. How does it feel to be away from Washington and reading Washington stories?

Q We have been reading the same one every day.

Q What are you going to do after Fort Worth?

THE PRESIDENT: Just go to Elliott's house and stay there. We will not get there until late at night -- 10 o'clock.

Q The first stop is going to be at the A. and M. (meaning [Texas] [Mechanics College] Agricultural and Military Academy)?

THE PRESIDENT: We are stopping at the Houston Station about ten minutes. I am not getting off the train there. There will probably be some people down there.

Q Yes, sir, what did you do with the fish you just caught?

THE PRESIDENT: It is going to be mounted. I am giving it to Elliott. There was some discussion on the dock as to whether Barney Farley had not arranged with the fish, as soon as he heard you people were coming -- especially that the photographers were coming -- so that it would be caught promptly at two o'clock.

(Laughter)

Q We thought that the fish got tired waiting.

Q Will you make a platform appearance at Houston?

THE PRESIDENT: Am I, Mac?

MR. MCINTYRE: It has not been decided as yet.

Q Have you got any plans to speed up Congress when you get back? They haven't done any work since you got away.

THE PRESIDENT: I signed 32 bills.

Q For the relief of, weren't they?

THE PRESIDENT: Did you read the titles on all of those bills? It is a scream.

Q We just looked them over.

Q Will you see the Congressional leaders, as you usually do?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q How did you enjoy Port Aransas?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a grand spot.

Q Did you land yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, on St. Joe Island. I went ashore for lunch with Mr. Richardson. I was particularly interested in a great many birds I had not seen before. They do not get as far north as we are.

Q Was that on St. Joseph Island?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Do you plan to do anything on housing legislation when you get back?

THE PRESIDENT: I will have a conference on that.

Q Is that set for a definite time?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Who will be there?

THE PRESIDENT: All the government people, congressional people and administration people, and others who are interested in it. We will try to get something tied together.

Q Have you had any report on the progress being made while you were down here?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard a word. We are having an awfully light mail. Mac has been good to me.

MR. McINTYRE: Washington has been good to me.

Q We are getting awfully light reports from the Potomac. It is a good thing you are not a correspondent working on space.

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe if I were on space I would make a good story.

Q Mac has made some very good space at Galveston.

THE PRESIDENT: Good; that is fine.

MR. McINTYRE: I think J. Russell (Young) has got to come across now (meaning thereby a certificate from the J. Russell Young School of Expression).

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's right.

Q How many fish have you caught? How many Tarpon?

THE PRESIDENT: Two, that is all. I caught some very nice king fish out in the gulf yesterday. Of course we caught some small fish over the side.

MR. McINTYRE: We made an awful liar out of Kannee. He phoned Doc Smithers and told him he caught a 40-pound amberjack and it turned out to weigh only about half that.

MR. KANNEE: We had no scales, so I had to guess its weight, but I do believe that it weighed about 25 or 30 pounds.

Q When do you plan to leave Port Aransas?

THE PRESIDENT: I plan to move out slowly into the mouth of the Brazos River, getting there on Monday morning and fishing off the mouth on Monday and then going to Galveston on Tuesday morning early.

Q Mr. President, are you coming into Galveston on the Potomac?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. The top deck will be within two feet of the level of the dock.

Q What is the name of your fishing guide?

THE PRESIDENT: Barney Farley.

ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT: No kin to Jim (meaning Jim Farley).



THE PRESIDENT: He says he likes Jim a lot.

Q What kind of guide is he?

THE PRESIDENT: He is a grand fellow. You know, both their predictions were good. Jim predicted the election and Barney the fish. It runs in the family.

MR. McINTYRE: Have you any more financial questions, Mahoney? Ask him. (Turning to the President) He has been away from his office for two weeks.

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell him, off the record, and really, this is very interesting. You remember, just before we left, a week or ten days before we left, we talked about the price of copper and steel -- and things started to smash up. Well, since we have been on board, they have had a most awful smash-up in London and Paris, with the result that all the more conservative bankers are just ticked to death. As it worked out we got all over it before the break over there and they thanked me for doing it. It is just the people who got caught -- who were too long -- that are blaming it on me. It is really a very interesting thing.

MR. McINTYRE: Should we use that for "background" and not "off the record"?

THE PRESIDENT: For background is all right.

Q How much have prices dropped on the other side?

THE PRESIDENT: I have been told quite a lot -- more than over here. Relatively, I think it has been a greater drop. They feel the whole situation -- the financial situation -- is better in London and Paris since it happened.

Q Have you enjoyed this stay here?

THE PRESIDENT: Fine. It is a good place in here. There is fine fishing. I think I have taken off two inches. It is all right.

Q Did you see Mr. Jones while he was here?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he came on board. He went out fishing but did not get anything. The Houston Post, however, credited him with four fish. That is what they call editorial courtesy.

MR. DURNO: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Have a good time. I will see you all on Tuesday.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #366

Held in the dining room of the President's car attached to the special train enroute from Galveston to Washington shortly after leaving St. Louis, Missouri,

May 13, 1937.

THE PRESIDENT: Doris, how is their behavior?

MISS FLEESON: I won't say, but I am so happy that I am going home.

Q Did you know that Pericles Levy was elected?

THE PRESIDENT: So I heard. It is fine. Good for old Pericles.

(Mayor Levy of Galveston in a somewhat eloquent speech introducing the President, compared him with Pericles of Athens.)

Q Is there anything doing in Congress that you can tell us about? Is there any reaction to Ambassador Dodd's letter. Has it been called to your attention?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not read the whole letter, so I cannot have any reaction to it. I don't think anybody printed the full letter.

Q It may have been printed up there, but not here.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think anybody has printed the full letter. Of course, as background, I think the importance of the letter is not in the least bit the talk of some billionaire. Of course, talking about a billionaire would make a lead for a story but that is

not the importance of the letter. It has nothing to do with the price of eggs as to whether he can name a billionaire and prove it in court or not. The point he makes is that he thinks democracy is in jeopardy if certain elements in the Nation continue to control the Government of the Nation or seek to control the Government of the Nation.

It is a question of historical precedents and it is also a question of present-day tendencies on the part of elements -- that is a polite way of putting and saying all sorts of other things -- which are horrified by the thought that they won't be able to return to their old and accustomed control of Government. In fact, they are all het up about it and when people get all het up about things like that, nobody can tell what practical or actual action they are going to take and you don't have to prove it in court. It is just human nature.

MR. MCINTYRE: This is still off the record?

THE PRESIDENT: This is all background.

MR. MCINTYRE: Did you see where Burke and Truman were the only ones that got excited?

Q And Van Nuys and King?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and King.



Q Are you planning to meet the leaders some time tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any plans at all. There will be a Cabinet meeting tomorrow afternoon, as usual, on Friday.

MR. McINTYRE: While you haven't any appointments, you will be seeing some leaders.

THE PRESIDENT: No appointments -- no big gatherings.

Q Did you discuss the Argentine Sanitary Convention with the cattle men?

THE PRESIDENT: We did, but among a great many other things.

Q Can you give us any idea as to what you are going to talk to the Postmaster about?

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q The Postmaster General.

THE PRESIDENT: No, we will talk about a lot of things.

Q Where did you talk to the cattle men?

THE PRESIDENT: We all sat around in a circle and ate some excellent beef and they talked and I talked and we had a general conversation and individual conversations, and we talked about the whole general cattle problem and deflated the idea which most of them understood before. Let me talk some more background to you. The objective of these trips, you know, is not fishing. You probably discovered that by this time. I don't

give a continental damn whether I catch a fish or not. The chief objective is to get a perspective on the scene which I cannot get in Washington any more than any of you boys can.

Q (George Durno) - Right.

THE PRESIDENT: You have to go a long ways off so as to see things in their true perspective because if you sit in one place, right in the middle of the woods, the little incidents that don't mean a hill of beans get magnified by a President just as they do by a correspondent. Am I right, John? (Mr. O'Brien)

Q Right.

THE PRESIDENT: And that is why I take a good many trips in the course of the year through the country. I am not talking about going down to South America; that is a different thing and gives you a different perspective. On this particular trip, as you know, I have seen a good many people -- not only the people I have seen in crowds, for you get the feeling of a crowd, but also the people I have talked to. I have talked to people down in Mississippi, in Louisiana and a whole lot of people in Texas. I have talked to various people down around Aransas Pass. It has given us a pretty good picture of the problems in the southwest and in the Mississippi

Valley. I saw a lot of oil men and cattle men. I talked with the Commissioner of Agriculture of Texas and with one of the big exporters of cotton on the subject of cotton, George Sealy. Up at Elliott's, I talked to a whole lot of cattle men, not just from Texas but he had people there from New Mexico, California, Arizona, Montana, Kansas, Oklahoma, Chicago and there was a man there that puts on a big Chicago cattle show, for instance. There were other States, Missouri, Iowa and Wyoming and Nebraska. There was one man from Tennessee representing the southern cattle men's point of view. We did not only talk cattle, we talked about economics along the general lines that the thing that has hurt the country in the past, whether it be cotton, corn, hogs, wheat or cattle, has been the tremendous fluctuation in price. As several of them said to me yesterday, speaking of cattle, it is not only 2 cents a pound for cattle that busts them it is the price that goes too high that busts them equally. That is because when the price goes too high, obviously people stop eating beef. You get a consumers' strike and you get a consumers' strike also when cotton goes too high or wheat or hogs or corn; it is all the same thing.



Of course on the other side of the picture, there is one element which is very local and gets a tremendous amount of publicity that does not agree with that theory at all and that is the element in the community that makes money from the swings, upward and downward. I pointed out to them what they already knew, that the objective on cattle, like on all the other major crops, is to bring the price to a point where the growers of cattle will find brings them a reasonable profit and then to try to keep it either from going through the roof or dropping through the bottom. That does not mean price fixing at all. It means stabilizing within reasonable limits.

Of course we talked also about the other phase of the cattle business, which is the processing and distribution. We talked along the same general lines, that in processing and distribution there are bound to be sudden or drastic rises or declines; that they too should be eliminated because it puts it into the speculative element and hits the consumer. That is the general line of things. And, mind you, the same analogy applies whether you talk cattle, cotton, corn, hogs or wheat. It is all the same theory.



But the thing that impressed me on this whole trip is that the people, as a whole, understand what it is all about. And, in the same way, the people understand the unemployment problem. Taking it by and large, they are just exactly as intent on going ahead with orderly progress, with the many objectives not yet attained, as they were last November or in 1934 or in 1932.

MR. MCINTYRE: Would you object, Mr. President, if the boys put a rather liberal interpretation on that background -- on this latter part of it?

THE PRESIDENT: What do you mean by a liberal interpretation?

Q No direct quotes, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

And, it might be worth while -- you need not repeat it but if you want to put in all the things for which "I have just begun to fight" -- what I used in the Madison Square Garden speech, that is a pretty good list of objectives. In other words, still doing business at the old stand.

Q Have you received any reports or estimates from Congressional leaders as to when action can be expected on the Court Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't heard a word.

Q Have you given any thought to the appointment of those folks who you were going to ask to study anti-trust legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I suppose I will talk about that next week some time. I haven't talked with them about it for two or three weeks. That is just in the normal course of things; there are no plans or prospects.

Q Anything you would like to say about the action of the House in extending CCC two years and not making it permanent?

THE PRESIDENT: We have two years more; I am not much worried.

Q Have you appointed Colonel Thompson of Texas as Railroad Commissioner?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a very good illustration of what I said about being in the middle of a forest. It is an excellent illustration because there we have news out of Washington on the House doing something. Now the Lord knows what the Senate will do. Suppose they do make it two years? There aren't any eggs spilled. In other words, that is a matter of absolutely minor significance. You have to get far away before you really can appreciate that it is a matter of minor significance. Yet columns have been written by the columnists --

Q (Miss Fleeson) When you say that, smile.

THE PRESIDENT: You aren't; you are a combination of both.

(Laughter)

You take that question about the saving out of the 1938 budget that started before we left and has been going on ever since. Again it is a case of forests. The House -- who was it, Cannon -- proposed a 15 per cent optional cut and Jim Byrnes proposed a 10 per cent cut on those things which were not -- whatever they called the thing, mandatory.

Q Fixed charges?

THE PRESIDENT: Now, that is a pure case of a little problem between the House and Senate. Actually everybody is agreed on the cuts to the extent of \$300,000,000 or \$400,000,000 out of next year's budget. The method of doing it is utterly unimportant. As a matter of fact I think probably that I have the right to make the cuts -- in other words not to spend any money -- without any legislation. It is just a case of trees. The objective is to save \$300,000,000 or \$400,000,000 and, when the session is all over, you will find we have every right to make a saving of \$300,000,000 or \$400,000,000.

Q Getting back to this price stabilization. Can you tell us how you propose to bring it about?



THE PRESIDENT: Stabilization? Don't use the word "stabilization." Stabilization connotes to most people price fixing. Put it this way: Stabilizing through reasonable limits so that it won't go through the roof or down through the bottom.

Q How?

THE PRESIDENT: Along the general lines about which we are talking about which is, again, not the letter but the spirit of Triple A. In other words, the details of Triple A may be entirely changed, but the objectives would remain. Wheat is a very good example. This year we have a perfectly enormous wheat acreage but the carry-over of wheat this year is too small. With that carry-over there isn't any danger of anyone going without bread because it still is a carry-over but, when you have a small carry-over, there is a danger of a small group, with or without concerted action, in effect cornering the market and putting the price of wheat so high that it will affect people in the city who are buying loaves of bread. So, therefore, the objective is to increase the carry-over of wheat this time but, if that carry-over is going too high again this year or next year, the objective will be to cut the carry-over of wheat so that you won't have such a



large carry-over that will give us 30-cent wheat again.

Q That comes pretty close to being an ever-normal-granary plan, does it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q There won't be any chance of new legislation, will there?

THE PRESIDENT: There may. That is a thing we haven't got to yet?

Q How about similar action with regard to industry?

THE PRESIDENT: That is an entirely different thing. There isn't any news on that.

Q You talked some time ago about copper prices, for instance?

Q Will you have wage and hours legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing on that yet.

Q Did you appoint Colonel Thompson of Texas as Railroad Commissioner?

THE PRESIDENT: I appointed some people the other day. I think I have a request for three or four names that were not in the original group. It is a very large group and I don't think it costs the Government anything. I think they go over at their own expense.

Q That statement about doing business at the old stand is attribution, not for quotation?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. DURNO: Thank you, Mr. President.