

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #604,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 8, 1939, 10.50 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: These girls don't know what they missed last night.

Q May (Miss Craig) has another question.

THE PRESIDENT: Sitting up too late?

Q All night.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Nice speech last night; nice talk.

THE PRESIDENT: I took it off the back of the menu. I wrote down some notes.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Very nice; very happy. I hope you feel all right. I felt all right up to the time I got up this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not get enough sleep. There was a bunch of stuff from the State Department last night and I sat up until about 2.00 o'clock.

Q There were a lot of inquiries as to whether you had ptomaine poisoning.

THE PRESIDENT: It was all right and I ate a little of everything.

Aren't they all in yet?

Q Not quite; there is a big house.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am sorry to be late but it is all the fault of Joe Kennedy (Ambassador Kennedy). He came in this morning at the crack of dawn. We have been talking ever since. And we will talk some more this afternoon.

You gentlemen had better be on your good behavior because inevitably there will be comparisons with interviews with the British

Press and today's Conference. Be careful.

Outside of that I know nothing. One of the things we talked about this morning goes back to the old question of American ships and the Ambassador is taking up today or tomorrow with the Maritime Commission the thing we have been working on for some time, and for which, I suppose, the only thing I can say is that we are making progress. That is the general idea -- I think I spoke of it about a month ago -- trying to use some of these American flag ships in foreign trade runs in other parts of the world, outside of the war areas -- taking over a certain amount of carrying of goods which are now being carried by belligerent ships, merchant ships. We hope that that will give employment to some of the ships that have been laid up, that formerly ran to belligerent ports.

Q Mr. President, did you and the Ambassador speak of something which I think I saw in one of the earlier dispatches today, the question of southern wood, southern lumber?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That also was being talked about, whether we cannot get use for some of our southern pine for shipment to belligerent ports.

Q Mr. President, on the use of ships, the last time you talked about it you said some of these ships might be used for the so-called barter arrangement on cotton and tin, et cetera. Can you discuss that?

THE PRESIDENT: We are doing a little -- we haven't got very far, Pete (Mr. Brandt), not as far as we do hope to get. That is a thing I meant to speak to Joe (Ambassador Kennedy) about this morning but we haven't got to that item.

Q Will the matter of ship transfers become a matter of discussion between the United States and Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q In taking over the trade routes, would it be by agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not say agreement but, if certain lines are to be abandoned by belligerents, we hope to be able to be there, to know about it and take over the work during the continuation of the war.

Q Are those lines between American and neutral ports?

THE PRESIDENT: No, mostly between neutral ports and neutral ports -- non-American. That is the objective.

Q Mr. President, there is an Ohio relief situation which is rather complicated and difficult to explain unless you go into it. Have you seen it in the newspapers or have you anything to say about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I asked yesterday for a memorandum on it from Colonel Harrington. I have got it here and there is no reason why Steve (Mr. Early) should not give it to you. The gist of it is -- well, in the first place -- let us put it this way. Let us clarify the thing.

A good many years ago -- I do not know what, six years, seven years -- there has been a perfectly definite allocation of responsibility in the United States. The Federal Government has assumed to take care of, as much as possible -- it does not mean one hundred per cent but it is a pretty high percentage -- of workers, of needy people who are able to work and want to work. They have to be three things: They have got to be needy; they have got to

want to work and have got to be able to work. The Federal Government has taken care of the overwhelming majority of those people. That is the Federal job.

At the same time, it has been the Government policy that what we call home relief people -- those are needy people who cannot work for one reason or another -- and the responsibility of taking care of those Americans has been definitely established as being on the state. Now, that does not mean that the policy -- that it is on the states as local governments. It is on the states. Why? Because local governments are creatures of the states. They have a system of local government in almost every state in the Union. That is not our business. But the primary responsibility for the non-W.P.A. cases, that is, needy people who cannot work, is on the states.

Some states have one method of working it out with their municipalities and other states have other methods of working out the procedure with their municipalities. When I say, "municipalities," I mean townships, as we call them in the North, or the county system of government as they have it in the South. We have counties all over the United States except in Louisiana where they have parishes, which is the same thing. I mean incorporated villages, cities, boroughs, et cetera.

It is not the concern of the Federal Government as to how it is done. It is the responsibility of the state and that means the governor and the legislature of each state. Therefore this Ohio situation concerns primarily home relief cases. It is solely a matter for the State of Ohio, and how the Governor and the Legis-

lature work it out, or the City of Cleveland or the City of Toledo or any other cities in Ohio, is not our business. In other words, we are proceeding in an absolutely constitutional way and putting that burden up to the states.

Now on this particular Ohio situation, the controversy in regard to home relief cases is between the cities of Ohio and the State Government. We are maintaining and retaining this well-established principle, which has been in our laws now for six or seven years. However, we have added, in Cleveland, a good many Federal projects. Those are to take care of people who are in need and can work -- six thousand new jobs. That comes pretty close to taking care of the people who are in need and can work but it does not solve the problem of thousands and thousands of people who are in need and cannot work. Therefore, all we can say is that the responsibility of the people in Cleveland and these other cities is on the State of Ohio.

This memorandum, as you can see -- Steve (Mr. Early) will give it to you -- has a comparison of what two contiguous states have done, Ohio and Pennsylvania. Ohio has six million people, Pennsylvania nine million people. In 1939, the relief expenditures in Ohio were \$7,000,000. and in Pennsylvania \$33,000,000. Now, these are not Federal, these are state figures. Do not get the thing mixed up. This is what states are doing for their home relief cases.

Q Will you read those again, please, seven and --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Seven and thirty-three. The average general relief benefits, that is, home relief benefits, per case

in October, 1939, in Ohio was \$16. and in Pennsylvania, \$27., which goes to show that the State of Ohio has not taken care of home relief cases half as well as the State of Pennsylvania.

That is about where the thing stops. The responsibility for those cases is on the state. That is all there is to be said about it, that they have failed to carry out what we consider to be their responsibility under the established policy for the last six or seven years.

Q Where did you say the figures came from, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: These are home relief expenditures, July to October, 1939.

Q July to October?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

(At this point Mr. Early spoke to the President.)

Steve (Mr. Early) suggests another thing, although, frankly, it is a drop in the bucket. Under the general policy of doing everything we can to keep people from starving, we are sending in surplus commodities, the Federal Government, to those places in Pennsylvania (Ohio?). In other words, we are doing more than the original policy. Now, of course, people cannot live on our surplus commodities; we know that. Those are apples and some cereals.

Q There are no strings placed on the use of those surplus commodities?

They are both Federal and home relief?

THE PRESIDENT: They are only used on home relief cases, because the Federal relief cases are getting money.

Q Does the memorandum show what percentage of Ohio's needy employables are being cared for by the Federal Government?

THE PRESIDENT: No. But, just as a guess, I would say probably a higher percentage of the needy employables in Ohio than the average of the states.

Q Mr. President, did you discuss the Cuban sugar situation with Secretary Wallace yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we did, and with the State Department. I asked them to give me a memorandum. I would put it this way, that at the present time nothing has been concluded but there is a serious doubt as to the advisability of restoring the quota system under present conditions. On the Cuban sugar phase of it, there are certain international obligations which, of course, have to be carried out in accordance not only with the letter but the spirit of them. That is about all there is to say now because nothing has been concluded.

Q Mr. President, on this Ohio situation, do you know whether the Ohio authorities, the State authorities, have denied or acknowledged their responsibility for unemployables?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is like saying, "Was this national policy seven years ago based on a contract between, say, the State and the Federal Government?" Of course that is tommyrot. The Congress of the United States said, "We will take care of employables." Every state in the Union has proceeded -- even some of the poorest states -- along the line of taking care of their unemployables, every single state, and that has been going on for six or seven years, including Ohio.

Q You speak of international obligations. Does that mean tariff cuts?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. You had better talk to the State Department

about that. As you know, we have had this old agreement that has been running for quite a long while, several years. You had better take it up with the State Department.

Q Mr. President, what response have you had to your Warm Springs statement on the public debt and taxes?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I do not think there is anything at this time.

Q Sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is anything at this time. In other words, anybody who says anything about the tax situation is just making wild guesses because I do not know. There has been no change in policy at any time. We are still in the study stage and will be until about the twenty-sixth of December, which will be the last Tuesday in the month.

Q Is that the day after Christmas this year? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We set Christmas for the last Monday in December this year.

Q Have you had much response to your request that the people tell you which they prefer?

THE PRESIDENT: Not very much from the people. (Laughter)

Q Your wife spoke out. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: We have had a lot of other gratuitous advice but it is very nice. I like to get it.

Q There are some Federal judgeships, at least one which we are interested in. Are you up to the point of discussing those?

THE PRESIDENT: Frank (Attorney General Murphy) and I have not had much chance to discuss any appointments yet and probably won't for about another week.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, sir.

Q Mr. President, Governor Landon was in town yesterday and he again expressed the desire that you make some sort of expression in connection with your 1940 plans. Have you anything on that?

THE PRESIDENT: You had better ask May Craig. (To Miss Craig, as the Press were leaving) May, that wasn't up to your standard at all.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #605,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 12, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

Q I got a message from Senator White of Maine, personally for you,
today.

THE PRESIDENT: What is it?

Q He says Maine is republican.

THE PRESIDENT: Did he really?

Q Yes. He asked me to tell you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, some day he is going to be wrong. (Laughter)

You tell him that some day he is going to be wrong.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have got anything today.

Q There is a rumor that Frank Knox will be asked to go into the Cabinet as Secretary of the Navy. The rumor is strong again today.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we generally have something like that at this time.

Q Do you think that is a Tuesday story?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; that is a Tuesday story.

Q Can we expect a new District Judge (for the District of Columbia)?

THE PRESIDENT: Here in the District of Columbia?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: We have not taken that up. The Attorney General and I have talked over several judgeships but not the District of Columbia yet.

Q There are reports that you have decided on a Supreme Court Judge?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q You have conferred several times recently with Norman Davis. Has he given you any estimate of relief requirements in Europe or what the Red Cross is doing about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I have a memorandum somewhere around here, if you want figures. They have spent over \$500,000. to date, or it is in the process of being spent, and the Central Committee of the Red Cross has appropriated a million dollars for war relief in Europe.

Q Does that include Finland?

THE PRESIDENT: It includes Finland. The chapters (of the Red Cross) have produced warm garments for refugees, valued at \$250,000. and the public has contributed for war relief \$260,000. and they have sent, already, warm clothing and medicines to Polish refugees who are in neighboring countries, Rumania, Hungary, Lithuania and Latvia, and they are spending \$250,000. besides, under an agreement with the German Red Cross, to give impartial aid within Poland.

They have sent \$25,000. for initial relief in Finland and have bought \$16,000. worth of medicines in London to send by airplane to Finland. Wayne Taylor is arriving in Finland today to report on further relief needs.

Then, in addition to those statistics, I think I can say that of course we are encouraging all kinds of gifts and, through various channels, of working in cooperation with the Red Cross because, undoubtedly, the needs in the case of Finland will be a good deal greater than they are now, and the needs in Poland will continue at least through the winter, also the needs of Polish refugees who got out of the country.

Q Mr. President, as the president of the Red Cross, have you anything to say about the competition Mr. Hoover seems desirous of offering in connection with relief in Finland?

THE PRESIDENT: Fine, fine, because, as I understand it, there is cooperation between his money raising and the Red Cross.

Q Did he consult with the Red Cross, do you know?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think they have been in consultation for about two months.

Q Are there any moves still being made to establish a central agency to take care of all the refugees?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is being handled through a central agency now.

Q I beg pardon?

THE PRESIDENT: It is being handled through a central agency now, all of it.

Q Well, I counted six of these different Polish committees.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and they are all working through the Red Cross.

Q Through the Red Cross?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, the Export-Import Bank says there is no statutory obstacle to them lending money which Finland may use for military purposes but they have a policy against loans of that kind. Have you anything to say about the relaxation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it is relaxation. I think this loan to Finland is for non-war material.

Q Yes, it is, but I was wondering whether there might be a relaxation on future loans?

THE PRESIDENT: That is an "iffy" thing. They are not in contemplation at this time.

Q We hear that George Earle is to get a diplomatic post. Can you tell us anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I read it in the paper too. (Laughter)

Q Do you plan to ask Congress for any changes in the Neutrality Act at the next session?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of, no. But, if something new should turn up in January --

Q (interposing) No weaknesses have developed?

THE PRESIDENT: But if something turns up and I should have to ask for something, do not say it is contrary to what I said on the twelfth of December. I have not any thought in mind now.

Q Is it desirable to ask for trade agreement renewals next session?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you tell us anything about the desirability of lowering the excise tax on copper as indicated in the Chilean trade agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know what is contemplated in the Chilean trade agreement so I cannot answer the question.

Q The present excise tax is four cents and, in the agreement under discussion, there is the possibility of a fifty per cent reduction or two cents.

THE PRESIDENT: I am glad to have the information. I did not know it before. (Laughter)

Q Is there any modification of the Act in the process of review?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. The thing has not been taken up except with the general thought that there will undoubtedly be requests

for renewals. There are undoubtedly many countries that are still in the potential effort of making trade agreements for the general objective of increasing our exports along the same line. We have had great success in doing it so far.

Q Did Secretary Wallace say anything to you about that Dies report on the consumers' organization?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Lots of other people have, though. (Laughter)

Q Name three, Mr. President. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything of your conference with Mr. Leon Henderson yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the usual checkup. It happens about every three or four weeks -- S. E. C. and the T. N. E. C.

Q Senator Taft said yesterday in Boston that Government expenses could be reduced to such an extent, without hurting anything, that the Budget would be balanced in two years.

THE PRESIDENT: Good, good. I would do anything in the world to give him a prize for a bill of particulars. I would offer a very handsome prize if he, personally, would give me a bill of particulars.

Q In your conference with Mr. Eccles, did you come to any conclusion about taxes at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Has the question of his reappointment come up, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we did not talk taxes or appointments at all.

Q Mr. President, in regard to these trawlers and other boats that the British bought for mine sweepers, if we could sell fully armed vessels, why can't we sell unarmed vessels?

THE PRESIDENT: All I know is that it has been taken under advisement

by the Attorney General. I do not know anything about it one way or the other. You had better ask him.

Q Referring to the Dies report for a moment, is there anything you can tell us about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Which report was it, the Matthews report?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: As I understand it, and I will tell you that my only information is what I have read in the papers, Jerry Voorhis said that the chairman of the committee appointed himself a subcommittee; he thereupon assumed the role of subcommittee; he thereupon received a report from Mr. Matthews and his subcommittee directed that it be accepted by the committee and published. Am I right?

Q That is right.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that speaks for itself.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Secretary Wallace is putting out a statement on consumers.

Q Something seems to have happened in the W. P. A. situation in Minneapolis which raises some questions among people interested in the W. P. A. organization. The first question asked is, "Do W. P. A. workers have a right to organize?" And, second, "If they do, can that right be protected?"

Have you any comment you care to make?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say offhand and, mind you, this is a horseback opinion, that they have just as much right to organize as the employees of the Government in Washington and, as you know, the

employees of the Government in Washington belong to, I think it is either two or three different organizations. Most of the employees here in the city belong to one of the two or three.

They have not got the right to strike against the Government; they have not got the right to create commotions and disturb the peace.

Well, that is about all there is to be said on that. I think it is just common sense.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. YOUNG. Thank you, sir.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #606,
Held while the President was in his automobile,
parked alongside of the Presidential Special Train,
Highland⁴, New York,
December 15, 1939, 8.45 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, boys.

Q It is kind of cold.

THE PRESIDENT: That is terrible.

Q How cold is it? What is your guess?

THE PRESIDENT: I would say around twenty-five or six. That is not bad,
you know.

I do not think I know a thing. It is awful to be in that
frame of mind in the morning but we are going to have a good day.

Q Anything on the South American running gun battle?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not heard anything more than you got.

Q That Mr. Wilson reported last night, at the State Department -- yes-
terday afternoon?

THE PRESIDENT: Wasn't that the same thing that came out in the papers?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not got another thing.

Q Are you going to see Ambassador Kennedy?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q What made me ask you was a story in Boston that he was going to see
you Friday.

THE PRESIDENT: I think his plans are indefinite. He is going to see
me on the way south, but after that I do not know.

Q Can you tell us anything generally about that South American running
gun battle?

THE PRESIDENT: I think not; no.

Q Mr. Patterson (of the New York Daily News) was interested, very much, on the showing of guns. You know, the Germans had eleven-inch as against the British six and eight. You would not want to talk on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. In other words, of course the truth of the matter is that Joe (Patterson) doesn't know a damned thing about it and I am only guessing. (Laughter)

Joe is all right on his Army stuff -- this is off the record, of course -- and his two ships for one every Monday morning.

Q He never misses.

THE PRESIDENT: He never misses; it is all right.

Q Do you know, sir, that old saying that there is no harm in trying, so if I may thus preface my question, I will state it. It has not been asked and it is rather important. Question: Do you, as a Liberal, agree with what Secretary Ickes said about Administrator McNutt, that he would not be a suitable candidate to liberals?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, there is nothing I can say on that. In other words, one of the old games is to get people to comment on this man, that man, the third man, the fourth man, and gradually, by the elimination process, to have the whole story and I am much too old to fall for it. I used to, twenty-five or thirty years ago.

Q I must say I had no follow-up question. If I had had an answer to that, I would have been --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes. There would not have been another for a week.

Well, I am not going to do anything today except play around the place and look at the progress of the new building. McShain wrote me that he thought he would have the last part of the roof on by this morning. You cannot tell what the snow has done but he has been lucky.

Q Do you think we will stay over Monday?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. It depends entirely on what I hear down there. Of course I would like to, very much, because Anna (Mrs. John Hettiger) and John get in Sunday afternoon and I would like to have one day with them. However, the train has been told to be ready Sunday.

Q May we say, Mr. President, that you are in touch with the Department of State as on regular other trips?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Just for example, I will probably talk with the Secretary every morning and sometimes in the evening. That is just regular procedure.

Q Thank you very much, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #607,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 19, 1939, 4.10 P.M.

Q Mr. President, how are you?

THE PRESIDENT: Fine, perfectly grand. What is this dirty sheet (The Evening Star) I am reading here?

Q It is the metropolitan paper of Washington, sir.

Q The news is three weeks old in that.

THE PRESIDENT: Some of the filler they use is terrible. They used a piece the other day that was at least three years old. They used a filler piece three years old.

Q I have the Christian spirit. I only said three weeks.

Q By the way, we have a piece about Heywood Broun.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I said something nice about him. There is a special little clause, "He wore no man's collar."

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the front row has no news at all and apparently no questions.

Q Have you heard, sir, that a German or British cruiser has pursued a German tanker into our territorial waters?

THE PRESIDENT: I only had a flash on it. I do not know whether it is true or not.

Q Does your flash announcement identify the British ship or the tanker?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it was somewhere down south.

Q It was off Fort Lauderdale.

THE PRESIDENT: We have been there.

Q It was the German tanker ARAUCA. I think the latest thing was that

a British destroyer chased the German tanker. It was the British destroyer ORION and it went into Port Everglades and the British cruiser stayed outside the three-mile limit to await any developments that happen to the German ship.

THE PRESIDENT: That is very nice. (Laughter)

Q Would that be in our territorial waters?

THE PRESIDENT: What, Port Everglades?

Q No, three miles out.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know. Nobody sunk?

Q Yes. (Laughter)

Q The German ship has asked for a pilot to take them in to Fort Lauderdale. That is the report that the British had.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is something. We will get pilot dues.

Q Will there be some proclamation in connection with the new Cuban trade agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I guess the State Department will handle anything on it. I signed a lot of things today on it. I signed eight documents. For details see the Secretary of State.

Q Any of them include restoring the quotas on sugar?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; oh, my, yes.

Q Do you know if the State Department is studying certain proposals put forth by the Tokyo foreign office? Can you tell us whether you are hopeful that a basis for friendly relations with Japan will be forthcoming?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot, since that is one of the things the Secretary of State and I decided to defer the discussion on because we do not know anything about it.

Q Any news in the long Cabinet meeting?

THE PRESIDENT: Heavens! It was not long at all. We got out at four o'clock. It was shorter than usual. We swapped stories.

Q Can you tell us anything more about the restoration of sugar quotas?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot. Frankly, I do not know. You had better ask the State Department.

Q Can you tell us anything about the call John Lewis made today? He said he would leave it to you if anything can be said. Could you say anything?

THE PRESIDENT: I talked about my hopefulness that labor as a whole will come together. There was nothing concrete.

Q Some of us did not hear the answer to the next to the last question about sugar quotas.

THE PRESIDENT: I said he had better ask the State Department because I do not know.

Q When the Department of State put out the announcement, they said, "You had better ask the Department of Agriculture" and today the Department of Agriculture says to ask the President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, take me out of this run-around. You would save mileage by confining it to State and Agriculture. Honestly, I do not know at all.

Q Anything about the District Judgeship?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not got to that. We got to -- did we do the Virginia judges?

GENERAL WATSON: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: The Virginia judges was as far as we got.

Q How about the successor to Dr. Gruening?

THE PRESIDENT: That we have not even discussed.

Q Have your studies on the Budget gone far enough to tell us anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. Probably there won't be anything decided until somewhere around the end of this week, when we will probably come to a final decision, subject to correction up to the date, whatever it is, that it is going to the Public Printer, which has to be next Friday. And then you won't know. We will have our seminar, as usual, I suppose on the third or fourth (of January).

Q We hear reports that there have been very drastic cuts in many items.

THE PRESIDENT: I would put it this way, that a lot of department and agency heads think they are very drastic. But some other people do not think they are very drastic.

Q In that connection, do you think Senator Taft has qualified yet for that prize?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard a peep.

Q Mr. President, Earl Browder said in a speech in New York last night that the New Deal was trying to start a holy war against Russia. Any comment on that? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What do they call it down in Arabia? What is a holy war?

Q Jihad.

THE PRESIDENT: Jihad; that is right.

Q Did Mr. Lewis offer any encouragement for your hopefulness on labor?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he is hopeful too. (Laughter)

Q Has there been discussion on the so-called certificate plan of financing farm relief?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is going on all the time. Of course on that -- on the general subject, not the certificate plan -- it brings back to the memory of all of us that in 1938, when the Congress appropriated, what was it? \$250,000,000., it was pretty late in the session and they all thought it was too late to bring in some kind of a tax measure to repay the Treasury for this \$250,000,000. As I remember it, they passed that Joint Resolution which, in effect, promised that at the next session they would pass a tax measure to bring in \$250,000,000.

Well, of course the record shows that they did not. Then, last year, they appropriated three hundred million more for the same general objective and they did not pass a tax to make it up. So I figure that the Congress owes the Treasury \$550,000,000. and I guess -- probably it is a pretty good guess -- that I will mention the fact that the Congress owes the Treasury \$550,000,000. under a solemn pledge given a little over a year ago.

Q You will mention that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it will be mentioned.

Q And put it in the same category as the war debts?

THE PRESIDENT: Somewhat; same general idea.

Q Write them a note twice a year? (Laughter)

Q Will you comment on these violations of the neutrality belt around the Americas?

THE PRESIDENT: No; not yet.

Q Mr. President, there are some reports of the resignation of the

Governor of the Farm Credit Administration. Have you received any such resignation?

THE PRESIDENT: We are not ready on that yet.

Q Mr. President, has any progress been made on the bonded indebtedness of the South American republics you spoke of some months ago?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they are making pretty good progress. I have only had one or two informal reports on it. No details yet. They are making very definite headway.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #608,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 22, 1939, 11.00 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Did he (indicating Mr. Godwin) talk about it this morning?

MR. EARLY: Yesterday morning.

Q (Mr. Godwin) What is that about?

THE PRESIDENT: Everybody going broke the end of the month.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Well, I will tell you, I am.

THE PRESIDENT: It is not as bad as some previous Christmases and New Years. Earl (Mr. Godwin) is worrying about his income tax this year.

Q (Mr. Young) Yes, his salary was printed the other day in Variety.

THE PRESIDENT: He will turn conservative, the first thing I know.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I did take up the question as to whether we could pay the good people who serve the Government ahead of the regular pay day, at the end of the month, but the Director of the Budget and, I think, the Comptroller General say that, unfortunately, we cannot do it under the law.

I have done my best and we will all have to stay broke for a few days until the second of January, except some people who have new radio contracts and things like that.

Q Mr. President, are you ^[?]reviving the Interdepartmental Health Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I do not know where that crazy story came from.

Q No reflections?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It was just made out of whole cloth.

Q Is Miss Roche (Miss Josephine Roche) going to stay?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Did she resign?

THE PRESIDENT: She wanted to resign last spring and I persuaded her to stay on into the fall and in the fall she wanted to resign again and I persuaded her to stay on.

They are working along the line of continuing their studies and they are also working along another line which I suggested to them, which might be called an effort during the coming year (to work out a plan on a small basis) instead of waiting for a complete and perfected plan, such as a plan similar to the Wagner Bill and the Harrison Bill, which would cost an awful lot of money -- might run up to a very, very large sum every year.

The chief trouble with those plans for health, as you all know, is that they are more or less based on what we call the "matching basis" and the trouble with the matching basis is that those states which have the most money are able to put up the most money and get the greatest amount of federal aid and those, of course, are the states that have the best health conditions. The poorest health conditions are in those states which have the least money to put up and therefore would get the least federal aid.

This general proposal that we are studying at the present time is that -- on the assumption that we are not going ahead on the 45-55 matching basis on public works, as hitherto, for schoolhouses and county courthouses and jails and water works

and sewer systems, et cetera and so on -- that we could afford, in a comparatively small way, to have the Federal Government finance hospitals and clinics -- I suppose the best term is "medical centers" -- in those parts of the United States that have not got any hospitals or facilities.

You take, for instance, two cases: I have in mind a county in the State of New York with about 100,000 population that has six pretty good hospitals in it and enough money to keep those hospitals going. That is a pretty good health service, taking it by and large. Then I have in mind another area in the lower South where three counties with a total of about the same population, 100,000 people, have not a hospital within the three counties, no clinic, no operating room and eighty miles from the nearest hospital. They can only send patients if there are free vacant beds in that hospital eighty miles away.

Now, the general thought is that in a locality like the latter -- and there are probably several hundred of them in the United States -- the Federal Government should build small hospitals for the region that has no hospital facilities on condition that the Federal Government is satisfied that the local people will be able to operate and manage that hospital in a successful way, both from the point of health efficiency and from the point of view of finance, so that if they once get the plant the local communities would sustain it along adequate lines, both financially and from the point of view of good medical service. And the cost of that, what might be called the first experimental step to bring better medical health center

facilities to the places that have not got any at all -- and I think it is worth trying -- the cost would not be very great.

The idea would be to start it in such a way as to serve the most needy communities first and, if the thing works, it can be developed further.

Q Mr. President, would that be a substitute for the Wagner Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I would not call it that. It would mean at this particular coming session we would not attempt to put through a general plan on a nationwide basis but that this would be a step toward the improvement of health in those communities that have complete lack of facilities today.

Q Would that take new legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, my, yes.

Q Where would the funds come from and which agency would do it?

THE PRESIDENT: It would be a combination. The Government would put it up. It would be a combination of P. W. A. and W. P. A. using, at the same time, W. P. A. labor as far as we can.

Q Does the U. S. Public Health Service come in?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. They come in on the plans and they would pass, with probably some very distinguished group of doctors, on the plans and also on the approval of the local operating methods.

Q They would make the plans and the surveys?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and also the inspection to see that it was kept up to the promises.

Q Has the Federal Security Administrator worked with this committee in formulating this plan?

THE PRESIDENT: It is being studied. It is in the preliminary study stage

and I have talked to quite a number of doctors. I am talking very soon with the American Medical Society people; they have a committee of seven that is studying this same type of project.

Q Mr. President, do you mean the Federal Government would bear all the construction expense?

THE PRESIDENT: All the construction expense on the condition that the maintenance and operation and management was carried out completely by the local people.

Let me give you an illustration which will probably show you what I mean: Take any one of three or four given areas that I know of, one of them in the Middle West, one in the rather far West, not as far as the Coast, and a couple of them down south. Doctors in those places have come to me and have said, "The one thing we cannot do is to build a hospital. We cannot get the money; it is a poor section. We cannot build a hospital. We cannot put in the operating rooms. We cannot buy an ambulance to go with it. We cannot put in facilities for trained nurses. We cannot raise the capital. But, if we could get a small plant, we think we could maintain it."

I said, "What do you mean by a small plant?" Now, this is just one example. They said, "In our locality we could put up a one-story building of wood. It is a good section for wood. The building would last fifty or seventy-five years if it was kept painted. Being one-story, it is perfectly safe from the point of view of fire. It would have two wings, one for white people and one for colored people. It would have, in the middle, an administration building with a clinic in it that people could come to, and an operating room, and also a laboratory

which, of course, is necessary for any modern hospital."

I said, "What could you do it for?" "Well," they said, "we could do the whole works, including equipping the operating room, for \$150,000."

In other words, this is not any grandiose scheme for putting up hospital centers that cost \$10,000,000. apiece. In these areas, in a great many cases we could put up a fairly adequate building for \$150,000.

Q How many beds?

THE PRESIDENT: About a hundred beds.

Q A hundred beds total in both wings?

THE PRESIDENT: Total, yes.

Q As I remember it, the A. M. A. (American Medical Association) Committee particularly criticized the proposal to build hospitals, saying that we have enough hospitals and saying that we had better use those hospitals we have.

THE PRESIDENT: I think they were talking about some of the great centers when they said that. In other words, they would not say it themselves in these localities that have no hospitals. I think the statement that they made was probably true in relation to some of the great cities of the country.

Q One sound point that the A. M. A. has made consistently is that they would like to have the operation of the hospitals left in private hands rather than in Governmental hands. Your plan would comply with that?

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, it would be the people in the locality.

Q In introducing this subject, you spoke of the old P. W. A. ratio of

55-45 as a precedent. I imagine --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, no; that is gone. For this thing it would be 100% by the Federal Government but, of course, a fairly large proportion of that 100% would be covered by the W. P. A. relief workers' appropriation.

Q Have you reached any estimate as to how much might be used in the first year under such a program?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we have not got as far as that. It would not be a very large sum.

Q This looks like a natural for the log rollers on the Hill. How would you hold that down?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) I think you are right and, therefore, the idea is this: Of course, if Congress wants to do it they have a perfect right to do it but the objective is to find out the fifty areas in the United States that most need hospital facilities. Now, if Congress wants to specify those fifty areas -- it would take a long time to study it out -- of course, it is all right. However, the practical way is to appoint a committee of distinguished doctors, rather than Congressmen, to determine which are the most necessary fifty localities to put fifty buildings in.

Q What in case these local people cannot support it?

THE PRESIDENT: That is what we want to find out.

Q Suppose it couldn't?

THE PRESIDENT: The idea is that no hospital would be built until some expert committee of doctors and hospital managers and Public Health people is satisfied that the community could and would support it.

Q No liens at all? The title, free, goes from the Federal Government?

THE PRESIDENT: It is up to the Federal Government to keep the title to it.

Q Would not that penalize the communities which do build their own? Would any community build its own?

THE PRESIDENT: I am talking about the communities that haven't got any at all, no hospital at all. This northern area that I am talking about has got six hospitals and if it wants a seventh hospital it has enough money to build it and pay for it itself.

Just the same thing on talking of matching on the question of education. The States of New York, Massachusetts and Illinois ought not to have any aid from the Federal Government for schools but Georgia and Mississippi and Alabama, South Carolina and Arkansas, I think they need some aid because they have not got the values down there to build schools and run them. You take the State of Georgia -- some of you were down with me this year. You remember the Atlanta papers? There were great headlines every morning: "State Schools will Probably Close Down the First of January." This information was given to me when we were down there. They have kept open through December because the Governor borrowed \$400,000., I think, from the State highway fund. There is your problem. We rich people up here, we do not visualize it.

Q A group of newspapers in Cleveland, with the cooperation of the Police Department, has organized what they call an "Industrial Safety Council" for the prevention of sabotage. They say this

is being done with the encouragement of the Federal Government through Naval Intelligence. It has aroused a great deal of opposition from labor, which thinks this is a move for labor espionage. Will you say what the policy is?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of the particular thing. Of course the policy is a very simple one. What is labor going to do if, in a plant employing 10,000 people there are ten potential -- what do they call them? -- saboteurs? Now, there is no attack on those 10,000 people employed there but it is very distinctly the duty of the Federal Government to ferret out these potential saboteurs. That is just plain common sense.

Q It is necessary to have the industries themselves work with the cooperation of the local authorities?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, sure; and labor. Heavens, the other 9,990 people have a duty as employees to help the Government find the ten.

Q Mr. President, will you discuss this Ohio soup kitchen proposal?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is anything to discuss. If and when any city finds itself with a lot of people who are starving and it is proved to the Federal Government, the Federal Government will try to do what it has said right along it would do and that is to keep people from starving. The obvious way of doing that is to do it the way we operate during a flood disaster or an earthquake or something like that. We use the Red Cross, we use the W. P. A., we use the nonmilitary part of the Army, which means camp kitchens that are drawn upon in any disaster.

Q The Federal Government would not move in that area voluntarily?

You would have to be informed by the Governor of the state? Is that clear to you?

THE PRESIDENT: No. If there are a lot of starving people and it is proved, there is no question of the Governor or anybody else. We will just carry out the policy of the Federal Government.

Q Have you seen any such proof from Ohio as this?

THE PRESIDENT: No. That is merely a restatement of what we have been saying for the last seven years.

Q Is there anything new to tell about what you are going to do about sugar quota restorations, about which there has been some confusion?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I signed an Executive Order last night and I think you had better get it because I won't trust my memory. I am getting mixed up again between quotas and tariffs.

Q There have been reports that the Under Secretary of the Treasury, John Hanes, is going to resign immediately. Can you tell us anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he is going out very soon. I think last spring Johnny wanted to go back to private business and we asked him and persuaded him to stay through the summer. Then he was going out in the autumn but the war broke and we persuaded him to stay on until we got out our autumn financing. Now that is all done. I cannot, with a clear conscience, ask him to stay any longer because there is no particular crisis over in the Treasury. I am very sorry to have him go and I am very glad we were able to keep him on for six months or more after the

time he wanted to leave.

Q Do you know about the District Judge for the District of Columbia, which is reported to be almost ready?

THE PRESIDENT: It has not got here yet. Maybe Frank (the Attorney General) is studying it.

Q Will Colonel Harrington have to go back with the Army after the first (of the year)? His four-year tour is up on January sixth.

THE PRESIDENT: That is bad news. I do not know.

(Note: It developed that Colonel Harrington's leave from the Army had been granted by Congressional action, consequently there was no limitation on its length.)

Q Several weeks ago a reporter asked you if Mr. Garner's candidacy made any difference in your plans. In view of the statement made yesterday by Secretary Ickes and the Attorney General regarding Progressive-Liberal coalitions, is there anything you can say today?

THE PRESIDENT: The easiest way to put it is -- please excuse the language and do not quote it -- I am too damned busy (laughter), literally, to be talking about potential events a long, long way off. I have other things I think are more important for the Nation at the present time, foreign affairs and certain domestic issues which are right to the core.

In other words, I, unfortunately (?), have, as some of you have been kind enough to intimate, two things, a sense of proportion and a sense of timing. (Laughter)

Q You sat up all night on that one.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (Laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Merry Christmas!

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; I forgot. A Merry Christmas to you all!

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #609,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 26, 1939, 4.05 P.M.

(Mr. John Boettiger, the President's son-in-law, attended this Press Conference. He held in his arms John Roosevelt Boettiger, the President's grandson.)

Q (Mr. Godwin) What is this, the infant class?

You should have seen Bill Hassett eating two Thanksgiving (Christmas) dinners at my house and then going out to Mary Holmes's and Russ Young's and eating two more.

THE PRESIDENT: Gosh, what happened?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I don't know; he is here today.

THE PRESIDENT: He just had an operation, too.

Q (Mr. Godwin) He is going to have another one, Mr. President.

That comes from cutting out liquor. He don't drink any.

You will need an extra Christmas for that fellow.

THE PRESIDENT: Is he all right today? I haven't seen him.

MR. EARLY: He said he would like to leave early this afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: Tell him to answer all calls.

MR. EARLY: I think he is studying Chinese, Mr. President.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: President Godwin has asked me to present the latest applicant for membership in the White House Correspondents' Association to you, Mr. John Roosevelt Boettiger. I will ask his father first what paper he represents.

MR. JOHN BOETTIGER: I think it is the P.I. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) How do you spell it? (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Young) He is destroying the Star over there.

MR. JOHN BOETTIGER: That was done long before.

THE PRESIDENT: We have been giving him a course the last two days as to the difference between "background" and "off the record." I think he will soon be eligible.

Q If he is to be eligible and if he is to attend these Conferences legitimately, we would be very glad to ask for his admission and issue a card.

THE PRESIDENT: Then you need more than a card?

Q (Mr. Young) For a dollar.

Q (Mr. Godwin) For a dollar, one dollar.

MR. JOHN BOETTIGER: He has told me he has not got the dollar but he greatly appreciates the invitation and will try to borrow the dollar.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Well, I will get it.

MR. JOHN BOETTIGER: If Grandpop has a dollar.

Q (Miss Craig) Looking at the Times-Herald picture, he looks as though he was trying to get off the record.

THE PRESIDENT: That was a good crawl; it is all right.

Q Any news?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is a thing. Steve (Mr. Early) has been feeding you all morning.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, sir.

Q What came out of your conference with Secretary Hull, Secretary Wallace and Assistant Secretary Grady?

THE PRESIDENT: That was just to bring me up to date on these various things.

Q The Argentine Trade Agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that among others.

Q Any progress being made on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope so.

Q Can you fill us in on your conference with George Allen?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, we just talked in general about this -- is it the old plan or the new plan or the old plan revamped?

Q New plan.

Q Did you --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Just went over it in general.

Q Is the Budget Message finished yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Finished? Oh, my, no.

Q Were you finished with the local matter?

THE PRESIDENT: Only I suppose the next step is that it is to be presented with all the particulars and accounts of the various parts of it to the Committee.

Q Won't it be prepared in bill form?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. Is that a plan or a bill?

Q Was District suffrage discussed?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Mr. President, will the appointment of Mr. Taylor to the Vatican affect his status as Chairman of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees?

THE PRESIDENT: No, he will continue on that.

Q Governor James (Governor Arthur H. James of Pennsylvania) last week accused W.P.A. of discriminating against Pennsylvania because it

turned Republican. Have you any comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No; naturally, not.

Q Will Mr. Davies have special functions as new Assistant Secretary of State?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he will take over most of the functions that Breck Long is now doing.

Q What happens to Long?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot tell you yet.

Q Will you tell us something about Mr. Taylor's activities at the Vatican?

THE PRESIDENT: Activities at the Vatican?

Q Yes, sir. I mean, is there anything besides observing that he will have to do at first?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. He will get up in the morning, eat his breakfast and go through the normal functions of a human being in a post of that kind. (Laughter)

Q Will he carry a special message from you when he first goes over?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not the faintest idea.

Q In that connection, Mr. President, dispatches out of Italy today say the Italian Government and the Vatican have reached an agreement to work along parallel lines for peace. I wonder if there are any comments?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The more nations and governments do things like that, the better it is.

Q Would you venture a guess, sir, whether the eight United States liners will be transferred to the Norwegian flag?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I have only heard a rumor. I have not

heard of anything done. Has the transfer gone through yet?

Q They are pending. The negotiations are pending.

THE PRESIDENT: I read about it in the newspapers; I have not heard anything about it.

Q Can you tell us anything of the suggestion to use some of those liners for meteorological observation in the North Atlantic?

THE PRESIDENT: That report has not come to me yet. I believe it is being studied because they believe there ought to be something in the way of an observation post or station between Bermuda and the Azores. It has not come to me yet.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us about your conference with Assistant Secretary Johnson this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It was just on coordination of purchases; joint purchases.

Q Was the Panama situation discussed, the building of the barracks down there?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think -- haven't we asked for bids on that by a certain date?

Q Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Otherwise, all quiet and I have not -- Russ (Mr. Young), I have not actually started writing the Annual Message. You are a little ahead of time.

Q (Mr. Young) Steve (Mr. Early) is ahead of time.

THE PRESIDENT: I will probably start either on Budget or on that this evening. I do not know which. They will proceed simultaneously.

Q (Mr. Young) Steve (Mr. Early) will hear about that after the first

of the year.

Q Do you plan to deliver your Message in person?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know yet. Probably yes, on the doctrine of chances.

Q (Mr. Godwin) We will send him (indicating John Roosevelt Boettiger) a card.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #610,
Executive Offices of the White House,
December 29, 1939, 10.50 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: That sight on the sofa is enough to make anybody feel good this morning. (Referring to the secretaries seated on the sofa, laughing at some quip)

Q (Mr. Godwin) What do you hear from Franklin?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, he is all right.

Q Was it bad?

THE PRESIDENT: Some cuts. Nothing busted.

(The President motioned to Miss Craig, indicating her new fur piece.)

Q (Miss Craig) The American fox fur farmers' loss is my gain.

THE PRESIDENT: A Christmas present?

Q (Miss Craig) Yes.

Q (Mr. Mahoney) My boss (Mr. Casey Hogate) complimented your menu yesterday.

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right.

Q (Mr. Mahoney) It is all right. It would make me fatter.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to -- when Congress assembles I am going to send up the name of the new Under Secretary of the Treasury, whom you know all about very well is Danny Bell.

Q Who?

Q Dan Bell.

Q That is nice. He always gave us the impression that he did not want to lose his civil service status.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't believe he has to. In other words, he has a certain number of years in which he can stay out and then go back.

Q Do you recall what his title is now?

MR. EARLY: Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury.

THE PRESIDENT: Assistant to the Secretary of the Treasury. Steve (Mr. Early) has got his biography out here, in case you want to see it.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Before we get any further I think the Press would like to say, this being the last Press Conference of the year, that we wish you an eventful 1940. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Don't be so equivocal. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) We have learned it here, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right. That is very sweet of you.

Q Mr. President, there is one little matter connected with these exchanges between these religious bodies of the White House. You have taken that matter up with three large religious bodies but, in the case of the Protestants, at least, being an old Protestant choir boy, I know that many church organizations are not connected with the Federal Council. What, if anything, do you intend to do in that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Two things. In the first place, if any of the heads of these churches -- there seem to be four which are not directly in full membership in the Federal Council: the Southern Baptists with 4,800,000, the Southern Presbyterians with 500,000, the Lutherans with 4,000,000, who, however, are associated in a consultative capacity, and then -- I do not know what the membership of the Episcopalians is, you probably know better than I do -- they are also associated in a consultative capacity. Then there

are a great many very small organizations of separate Protestant churches. Well, there are two things: The first is that if any of the leaders of those churches want to come in here and talk to me in the same way as Dr. Buttrick or Dr. Adler, I will be very glad to see them too. Of course I hope also that they will have, nearly all of them, the same feeling that all churches are pretty well united in the objective that we have towards peace and that they will keep in touch with Dr. Buttrick and communicate with me in that way. If they want to see me personally, of course I will be delighted to see them.

Q Have you received those letters from the Baptists yet, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, there is a story out of Buenos Aires that the Argentine trade treaty is on the rocks. Have you any information on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Not to my knowledge; I have not heard anything about it.

Q There have been new reports that this Government is considering sending an ambassador to Germany. Is there anything new on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard of it; not a thing.

Q Some miners in Ohio telegraphed yesterday and asked that soup kitchens be sent out there?

THE PRESIDENT: I saw that in the paper. I do not know whether the telegram has actually come in.

Q Will one be sent?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose it will be turned over to Colonel Harrington for investigation.

Q I understand the Budget Director has sent a letter to the Department heads, telling them not to talk of the Budget cuts they have suffered. Any occasion for that letter?

THE PRESIDENT: I guess it is the usual annual letter that has always gone out.

Q It said, "By direction of the President" --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) The same thing goes out every year. In other words, when the Budget is made up it is solely and purely a question for the Congress.

Q Have you received from the Department of Justice a recommendation for the First Circuit Court Judge?

THE PRESIDENT: That is New England. No.

Q There are several vacancies around for Government posts besides the Under Secretary of the Treasury, particularly the Diplomatic?

THE PRESIDENT: They have not been decided on finally. There have been some tentative decisions but I do not think I will announce them until their names go up to the Senate.

Q When may we expect the nominations?

THE PRESIDENT: Very early in the session.

Q How about the nomination for the Supreme Court?

THE PRESIDENT: The same thing.

Q Does that include the Federal Judge in the District of Columbia?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know because I have not talked about it.

Q Have you arrived at a figure on the Budget?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you tell us what it is?

THE PRESIDENT: It is good. (Laughter)

Q When will the seminar be held?

THE PRESIDENT: Let us see. The Speaker is coming in at lunch time today and I am going to talk with him about when the Annual Message is to go in and I will let you all know this afternoon. If the Annual Message goes in on the third, I see no reason why the Budget should not go up the fourth, which is Friday.

Q Thursday.

THE PRESIDENT: And I could have the seminar on the Budget on --

MR. EARLY: (interposing) It more or less depends, Mr. President, on the Public Printer. That involves a terrific printing job. May I suggest to you, sir, that we hold the seminar about two hours after the Bureau of the Budget makes the distribution to the Press? That will give them copies for each of them and then they can come in. It is our old procedure.

THE PRESIDENT: If the Annual Message goes in on the third, if I go up to the Congress on the third, fairly early in the afternoon, we can have the seminar that same afternoon and then it won't mix up your work because you will have the Annual Message out of the way. We will take up the Budget that same afternoon, around four o'clock.

Q Mr. President, will you talk taxes to Speaker Bankhead when he comes today?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Mr. President, concerning the deficit on farm relief, is it possible to say when the recommendations will be sent up recommending that plan to the Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I should say, like taxes, I doubt very much whether any specific form of tax is recommended but a great many forms will

be, as usual, mentioned, leaving the determination to the Congress, which is the usual method.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President, and a Happy New Year.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Happy New Year to all of you, strenuous or otherwise.