

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #453,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 22, 1938, 1040 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you got any news?

MR. EARLY: I was just thinking about you, having cleaned up the editors about 11:30 last night, telling me to shoot the reporters this morning. (Laughter)

Q Give us a chance to write it before the editors get back home and write it.

MR. EARLY: They won't write it.

Q I want to ask you something about prices this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Prices? What prices?

Q Commodity prices.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: There isn't any news this morning. I gave all the news last night to the editors, lots of it, and it was all off the record.

Q Do you find that the editors recognize news when they see it?  
(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Not as well as you fellows do.

Q I agree with you. (Laughter)

Q Can you tell us about the studies being made of prices?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask Procurement about it. I don't know enough about it.

Q I mean the study of your group, that you have.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is being done really under Procurement.

What group do you mean?

Q That interdepartmental committee.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; they are still studying it.

Q Can you tell us anything about your fishing trip you are reported to be taking next week or so?

THE PRESIDENT: There is just a possibility -- it depends entirely and it may be called off at the last minute -- that I may go down to Charleston and get on board one of the new cruisers to be gone four or five days. There are two objects: One, to see the new type of cruiser, and the other one, to get an opportunity to do a great deal of report reading that I have to do but that I cannot do here.

Q What is the name of the cruiser?

THE PRESIDENT: PHILADELPHIA, but it is a very tentative plan.

Q What ship will we go on?

THE PRESIDENT: You don't go. (Laughter)

Q Will there be any destination?

THE PRESIDENT: Atlantic Ocean and back.

Q Will you tell us, sir, what you intend to discuss with Mr. Ford?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the things he has already told you.

Q Going back to that cruiser, have you any new ideas on cruisers, like the Japanese have?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (Laughter) You mean happy thoughts?

Q Well, you said you wanted to look at the cruiser.

THE PRESIDENT: That is right.

Q The Secretary of War and the Surgeon General spoke to you about their project to erect their Army medical building. They discussed it with you. Do you have anything further to say about

that?

THE PRESIDENT: Only that I am very much in accord with the plan to put it up here in Washington, and that is what they recommend also. It is a medical library for which we have probably the greatest nucleus in the world, everything in medical history, going away back, incunabula and manuscript, going back to medical sources, and we should dignify it with a separate building. It is listed on the general plan for improvement of Government facilities in Washington. As to the location of it, that is a matter that will not come up until Congress votes the money for it.

Q At your luncheon yesterday with Senator Borah, did you agree on monopoly?

THE PRESIDENT: We agreed substantially on everything.

Q What about a monopoly message? When will it go up?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope before I go away next Friday, if I go away.

Q Same about taxes?

THE PRESIDENT: The same about taxes. In fact, about taxes, I think probably the tax-exempt bond and salary will go up on Monday.

Q Referring to your talk with Senator Borah, can you give us your views on neutrality with respect to Spain and also in relation to the Far East?

THE PRESIDENT: Not in detail. I think the only thing that can be said on that is that there are two objects -- two objectives with respect to the neutrality law: One is to keep the United States from being involved in foreign wars and the other is that if a foreign war takes place, we must, as far as humanly

possible under this law -- it is a difficult one to operate under -- avoid giving aid to one side as against the other, or of penalizing one side as against the other. Now, it has to be a general statement and I cannot go very much further than that.

You can all use your imagination as to the practical application.

Q Do you think that has been substantially done in the Spanish case?

THE PRESIDENT: As far as it is possible to do so under the existing law.

Q Is it possible to embargo German and Italian purchases here?

THE PRESIDENT: Do what?

Q Is it possible to embargo German and Italian purchases here of munitions?

THE PRESIDENT: Or French?

Q Or English?

THE PRESIDENT: Or English. Not under the present neutrality law.

Q What are your reactions to the charges that the appropriations for the resident commission -- the High Commissioner's residence in the Philippines are excessive?

THE PRESIDENT: I think if I gave you my reactions I would have to comment on statements made on the floor of the House and, under the Constitution, I am not supposed to do that. (Laughter)

Q It was said up there that McNutt was leaving the Philippines October first on a world tour. Does that agree with your plans?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That is the first I heard of it.

Q Representative Snyder of the subcommittee told us he was told that by McNutt.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Would it be possible for you to give us a little light on why you say that we are going to be as neutral as we can under the limitations of the law, which is not a perfect law? What are the limitations of the law which have not been satisfactory?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think any of us want to go into that. — I would have to have the law before me and go into it in detail. It would take half an hour.

Q Will you do it at the next Press Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q To return to possible purchases of arms in this country, there are stories that the British are sending a delegation over to negotiate regarding purchases of aircraft in this country. Have you been informed of that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have read that they are doing it. I know only what I read in the papers.

Q Are you going to take the POTOMAC with you on your cruise?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I will go way off shore. I will get as far away as I can from visitors, telephones and the Press. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, the American Ambassador to Chile is reported in today's papers to have told the authorities there that you may visit Chile this year. Would you care to talk about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Only the same old story. I have wanted for four years to visit the west coast of South America. I have visited the east coast and Colombia and I want to visit the west coast some day. That is as far as it has got.

Q Speaking of messages, what has happened to the message on phosphate?

THE PRESIDENT: Fred (Essary), that is a terribly embarrassing question.

Q Embarrassing?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q It is not embarrassing to me. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: It embarrasses me, Fred, lots because I have lost the papers. They are somewhere between here and Agriculture.

Q Well, that is fair enough.

Q Mr. President, are there any other large industrialists besides Mr. Ford on the invitation list for the future?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any list made out ahead of time.

Q In respect to taxes, you mentioned some time ago that you thought it might be a good idea to have a conference of state and local officials with respect to taxes. Have you given any more thought to that?

THE PRESIDENT: There has been a good deal of thought but there are other things on the priority list.

Q You think that might be held sometime?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Have you any plans for the week end?

THE PRESIDENT: I will go down the river at 12:30 tomorrow and get back Sunday afternoon, late. We go off the record tomorrow.

Q Will you go from Annapolis or Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: Washington.

Q Do you favor a Merchant Marine training school?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have a good many of them now, doing very good work.

Q There is one recommended in the Kennedy Maritime Report.

Q I am speaking of the ones that Kennedy-recommended. The Maritime

Commission is considering establishing something.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't know. You have half a dozen now, state training schools.

Q I meant Federal -- speaking of schools and not ships.

THE PRESIDENT: They are the same thing.

Q I wanted one at Quoddy Village. (Laughter)

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #454,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 26, 1938, 4.09 P.M.

Q Here is Rudolph Forster.

Q Hello, Admiral.

MR. FORSTER: Hello, Fred (Storm).

Q Commodore and Commodore McKenna.

Q We have the Navy and the Judiciary here today.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Did you notice the two shades of green in the new stamps yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not.

Q They have different ink.

Q Can you tell us who will accompany you on your ocean trip out to  
the Atlantic Ocean?

THE PRESIDENT: Dean (Mr. Young), I have three promotions in the Naval  
service to announce. They will take their first cruise under  
their new titles with me on Friday night. The first is Mr.  
McIntyre, who has been promoted to a Rear Admiral -- to a Vice  
Admiral. (Laughter)

Q This is good.

THE PRESIDENT: The other is Commodore Forster, who is promoted to  
Rear Admiral, and the third is Captain McKenna, who has been pro-  
moted to Commodore.

Q Does the Navy know? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. Their suits have been prepared, Fred (Storm).

Q What is your particular rank in this navy?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, just the same old thing, C in C (Commander in Chief).

Q Will Commodore McKenna be able to take it?

THE PRESIDENT: You bet he will. He is an old sea dog.

Q We have been given a list of names and a statement concurred in by sixteen of the outstanding business and financial people of the country, and I understand you have a copy, pledging cooperation. Can you give us your reaction?

THE PRESIDENT: It just came in three minutes ago and I have just read it through once and it seems to be excellent.

Q Without specific reference, necessarily, to Governor La Follette's move, do you think there is a need for organization of liberal forces in politics?

THE PRESIDENT: The more liberal forces for liberal policies of the country the better.

Q Returning to your proposed cruise, can you tell us what arrangements have been made for the Press during that time.

THE PRESIDENT: We have arranged a special train on Friday night, which will take the Press all the way to Charleston and then, when we Admirals and Commodores push off on Saturday morning about nine o'clock, the Press will be completely free to see all of the flower gardens and the azaleas in Charleston just as long as they want, returning to Washington at their leisure. When I come back, I will probably come straight back to Washington.

Q Landing at Annapolis?

THE PRESIDENT: Either at Annapolis or at the mouth of the Potomac River and taking the POTOMAC up.

Q About a week, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Just a week.

Q Some of us on this side did not hear what you said about the businessmen's statement.

THE PRESIDENT: I think I said it just came in three minutes ago and I read it through once and thought it was excellent.

Q Are you going to see any of the sixteen businessmen?

THE PRESIDENT: I have been seeing a great many of them.

Q Will you make that public?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it was made public.

Q Who will be with you at your luncheon tomorrow with Mr. Ford (Henry Ford)?

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Ford, Edsel Ford, Mr. Cameron and Eccles.

Q (Mr. Godwin) The civic associations and newspapers in this town are staging what they call a referendum on Saturday to determine whether or not they need suffrage in the District of Columbia. Can you help that along a little? (Laughter) If you cannot, don't say anything. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Can I say anything off the record?

Q (Mr. Godwin) No, not against it. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I was not going to talk about it. I was going to talk about the newspapers, off the record. Don't you want that?

Q (Mr. Godwin) No, no. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I was going to pay a compliment to the newspapers, off the record. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) I am afraid to trust you. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell you privately afterwards. It is all right.

Q Getting back to the Ford luncheon, can you tell us what is likely to be discussed, since you have Mr. Eccles there? You are going

to have Mr. Eccles there; that indicates finance.

THE PRESIDENT: No, economics.

Q General economics?

(The President did not answer the question.)

Q Getting back to Mr. Godwin's rather peculiar question, have you anything to say about this referendum in Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: I wish I could, but honestly I have not read anything about it but just the headlines. That, really, is true.

Q The story appears in Detroit to the effect that both General Motors and the Chrysler Corporation inform you that only Mr. Ford can lead the --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That what?

Q -- that only the Ford Motor Company, by entering into an agreement with them, can bring about recovery in that industry.

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it.

Q You know, the Federal Trade Commission reached an agreement with motor manufacturers in Detroit.

THE PRESIDENT: Is that today?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard of it.

Q The statement says that the automobile industry comes under the powers of the Federal Trade Commission for the first time.

THE PRESIDENT: That is a new one on me.

Q Have you heard, sir, that Mr. Berle is going to the Madison Conference called by Governor La Follette?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he told me so yesterday.

Q Any significance in that?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose he is going because he is invited.

Q Have you any comment on the Anglo-Irish trade talk, which is taking place?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Only I suppose the general comment that this seems to solve a good many of the problems between England and Ireland and therefore is, very definitely, a step that is being accepted with pleasure.

Q Mr. President, have you ever had a conference or conversation before with Mr. Henry Ford?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes, lots of them.

Q Since you were President?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q The new national airmail stamp, the commemorative stamp, goes on sale May fifteenth. Prior to that the Dayton, Ohio, and St. Petersburg flight of planes will carry covers and it is the suggestion that you add the one arriving first to your album. Would that fit in with your approval?

THE PRESIDENT: I accept all kinds of gifts of stamps with great avidity.

Q You will accept both regardless of which arrives first?

THE PRESIDENT: Cannot we arrange it so that they will both arrive simultaneously?

Q Each city wants to be the first to arrive.

THE PRESIDENT: That can be fixed up with the airport.

Q Do you intend to send a message of any kind to the La Follette conference?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you selected a new Assistant Secretary of Commerce?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q The Philadelphia City Chairman has asked for an F.B.I. investigation of things in Pennsylvania. Has that been referred to the Department of Justice?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Will you get your monopoly message up before you leave on the cruise?

THE PRESIDENT: That depends entirely on whether I get it to the Congress on Friday or whether I do not get it finished in time before they adjourn Friday afternoon, in which case it will be held until Monday when they will meet again, because I suppose they will not be in session on Saturday.

Q Does Mr. Berle in any way represent the Administration on this trip?

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, he was invited personally to go and expected personally to go.

Q I did not hear whether you said he came in to ask you or to tell you?

THE PRESIDENT: He told me.

Q There is a report from Berlin today that Ambassador Hugh Wilson has undertaken a labor study and has asked the Berlin Government for facts and figures on what they have done in handling the labor situation. Do you know anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The only thing that it might be was this: I told him that I was very much interested in their outdoor camps for young people, about which I know very little except the fact that both boys and girls seem to be improving very much physically. I was interested in the work which the German Government is doing for the physical health of young people and I asked him to study

that and let me know. That is probably it.

Q Is it conceivable that the question of an annual wage will be discussed between yourself and Mr. Ford?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not the faintest idea.

Q Have you read his proposal for an annual wage?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Do you contemplate any further answer to the businessmen's statement after you have read it more thoroughly?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not get it. (referring to the question.)

Q Do you contemplate any further answer to the businessmen's statement after you have read it more thoroughly?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I had not thought about it. I really haven't thought about it yet. You are a whole day ahead of time.

Q Representative John O'Connor was seen coming out of here about ten minutes ago. Anything you have to say on his unexpected visit to the White House?

THE PRESIDENT: We talked about just one subject and that was wages and hours.

Q I am glad you told us the truth. He said it was about the cherry blossoms. (Laughter) Will there be an effort for wages and hours this session?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he will ask for it. I know I am asking for it.

Q How about the Rules Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask them.

Q Did he ask for the appointment or did you ask him to come down?

THE PRESIDENT: I asked him to come down.

Q Are you going to do anything to stop the Democratic warfare up in

Pennsylvania?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better go up to Pennsylvania and find out there. (Laughter)

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #455,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 29, 1938, 10.48 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Claude (Mahoney), are you going?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: That is what comes from representing a financial paper.

Q They have no service over the week end, anyway.

THE PRESIDENT: Are you confining it to the week end? (Laughter)

Q No, sir. They will have to take Press Associations.

THE PRESIDENT: Do they take Press Associations.

Q They have an unbiased account now of what happens.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you take Press Associations?

Q (Mr. Mahoney) We take Fred's (Storm) stuff. I am supposed to be faster on my feet than he is.

THE PRESIDENT: You know the difference between a dollar and a cent.  
(Laughter)

Q (Mr. Storm) To my sorrow; I realize that now.

THE PRESIDENT: That is why we are both poor. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Young) Big crowd today.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, let us see. I have several things. No. 1 on the trip: There are more azaleas than I expected in Charleston and therefore I do not know what port I am coming back to. I might come back to Charleston. But I won't know until about Tuesday, somewhere along there. It is just possible I may come back to Charleston. So, if the Press decides to count azaleas, I will arrange to have the press dispatches go into the Charleston

Navy Yard.

Q We are all flower lovers.

THE PRESIDENT: Poor old Pat McKenna cannot go with us because his sister is very ill, so I have given him a rain check for another cruise.

I have sent a letter to Altmeyer, Chairman of the Social Security Board. You can get copies from Altmeyer. He has got copies and further details if you want more of a story. (Reading)

"I am very anxious that in the press of administrative duties the Social Security Board will not lose sight of the necessity of studying ways and means of improving and extending the provisions of the Social Security Act.

"The enactment of the Social Security Act marked a great advance in affording more equitable and effective protection to the people of this country against widespread and growing economic hazards. The successful operation of the Act is the best proof that it was soundly conceived. However, it would be unfortunate if we assumed that it was complete and final."

That is along the line of what I have talked to you about so often, how, in England, they have had an Act for almost a quarter of a century and almost every year or two they amend it without fuss and feathers in Parliament, improving the actual working of it. (Reading)

"Rather, we should be constantly seeking to perfect and strengthen it in the light of our accumulating experience and growing appreciation of social needs.

"I am particularly anxious that the Board give attention to the development of a sound plan for liberalizing the old age insurance system. In the development of such a plan I should like to have the Board give consideration to the feasibility of extending its coverage, commencing the payment of old age insurance annuities at an

earlier date than January 1, 1942, paying larger benefits than now provided in the Act for those retiring during the earlier years of the system, providing benefits for aged wives and widows, and providing benefits for young children of insured persons dying before reaching retirement age. It is my hope that the Board will be prepared to submit its recommendations before Congress reconvenes in January."

Copies and further explanation and details from the Chairman.

Then there came in on the ninth of April -- I have been reading it in the meantime and there is no reason you should not have it -- a report of a special committee on the housing needs, that is to say, the federal buildings in the District of Columbia. It is signed by the Secretary of the Interior and the chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on District Appropriations, that is, Senator Elmer Thomas, the chairman of the Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee for the District of Columbia, the chairman of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission and the Director of Procurement. That is a study of present and future needs for Government buildings in Washington. Copies of it are available at the office of Aubrey Taylor in the Interior Department.

Q We will get it over in Interior and not here?

THE PRESIDENT: It is so long we have not got copies.

Q Getting back to social security, have you gone far enough into it to tell whether you can cut down payments to the reserve fund?

THE PRESIDENT: That you will have to talk to Altmeyer about. It is one of the things they are studying.

Q Are copies being given out of that, sir?

MR. EARLY: Not here.

THE PRESIDENT: Not here -- Altmeyer. Outside of that I think we are all clear. We leave at 8.00 o'clock tonight.

Q Any comment you can make on the announcement of the formation of the new Progressive Party?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing to add to what I said last Tuesday.

Q Can you tell us anything about your Ford visit?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that I was interested to see what the press said about it.

Q How nearly accurate was the press?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, don't ask me that, Earl (Godwin).

Q About as usual? (Laughter)

Q What is the status of the monopoly message?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they have started to type it and I think it will go up this afternoon.

Q Mr. President, are you going to give personal attention to the political use of WPA in Pennsylvania or other states, or will you leave it entirely in the hands of Mr. Hopkins?

THE PRESIDENT: It is supposed to be investigated by the people who are in charge of it.

Q We cannot hear you back here.

THE PRESIDENT: People are supposed to investigate it who are in charge of it, where allegations have been made. Obviously, they go to Mr. Hopkins.

Q Mr. President, the morning papers say that the more conservative advisers of the President say that you are considering creation of a new council of business men to study and make recommenda-

tions on economic problems.

THE PRESIDENT: I read it in the papers.

Q Is there any truth in it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. If you will ask me direct questions, I will have to give you direct answers.

Q Can you tell us something about Lowell Mellett -- what he is presumed to do or will do?

THE PRESIDENT: He is to go back and reconstitute the N. E. C. the way it was working about two years ago. In other words, with a larger relief program, a larger flood control program, public works, C. C. C., et cetera and so on, going into effect as soon as the bill passes -- certainly by the first of July -- we have to have coordination in the different states. For the last two years we have been cutting down because the need for coordination has been getting less and now it has to be stepped up again. The system worked exceedingly well. I should say it worked pretty well in forty states out of forty-eight, which is a pretty good average, so we are going to reconstitute it under Lowell.

Q Are those state organizations disintegrated?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we have the nucleus in every state.

Q On paper?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not only on paper. -- I don't know whether they have been going out to the public or not but Red Leggett has been getting out a very interesting statement once a month ever since he has been in, a sort of report or general picture of the conditions in each state relating to needs, employment, public

works, -- all forms of Government activity -- and recommendations as to how things can be better coordinated. Now, these reports have been coming to me every month and then going out to the different agencies affected by the report, so they have been very helpful and it has not been a mere skeleton. It has been cut down.

Q Is Mr. Leggett going to stay in the Government?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Where?

THE PRESIDENT: Lowell wants him to stay with him.

Q Can you give us an outline of your plan for a basic attack on unemployment? I mean a basic attack on it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, not today. I am trying to get the Message to Congress.

Q Have you any comment to make on Henry Ford's speech last night to the editors?

THE PRESIDENT: I have only read the headlines.

Q That is all there was to it. (Laughter)

Q Did you see the story in this morning's paper where Senator Minton has introduced a bill in which he would impose a fine on newspaper editors who knowingly printed a false story? The bill was introduced yesterday.

THE PRESIDENT: I read the headlines, Fred (Storm) and I think that is a matter that would have to be referred to the Prison Commission. (Laughter)

Q What Commission?

MR. EARLY: Prison Commission.

Q Are you for such a bill, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I am trying to cut down the cost of Government, I don't want to have to build any more prisons. (Laughter) You boys asked for it, you know.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Mr. President. We hope you have a nice trip.

THE PRESIDENT: Have a good time. I will see you all in just about a week.

Q There was a report in New York at the editors' meeting that Government was contemplating starting a newspaper. Is there anything to that?

THE PRESIDENT: That would be interesting, wouldn't it? Will you edit it, Fred (Storm)?

Q (Mr. Storm) I would be glad to.

THE PRESIDENT: Good; that is all right -- as, if and when. (Laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #456,  
On board the U.S.S. PHILADELPHIA,  
Charleston, South Carolina,  
May 8, 1938.

(The President greeted each member of the White House Correspondents Staff individually, and was introduced to two members of the local Press. Photographers from the local Press took photographs of the conference as it was held.)

Q Did you have good weather, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: We had perfect weather, did you have good weather?

Q We had one of the most delightful times, next best to Rio.

THE PRESIDENT: How did you like Mac's stories?

Q Best reports we have had. We are going to make a reporter of him.

THE PRESIDENT: Where were you at 10.00 o'clock last night? We were wondering whether you could all be found. (Referring to the SS MARATHON incident)

Q We all got it. Everyone was present.

THE PRESIDENT: Where is the Hysterical House?

Q It isn't Hysterical House, it is the Historical House -- you can get drinks there. As a matter of fact we were out with a Mr. Stone who owns an old plantation about 200 years old. This is a lovely city, you ought to see it sometime, Mr. President.

Q To strike a serious note, Mr. President, is there anything you can say on the Wages and Hours Bill.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we sent something to you on that.

Q I think you sent it to Washington.

THE PRESIDENT: No, nothing further.

Q While you were gone, Mr. President, a man named Winthrop Aldrich gave a speech regarding extending a breathing spell to business of two or three years to absorb what had been done.

THE PRESIDENT: I have only seen the radio press.

Q Was he one of the sixteen?

MR. MCINTYRE: He led all the rest.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not seen a newspaper since last Tuesday's.

Q The other development in Washington is the interest on the neutrality question, particularly lifting the arms embargo to Spain. The Nye Resolution comes up.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the State Department Press report covered it completely.

MR. MCINTYRE: I will get one of those ship's papers for you. It covered it completely.

THE PRESIDENT: We sent something on the Spanish embargo to you - just what you asked.

Q It was about old Spanish fortresses.

THE PRESIDENT: It was a direct reply.

MR. MCINTYRE: Approaching the subject.

Q Mr. President, any further plans for Monday -- the regular conference?

THE PRESIDENT: Just normal. There will be a conference around ten.

Q When do you look for an adjournment?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Will you see Harry Hopkins and Secretary Ickes immediately upon your return?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose so. I will see the Secretary of State and

Secretary of the Treasury tomorrow. Those are the only definite dates we have.

Q Anything special on Secretary Hull?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just bring things up to date.

Q Mr. President, Harry Hopkins has done a splendid job with the old Dock Street Theatre here.

THE PRESIDENT: It is good, isn't it? I was in it in 1913, it is very nice.

Q They have put up a tablet to Harry.

THE PRESIDENT: That theatre and the old Opera House in New Orleans are the most interesting theatres in this country, and the old Opera House was burned down.

Q How about that barracuda Rudolph Forster caught? Did he really catch it?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course. We had so many barracuda we didn't know what to do with them.

Q Mr. President, what time are you going ashore?

THE PRESIDENT: About 6:45, starting to leave about 6:00 o'clock.

Q Is there any complaint on the Wages and Hours Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't a thing on it except the small radio reports -- the dispatches we get on the radio. You ought to see Colonel Watson; the second day out he got burned -- he looked like a Carib Indian. He didn't like it because it hurt his Virginia ancestry.

Q Mr. President, did you notice the transformation of the HARTFORD?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, doesn't it look nice?

Q Speaking of the old HARTFORD, they should take the HARTFORD from

here and put it in the Yankee waters of Hartford and put the submarine that is under the Hoosatic here.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you suppose they know where she is? It would be grand. You know the plan right along has been to use the waterfront of the Potomac for some historic ships, one from each war, starting with the CONSTITUTION, if we could get her from Boston. Of course there is the CONSTELLATION, which is at Newport. If we could raise the submarine it would be a fine thing.

Q The amazing thing about that is that eight crews went out and were lost and each time the entire corps stepped forward to volunteer.

THE PRESIDENT: I have a very interesting print of that.

Q Did Mac get anything to drink?

THE PRESIDENT: Heavens, no! He was on a Navy ship. He was on a milk diet.

MR. McINTYRE: Yes, and I lost three pounds.

Q The State Legislature of South Carolina has passed numerous Resolutions that you award one ship to this Yard. Have you anything on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not sufficiently up on the schedule, but we are going to keep construction work going here. Let me see, they have just laid a keel here. We will undoubtedly keep two ships going here at all times. You have one here about three-quarters completed and one with a keel being laid, and when the number one goes overboard we will start another.

Q How about relief labor on new projects?

THE PRESIDENT: We will use relief labor as far as we can.

Q Have you any particular interest in the South Carolina Primaries?

THE PRESIDENT: A great deal of interest, as I have in most Primaries.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #457

Executive Offices of the White House

May 10, 1938, 4:10 P.M.

(There was some "round-the-desk" discussion about the activities of the Press while in Charleston.)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe there is any news. I have been trying to catch up since yesterday morning and I haven't caught up yet.

Q Anything to say about the Florida election?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think the little old Latin phrase.

Q What is it? What phrase?

THE PRESIDENT: I will put it in English, "The thing speaks for itself."

Q Mr. President, any Latin phrase for the Pennsylvania situation?

(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, but you might read Dante's Inferno. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, speaking seriously, if we may, about Pennsylvania, there are charges of the use of Federal money -- of the misuse of Federal money involved in that Grand Jury investigation. Are you paying any particular attention to those charges?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't even know it. I did not know Federal money was involved. What department?

Q That is rather vague. (Laughter)

Q Frank Murphy, of Minnesota, conferred with you this morning. Would you care to tell us anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: We had a delightful visit. We talked about a gas line and all kinds of local problems in Minnesota.

Q The Postmaster General was present, too. Is he interested in pipe lines?

THE PRESIDENT: He just came in after, as an old friend; just happened around.

Q Did you see the story in this afternoon's paper where fourteen of the large utility companies have agreed to work out some sort of a plan whereby they could abide by the death sentence clause of the Utility Holding Company Act?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not; I hope it is true.

Q John Ihlder was here today to see you and he told us that you and he worked out some phraseology for a proposed amendment, etc.

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't actually worked out the phraseology. I told him we all had the same objective and to work out the phraseology with Bell. He was to see Bell and then Bell was to see Nathan Straus and I think they are in substantial accord and then they are to go up to the Hill and see if we cannot get the amendments through.

Q Have there been any developments on the International scene which would justify a change in America's policy of arms embargo toward Spain?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask the State Department.

Q I have a question in two parts.

THE PRESIDENT: You must have sat up all night. (Laughter)

Q Yes, sir. (Laughter)

Is there anything the Chief Executive can do about free speech and free assembly in Jersey City? And the second question is: Is there anything the Democratic Party can do about its Vice

Chairman, Mr. Hague?

THE PRESIDENT: The first question pertains to local police matters and the answer is, "No." The answer to the second question is to ask the National Chairman.

Q You mentioned a gas line a moment ago. That permits an inquiry about whether you care to say anything about Dr. Eckener's gas mission in Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. I talked with the Solicitor General about it this afternoon and they are having a meeting tomorrow morning. The question hinges on a determination of two words in the law. I can't remember what the two words are -- military --

Q Importance?

THE PRESIDENT: Military importance, that is it.

Q Apart from the law, do you think we want to gas Germany? (Laughter)

Q With whom, sir, will you hold this meeting tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: The Solicitor General, the Chief of Staff of the Army, the Chief of Operations of the Navy and the Secretary of the Interior.

Q Mr. President, in your discussion with the Postmaster General today, did you talk about O'Connell's letter, Representative O'Connell's letter demanding that Hague be removed as Vice Chairman?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't even got it yet.

Q What assurance have you that the gas will not be used for military purposes?

THE PRESIDENT: That is the question we are going to discuss tomorrow as to whether it can be used for military purposes.

Q Do you require any assurance from the person to whom it is to be

given that it not be used for military purposes?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on what the use is, the stated use.

Q Whose word will it be?

THE PRESIDENT: It is not a question of word, it is a question of purpose.

Q Mr. President, the House Wages and Hours Bill is likely to come up this session and it states no differential of wages. Do you favor a floor --

THE PRESIDENT: That is discussing details of current legislation.

Q Have you any preference?

THE PRESIDENT: We do not discuss details while legislation is going through the House.

Q We have never seen Louis Johnson and Basil Manly in here together before today and they have referred me to you for an explanation.

THE PRESIDENT: We talked about an interesting problem and that is the adequacy of power for purposes of national defense. It is a subject that has never been studied until this year. It has two factors in it: one, the sufficiency of power and the need of additional power in case of war. The second is the question of tying in existing power lines which are now not connected. It is purely -- we are approaching it purely from the military point of view. I can give you two very simple examples: For instance, if anything should happen to the power plants of the District of Columbia, there is absolutely no connecting link between the District of Columbia and Baltimore. We could not borrow power from Baltimore, or if anything happened to power in Baltimore, they couldn't borrow power from the District of Columbia.

The other example is the City of New York where there is no physical power connection between the eastern side of the Hudson River and the other side of the Hudson River. That is a military problem and it is being studied this year for the first time in history. It is still in the study stage, of course, and will take some time.

Q Have you received any recent advices which would indicate that business is ready to end its fire breathing spell?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not.

Q On the Spanish arms embargo, do you feel that is primarily a matter for Congress to decide?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask the State Department.

Q By referring the second Hague question to the National Chairman, do you think it is not up to you to take the initiative in that?

THE PRESIDENT: I will simply have to tell you to take it up with the Chairman.

Q How about the District Commissioner for the District of Columbia?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet, but in the course of the next two or three days.

Q Mr. President, since you made your statement expressing sympathetic interest in the Anglo-Italian accord, the significance of that statement has been debated in several forums, including the British House of Commons. In view of the controversy, could you explain a little further?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think so; no.

Q In that same connection, Mr. President, your statement was quoted in the League of Nations Council today as indicating approval from

the United States, along with approval from France and several other countries.

THE PRESIDENT: I should say, if you want to write stories about it, that you had better reread what I said.

Q At Chicago, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the statement he was referring to. You can also reread the Chicago one, which has been very widely misquoted in the press. Both of them have.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you Mr. President.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #458,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
May 13, 1938, 10.35 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only thing I have got today is a letter from Mr. (John) Biggers, making his semi-final report on the unemployment census. He points out that the cost of the census, including everything, will not exceed \$1,986,000. out of the \$5,000,000. that was authorized for the census. In other words, \$3,000,000. will be turned back to the Treasury. The printed report will be submitted shortly and made public. He points out that the saving in cost and the speed with which the whole thing was done was due primarily to the utilization of the facilities of other Governmental agencies, the Post Office Department and others. That, in the short time that the census was concluded, he has tabulations for 3,070 counties and special tabulations for 952 cities, cities with a population of 10,000 or more, broken down in such form that each state, county and city can use this information as a valuable aid in solving its own unemployment problem.

The staff of the organization is now substantially disbanded, only a few people being left to check the final reports and the liquidation of accounts.

85,000,000 unemployment report cards were distributed to every home in the country in one day.

The voluntary educational campaign in which the press, the radio, and the motion picture all played important parts had so well acquainted the people with the purpose and importance of the

census that over 11,000,000 people voluntarily filled out registration cards. 5,833,401 reported as totally unemployed --

Q May I have that figure again?

THE PRESIDENT: 5,833,401 reported as totally unemployed, 2,011,615 as unemployed except for emergency work, and 3,219,502 as partially unemployed.

Fifteen tons of postal cards came into Washington.

The census demonstrated the possibility of quick action and cooperation between the branches of the Government to undertake emergency tasks.

Regardless of fluctuating totals, the data showed characteristics and composition of unemployment have permanent value. These facts developed include a study of ages and sex; dependent workers, geographical distribution; industries and occupations -- Steve (Early) will make this available for you -- all of which will be necessary as a basis for any comprehensive reemployment plan. Since this information is available by counties and cities of 10,000 and more population, an opportunity and a challenge is presented to local communities to assist in solving our principal economic problem.

An interesting revelation is the fact that as the main breadwinner of a family is thrown out of work, additional members of the family seek work which accentuates the number of unemployed in depression times. Likewise, it proves the fact that to bring about recovery, it is not necessary to provide jobs equal in number to the unemployed, because, as breadwinners are restored to work, other potential workers vanish from the labor market.

That seems to be fairly well established. In other words, the unemployment census has real value and makes it much more easy for the Government to conduct the unemployment census, the next one, in conjunction with the decennial census of 1940.

Q Mr. President, do you think this unemployment census should be a continuing function so that fortnight by fortnight or month by month the Nation should know accurately the changing figures of unemployment?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we are, in general, working toward a system of that kind. In other words, it may be called a voluntary registration system.

Q If I recall correctly, before John Biggers started that I got the impression, both from you and Mr. Hopkins, that such a census would be of no practical value, or words to that effect. Has it turned out --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It has turned out to be of real value, not only for the bringing together of definite figures for the time that it was taken, which was last December or the end of November -- the first week in December -- but it also ended all kinds of perfectly crazy stories, stories that were got out by all kinds of people, where the figures varied by millions, and gave us a perfectly definite point of departure. Also, it is very useful for the future.

Q Will the machinery used in that poll and the method of this poll be studied with a view to national defense or possible mobilization of machinery?

THE PRESIDENT: I had not thought of it; it is a new one on me.

Q While we are on the subject of recovery, the Administration speakers, including yourself, said that the causes of the present depression, the primary causes, were the unabsorbed inventories and unwarranted increases in prices.

THE PRESIDENT: Those were the factors, yes.

Q Prime factors?

THE PRESIDENT: Not the only factors.

Q But now that the spending and lending program is on its way, have you a program to meet these two points --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No --

Q -- the unwarranted increase in prices and unabsorbed inventories?

THE PRESIDENT: Unfortunately, not. We did -- we were working towards it, as we all know, in an experimental way under NRA, really, honestly, in an experimental way. However, we had to desist from those experiments when NRA was declared unconstitutional. And at the present time the whole thing is being started anew, not with any thought, as I have said so often, of reconstituting NRA, but being started anew through the study of what was really misnamed the monopoly problem, because it is a far wider problem than the mere discussion of certain definite monopolies, and the study of those will go hand in hand with this investigation I hope the Congress will authorize before they adjourn.

Q The reason I asked is because they say that the other spending program failed. I am just wondering if there is an answer.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course the other spending program did not fail but it got to such a point that certain other economic and business methods ran away with the ball.

Q I was wondering whether there was some way of regulating running away with the ball?

THE PRESIDENT: That is right.

Q Have you any plan in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. Murray, of the steel workers' organization committee, proposed and Mr. Lewis later endorsed the proposal, that you seek a conference of business, industry, finance, labor and agriculture to work out with you what each might do.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, those conferences are going on every day.

Q He meant where representatives of all the groups would be together with you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they are, every day.

Q Mr. President, will you comment on the Chief Justice's speech and Mr. Wallace's following comment?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it depends on which paper you read.

Q Mr. President, regarding the helium question, which you took up with members of various departments the other day and afterwards indicated that the matter was for decision of the National Munitions Control Board, that Board had already approved the export. Did you intend that they should reopen the question?

THE PRESIDENT: I think probably there will be another meeting of the Board very soon.

Q When?

THE PRESIDENT: Very soon; I don't know when.

Q Who has the power to call that meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: The Chairman.

Q The Chairman yesterday said it would depend on you.

THE PRESIDENT: Perfectly true; I have not asked him yet because I have not seen him.

Q Do you understand that the Board acted illegally when it approved the export of helium?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; it is a question of law, I suppose. The statute is very definite in setting up the National Munitions Board. It says, "The Secretaries" of these different Departments, "The heads" of these Departments. Well, by Government custom, as you know, these interdepartmental boards meet with the membership composed of Assistant Secretaries and, in order that the record may be perfectly clear, we want to have a meeting with the Secretaries present. Legally, whether the action of the Board when it is constituted by Assistant Secretaries may be all right, nobody knows.

Q In weighing the laws governing the export of helium, does the Board take into consideration the intent of the Congress, the intent of the time when it was passed, which was immediately after the Hindenberg disaster?

THE PRESIDENT: They take into consideration the language of the statute primarily. When any question comes up as to the construction of the language, they are at full liberty to look into the debates on the floor or the hearings of the committee prior to the passage of the statute.

Q What I had in mind was that it was passed immediately after the loss of life in the Hindenberg disaster.

Q There are two small local matters that we can dispose of. One is the

District of Columbia Tax Bill.

THE PRESIDENT: That hasn't got here yet.

Q The other is the suggestion that you gave Mr. Ihlder that he give you some proposals for language for the Alley Dwelling Authority.

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet but I think that is coming along all right.

Q The State Department has referred to you the question of what happens to Mr. Hugh Gibson now that you have appointed Mr. Davies to Brussels.

THE PRESIDENT: They have not referred it to me.

Q I asked the question of Secretary Hull and he said that was for the White House, for the President to answer.

THE PRESIDENT: It hasn't got here yet.

Q This week you saw the members of the Philippine Commission and Ambassador MacMurray. Is it your thought that their recommendations will solve the future relationship with the Philippines?

THE PRESIDENT: All I can say is that they are making excellent progress.

Q When will you sign the new tax bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope to act on the tax bill within the next nine days.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the 15% wage cut by railroads effective July 1?

THE PRESIDENT: That is in the usual legal process.

Q Will Norman Davis, as head of the Red Cross, handle our participation in the refugee problems?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. Myron Taylor is the head of that.

Q I thought perhaps Norman Davis of the Red Cross might have something to do with it.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Any plans for the weekend?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going down the river tomorrow afternoon; be back Sunday afternoon.

Q Has Mr. Gibson resigned as Ambassador to Belgium?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Has it been accepted?

(No answer.)

Q Does this report by Mr. Biggers mean the conclusion of his connection with the Government?

THE PRESIDENT: On this particular job, yes. I hope -- he has been so perfectly fine about this whole thing that I hope we will be able to use his services again somewhere.

Q Do you contemplate a letter to Senator Duffy like the one you sent to Senator McAdoo?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Or Governor Earle?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you accepted Mr. Gibson's resignation?

THE PRESIDENT: What is that?

Q You say that Gibson has resigned. Have you accepted his resignation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I don't know whether I accept it or not or whether the State Department does. I don't know what the procedure is.

Q Are you seeing the Chairman of the Stock Exchange today, Mr. Martin?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he is coming in with Mr. Douglas (Chairman of the SEC) at 12:15.

Q Is that just a courtesy call?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you give us any information about the report in the newspapers the last few days about the appointment of Mr. West as Comptroller of Currency?

THE PRESIDENT: No decision has been reached.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #459,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
May 17, 1938, 4.07 P.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only news of any interest is the letter I wrote to Chairman Rice, of the Central Statistical Board. I will read it. I haven't any copies; you will have to get them from him unless you want to take down the gist of it.

"May 16, 1938

"My dear Mr. Chairman:

"I am concerned over the large number of statistical reports which Federal agencies are requiring from business and industry. In view of comments that come into this office, I desire to know the extent of such reports and how far there is duplication among them. Accordingly, I am requesting the Central Statistical Board, under the authority of Section 1 of the Act creating the Board, to report to me on the statistical work of the Federal agencies, with recommendations looking toward consolidations and changes which are consistent with efficiency and economy, both to the government and to private industry.

"Specifically, I am interested in the approximate number of financial and other statistical reports and returns regularly required from business and industry and from private individuals by agencies of the Federal government under existing law, and the authority under which each is collected; specific indications of the extent and kinds of duplication existing among them, and the diversity of accounts and records which they necessitate. I assume that exhibits of the questionnaires and report forms are already available in large part in the Board's files, and I am sure that all of the Federal agencies will cooperate in providing any additional information that is relevant.

"With a view to reducing the amount of duplication in statistical reports, will you indicate the principal points at which the enactment of legislation by the Congress appears to be necessary in order

to effect consolidations or changes, with the recommendations of the Board regarding them?

"I should like to have the complete report of the Board by January 1, 1939.

"Very sincerely,

"Honorable Stuart A. Rice,  
Chairman, Central Statistical Board,  
Washington, D. C."

Q May we have copies of that?

THE PRESIDENT: From Mr. Rice.

Q Mr. President, it may be out of turn but there are a lot of fellows that have to make spot news out of that. Is it possible that we can have a copy here?

MR. EARLY: They could use that copy, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: We will post this in the Press Room.

Q Can you tell us the first name of Mr. Rice?

THE PRESIDENT: Honorable Stuart A.

Q Had you received a lot of complaints about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say not many more than there are always. There always have been complaints about it.

Q You say there had been some. I was wondering if there was any particular reason at this particular time?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It is just something that ought to be done and of course probably it will help, too, in preparing for the 1940 census. That is another factor.

There is a good deal of discussion going around the departments on the need of individual reports. This does not affect corporations, of course, or involve financial reports but on individual

census reports there is quite a lot of study being given by private organizations to a system that has been talked about in Australia, of making Election Day -- changing the name of Election Day to "Citizens' Day" and put a provision that when people go to vote, at the same time they will fill out a blank relating the various information that the Government ought to have. They will gather information, for example, on crop legislation -- crop statistics, how many cattle they have got, whether they changed their business in the past year or have gone out of farming or whether they have gone into farming or whether they are living in a rented house or buying their own house, at the same time giving them the opportunity on "Citizens' Day" to pay their taxes. (Laughter)

Q That is very funny.

Q That would cut the deficit a good deal, wouldn't it? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, clean up all their business with the Government in one day.

Q You say that is in effect, or being spoken of?

THE PRESIDENT: It is being talked about in Australia. Whether it is being put into effect in any of their states or not I don't know. At the same time, they have also discussed the possibility of enacting a poll tax, let us say of five dollars, which will be remitted to you if you vote. It is not a bad idea -- not a bad idea for some of those present, I might say, besides others.

Q Would that apply to the District of Columbia? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: They would go through all the functions of citizenship in one day. Of course you could get a doctor's certificate.

(Laughter)

In that way the proponents of this thought are saying that it avoids a great deal of doorbell ringing to get information and you get, in large part, an annual census of things that you ought to have an annual checkup on. It is something you can write a piece about. I am not advocating it but it is an interesting possibility.

Q Can you tell us who the proponents are?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know their names.

Q Have you received and read a letter from Mr. Amos Pinchot which is awaiting release?

THE PRESIDENT: No; he never awaits release. (Laughter) It is impossible.

Q It is twenty-one pages.

Q The polls in Pennsylvania will be open for about four hours yet.

THE PRESIDENT: Will they?

Q Do you wish to comment on Mr. Farley's statement of yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Governor Johnston (Olin D. Johnston, of South Carolina) announced his candidacy for the Senate yesterday against Smith (Senator Smith) and issued a statement when he left the White House that he inferred you were supporting his candidacy. Is that right?

THE PRESIDENT: The same old phonograph record. Get Steve to turn it on for you, afterwards. The same applies to all the other people that come in here these days.

Q Does that apply to Mr. Farley also, and his statement? (Laughter)

Q Did you decide what to do about the Tax Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: It has not come to me yet. It had not been signed up

to twelve o'clock noon yesterday, and whether it can get to me tomorrow or not, I don't know.

Q Will you have a statement?

THE PRESIDENT: It will undoubtedly come via the Treasury Department.

Q Will you have a statement with the signing of the bill?

THE PRESIDENT: With the signing of the bill?

Q A statement with the signing of the bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you are assuming something. (Laughter)

Q Well, in either case? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am not prognosticating.

Q Is there anything you can say to clarify the attitude of the Administration as to the Oregon primaries for Governor, for the Democratic nomination?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q There have been a number of reports printed about it, indicating that you favor one candidate or another.

THE PRESIDENT: Same old story.

Q Have you received a communication from Norman Thomas on the Hague incident in Jersey City?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Have I? Does anybody remember?

MR. EARLY: I think there was a message received and sent to the Attorney General.

THE PRESIDENT: I guess that is it.

Q What about O'Connell, did he write a letter, too?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so and I think probably that same action was taken.

Q In 1935 you issued an Executive Order setting up an Accounting

Division in the Treasury Department to handle relief expenditures. Now the House has abolished that, that particular division, with the result that the agencies will do their own bookkeeping.

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily; your conclusion is not necessarily correct. It is a question that is being discussed now between the Treasury Department and Senator Byrnes. We do not want to end an independent check on accounting and how it will best be carried out is now being discussed between them. It does not necessarily mean that the language of the House bill will stop it because it can always be set up as a project.

Q They reduced the amount of money for that work from \$8,000,000. to \$2,000,000?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Therefore they cannot hire many employees to do it.

THE PRESIDENT: That creates a problem which is now under discussion.

Q Do you intend to appoint Charles West to a Federal position?

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q Charles West?

THE PRESIDENT: Not today. (Laughter)

Q Your replies on these state primaries do really leave a difficult line of demarcation for us. Are we to assume that when a Cabinet Member or two Cabinet Members and a Secretary --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) My dear boy, I never knew that silence on my part left a difficult situation for you. (Laughter)

Q Cannot we assume that when these men speak they are speaking for the Administration?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not assume one way or the other. You will

continue to write your pieces, so it is all right. I won't kick.

Q Do you want the Reorganization Bill revived at this session?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing on that today; no news.

Q Did you and Senator La Follette discuss the best technique for organizing liberal forces for liberal policies?

THE PRESIDENT: We talked about cabbages and sealing wax. (Laughter)

Q How about kings?

THE PRESIDENT: You will notice that I did not give the whole quotation.

Q There have been some stories in the papers recently regarding report of resignations of Cabinet Members. Both have been denied. Will you tell us what you believe the genesis of those stories to be?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I suppose it is like all other news. (Laughter)

Sorry I cannot be more helpful today. (Laughter)

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #460,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
May 20, 1938, 10.50 A.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am sending out today to the Congress the message on phosphates, you will all be glad to know, since it is somewhat overdue.

It does call attention to the need of phosphates in the land and to some rather interesting figures in regard to the supply of phosphates in the world. We probably have the largest deposits of phosphate rock, phosphorous rock, of any other nation in the world, and the rest of the phosphates is only in three countries, Russia and French and British Colonies.

Science has been more and more coming to the conclusion that land runs out in most climates if it does not have the phosphates renewed in it. Of course the whole thing ties up with soil conservation because, if land runs out, farmers abandon it and thereupon erosion sets in. In other words, it is tied in with the general soil conservation problem.

In the United States, about seven or eight billion tons of phosphate rock that has been located, nearly all of it, the great bulk of it, is out in the Rocky Mountain states. About the only chemical phosphate that is being produced at the present time in this country comes from Florida and Tennessee and a very large portion of the Florida phosphate is exported. Actually, of the entire supply of phosphate rock, probably the Government owns today, on public land, something like three quarters of it and it is a

very important thing to get a national policy as to the present development, including export, and the future development of phosphate, in view of these rather simple figures.

If you want to add a human interest touch to any story you write, it was brought home to me when I was preparing this message -- I haven't got it in the message -- the fact that no life can be successfully produced without phosphate. Just as an example, that includes human life, animal life and plant life. If you produce a crop for human consumption that is produced on a field with very little phosphate in the soil, it means that the children who eat hominy or the oatmeal do not get enough phosphate and of course we all know that the lack of phosphates in children is the cause of rickets and things like that. It is the same way with animal life of all kinds. It does not maintain its standard unless it gets phosphates out of its food. If cows do not get enough phosphate in the grass they eat, their milk has got less phosphate than it would have otherwise. So you can go on and enlarge on that ad lib. It really is a new thought for the American people that phosphate is necessary for all kinds of life, human, animal and plant and that is why it is of importance to this country for the next thousand years or so that we have a policy in regard to returning phosphate to the land.

Q Mr. President, is it not the idea with respect to plant food to have a combination of phosphate and nitrates?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and of course on the nitrate end of it --

Q (interposing) I was going to ask you about the nitrate side.

THE PRESIDENT: That is the other side, Fred (Essary). I am only a

layman on this but the general idea is that when you plough under a cover crop in order to help bring the soil back, or when you put on the other types of fertilizer and manures, you do increase the nitrates but you increase the phosphates very little. When you plough a crop back, the bulk of the chemical is the nitrate end rather than the phosphate end, and the two are absolutely essential.

Q Isn't the nitrate supply almost inexhaustible by reason of the power plants?

THE PRESIDENT: We are not troubled by the nitrate supply. You can always bring the nitrate factor in the land back by ploughing crops under.

Q Can you tell us what the recommendations are?

THE PRESIDENT: The recommendation is that the Congress appoint a Joint Committee to make an immediate study and report back, with recommendations on policy, at the next session.

Q Do you care to make any observations on the Primary results in Pennsylvania?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I took no part in it. I am taking no part in the Oregon Primary. That is all there is.

Q We notice that Mr. John L. Lewis is to be your luncheon guest today. Is that in connection with Pennsylvania?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so; I think it is on other matters.

Q Have you made a suggestion to the Munitions Board that they might reconsider the sale of helium?

THE PRESIDENT: Claude (Mahoney), the thing is under study. That is as far as I can go at this time.

Q Secretary Hull keeps referring us back to you.

THE PRESIDENT: We are still talking about it.

Q Would you care to endorse the candidates nominated in Pennsylvania by the Democratic Party?

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't I send a telegram yesterday? I think it was given out, either up there or here.

Q Yes, it was.

Q Do you desire the election of a Democratic governor in Minnesota this year? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Do you know, if I answered that question they would ask me something about a Democratic governor in every other state in the Union.

Q Don't you favor the election of a Democratic governor?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I am making any announcement about who I favor at this time, one way or the other.

Q Mr. President, do you favor the Senate Banking Committee's proposal that loans be withheld from railroads that have reduced pay?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not in it at the present time. Jesse Jones is talking to both the Senate and House Committees about it. I do not know what the present status is.

Q Have you any comment on the sale to Knoxville of the Tennessee Public Service Company's property?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the only comment I could make would be a somewhat caustic one so I won't make it. (Laughter)

Q Will this be your last message to the Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Heavens, I don't know.

Q Mr. President, your Naval Aide, I think, leaves you at the end of

this month. Have you selected another one?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q This Minnesota question raises another one that has been speculated over quite a bit by political writers over the last year. Do you anticipate that there will be a strong political party in 1940, or do you think we will remain on a two-party basis?

THE PRESIDENT: I am no prophet; sorry. (Laughter)

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #461,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
May 24, 1938, 4.10 P.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve tells me there isn't any news at all in the  
White House or in Washington, except the news from Dublin.

(Referring to Secretary Ickes' marriage abroad.)

Q Is that all he told you?

THE PRESIDENT: Pretty good, wasn't it? That was clever.

Q What is the rest of it?

Q Can you tell us anything about the Baltimore mail line situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except what you know already. Apparently, legally,  
we cannot go ahead with additional subsidies to that line. It is  
losing money at the rate of -- I don't know what -- \$40,000. or  
\$50,000. dollars a month. There doesn't seem to be anything to  
do about it except what the Shipping Board is planning and that  
is to substitute smaller, somewhat slower ships so as to maintain  
the service out of the Chesapeake.

Q Mr. President, I think you have had for some weeks now a report by  
the Federal Trade Commission on living costs. Any reason why that  
should not be released?

THE PRESIDENT: Have I, Steve?

MR. EARLY: Yes, you have.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I will have to find out.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything about your conference today  
with Mr. Lilienthal?

THE PRESIDENT: No; we talked about the general work of the TVA, the

Knoxville agreement that you all know about. There is nothing new.

Q Mr. President, did the visit today of Mr. Stern, the Philadelphia publisher, have any relation to the Pennsylvania political situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it did not.

Q Have you any further engagement, or any other engagement in relation to that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, did Mr. Secretary McIntyre's conference with Dave Lawrence of last Friday give any indication that Dante's Inferno was calming down or that peace might be in sight?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; you will have to ask Mac.

Q Did you have a report on the Supreme Court's decision on the state taxation cases?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is in my mail because I generally get a report from the Attorney General. I have not read it yet.

Q Anything on the Tax Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q Mr. President, are you likely to name a third member of the TVA before the close of this session?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't thought of it one way or the other.

Q Under the authorization for a Naval increase, I notice you have requested funds for dirigible construction, among others. Have there been any further studies or additional information which will change the opinion as to the merit or worth of them in combat?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing further, no further studies but there are going

to be along somewhat different lines.

Q Can you elaborate on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it is a military secret.

Q Have you decided against full Federal financing of flood reservoirs at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: That is still under discussion up at the House and Senate and down here. It is still being talked about and no decision reached.

Q Who is going to make the study of dirigibles, the Navy?

THE PRESIDENT: I am.

Q Is an amendment to the new Recovery Bill relating to financing by PWA of power plants acceptable to you?

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

Q There was an amendment that PWA could not loan in competition with existing plants and then Senator Barkley offered a compromise to that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether you are up to date on that. You had better check on it up on the Hill. The situation changes every three minutes.

Q In that same bill it is proposed to provide for the payment of \$212,000,000. for parity payments?

THE PRESIDENT: The only tip I can give you is to read the statement I made when I signed the Farm Bill. See the last paragraph of it.

Q You would have to veto the entire bill in that case?

THE PRESIDENT: Read the statement, the last paragraph, when I signed the Farm Bill.

Q Is there anything in the German-Czechoslovakian situation that calls

for comment on the part of this Government?

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

Q Secretary Early told us this morning that you are going on the air with your speech Friday afternoon at Arthurdale. Can you give us any advance dope?

THE PRESIDENT: I have no idea what I am going to talk about, really.

Q Are you going to make a speech at the Naval Academy on the second?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; the same idea -- I have no idea what I am going to talk about.

Q The Senate proposes to provide \$26,000,000. to begin anti-aircraft defenses on this coast. Are you in favor?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not know.

Q Would you be in favor of it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. They are talking over two or three items. I think they total \$42,000,000.

Q Yes, that is right.

THE PRESIDENT: That is under discussion between them and the Budget at the present time.

Q What, sir, is the occasion for the Friday afternoon speech, if any?

THE PRESIDENT: Giving diplomas to the high school graduates at Arthurdale.

Q Mr. President, have you selected a successor for Mr. Hanes, who was leaving the Securities and Exchange to go with the Treasury?

THE PRESIDENT: I probably won't think about it until toward the end of June because he is not leaving the Securities and Exchange Commission until the first of July when his present work is finished.

Q Have you selected an Ambassador to Moscow to succeed Joe Davies?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. When does Joe leave there, the end of this month?

Q Yes, I think at the end of June.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Mr. President.