

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #522,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
January 31, 1939, 4.05 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Hello, hello, how is everybody?

Q How are you?

THE PRESIDENT: I survived. I do not know why, but I did.

Q Steve (Mr. Early) did not look so good.

Q I see Annabelle's boy (referring to Mr. McIntyre) over there. He looks pretty good.

THE PRESIDENT: He is all right. He is proud of it. You cannot kid him. (Laughter)

Q It is not St. Patrick's Day, either. (Referring to green tie and green suit worn by the President.) (Laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: We had two prisoners who tried to escape just now. I told them I was going to read to you, off the record, one of the several prophesies that were made at the Birthday Party last night. And really, this is off the record, just between us girls. (Reading)

"I suspect I am nearer to being the Son of a Prophet than -- as I have often been accused of being -- the grandson of that old bachelor misogynist, Jubal Early.

"It matters not what I am -- I must be bold -- because I prophesy:

"That McIntyre need never worry about employment . . . he and Senator Capper have just found out that girls are willing to pay for the messages both of them now give away free." (Laughter)

This is all off the record.

"That the President, in the near future, will issue an Executive Order prohibiting accordian playing

in and about the White House.

"That some friend is going to tell me before very long that the girls in my outside room are entirely too pretty for office work.

"As for a third term -- the boys in the Press Room say -- F.D.R. can have one for all they care if he will only start his Press Conferences on time; stop advertising Mark Sullivan; quit smoking camels; buy Sister Perkins a new bonnet; cork up Harold Ickes and put a Mickey Finn in Henry Morgenthau's coffee at lunch some Monday; also, quit talking about the Herald Tribune.

"They say they are all for a third term if the President will promise to keep on riding to Hyde Park in the daytime instead of night; if he will take the B. & O. for a change to give them relief from those flat wheels of the Pennsy; if he will desist from picking out those farm-to-market roads when he goes automobiling; and if for Pete's sake he will tell the Pine Valley Mountain promoters to 'go to Hell' when they invite him to visit their settlement on the coldest day of the year."

Now, to business: Oh, I have got a lot of it for you today.

No. 1: At 3.00 o'clock this afternoon I received the resignation of Judge Martin T. Manton. (Reading)

"January 30, 1939.

"The President,  
The White House,  
Washington, D. C.

Sir:-

I hereby tender my resignation as United States Circuit Judge for the Second Judicial Circuit, to take effect at your pleasure and not later than March 1st next at which time I will have been able to finish the business now in my hands.

Respectfully,

- Martin T. Manton"

To which I have replied:

"January 31, 1939.

"My dear Judge Manton:-

I have received your resignation as United States Circuit Judge for the Second Judicial Circuit, and I hereby accept it to take effect on Tuesday, February seventh. This will give you opportunity to dispose of such pending matters as the public interest requires, but this means, of course, that you will no longer sit on cases before the Court.

Very truly yours,

Honorable Martin T. Manton,  
United States Circuit Judge,  
New York City,  
New York."

I have been asked by the Securities and Exchange Commission to make clear a point that has been brought up in and out of the press in regard to the Tennessee Commonwealth and Southern Corporation. Mr. Willkie, as the president, recommended that the TVA refer to the Securities and Exchange Commission the question of valuation of the Tennessee Electric Power Company properties in connection with the proposed sale of those properties to the TVA and certain municipalities. Similar suggestions have been made by other people. Recently, unofficial questions were received seeking to ascertain what the reaction of the SEC is to this and similar proposals.

The SEC states that it has no statutory authority for making such a valuation, hence no part of its appropriation, under which it is operating, was made for such a purpose. Consequently, they do not propose to utilize funds from their budget for such an unauthorized purpose, nor do they propose to seek such authority from the Congress. That is that.

Next, in regard to the civil service order of last June twenty-fourth. As you know, we ran into all kinds of problems, with different agencies of the Government asking for explanations and this, that and the other thing. Steve has got this release for you outside, but I will summarize it for you. (Reading)

"President Roosevelt announced today that upon the advice and with the approval of a majority of the Civil Service Commission he had modified Executive Order No. 7916 of June 24, 1938, in order to provide additional time in which the Commission might reach agreement with the executive agencies of the Government on the scope of certain positions to be affected by such orders.

"It is estimated that the new Order will affect less than 10 per cent of the positions to be brought under Civil Service on February 1, 1939, by Executive Order No. 7916. The remaining 90 per cent or more will be brought in the Civil Service on that date under the terms of the original Order. Final determination as to precisely which administrative and technical positions will be temporarily removed from the operation of Executive Order No. 7916 is to be made by the Civil Service Commission in accordance with the new Order. It is contemplated that those comparatively few positions as to which Executive Order No. 7916 is postponed for the time being will be brought into Civil Service as soon as the committee works out adequate methods for the selection and promotion of the personnel for such positions.

"At the same time, he announced, through the new Executive Order, the appointment of a committee of seven outstanding advocates of Civil Service reform and the improvement of Government personnel, to make a thorough study, in conjunction with the Civil Service Commission, of the best way of applying Civil Service principles to the professional, scientific and certain administrative and other technical positions in Government service.

"The members of the Committee are:

"Mr. Justice Stanley Reed of the Supreme Court,  
Chairman;  
Mr. Justice Felix Frankfurter of the Supreme  
Court;  
Attorney General Frank Murphy;

William H. McReynolds, Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury; Mr. Leonard White;"

He used to be the Republican member of the Civil Service Commission.

"General Robert E. Wood;"

He is chairman of the board of Sears Roebuck.

"Mr. Gano Dunn."

Former president of Cooper Union and now president of the J. G. White Engineering Corporation.

(The President omitted the following, which appeared in the release:

All of the members of the committee have long advocated the improvement of the Civil Service or have had wide experience with the selection of personnel for professional, scientific, or commercial positions. Mr. Justice Reed, as General Counsel of the Federal Farm Board and the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, and later as Solicitor General of the United States, has had experience both under Republican and Democratic Administrations in recruiting large numbers of lawyers and other persons for Government service in times of grave national emergency. Mr. Justice Frankfurter has long been a student of Civil Service both in this and other countries and has been a strong advocate of the improvement and extension of the Civil Service. Attorney General Murphy, as Governor of Michigan, in reorganizing the State Government, extended the Civil Service further than in any other State. Mr. McReynolds, formerly Director of the Staff of the Personnel Classification Board of the Civil Service Commission, and now as Administrative Assistant to the head of the largest Department of the Government, supervises and directs the selection and promotion of the largest single unit of personnel and has had long years of experience with the practical operation of the Civil Service. Mr. Leonard White, formerly a Republican member of the Civil Service Commission, and now a Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, has long been an innovator of the improvement and extension of the Civil Service. General Robert E. Wood, formerly

Acting Quartermaster General of the United States Army, and now Chairman of the Board of Sears, Roebuck and Company, is as well equipped as any one in the country in the selection of personnel for commercial and business positions. Mr. Gano Dunn, formerly President of the Cooper Union, and now President of J. G. White Engineering Company, has had long and varied experience in the selection of professional and scientific services.)

"In taking this action, the President called attention to Section 2 of the Order of June 24 which directed the heads of all departments and independent establishments, including corporations owned or controlled by the Government, to 'certify to the Civil Service Commission for transmission by it with its recommendations to the President the positions in their respective departments or agencies which in their opinion should be excepted' from the provisions of the Order as policy determining or for other reasons. The President said that the recommendations and certification called for have been received, but that the burden of preparing for the covering-in of other positions had not given the Civil Service Commission and the executive agencies concerned sufficient time to study and reach agreement on their respective recommendations.

"The committee selected by the President will study the many diverse problems presented in the recruitment and promotion of professional, administrative and other technical personnel for the various Government departments and agencies. The President believes that such a study will result in an informed and wise extension of the merit system and the application of higher standards in the selection and promotion of such Government personnel."

Q Isn't it unusual to have Supreme Court Justices on a commission like that?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I do know that away back, at the time when I was here in the early days of the Wilson Administration, several Justices of the Supreme Court did serve in positions of this type. Whether they were commissions or not, I do not know.

Q It would indicate that you are having a great deal of trouble with lawyers?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and a good deal with other positions, too. It is not bright, young men. That is a very small percentage (laughter) as you use the term.

Q But you are having considerable difficulty with young lawyers who have made good records in colleges and would like to come down here?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q I thought that was one of the problems, that they did not want to take civil service examinations?

THE PRESIDENT: I should say not. I should say that was one of the minor troubles involved.

Q You had two Justices, I thought that was the reason.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Will it take into consideration any revision of methods of examination and classification?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it probably will for this less than ten per cent.

Q Numerically could you tell us how many are covered in under your Order?

THE PRESIDENT: About 45,000 will come in, starting tomorrow. About 5,000 are temporarily excluded pending a report of this Commission. And there are another 30,000 that fall under the WPA. However, I am not changing the Order of July first in regard to the WPA. In other words, beginning tomorrow they become eligible for civil service examinations. What the Congress decides of course we do not yet know.

Q You feel they should be under Civil Service?

THE PRESIDENT: Certainly. Why not?

Q Mr. President, did you clear up what misunderstandings may exist with respect to the sale of American planes to France and its diplomatic significance? So far, everything has gone from comments on Capitol Hill, that this is a military alliance, to the other extreme that it is a question of letters supposed to have been written by you to heads of the Government, et cetera.

THE PRESIDENT: The only thing I can tell you is to repeat what I said at the last Press Conference, I think it was. It was perfectly simple, and that is that I think we are in this country very desirous of trying to put the airplane industry in this country on a mass production basis as a measure of national defense. Also that we expect a fairly large program of our own, for our own Army and Navy planes, this spring. In the meantime, for the last two years we have been encouraging foreign governments to buy planes over here; first, to put people to work in these idle factories, and, secondly, to go through what might be called the experimental period of mass production that we do not know much about. And these orders from France and some from Great Britain are serving and will serve this spring to accelerate production so that when our orders come in right behind, we will get on a mass production basis and learn something about mass production of planes. That is absolutely all there is to it.

Q If similar orders had come with the same financial security from Italy or Germany, that would be answered in the same way?

THE PRESIDENT: That is an "if" question, because they have not.

Q That is what I meant, it is purely a question of financial ability to pay on the barrelhead?

THE PRESIDENT: That is an "if" question because the orders have not been sought.

Q If your desire is to get mass production, couldn't you get mass production of planes already in production easier than you could of planes just being developed?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because the planes in production at the present time are out of date.

Q How about those they bought in Buffalo, the hundred they bought from Curtiss Hawk that made the 555 miles an hour the other day?

THE PRESIDENT: Is that an American Navy order?

Q No, it is not; it is a French Government order.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, does the Army want to buy those planes?

Q It is a development from the plane that the Army was buying.

THE PRESIDENT: Do they want that particular type of plane?

Q I don't know.

THE PRESIDENT: Neither do I.

Q This is supposed to be a better plane than Germany has.

THE PRESIDENT: Should not you ask the Army whether they want to buy that type of plane?

Q The question now is whether we want to give to France a plane we have just developed.

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, you are saying, in effect, that this plane that is being built in Buffalo is something the Army ought to buy?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: That is something you ought to ask the Army.

Q (Mr. Essary) Some very good planes are for sale in Baltimore, too,

Mr. President. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Fred (Essary), go to the top of the class. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, was the airplane question taken up in your meeting with the committee today?

THE PRESIDENT: Among many others, yes.

Q Why did you swear them to secrecy?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q They said you swore them to secrecy.

THE PRESIDENT: Did they say that?

Q Good thing.

Q There are two or three little items on the civil service matter we would like to clear up before you get into international defense. These 45,000 coming in tomorrow, are those under previous A and B exemptions or are they part of A and part of B?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Getting back to Germany and Italy again, is it not a fact that they would come within the conditions of the Secretary of War's orders with respect to bombing civilians?

THE PRESIDENT: That is an "if" question.

Q They did indicate that their fishing expedition had come to an end.

THE PRESIDENT: I would not call it a fishing expedition.

Q They have been shooting in the dark, trying to find out the policy.

THE PRESIDENT: We sat around and had a perfectly grand talk about a great many things and everybody felt very satisfied.

Q Some of them want to make it public, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: That is interesting.

Q Will you oppose that, the making public of the whole story this

morning?

THE PRESIDENT: It has not been put up to me.

Q One of the things they did not object to, some of the Senators, was the fact that we did not disclose secret plans to foreign governments. Was that involved in the sale of any of the planes? Were the secret devices eliminated?

THE PRESIDENT: Pete, (Brandt) I do not think that ever was a real issue. I think some of them, several days ago, may have wondered whether any secrets had been disclosed. They received assurances that no secrets had been disclosed. But then, there was no news in that because that was always the case. That is not news.

Q Did you discuss with them, can you tell us, the procurement mechanics that have been worked out by the War Department?

THE PRESIDENT: Only the way I have been talking about them to you -- mass production.

Q Some of the people say that ideas are being discussed by the War Department which they consider a threat to private operation and which may result in the confiscation of their developments.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think so.

Q (Mr. Storm) I happened to be in Mac's office while they were meeting and I heard some applause coming from your office out there. Can you tell us what that was about?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think we all applauded each other.

Q Have you and the Attorney General reached the point where you can tell us about appointments or the proximity of appointments?

THE PRESIDENT: No. He is coming in to lunch tomorrow and we are going to talk more about appointments. We haven't got to it yet.

Q Chamberlain, in a speech today, proposed that the European countries get together in a disarmament or arms limitation conference. Have you been approached on that recently?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard anything about it.

Q A group of southern and western representatives is seeking to take action to tie the removal of freight rate differentials into general railroad legislation. You have commented on that before and I wondered if you had anything you might tell us now.

THE PRESIDENT: No, nothing new. I am very much in favor of removing regional or sectional differentials that exist today in the rate structure of the country. I cannot go into details because I do not know enough about the details. I am merely talking of it as a general principle.

Q Would you support such legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: It would depend on whether the legislation carried out the objective or not.

Q Did you happen to listen to Chancellor Hitler's speech yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I could not.

Q On this Manton thing, could there be a law prohibiting a judge from having outside activities so that he would "take the veil," so to speak, when he becomes a judge?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know, Pete (Brandt). It raises an interesting question as to whether anybody in Government service, if he happens to have or own any property -- it is awfully hard to draft a law that will allow him to retain property in a perfectly proper way and at the same time prevent him from continuing the ownership of that property and using that ownership improperly in connection

with his office. It is a terribly difficult thing to draft a law to cover it.

Q You have got the Secretary of the Treasury having to divest himself and the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve Board having to divest themselves of bank stocks and then there is the SEC --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, that is perfectly obvious. The Secretary of the Treasury and the Federal Reserve Board are acting directly on bank stock capitalization and things of that kind. But they are not prohibited from selling real estate or securities of other types that they own. How can one do it? How can one put it down in language that would meet your objection and mine and yet make it possible for a public servant to keep what property he has?

Q I would have them make a list of it so that it would be open to public inspection and make them forswear engaging in outside activities.

THE PRESIDENT: That would be a good thing. It should apply to all quasi public officials, like newspaper owners, for example.

(Laughter)

Q Did you have a representative from the Department of Justice on this whole situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that was started a long time ago.

Q Has the matter of enactment of such a law been studied?

THE PRESIDENT: It has been studied lots of times in the past.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Mr. President.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #523,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
February 3, 1939, 10.50 A.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: The most important news is that this is Fred Storm's birthday. I turn him over to you; you know what to do.

Q Hurrah! (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, did you see the story in this morning's paper that the Franco Government is suing the United States in regard to the purchase of \$11,000,000 of silver?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I screamed with laughter when I saw it because all of that story came out in 1938. It was given front page principal headlines; it is all out and has been out for a long time. No news in it.

Q The morning papers have a lot to say about your trip down to Guantanamo, linking it up with your defense program.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not even read that. As far as I know I am not going to Guantanamo.

Q Are you quite sure you are going, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not sure I am going at all in the first place, and in the second place, if I do go I do not think Guantanamo is on the trip. I think I will be away to the eastward of that, if I do go.

Q The Naval maneuvers?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The other day, when I was swinging into my pep talk for the Buffalo Chamber of Commerce, Fred Essary stepped in front of me and, if I

can arrange a division of time, I would like to go back over that a bit.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The A.P. carried a story yesterday that, as part of the national defense program, a survey was being made of the possibility of selling planes in South America.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q The thing that interested me was that right now some airplane producers are being prosecuted in New York for selling airplanes which the Government contends were for military use whereas they contend they were for civilian use.

THE PRESIDENT: What is the connection?

Q I wondered whether or not those two things squared up.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not see where they have any relationship to it at all. In other words, it is a perfectly simple thing. We had a definite law and definite proclamation under it relating to the Bolivian-Paraguayan war and the Government is claiming in this suit that these planes were shipped in violation of that proclamation. It happened three years ago. What can possibly be the tie-in between that and the sale of planes to South America today?

Q I do not know that it is. It is a question of military planes again being sold by our people.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard of any plane sales or prospective plane sales down there, except those proceeding along the line of trade.

Q When will you sign the Relief Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Has it come to me yet, Mac?

MR. McINTYRE: No, sir.

Q Have you been requested by Democratic members of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee to withdraw the nomination of Amlie?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, is it likely that changed world conditions may require the readjustment of the silver purchase program?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I have no idea.

Q I had in mind Mexico.

THE PRESIDENT: I have no idea at all.

Q Is there nothing you can tell us about the development of that program?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you had better ask the Secretary of the Treasury about it because it is rather a technical thing. I don't know of any particular changes lately.

Q I see Senator Pittman on the side and I thought --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, I was going to talk to the Senator about some other matters and I suggested that while he was down here he could come in here and tell the Senate what has really happened in this conference. (Laughter)

Q Are we sworn to secrecy? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Sometimes we go off the record and we talk about birthday parties, but that is about all. We discovered, when was it, about three years ago that this off-the-record stuff on important subjects was not liked by the Press.

Q What will be the status of these 33,000 W.P.A. administrative personnel so far as Civil Service is concerned, since the Congress has barred them? You said at your last conference --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) If the Act is signed, the status will

be that they have been covered into the Civil Service under the February first order insofar as being eligible. On February first they became eligible to take the examinations. Now, if the Act is signed, it precludes their taking the examination. In other words, they are half way in but they cannot go any further. I suppose that is the easiest way of putting it.

Q They are eligible to take the examinations but the Act does not provide money?

THE PRESIDENT: That is it. They can take the examinations but won't take the jobs because they cannot get paid. They are half way in but, from the practical point of view, they cannot go all the way in.

Q Have you any plans for meeting that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Will another Executive Order be issued to exempt them?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think it is necessary because the Act says to every one of them, "You cannot get any money."

Q You say, "if" the Act is signed. Is that a capital letter "IF"?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it is just the fact that the Act has not come to me. It is to avoid somebody saying that I answered that last question in such a way as to intimate that I would sign the Act. You see, I am getting cagey. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, you have adopted that form of response ever since I have covered you. Is there anything significant about this particular occasion?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, is it true, as reported, that you see a theoretical

possibility of an attack on the Panama Canal by Europe?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, that is doubly "iffy."

Q There are reports to that effect?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, some people seem to have some difficulty understanding foreign policy. Have you any intention of getting down to the elementary A, B and C's in a statement, or speech or fireside talk in the near future?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let us do a little analyzing for the benefit of some people. In the first place, the foreign policy of the United States has been thoroughly covered in my Messages to Congress, completely and adequately covered in every way. No. 2, there is nothing new about it. No. 3, the people in this country are confronted at the present time by a simple fact and that is that a great many people, some members of the House, some members of the Senate and quite a number of newspaper owners, are deliberately putting before the American people a deliberate misrepresentation of facts -- deliberate.

I had always supposed, and I still believe, that the foreign policy of the United States should not be involved in either legislative or party or newspaper politics. In other words, I do not think that the 1940 campaign should enter into the problem either on foreign policy or American defense in the year 1939. All you have to do is to read stories and headlines to realize that pure guesses dressed up have become, in the next step, statements of fact. I have in front of me, Oh, about eight or ten different newspapers. There isn't one story or one headline in all

of those papers that does not give, to put it politely, an erroneous impression -- not one. It is a rather interesting fact. These things have been manufactured by deliberate misrepresentation of facts, existing facts. The foreign policy has not changed and it is not going to change. If you want a comparatively simple statement of the policy, I will give it to you and Kannee can copy it out afterwards:

Number 1: We are against any entangling alliances, obviously.

Number 2: We are in favor of the maintenance of world trade for everybody -- all nations -- including ourselves.

Number 3: We are in complete sympathy with any and every effort made to reduce or limit armaments.

Number 4: As a Nation -- as American people -- we are sympathetic with the peaceful maintenance of political, economic and social independence of all nations in the world.

Now, that is very, very simple. There is absolutely nothing new in it. The American people are beginning to realize that the things they have read and heard, both from agitators of the legislative variety and the agitators of the newspaper owner variety, have been pure bunk -- b-u-n-k, bunk; that these people are appealing to the ignorance, the prejudice and the fears of Americans and are acting in an un-American way.

You will also notice that quite a number of them are receiving the loud acclaim, the applause of those governments in the world which do not believe in the continued independence of all nations.

I think that covers it pretty well. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, did the Rome Embassy report to you that the Italian

Government is going to change the name of Via Woodrow Wilson to Hamilton Fish?

THE PRESIDENT: All I can say is that that is rather joyous.

Q Is it possible then, in connection with this, to clarify the differences in interpretations that have been coming from the conferences you have had? In other words, can you now give us exactly what happened there?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe I could without asking them on the Hill what they think about it.

Now, on the question of secrecy, that also is 100% bunk.

Q In what way?

THE PRESIDENT: In this way: I will ask you a question: Do you think that -- suppose I had information which came in through the intelligence service, that such and such things were going on in such and such a country. There are no names, no way of proving the information before a court, and yet it is information which, because it has been checked from two or three different sources, looks to be, as far as we can tell now, reasonably true.

Now, suppose I held a press conference every day and gave out information of that kind to the public. In the first place, we are not definitely sure of it; it would be almost like certain stories that you read -- many of them are true, many of them turn out later on not to be true. In the second place, giving out information of that kind would completely terminate the getting of future information, because the sources of the information would be immediately blocked.

Now, in that conference the other day, I told them of some

things, information of that type, which we at the present time believe to be true but it is not the kind of thing to write a newspaper story about because it may not be true. It is merely our best slant as of today. It may be changed two weeks or a month from now by other information.

That is the only element of secrecy that has entered into either of the conferences, either with the Senate Committee or the House Committee. I told them both one or two pieces of -- you would not even call it information -- matters that have been reported to us, which we have reason to believe are true. Now, that is the only element of secrecy in either of those conferences. The rest of the conferences related solely to what I have just given you.

Q One of the principal items of the conference is that you are supposed to have told some of the conferees that the Rhine was our frontier in the battle of democracies versus fascism.

THE PRESIDENT: What shall I say? Shall I be polite or call it by the right name?

Q Call it by the right name.

THE PRESIDENT: Deliberate lie.

Q That goes, too, for the French?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q May we quote that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Was there any discussion of the manner in which the purchase of planes by France and Great Britain would be financed?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they asked in both conferences -- the question

has been asked about ten times before, "Are they going to be paid for in cash?" I said, "Yes." That is all; there is no further discussion.

Q Will the R. F. C. help them?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You indicated a moment ago that in these fourteen or fifteen newspapers you have on your desk there was an impression given, erroneously, of both facts and in the headlines, as I understood it, in practically every paper. Did your reading of those papers go far enough to convince you of what may be the motive of fifteen or more of our newspapers on a given day writing erroneous information --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, Fred (Essary), that is a very long subject. You know perfectly well that a story that starts as a story -- 'it is learned from reliable sources,' that kind of a thing, or 'it is believed, 'sources close to the President suggested,' etc., and so on. Now, when that story goes out, you are all covered by making that qualification, but the fellow who writes it up the next day, either in the editorials or in the subsequent news stories, leaves out your qualifying phrases. We have all had that happen. There isn't a person here who hasn't had that happen. That is the mechanics of journalism, and that is what happened in this case. I read, for instance, a compendium or concensus of editorial opinion I have here, and you will find that every one of those editorials put down as facts what you boys had said, 'it was learned from so and so but it was contradicted by somebody else,' or 'it is understood that at the conference the President

did this, that or the other thing.' Now, in these editorials there isn't one that does not affect those qualified statements as facts, and that is one of the troubles with our newspapers today. The public understands pretty well when it is said that such and such a thing is learned on good authority, or it has been suggested by White House sources, or things like that. They understand that that is not news, it is only a rumor of news. It does not make anybody sore; it is part of our system of a free press and it is primarily all right and the public is getting more and more discriminatory, which is fine.

Q The thing that impresses me most about your observation is that the things that we are writing or our editors are writing and our publishers are publishing are being applauded abroad. There seems to be something sinister about the way what we are writing is getting foreign applause.

THE PRESIDENT: That follows out the statement that the American frontier is the Rhine. Some boob got that off; I don't think it was a member of the Press. That was applauded in France. There were editorials about it; newspaper stories about this great thing that the President had said, and it was attacked in Germany, and it was attacked in Italy. It was applauded in London. In other words, the attack and the applause are again based on a misstatement of fact. Now, what can I do about it?

Q Have somebody in the Senate give the correct version.

THE PRESIDENT: No, you have got the correct version. I just gave it to you.

Q Do you doubt that somebody said that?

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt it very much. I would like to have that traced down and find out who it was, and if you can get him, Earl (Godwin), and bring him down here and let me ask him "Did you say that?"

Q Do you doubt somebody said that to a newspaper man?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I believe somebody did say it, but I would like to have you bring that fellow down here. That would be very good.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes, I would be glad to do that. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, do you think that that catch phrase sums up the situation?

THE PRESIDENT: What phrase?

Q 'The American frontier is on the Rhine.'

THE PRESIDENT: Of course not.

Q There is another manner in which that can get into print and that is by somebody in the conference making that remark to you. Could that happen or did it happen?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the remark was not even made to me.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Are you going to withdraw the name of the Virginia judge?

THE PRESIDENT: No. On the Virginia judge, the Senate, of course, has not taken action but if the Senate should refuse confirmation it is my plan to write a letter to Judge Roberts and that letter, I think, will be quite interesting.

Q Would that same course be followed in case Mr. Amlie's appointment or nomination were not confirmed.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know at all; I haven't thought of it.

Q You are not withdrawing the Amlie nomination?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #524,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
February 7, 1939, 4.15 P.M.

Q (Mr. Young) How long is it, Mr. President? (Referring to mimeographed release of February seventh, which the President had before him.)

THE PRESIDENT: Four pages and a little over.

Q Pretty nearly 2,000 words?

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: The Dean and I have agreed that on this letter of mine to Judge Roberts, it takes a long time to read the whole thing, so I will try to shorten it a little bit in order not to read every part of it. (Reading)

"First of all, I tender you my thanks for the honorable, efficient, and in every way praiseworthy service that you have rendered to the people of the United States in general and to the people of the Western District of Virginia in particular.

"Second, I wish it known that not one single person who has opposed your confirmation has lifted his voice in any shape, manner or form against your personal integrity and ability."

Then I proceed to summarize a series of letters that started way back last March between the Senator and myself --

Q (interposing) Which Senator, please?

THE PRESIDENT: Senator Glass. (Reading)

"On March 17, 1938 I received a letter from Senator Glass enclosing a clipping from a local Virginia paper. This newspaper article, quoting an editorial in another local Virginia paper, made the assumption that it would henceforth be necessary to receive the backing of Governor Price of Virginia before any Virginian could hope for a Federal appointment.

"Senator Glass in his letter asked if Federal appointments, for which Senate approval was necessary, would be subjected to the effective veto of the Governor of Virginia."

I replied to that, pointing out the Constitutional powers of Senators and Presidents.

He wrote to me again, agreeing in regard to the Constitutional rights but saying he still inferred that I approved the offensive publication. (Reading)

"I replied to this letter from the Senator on March 21st in a personal and friendly vein. I stated that I was glad that we seemed to agree in our construction of the Constitution. I told him that I was not in the habit of confirming or denying any newspaper article or editorial. Obviously if I were to begin that sort of thing, I would have no spare time to attend to my executive duties.

"I told the Senator to go ahead as before and make recommendations; that I would give such recommendations every consideration; but that I would, of course, reserve the right to get opinions from any other person I might select. I ended by asking the Senator to forget the newspaper article and wished him a good vacation and expressed the hope that he would come to see me on his return."

After that the Attorney General and I had several conferences in regard to possible nominees from that District (reading)

"with the result that we concluded that you were best fitted to fill the Judgeship.

"As a result, I wrote on July 6th to both of the Virginia Senators stating that I had concluded to appoint you, that a number of gentlemen had been suggested for the place, but that I believed you to be the best fitted.

"The following day, July 7th, I received a telegram from Senator Glass stating that he and his colleague would feel obliged to object to your appointment as being personally objectionable to them, and that a letter would follow.

A few days later I received a letter from the Senator stating that he could not conceive any fair reason why one of his candidates had not been appointed.

"It is worth noting that neither Senator on July 7th or subsequently raised any question as to your integrity or ability, and the only objection was that you were personally objectionable.

"In regard to the original newspaper article suggesting that Governor Price had been given the veto over Federal appointments, this and similar stories are, of course, not worth answering or bothering about, for the very simple reason that no person -- no Governor, no Senator, no member of the Administration has at any time had, or ever will have, any right of veto over Presidential nominations. Every person with common sense knows this."

Then followed the appointment and the hearing before the Senate Committee. Then I point out -- this is to the Judge, (reading)

"You will recognize from what I have written you that as far back as last March, in reply to Senator Glass' letters, I told him categorically that I never answered any questions relating to the credibility or otherwise of newspaper articles or editorials, and I asked him to forget the newspaper article altogether. Therefore, the statement of Senator Glass to the Committee does not square with the facts.

"Continuing, the Senior Senator from Virginia referred to other newspaper articles which spoke of 'rebukes' to the Senators. It is almost needless for me to suggest that neither you nor I pay any attention to such excuses. Finally, Senator Glass stated 'as a matter of fact, the President of the United States did give to the Governor of Virginia the veto power over nominations made by the two Virginia United States Senators.' I am sorry, in view of my long personal friendship for the Senior Senator, that he has made any such statement, and I can only excuse it on the ground of anger or forgetfulness.

"At the end of his speech Senator Glass says 'Mr. Cummings never had the slightest idea of giving consideration to the recommendations of the two Virginia Senators because the Governor of Virginia had been promised the right of veto on nominations that they made.' Neither of these statements is true.

"Senator Glass was followed by Senator Byrd who stated that your nomination was personally offensive to both Senators, in fact, 'personally obnoxious.'

\* \* \* \* \*

"During this whole period Presidents have recognized that the constitutional procedure is for a President to receive advice, i.e., recommendations, from Senators.

"Presidents have also properly received advice, i.e., recommendations, from such other sources as they saw fit.

"Thereupon Presidents have decided on nominations in accordance with their best judgment -- and in most cases basing their judgment on the character and ability of the nominee. In many cases, of course, the recommendations of Senators have been followed, but in many other cases they have not been followed by Presidents in making the nominations.

"Thereupon, under the Constitution, the Senate as a whole -- not the Senators from one State -- has the duty of either confirming or rejecting the nomination.

"It is, of course, clear that it was the intention of the Constitution of the United States to vest in the Senate as a whole the duty of rejecting or confirming solely on the ground of the fitness of the nominee.

"Had it been otherwise, had the Constitution intended to give the right of veto to a Senator or two Senators from the State of the nominee, it would have said so. Or to put it another way, it would have vested the nominating power in the Senators from the State in which the vacancy existed.

"On somewhat rare occasions the Senate, relying on an unwritten rule of Senatorial courtesy,

which exists in no place in the Constitution, has rejected nominees on the ground of their being personally obnoxious to their Senators, thus vesting in individual Senators what amounts in effect to the power of nomination.

"In the particular case of which you are the unfortunate and innocent victim, the Senators from Virginia have in effect said to the President -- 'We have nominated to you two candidates acceptable to us; you are hereby directed to nominate one of our two candidates, and if you do not we will reject the nomination of anybody else selected by you, however fit he may be.'

"Perhaps, my dear Judge Roberts, the rejection of your nomination will have a good effect on the citizenship and the thinking of the whole nation in that it will tend to create a greater interest in the Constitution of our country, a greater interest in its preservation in accordance with the intention of the gentlemen who wrote it.

"I am sorry, indeed, that you have been the victim. Against you not one syllable has been uttered in derogation of your character, or ability in the legal profession or your record on the Bench."

Steve (Mr. Early) will give you the whole thing when you go out.

Q What next, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not thought about it.

Q Any other name?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not thought about it yet.

Q Is there any use sending up another name?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not thought about it yet.

Q Will you consult Senator Glass or Senator Byrd before you send up another name?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not thought about it yet.

Q Were only two nominations sent in by the two Senators?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q When Benjamin Harrison became President he made the public announcement that Federal Judgeships should not be treated as Senatorial patronage.

THE PRESIDENT: That is right.

Q Do you care to comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I am inclined to think that it is about right.

Q Can you tell us anything about your railroad conference today?

THE PRESIDENT: Just checking up, making progress. There wasn't any real news. There was a chance for the members of the I. C. C. and the two chairmen (Senator Wheeler and Representative Lea) and I to talk over various phases, but only in general conversation and no details yet. They are getting on quite well with their hearings and, as I understand it, the I. C. C. will go up there after most of the rest of the testimony is in so that they will have a chance to comment on the evidence that has been given ahead of them.

Q Mr. President, are you familiar with the report which was made to the District Committee of the House with respect to the change of form of government here? I think --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) They sent me a copy and I have got it in my desk for evening reading, and I have not gotten to it yet.

Q You do not care to comment on it now?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not dare to, but just from reading leads of the report it looks like an earnest effort to improve the structure of the Government.

Q Do you intend to look that thing over so that we can talk about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission, in hearings before Congress, said that he made a cost of living report to you last April or May but that it was never made public.

THE PRESIDENT: Mac (Mr. McIntyre), what happened to that?

(Mr. Early spoke to the President.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I do not know why I should not say just that. The material in it, Steve (Mr. Early) tells me, is tied up in a number of quite important court cases and therefore should not be released until the court cases are through.

Q What kind of cases --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Another illustration of illicit and illegal Government secrecy. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, there were reports about town, both published and not published, that we are now selling some of our anti-aircraft gun directors to the British. Would you care to comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Perhaps I should only do it this way: "That a President, who would not allow the use of his name, said --" (laughter). Is that a good lead?

Q If we can quote it.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think so. You can use that.

Q What did he say?

THE PRESIDENT: The President, who would not allow the use of his name, said this: When he read this story in the paper yesterday morning he had a fit and proceeded to ask Steve (Mr. Early) to get to the bottom of it. Here, again, there are two phases in this. The story said that, with the President's approval, with

President Roosevelt's approval -- this must have been another President -- the U. S. Army has delivered to Britain a supply of its Universal directors. Now, get the distinction: There are two things (reading) "...vital instruments in the firing of anti-aircraft batteries, a private Senate inquiry disclosed Sunday night."

I won't give you the headline yet. Now, that sounds pretty startling. That is the lead. In other words, to the ordinary layman that means that the President approved and the U. S. Army delivered to the British a part of its supply, its own supply, of Universal directors, which are called "vital instruments in the firing of anti-aircraft batteries, a private Senate inquiry disclosed." In other words, that the President had told the Army to sell part of its stocks of these vital secret instruments. That is right. Now, that is the ordinary English interpretation.

So we looked it up and it turns out that after the war and up to 1930, the only suitable anti-aircraft director was a type manufactured by the <sup>V</sup>Bickers Company in England, and that that was released by the <sup>V</sup>Bickers Company for use by the British Government, and a number of these directors are still in use in our own Army. I will tell you what they are, there is no secret about it. When you have seen any of the anti-aircraft batteries, you have seen great big horns, like phonograph horns, only about ten feet long and six feet wide -- huge things.

The use of these patents was turned over to the Sperry Gyroscope Company and a number of experimental models were pro-

duced for us.

In 1937, these directors, through the State Department, were released for foreign sale and the Sperry Company was notified of that fact by the Office of Arms and Munitions Control. The director was released for foreign sale for two reasons: It was essentially defensive in character, it could not be used in an offense and, secondly, approval of a sale of an earlier model of the director could be granted that would meet the requirements of the British Government without disclosing information or data of a confidential nature. Third, that approval and the sale would enable the Sperry Company to provide facilities and tools to increase the production rate and lower the cost of them to our own Army. Prior to the sale to England, the Sperry Company could produce the directors at the rate of one a month, and principally because of this large order to England, they are now producing them at the rate of one a day. In other words, it has greatly increased our capacity to make them.

The tools for making them were the property of the Sperry Company for use in the production of directors for our own Government. As a result of this order, the War Department estimates that for this fiscal year it has made a saving of \$250,000. for the purchase of ninety-three directors.

This year, the only other thing we got -- no, last September, an improvement in the director was made over here and the Sperry Company requested authority from the War Department to incorporate this improved device in future orders from the British Government and this authority was denied on January

seventh of this year.

Well, of course the point of the thing is that the lead of the story scares everybody to death and it does not happen to be true.

Then the story goes on and speaks about the Army, "The Army, however, denied earlier reports that Britain was given its greatest military secret, a highly prized plane detector." That is a detector and of course there is no question about that, one way or the other, that whatever we have in the way of a plane detector has not been given to anybody and, if we have one only a very few people know about it and we hope that nobody else will know about it, if we have one.

However, I will say this, that because of all this publicity -- I won't mention from what source, I know and you know -- because of all this publicity about this detector which, if we have one, is a very secret thing, if I were a foreign government I would start in and spend all the money in the world until I got hold of one or the drawings of one. In other words, there is a lead for a foreign government. If we have got something that is good, that is a real secret, why, it is an open invitation to every foreign government that is not one hundred per cent friendly with us to go out and put every kind of spy to work in our own country on information received by this same person who gave it to the press.

I am not complaining about the press printing it -- of course it is a story -- but is it a patriotic thing, if we have a secret of this kind, to blazon it out for the benefit of

foreign governments? I think that is a very nice question.

Is it, at the same time, right for that or similar sources to give out to a perfectly innocent newspaperman -- I will tell you who it is, there isn't anything unpatriotic about Bill Hutchison -- but isn't it a pretty rotten thing to give Bill Hutchison a lead that causes him to make the public believe that the Universal director, the big horn, is a dark military secret that has been handed out secretly to foreign governments?

Now you all, I know you sympathize with me on this, every one of you, as to selling a fellow down the river on a story which is a fact so far as the director goes but which ought never to have been talked out loud about as far as the detector goes. Now I ask that question. It is a pretty low deal, not only on the press but the public, not forgetting one of the Presidents who asked that he be not quoted.

Q You seem to have acquired new rules in the export of arms. You use the word "defensive." Is that to be a Government question on the export of military weapons hereafter?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it always has been.

Q Are the bombers --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, no. A thing that cannot be moved off the ground, a thing that has to stay here, that is a defensive instrument of war. Do you see?

Q That is, we can sell a defensive but not an offensive?

THE PRESIDENT: That was one of the considerations. It is the first time I have heard of it. I heard about it fifteen minutes ago. I suppose a special barbed wire offense, I suppose that also

would be a defensive article of war.

Q Was there any stenographic record of your famous conference with the Military Affairs Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there was.

Q You do not?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there was. I think there may have been notes taken. I took some myself.

Q Did Mr. Kannee take any?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I have not asked him.

Q Will you ask him now?

Q Mr. Kannee is sitting right there, will you ask him?

THE PRESIDENT: He does not know either. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the agreement that was reached over the week end between the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Tennessee Electric Power Company with the Commonwealth and Southern Company?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not read all the details; I have not even read it. I have got a report on it somewhere here; I don't know where it is. Well, anyway, I can tell you that the only comment I can make is that it seems a very excellent solution of a somewhat difficult problem and one of the chief considerations is the fact that it will enable the power rates in the area served by the company, as I understand it, to be reduced between twenty and thirty per cent. I think that is sufficient comment on the whole transaction to make you feel that the agreement was worth while. In other words, the consumers of electricity in all of this area will save between twenty and

thirty per cent on their power bills on the average.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #525,

On the President's Special Train en route from

Washington to Florida City, Florida,

February 17, 1939, 2.30 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Skipper, (speaking to Frederick Storm) how are the boys?

Q (Mr. Storm) Dry land skipper, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Come in and sit down. Have you got the whole gang here?

Q They are coming right along.

Q (Mr. Belair) We will take you at your word (sitting on the floor).

Q How do you feel, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Fine, all right, except that I feel as weak as a cat.

You know what happens to you after that damn thing. (Referring to his recent illness, grippe, which had confined him to the White House, in bed, for the previous six days)

After about two hours up the first day, I went back to bed.

You look as though you need a little sun; I need it and so do you all; you look it.

Q Kind of pale.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; even the big Viking (Mr. Storm) looks a bit off.

Q The doctors are prescribing three days in bed for all those (grippe) cases in Washington.

Q Have you got any news?

THE PRESIDENT: All quiet. What I think I will do -- I was talking to Bill (Mr. Hassett) this morning -- I am inclined to think that, between us girls, what I send in from the ship you had better use in quotes as it comes in because there is no use trying your hand

at rewriting a maneuver story. You will get it all wrong. It is a difficult subject to rewrite.

Q Can the United Press have the exclusive use of your by-line?

(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What I think I will do, instead of it being from me, I will have it come in on Captain Callaghan. That is the best way. "Following received today from Captain Callaghan, Naval Aide to the President."

Q That well-known author. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That well-known author; that is right.

Q I suggest you have it corroborated by the exclusive United Press. That will all be directly quotable?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; that is the easiest way.

There is not an awful lot. It is one of those things, you know; when the Fleet goes off that way there is damn little that can be said.

Q When you sail from Key West, will you go immediately to join the Fleet?

THE PRESIDENT: There you are. There is another thing we haven't the faintest idea of. In other words, the problem is that at the present time --

Q (interposing) You are part of the defending fleet, is that correct?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably.

Q Is Admiral Leahy aboard the HOUSTON with you?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Will your ship act as umpire in this problem at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q It will be a participant as part of the defending fleet?

THE PRESIDENT: Subject to my right to take myself out of the game at any moment I want or to join up with any part of the force that I want.

Q As you probably have seen, it was testified before the Senate Military Affairs Committee that you, personally, paved the way for that French Military Commission to come over here and that this was over the protests of General Craig.

THE PRESIDENT: What was that in?

Q It was testified before the Senate Committee in executive session.

THE PRESIDENT: Who said that?

Q Several witnesses, including General Craig.

THE PRESIDENT: Who said that?

Q Morgenthau brought it out yesterday.

THE PRESIDENT: Hold on a minute, you are scrambling things. You are quoting from a portion of the testimony that was given out verbatim by Senator Austin. That is one part of/<sup>it</sup>which was not, so far as I know, given out by the Committee. The other part was what Senator Austin said and of course on that I am not saying anything at all, obviously.

Q You would not care to say whether you did personally facilitate the French Military Commission's work here in purchasing --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) If you preface it by the fact that of course they had an absolute right to purchase planes in this country. Of course, the Government as a whole facilitated their purchase of planes; there is no question about that, but it was not doing a thing which was not absolutely one hundred per cent

legal. You cannot separate the two statements.

Q Did you see the item appropos of that that Germany said they would sell planes to any and every buyer, including France, and give them five thousand if they wanted them to build up their effective force? It is the same thing we did here.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not see that. Who said that?

Q That is the statement over there by the Air Ministry or somebody, I do not know who.

THE PRESIDENT: It would depend on who said it.

Q There was an article in the Saturday Evening Post of this week by the editor of "Aviation," who was a guest of the German Government and who visited the various airplane factories, and he quotes the Air Minister in his story as saying that they were willing to sell --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now Fred (Storm), do you think that any official of any responsible government could comment on an article by a civilian in a popular magazine purporting to say what somebody else had said in some other country? That is the trouble with the American people today, that they are being fed that sort of thing and expected to believe it. Now, you can put that down. That is the kind of bunk -- repeat the word bunk -- that is being handed out. And, in the same way, we have people who set themselves up with a quasi military or quasi naval title as experts. They write attractively and sell their wares to a magazine or newspaper syndicate and they are thereupon accepted as experts by members of the House, the Senate and the general reading public.

We have lots of examples of that kind. I will tell you off

the record, but this has got to be off the record, one fellow that we can think of at the present time. This has to be off the record so that we can have a meeting of the minds. His name is Eliot --

Q (interposing) George Fielding Eliot?

THE PRESIDENT: You know who he is. He has been connected with U.P., I believe, and somebody took him up. He wrote a very interesting book on the Service. He gave the real low-down. Brother Eliot is very simple. I believe he was born in this country -- this is all off the record but just illustrates -- born in this country and taken to Australia when, I think, he was two or three years old. He was brought up in Australia and, sometime during the World War -- I think he went as a private in the Australian forces, the Anzac Corps -- he went over to France and served in France in two or three engagements, I think very well, as a private or corporal or maybe as second lieutenant. All right; no kick on that.

At the end of the war he drifted around for a while and tried to sell some articles but he could not do it; he could not make a living. He came back to this country and although he hadn't been in this country since he was two or three years old, he had been born here and therefore had a right to citizenship and, as an American citizen, in 1921 or 1922 he decides that he wants to go into our Army Reserve Corps. He goes through an R.O.T.C. course. All right; fine. I think he went to two of them and then was made, I think, a major in the Reserves.

About 1926 or 1927, along there, he got his usual annual

post card or letter from the War Department as a Reserve Officer. He never replied. If he had not received the post card or letter, the thing would have come back, "Not known at this address." At the end of a couple of years of this he was dropped for complete failure to reply. He was dropped from the Army Reserves.

Now, I ask you, is that a man with any pretense of being an expert on military affairs?

He kept on trying to sell stories to the papers and magazines and nothing happened; nothing doing.

This past fall he happened to get out a book which he just happened to time right and it had a popular sale -- it is well written -- whereupon, today, he is taken to be by everybody a great military expert.

Now, that is the kind of stuff that is handed out to the American public.

Q Did you have in mind, when you made this remark about bunk, this kind of bunk?

THE PRESIDENT: This kind of fellow.

Q That was in answer to Fred's (Mr. Storm's) question about the Saturday Evening Post.

THE PRESIDENT: It is the kind of thing that we have to avoid. You can find lots of cases. You can find Army officers and Navy officers who go completely haywire. We don't have to mention any names.

Q Is there anything in his book that is open to that kind of criticism?

THE PRESIDENT: Only this, that nobody pays any attention to his book

that knows anything about it.

Q His premises are wrong?

THE PRESIDENT: The book does not mean anything at all. Then, if you will remember, in one of those articles, there were some solemn assurances that he had it from unimpeachable sources as to the number of planes that Germany had. This has to be still off the record. Well, of course, if you state that solemnly enough, people will believe it. "I have it from unimpeachable sources." Well, his facts do not jibe with the facts the American Government believes to be true. On the other hand, if anybody with a "Major" in front of his name, who has written for books and who has written for a newspaper syndicate and who has been widely heralded goes out and says, "I have it from unimpeachable sources," my God, what does one do about it? You see the difficulty? I am talking about that (difficulty) which the American public labors under. And then somebody in the House who wants to talk pacificism or play up to his own district or something like that, or somebody in the Senate, they pick it up and say, "See what this man says. That is my authority." Bob Reynolds.

You see, that is why we have to be so terribly careful about answering any questions along that type of line. The same way, how can we answer any questions about what a magazine story says about what somebody said to somebody else over in Germany? It does not make sense. That is not part of a legitimate newspaper story because that is not news, it is supposition.

I am not trying to teach you how to run your own jobs, but, in these days, it is a mighty serious thing to put down as fact,

even with the usual qualifying clause, which people pay no attention to, things that are made out of whole cloth or things that are based on your Saturday Evening Post stories or things like that.

Q As you pointed out before, every male over sixteen is an amateur strategist at heart and just eats that stuff up.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Is there any noticeable reaction on the part of the people to those stories in evidence?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, very much. Read any of the debates in the House on this new bill that went through the other day. Of course, the final vote was grand, perfectly grand but, in the course of the debate, there were things said there which were featured and put into the lead in a great many instances.

For instance, I was talking -- this has to be off the record -- I was talking to the Vice President yesterday at Cabinet and we all agreed that if you go by the final vote, it is perfectly grand -- there were only fifteen votes against it -- but think of all the poison that has been sold, all the misinformation that has been handed out in the course of the debate on that bill. It is perfectly terrible. If they would only look at the vote, it would be grand.

Q I take it you are suggesting that we not be amateur strategists?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I will tell you what it is like. Keep all this off the record, all the way along. So many -- it is like the use of English in saying that the frontiers of the United States are on the Rhine or in France. Of course that is utter rubbish but

there is an element -- there is a thing that can be said, and you can take this so that you can get the general slant -- we, being all in the family, we can talk quite freely -- what is true is an entirely different thing but, in the hands of an unscrupulous person like Nye or Bennett Clark, on this particular subject, it can be made, it can be so completely twisted around as to be an awfully dangerous thing. Let us put it this way and you will see the point, to give you an inkling of what happened two weeks ago:

There are certain nations, about thirty or forty strong -- perhaps thirty outside of this continent -- whose continued independent political and military and economic existence and, let us say, their economic independence, the continuance of those three factors, especially the political independence and economic independence, as long as they continue to have it, it acts as a protection for the democracies of this hemisphere. You see the point?

Now, suppose I was to say that the continued independence, in a political and economic sense, of Finland is of tremendous importance to the safety of the United States? Now, isn't that a very different thing than saying that the frontier of the United States is in Europe? It is an entirely different thing. Suppose I was to add to that and say that the continued independence, the political and economic existence of Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania is of tremendous ultimate importance to the defense of the United States?

Suppose I go a little further and say that the continued economic and political independence of Sweden, Norway and Denmark has a great bearing on the future defense of the United States and

of the democracies of the new world? Of course it has.

Now, go on down the line and say the same thing about Holland and Belgium and Portugal and Switzerland -- the continuation of their political and economic independence. Greece -- I will have to go clear around the corner -- Greece, Egypt, Turkey, Persia. There are quite a lot of nations I have named in there. The destruction of their economic and political independence would seriously affect the defense of the United States. Therefore we have a continuing interest in their remaining free and independent.

Now, last autumn, before September, we could have added other nations to that, Czechoslovakia. Now, there is a very practical illustration: Up to September, Czechoslovakia had independence, political and economic. So, last spring, March, did Austria. Austria went last March, and to all intents and purposes Czechoslovakia went since then and, since then, to all intents and purposes, Hungary has gone. Hungary has really got as much independence as it had a year ago. Yugoslavia says, "Yes, we will do anything. We will sign on the dotted line. We will trade with you." They are not so independent; neither is Bulgaria or Roumania. Roumania is scared pink. In other words, those nations did, a year ago, constitute an item.

Now, that kind of a story is absolutely, one hundred per cent, true, but that is a very different thing from talking about the frontiers of the United States being on the Rhine.

Q How do you suppose they got to use that term?

THE PRESIDENT: Very simple. It is the kind of term that could scare the American people, politically, and out of which they could

make political capital.

Q Do you think it was deliberate?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure, and you and I know it. All you have to do is to see the people who did it.

Q Well, talking about foreign affairs, can you tell us anything about your discussion with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Brazil?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not on the record, John (Mr. O'Donnell). We talked -- and on the record you can say this, that we discussed the economic relations between the two countries, and that things are going along very well there.

Q There have been reports that he was going to suggest, that there was to be discussed the idea of American colonists going down there?

THE PRESIDENT: Actually I heard about that but we did not talk about it. I did not get around to it. We talked for an hour about the economic and political situation but we did not get on the subject of colonies or colonization.

Q That would bear the implication, that struck me, that here we are getting to be an old country and that the young and vigorous must look for opportunities under a foreign flag. Do you subscribe to the idea of our economic future that the young men who are ambitious would --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, of course I think it is a great chance for a whole lot of young Americans. I think it is a grand chance. I think there is nothing to keep them from going down there. Brazil has one of the greatest futures for development in the world.

Q Is this on the record?

THE PRESIDENT: You can use all this. It is a grand chance but I have not talked about any plans for colonization or anything like that.

Q Isn't it remarkable in our short history as a nation that here we have reached this point now where the ambitious young men must leave the shores?

THE PRESIDENT: You are right on that, that it is a period, nationally, where we have, perhaps, come to that point. On that subject there is a very interesting historical fact which was so insignificant that it did not really amount to anything. At the end of the Civil War a very large number of Confederate officers, whose homes were gone, their families even gone to the four winds, they had nothing to look forward to, their businesses were gone, their professions were gone, even the places where they had been brought up -- I don't like to say how many there were without checking it up -- but there were a good many hundreds of them that went down to Brazil and settled there. Their descendants are, today, in Brazil. Some of the finest families in Brazil are descended from those Confederate officers.

So there is, really, a historical background for future Americans to go down to Brazil, not because there is a civil war but for economic or family reasons, people who are looking for a new place to which to go. That is a very interesting historical story on that. Did you ever know about it?

Q I did not, no.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you know how many hundreds there were?

Q It seems to me there were somewhere around seven or eight hundred.

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. You (Mr. Trohan) are the expert on Brazil.

Didn't you find out about that?

Q (Mr. Trohan) I think there are several thousands of descendants of them. They settled south of Rio.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q If that were carried out, wouldn't it drain our nation of its best and most vigorous young men?

THE PRESIDENT: No. What percentage?

Q I mean, it would be the first time in our history that people have left the flag to seek opportunity in foreign lands.

Q Canada, John (Mr. O'Donnell):

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, thousands went to Canada.

Q And thousands in Mexico.

THE PRESIDENT: There are really thousands in western Canada.

Q After the Mexican War, weren't there thousands of Americans who stayed on in Mexico?

THE PRESIDENT: A few hundred, I think; that is about all. You see, we never had very large armies down there.

Q Can you say anything on or off the record about Spain and recognition?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Off the record, there isn't anything we can say.

Q In connection with Wayne Chatfield Taylor's resignation yesterday, the report has been circulating around that he actually resigned because he differed from the Administration and the Treasury Department over the handling of the stabilization fund.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. We talked about it quite a while. Did he have anything to do with the stabilization fund? I don't

think so.

Q His foremost idea was that the Treasury should attend to its own knitting.

THE PRESIDENT: That is new to me.

Q I read one story on that this morning. Chatfield's (Taylor's) belief was that the Treasury was seeking to aid certain nations on the basis of political ideologies rather than on fiscal or monetary grounds.

THE PRESIDENT: It sounds to me like a lot of words put together.

Q Sources close to the White House have been hinting that there was a business appeasement program in the making. Do you know anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Let us put it the other way around. Let me ask a question: What is there to appease? Now, be specific.

Q (Mr. O'Brien) As I understand it, the Administration is attempting to remove so-called fear by (of) business --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, now you have to be specific.

Q Specifically, take the utilities, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: All right. Now, on utilities, we will answer that very simply and clearly. You cite that as an example?

Q Yes, that is one.

THE PRESIDENT: Now, for about, oh, I should say a year and a half, about ninety per cent, probably ninety-five per cent of the utility people in the United States have known and accepted the fact that the Government was going in for no further power development. During that year and a half every utility company -- that is, the holding companies because there has never been any

trouble with the operating companies -- has come in gradually and registered under the S.E.C., with two exceptions. You will remember that about three or four months ago Groesbeck came in to see me. Everything was lovely; his company had decided to register and his company was one of the big companies that had been holding out. That was Electric Bond and Share. When he came in that marked the complete understanding between the utility companies and the Government, that the Government had no further program for power development, and that the S.E.C. Act was constitutional, and that everybody was going to proceed in a friendly way to carry out the existing law. In other words, there was no further utility problem, therefore there was no fear.

Now, there are only two exceptions to that in the entire United States. One was the Associated Gas and Electric Company, which is and has been, for a long time, involved with the Government on charges involving failure to live up to the law and charges involving fraud. That one company, out of all the companies in the United States, has not been settled in any way at the present time. That is a pending question. In that case fraud charges and charges of illegality are still before the courts and will be for some time. The rest of the industry understands that situation thoroughly and is not in any way disturbed by it.

The only other company out of these dozens of companies was Willkie's company. His company was involved in only one of its many areas (that it covers) and that was the Tennessee Power Company area. That was only one of the many operating companies that are owned by Commonwealth and Southern. Now, that has been settled,

therefore that is no longer a pending question.

So you see, when you come down to brass tacks, there is John's (Mr. O'Brien's) illustration. You see how that works out?

Q Do you know to what extent the utilities have gone forward with the program they laid out with the War Department for integrating systems?

THE PRESIDENT: There is nothing today that stands in the way of going ahead with it and there has not been for a long time.

Q They have promised to do things in the way of building programs that never got any further --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What we are hoping is that they will go ahead with all construction plans that they have.

That is a very good illustration about generalities which, when reduced to specific facts, destroy the generalities. That is a good line.

Q There are some so-called big businessmen in this country who feel that they should not spend stockholders' money on plant expansion as long as they feel that the budget is unbalanced.

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't it a fair thing to say to them: "Gentlemen, come into my office. Here is the budget. I want to be constructive and so do you. Will you go over that budget with me and give me specific recommendations as to how to bring it in balance? That means, of course, that you have to take it item by item and tell me where you can cut and if, after having cut it and you are still not in balance with present taxes, what do you then propose to do?" That is a fair American way of putting it.

Q Is it up to the businessman or the Chief Executive to take the

initiative?

THE PRESIDENT: It is up to the businessman if he complains about the budget being out of balance. In other words, if he comes out publicly and says, "I won't do anything until the budget is in balance," then it is up to him to tell me how it should be done. That is just common sense and I will be delighted, perfectly delighted, if he will come in and make specific recommendations, and then, when these specific recommendations have been made, there is something for Congress to debate and act on. You see, Congress passes tax laws and the appropriations. We have got to have from any complainant, who does not like this or that, we have to have from that complainant a suggestion as to how it can be better done. That is just old man common sense.

Q It has been suggested that you might recommend taxes and a method of balancing the budget.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q It is up to the Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no; I do not think you need worry much about taxes. As you know, on taxes, we would have to do something if Congress were to fail to reenact present taxes, the ones that expire, or if Congress, on the other hand, were to pass very, very large additional appropriations outside of the budget. Of course, if we did that, that ought to be taken care of with new taxes, but there isn't any prospect of either of those things happening, therefore it is not a moot question at this time.

Q Mr. President, to get back to the defense question for just a moment: Is there anything you can give us, on the record, to counteract

that unfortunate statement that our borders lie on the Rhine?

Just where are our borders?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because, having told you all this off the record, I think that unconsciously, in the writing of future stories, not in the next two weeks but in the next few months, now that you have the low-down, that you will subconsciously infiltrate the idea into your stories. That is an honest, polite way of putting it.

Q In other words, bend over forwards back?

THE PRESIDENT: What they call subconscious infiltration.

Q You might have let us take notes on it, though. (Laughter)

Q Is there anything you care to say in connection with these maneuvers?

This is probably a hemispherical defense?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is better to hold that until we get out and Dan Callaghan gets the stories over to you. On that it is very possible that easily two or three days may go by without a whisper from the ship and that will be bad. All you can do then is to say, in regard to the President, that no news is good news.

Q There will be more than a whisper from our offices. (Laughter)

Q Will you please instruct Mr. Callaghan that deadlines are early and regular?

THE PRESIDENT: On that, what time do you want us to get it in to you?

What is the best time for all of you?

Q How many dispatches a day are you going to send?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably only one. There will be some days you won't get any at all. You will probably get a dispatch twice a day for the first three or four days. When do you want to get those?

Q One about 10.00 in the morning and another about three-thirty in the afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: You won't get one at 10.00 in the morning. I might send it out in the late evening.

Q We would like one for the day stories and then one for the night stories. Four o'clock would be for the overnight and 10.00 o'clock --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think the way we would handle it, the best thing to do, is to write our story before we go to bed and then leave instructions to send it during the night, so that you won't get it -- Bill (Mr. Hassett) will give it to you the first thing in the morning. Is that all right? Around 9.00 o'clock in the morning Bill will have it for you. And then, the other story we will try to get that off about 6.00 o'clock. It will go straight to you around 6.00 o'clock without any delay. Is that all right? What time will you want to file down there, about 8.00?

Q At night?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q As near that time as possible. Six o'clock, if possible.

THE PRESIDENT: We will try to get it off. If we should happen to go out fishing, we will try to handle that 6.00 o'clock story before we go out in the afternoon. The best time for us to do it is at luncheon time.

Q Then that would give us a free afternoon. That would be perfect.

THE PRESIDENT: For the first three or four days we will try to get you two stories a day. They won't amount to anything because we

will be just steaming along. But when we join up we may be in such shape that we won't even dare to send a word.

Q Your ship might be incapacitated?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, sure.

Are you all going down to Key West?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: You will find it interesting down there.

Q In that connection, you are making two brief radio speeches. Have you got them in shape?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have them tonight, all mimeographed. I am way ahead of you.

Q Just so we won't sleep late, what time do you expect to get started?

THE PRESIDENT: Eight-thirty or quarter to 9.00. Is that too early?

Q I guess we can make it. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: We might make it nine o'clock; it might be better.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Mr. President.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #526,

At the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp on

West Summerfield Key, Florida,

February 18, 1939, 12.45 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you had enough to eat?

Q Fine.

THE PRESIDENT: George (Mr. Durno), how are they behaving?

Q (Mr. Durno) They are on their best behavior.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not see -- where is the big Norwegian (Mr. Storm)?

Q He is out front.

THE PRESIDENT: Is he (Fred Storm) the house mother?

Q He resigned as the house mother.

Q (Mr. Trohan) No, I resigned. We are a lot of ex-house mothers.

Q (Mr. Storm) Here I am.

THE PRESIDENT: I was waiting for the house mother. It is all right.

Q (Mr. Storm) The house mother was very busy.

THE PRESIDENT: I want to get something across, only don't put it that way. In other words, it is a thing that I cannot put as direct stuff, but it is background. And the way -- as you know, I very often do it -- if I were writing the story, the way I'd write it is this -- you know the formula: When asked when he was returning the President intimated that it was impossible to give any date because, while he hoped to be away until the third or the fourth of March, information that continues to be received with respect to the international situation continues to be disturbing, therefore, it may be necessary for the President to return before the third of fourth of March. It is understood that this information

relates to the possible renewal of demands by certain countries, these demands being pushed, not through normal diplomatic channels but, rather, through the more recent type of relations; in other words, the use of the fear of aggression.

Q What was that?

THE PRESIDENT: The use of the fear of aggression. Further than that deponent saith not. I cannot, as you can readily understand. That does happen to be true. That is even since we left Washington. But it is just as well that the country should know that that is a situation and a possibility. Not by any means, a probability; it is much too strong to say it is a probability.

Q This latter we say on our own authority?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q (Mr. Durno) What are you going to do down in Key West before the broadcast, anything?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Mayor is coming into the car just before we get to the city line and drive around and see all the developments that have been made there in the last five or six years. Of course it is one of the amazing things we have done, to keep a city alive and change it over from -- what is that technical term, not an abandoned city but a --

Q (interposing) Ghost town?

THE PRESIDENT: There is some technical term for it when all industries leave the city. I have forgotten what the technical word is. It really was flat on its back and, through W.P.A. principally, it has been turned into an entirely different type of community. There has been an enormous amount of work done in cleaning up and

painting it. It has meant that people from the outside have begun to flock into it.

Q We flew down several years ago when you were fishing. It was a pretty sad looking affair then. The W.P.A. had just moved in.

THE PRESIDENT: Instead of being a thoroughly discouraged, dejected community, they are up on their toes again.

Q This road (the road from Florida City to Key West) ought to help.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that covers it.

MR. STORM: Thank you, Mr. President.