

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #510,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 16, 1938, 10.42 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Where is Fred?

Q Rochester, on his vacation.

THE PRESIDENT: Felix (Belair) off on a vacation, too?

Q Yes, sir; winter vacation.

THE PRESIDENT: It is a good time to get it.

Q (Mr. Godwin) They just had a vacation.

You should have seen the headlines of Mrs. Patterson on the story down there (at the site of the Jefferson Memorial). The second line read, "Makes no mention of cherry trees." (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to give you a local story this morning.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

Q Do you have one?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I will have to give you one on trees.

The front row is tree-minded again this morning. I had, in the last two or three weeks, quite a number of letters suggesting that we ought to have something besides Japanese cherry trees in Washington and they all seemed to concentrate on American dogwood, so the Park Service is planning for the planting of a very large number of American dogwood, both the white and pink variety, in the area west of the cherry trees. What is that? -- well, from Seventeenth Street north clear up to the brewery (laughter), the Georgetown bridge, and we hope to get that planting started this spring.

Q In connection with that, Arno Cammerer was speaking to us about

planting dogwood up the Canal. Does that come in on it?

THE PRESIDENT: The same thing.

Q Do you know about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Just heard about it, that is all, and also eventually that that will be a new parkway, the line of the old B. & O. Canal.

Q Any five to three ratio with respect to dogwood (as against Japanese cherry trees)? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, Fred (Wile). Considering our age we might call it sixteen to one. (Laughter)

Q That will start soon?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, have you decided as yet on any of the Federal Judgeships that have not been filled?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I thought I had one yesterday but I did not.

Q Any of the new Cabinet Officers?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet; not this morning.

Q When do you expect -- may we have any idea as to when to expect the Cabinet and Supreme Court appointments?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you. It is safer for me not to set a date for it.

Q Any more resignations in the Cabinet?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, will the vacancy on the Home Loan Bank Board be filled?

THE PRESIDENT: Very soon, yes.

Q There have been reports that Governor Murphy, of Michigan, is

going to be appointed in some kind of a position.

THE PRESIDENT: I have read a great many reports. I hate to characterize them as newspaper stories.

Q Mr. President, have you definitely decided one way or the other on this idea of Government aircraft factories?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q Returning to the trees, are you still going through with the planting of those thousand cherry trees?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, did you discuss with Senator Pittman yesterday anything concerning neutrality or spies?

THE PRESIDENT: All kinds of things. The trouble is that if I were to mention one or two it would be unfair to the other subjects.

Q When will you confer with Vice President Garner?

THE PRESIDENT: Tomorrow he is coming to lunch and we are going to lunch with the new Executive Committee about the records building at Hyde Park and then, after the lunch, I will confer with about six or seven of them and then after that the Vice President and I will have our talk while the Executive Committee is talking about historic records.

Q Mr. President, I would like to ask if Mrs. Roosevelt's what you might call official papers will be included in your records?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not got to that; have not discussed it yet.

Q Can you tell us anything about your appointment yesterday with the Philippine representative, Mr. Osmeña?

THE PRESIDENT: No. You know what his mission here is. We are all in favor of the plan which has been worked out by the Commission,

which will be submitted to the Congress, I suppose probably the first week.

Q Mr. President, you probably recall Luther Steward and half a dozen leaders of Government employees associated with him. They visited you and they told us that they had endorsed a portion of your re-organization scheme. Can you add anything to that or is there anything you want to say?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except there is no difference of opinion between us on objectives in regard to Civil Service.

Q Are you in a position or do you care to discuss Ambassador Wilson's traveling plan?

THE PRESIDENT: No; no news.

Q On that Civil Service, would you call a one-man commission an objective?

THE PRESIDENT: I think, Pete (Brandt), if you will stick to objectives it would be better. It is safer.

Q The objectives then have nothing to do with the personnel?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, on that Philippine report, will that go up in your regular Message or by special Message?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that will be a special Message because there are an enormous number of documents, five volumes, that go with it.

Q When will you see Ambassador Kennedy?

THE PRESIDENT: This afternoon, right after Cabinet.

MISS CRAIG: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #511,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 20, 1938, 4.10 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: This is especially for the benefit of the ladies
(referring to a Commission which he was in the act of signing).

Q What is it?

THE PRESIDENT: It is for American womanhood.

Q There is a sentiment in the correspondents' group for no Press Conference on Friday.

THE PRESIDENT: Is there? Where is the Dean?

Q He is ill. Earl Godwin is home, and the three Press Associations have substitutes. Just a few of us carrying on.

THE PRESIDENT: What is the matter with Earl? Is he sick, too?

Q He has been sick two days; he has been off the air for two days. I talked to Mrs. Godwin this morning and she thinks he will be back tomorrow.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell you my schedule and then face the questions. I will give you all my engagements as far as I know them. Tonight I am having the Director of the Budget in and various other people, the Secretary of the Treasury, et cetera, to work on the budget. General proposition, nothing specific. And probably again -- what is tomorrow? -- Wednesday -- and probably again on Thursday. Tomorrow we are having a Cabinet meeting instead of Friday and there are not any appointments, except this one (indicating the Commission on his desk) that I have got here on my desk. If there are any further, if any come up between now and after

Christmas, they will be just announcements. I have nothing ready yet.

The question is, Do you want a Press Conference Friday, or not? I have no other news, literally.

Q No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Let us call it off Friday and buy our Christmas presents.

The appointment (indicating Commission on desk) is Mrs. Ellen S. Woodward, of Mississippi, to be a member of the Social Security Board in place of Miss Mary Dewson.

If I were a lady writer, I would say, perhaps, "This is creating a precedent for all time -- one woman on the Social Security Board." Now, that does not come from me, it comes from you.

Q How long is that term?

THE PRESIDENT: The balance of that particular term; I think it has five years to run.

Q I may be behindhand, but I did not know Miss Dewson had resigned.

THE PRESIDENT: No?

Q Why did she resign?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it was because she could not stand it -- the pace, I mean. I think she felt that the work was too much. She was awfully sorry to have to do it. No question of disagreement or anything like that.

Q She looked very ill.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Anybody to replace Mrs. Woodward on WPA?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing yet.

Q Do you anticipate filling the vacancy that will exist in the Department of Commerce by Friday?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. In the first place, I think it does not exist until midnight Friday night.

Q Have you any plans, Mr. President, for Senator Brown of New Hampshire?

THE PRESIDENT: No; no other appointments in sight.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything about your conference Saturday with the Vice President?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing more than what he told you.

Q It was not much. (Laughter)

Q He said he had forgotten it. Does that mean that you forgot also?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think that is what we agreed to say.

Q Mr. President, have you read the report of the Social Security Advisory Council?

THE PRESIDENT: Not the whole report; only the summary.

Q Any comment on it?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Will there be any more legislative conferences between now and January?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; without any question.

Q One at a time, or in a group?

THE PRESIDENT: Either a group or one at a time. It depends on what we talk about and their desires. I do not know. I will probably see all of them next week a couple of times.

Q Rayburn is due tomorrow. Are you seeing him?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; I suppose I will see him then, if he comes, and I think the Speaker is due before Christmas.

Q He is due tomorrow.

Q He is due tomorrow and Rayburn the day after.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. No use hanging around because they will say also that they have forgotten. We are making it a standard phrase between now and the third of January.

Q Have you read that report of the committee that Miss (Josephine) Roche --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, only the summary.

Q Any comment on the Labor Non-partisan League's plan to select delegates to the 1940 Convention?

THE PRESIDENT: What is that?

Q Lewis announced it on Saturday; it is for their own convention.

THE PRESIDENT: I only read the headlines, that is all.

Just a word of caution on social security and the health reports: Do not go out on the limb and say that all of the details are going to be recommended by me for specific action. I, undoubtedly, am going to recommend, on social security, the objectives of the report. In the case of health, which is still in the study stage, I will transmit that to the Congress for their information and for such further study as they may want to make on it. That is a pretty young child, you know, the health end of it.

Q Is it a fair question to ask if you anticipate any Message on increasing non-contributory pensions?

THE PRESIDENT: No, only what they have said on it. Their comments,

that is all. No recommendations.

Q Mr. President, at the time Administrator Hopkins announced the general curtailment of WPA, he said the curtailment would be accomplished by the absorption of cases in private industry. Since that time, with particular reference to Pennsylvania, there have been reports that people are being forced back on direct relief. Is that because other projects have not been started up to absorb those people, or are they going to be continued to be left on the dole?

THE PRESIDENT: You did a very good thing; you put six questions in one. I could not tell you; I do not know enough about it.

Q You could not discuss the future of WPA?

THE PRESIDENT: No, especially in relation to one particular locality. You cannot generalize on WPA.

Q You saw Stanley Bruce of Australia today. Can you tell us anything about your conversation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. We have met before. We talked about a great many things, all the five continents of the world and then some.

Q Did you find any mutual interest in a trade agreement? He seemed interested in that.

THE PRESIDENT: If you won't print it, I will tell you the truth.

(Laughter) We never mentioned trade agreement.

Q Mr. President, the group headed by Louis Johnson that you saw yesterday, refers us to you for the subject of their conversations.

THE PRESIDENT: I think I will have something for you on that next Monday or Tuesday. It has to do with preparedness.

Miss Craig: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #512,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 27, 1938, 4.10 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Fred, are you back on deck?

Q (Mr. Storm) Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Is the president of the Association still laid up?

Q He is here, on one leg. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: On one leg? What do you mean? Are you all right again? Russell says you have only one leg. (Laughter)

Q The other one is being hollowed out for the New Year. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: You've got both wings?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes, sir. (Laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: We are making the announcement today at the Civil Aeronautics Authority -- they have the full statement -- I will give you a summary of it. (Reading)

"As a means of stimulating private flying in the United States and creating a valuable national defense reservoir by increasing the number of trained airmen in this country, the Civil Aeronautics Authority has developed what it believes to be a practicable plan for the annual training of 20,000 civilian pilots.

"This program will be carried out --"

We will say that we will recommend that it be carried out --

"as a vocational training project, utilizing existing educational institutions and present facilities of the aviation industry. As an immediate test of its practicability and in order to develop a sound pattern which later can be applied on a nation-wide scale, it is proposed to inaugurate the Authority's pilot training program as a National Youth Administration project during the second semester of the present school year in not to exceed a dozen --"

Probably there will be only nine or ten --

"selected educational centers throughout the United States.

"These centers will be chosen on the basis of pioneering work already done in aviation training by the universities and colleges concerned, and also with a view to giving the experiment a proper geographical spread.

"If this practical try-out --"

During the last half of this college year --

"of the program confirms belief in its soundness, it will be put into effect on a nation-wide scale in several hundred colleges and universities during the 1939-1940 school year. It is estimated that the cost of the first full-scale one year training program for 20,000 pilots will be \$9,800,000.

"The increasing importance of aviation, both as an economic factor in American life and as a necessary back-log to the national defense, amply justify its inclusion in a federally sponsored vocational training program."

The initial cost of training during this experimental period -- training 300 pilots during the period between now and next July is not over \$100,000.

Q Where does that money come from?

THE PRESIDENT: The National Youth Administration.

Q Have you got the planes to train them -- training planes?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we will rent the planes. They are in existence.

Q From whom, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I suppose people who own them. I don't know.

Q Is that something you can put into effect now with N.Y.A. funds?

THE PRESIDENT: As an experimental period.

Q Did you say, sir, that this is to be given out by Civil Aeronautics?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and then they have for you over there at Civil

Aeronautics four and a half pages.

Q Will that require additional legislation, new legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: It will require appropriations.

Q Just appropriations?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will it require any change in the relief requirements, that is to say in the way people are certified for this training? In other words, will people who are not actually in need be certifiable to take this training?

THE PRESIDENT: That depends on what the legislation says.

Q Well, under the existing --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Under the existing rules it would be under the N. Y. A. procedure.

Q It would eventually require an enormous number of planes for 1939?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Again, the idea is not for the Government to go in and buy these training planes. The Civil Aeronautics Authority thinks there are enough private planes in existence for the Government to rent them.

Q Will this be under the direction of Army and Navy fliers?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will it go on from year to year?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q As it is expanded, that would call for the standard production of a particular type of training plane? That would tend to bring about standardized production?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I suppose so.

Q Have the first institutions been selected?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think they are ready to announce them yet but, as you know, there are quite a lot of colleges and universities that have gone in for this study of flying and probably the first selected will be from that group.

Q The \$9,800,000., is that the actual cost?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, for training 20,000 pilots.

Q How long will each student be trained?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. You had better check -- I think it is six months.

Q Will they be trained in combat tactics?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no; that is a different thing. This is civil aviation, so as to get their regular pilots' licenses. They will be given the same examination as a pilot, which is probably a very stiff one; probably nobody in this room could pass it, therefore we are all out. But younger and more vigorous people will be able to pass that examination. (Laughter)

Q Will additional instructors be assigned to these schools?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will they just be engaged and paid or will they be assigned from the Army --

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the Army and Navy, and also hired from civil life. In other words, all sources.

Q After the preparedness training, what will be the special disposition of these trained men?

THE PRESIDENT: The idea is that probably the best ones, a certain proportion of them, will go into the Army and Navy Reserve. Of course that means further instruction, go down to Pensacola, to

Texas. They would form a reservoir for both the Army and the Navy, but a comparatively small percentage of the 20,000 each year would go into the Army and Navy for further training in military work. The great bulk will be civilian pilots.

Q Have you any figure as to the numbers? You would have 20,000 this year and 20,000 the year thereafter; do you calculate on a top figure of 100,000?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Will these be all pilots ~~or~~ some of them aviation mechanics?

THE PRESIDENT: These are pilots. Aviation mechanics is a different story. We are not ready yet.

Q How closely does that connect with the number of airplanes estimated for national defense?

THE PRESIDENT: You would have to be an Einstein to write a story from figures I have given you today.

Q What about the 13,500 planes in the stories today?

THE PRESIDENT: So far, there has been no decision made. That is all I can say. And there won't be, I believe, for another week.

Q There has been something in the press to the effect that the Lima Conference has been a failure. Can you comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think it was a very, very great success.

Q Mr. President, did you discuss the Latin American relations with Cardinal Mundelein today?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Anything to be said about his visit?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q There was a story appeared in the papers this morning that Secretary

Morgenthau was about to resign, also Secretary of War Woodring?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you confirm those reports?

THE PRESIDENT: Just another story. I won't put the adjective on it.

You can.

Q Mr. President, will you comment further as to why, particularly, you think the Lima Conference has been a great success?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they accomplished what they went down to accomplish and I call that pretty successful.

Q Is Senator Brown being considered for the Comptroller Generalship?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I will do anything about any decisions on appointments until about next Tuesday.

Q Mr. President, can you comment on the transportation report which was delivered here Friday?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I suppose I will send various things up to the Congress sometime later on. I have not written anything.

Q Mr. President, have you selected the successor to Attorney General Cummings?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. I just answered that question when I said I would not make any decisions on appointments probably until next Tuesday. I might beat that by a day and make it Monday.

Q Have you Governor Murphy in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: I have fifty-two -- no, what is it? fifty-seven varieties.

Q Representative (Ross) Collins was in to see you today. He is Chairman of the Committee on District Appropriations. I understand he discussed them with you. Can you go into any details?

THE PRESIDENT: We talked about two things, Russell (Young), and there were several other things that we did not talk about that I am equally interested in. We talked about the need for training more colored nurses at Freedmen's Hospital, because there is a definite shortage of colored nurses, and we talked about improving the very bad conditions in -- what do they call it? -- the girls' reformatory.

Q Bad conditions where?

THE PRESIDENT: What is the technical name?

Q The Girls' Reform School.

Q The Girls' Training School.

Q What was the other thing?

THE PRESIDENT: The general improvement of hospital conditions in the District. I did not get as far as that; I did not have time.

Q You did not discuss that?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q What is the other, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: General health conditions.

Q Are you planning on the reorganization of the Communications Commission?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Can you tell us anything about your recent conference with Commissioner Payne?

THE PRESIDENT: He was not well and is going away for two or three weeks to recuperate.

Q Would you like to go into a little more detail on what you call general health in Washington?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot go into detail but I can say that none of us, I think, are satisfied with health conditions in this city. They are not as good as conditions in the Nation's Capital ought to be.

Q Is that based on the health rate?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, the death rate and the conditions of tuberculosis and a great many other things, -- facilities for medical care of all kinds.

Q Is Mr. Payne resigning?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q There is being organized a new effort, and it will concentrate here sometime early in January, an effort to have the Spanish embargo lifted. Would you care to discuss that?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it.

Q They will be down to see you, or Secretary McIntyre, very shortly, I understand.

Q Mr. President, did you give Ross Collins any specific antidote for those bad health conditions?

THE PRESIDENT: No. He is going to talk to quite a number of people in the course of the next week and will come down again in the course of the next ten days to talk them over with me.

Q The question of group health?

THE PRESIDENT: That did not come up.

Q Was Federal contribution discussed at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Or taxes.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Mr. President.