

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #635,
Executive Offices of the White House,
April 12, 1940, 10.40 A.M.

Q Good morning, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

Q How are you today?

THE PRESIDENT: Any late news from the other side?

Q Just more of the same. Cannot tell whether that is a conclusive battle or not. At least, I cannot -- maybe you can.

THE PRESIDENT: No; absolutely conflicting statements.

Q A very interesting incident in Denmark, sir. The British bombed the communications center in Denmark and the Germans said, "If that is true; if the circumstances are as reported it may form a new base for our operations."

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: At eleven o'clock I am going to sign the Trade Agreements Extension Act in the presence of the people who did so much to get it through and there is a statement with it which Steve (Mr. Early) will give you right away, when you go out.

Q Sir, the people who did so much to get it through would include Secretary Hull --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Senator Harrison, Congressman Doughton and Secretary Wallace.

I do not think there is anything else I have got on my mind.

Q Will you talk taxes with Mr. Doughton and Senator Harrison while they are here?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just the signing of the bill in the presence of the

photographers. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, can you clear up the F.A.A. situation? The Order says that the F.A.A. is to be abolished and Mr. Alexander says he was authorized by you to tell us that he was merely to be absorbed and that his Administration would be a separate unit, which does not --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, the two statements are completely consistent. In other words, in Federal Alcohol Control, as you know, they have a great many people who are carrying out the duties of Federal Alcohol. They are carrying out the duties under the law. They are not going to be fired, they are going to be retained, of course, because they are all people who are doing excellent jobs, a great many of them are on civil service and they will be used in the same way that they have been used before, the great bulk of them. There will be some savings -- it is merely a question of whom they report to. That is all.

Q Mr. President, do you plan to send up a special Message on W.P.A.?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. They are talking of it up there on the Hill and I will probably see Congressman Woodrum and Senator Byrnes and various other people in the course of the next week.

Q Mr. President, do you care to comment on the transfer of the Civil --
Aeronautics Board?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there again, the present existence of the machinery of Government remains intact. The principal change is to carry out the objective of reorganization plans: There is an unfortunate person, called the President of the United States, and instead of having to talk to forty-five or fifty different agencies, which is

physically impossible, we are trying to reduce the number of people that he has to talk to. The present organization will remain intact except that we will save certain top salaries. In other words, the Air Safety Board work will continue, just as it is going on now, only instead of having to use an Air Safety Board it will be handled through the C.A.A., the Administrator and the Secretary of Commerce up to the President. It is merely a labor-saving device.

Q The statement is made in criticism of your Order -- the statement --
I think this came from the Senate --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Probably. (Laughter)

Q -- that aeronautic safety is imperiled.

THE PRESIDENT: Spinach.

Q Spinach?

THE PRESIDENT: Spinach. In other words, all the work for air safety that is being done today is going to continue and the three gentlemen at the top, I think, are all in agreement that it is perfectly possible to abolish three jobs and put in one man to run the Bureau.

Q Mr. President, several years ago, when P.W.A. was being started, you set aside or earmarked or whatever it was called at the time, several million dollars for grade crossing work and that was about coincident with the time of the crash out here at Rockville. Over in Prince Georges County they had a crash and I have had several letters asking what has happened to the President's road safety or road crossing elimination program. As I understand it, the program is going ahead. It has never stopped, has it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, my, no. I would be afraid to say offhand how many million dollars has been spent by the Government on a matching basis with communities and states. You would have to get the figures. There have been literally hundreds of grade crossings that have been eliminated as a result of that program. I imagine all of that money has been either spent or obligated a long time ago.

Q Yes, it has. This simply is a local matter of some interest because I get so many letters.

THE PRESIDENT: You had better check on this. I think the total amount of money -- this is just a guess -- but I think it is \$40,000,000. that actually has been spent on grade crossings.

Q In this Prince Georges County crash there has always been a dispute between the county and the railroad or the State and the county --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) As to how they would pay. Yes, that is right.

Q Would the violation of the integrity of Greenland raise the problem of applying the Monroe Doctrine?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think you are about -- you are very, very premature.

In regard to Greenland, I have been reading the encyclopaedia and various other works on Greenland and I have also talked to a number of geographers and geologists, et cetera, and from the point of view of very, very ancient history, the Island of Greenland, in its fauna and its flora and its geology, belongs much more closely to the American Continent than it does to the European Continent; that is the very simple fact. Still, at the

present time, and I am looking at it more from a humanitarian point of view than a political point of view, there are about, roughly, 17,000 human beings in Greenland and the Danes have -- of course nearly all of them are Eskimos, full-blooded or part-blooded, and comparatively few pure white Danes, Europeans, I think only a few hundred. The Danes have done an awfully good job with the Eskimos. They have a system of community governments, where each small settlement of Eskimos and perhaps a few white people among them are self-governing, and the thing has worked awfully well, both from the social angle and also the economic angle. But, in spite of that, Denmark has had to send up, every spring and every summer, a certain number of supply ships to take to the population of Greenland certain necessities of life which they cannot raise or grow among themselves.

I have got the Red Cross looking into the question of fact as to the needs of these 17,000 people in these small communities on the east coast and the south end and the west coast of Greenland during this coming summer so that we can be reasonably certain that they won't starve through next winter and they will have certain things they ought to have. It will be primarily a question of relief, which should be handled by the Red Cross, and I think the American people -- it won't involve any large sum of money because there are 17,000 total population -- and I think the American people will be glad to chip in and help those people go through the next winter if their supply ships from Denmark are cut off. I think that covers it.

Q Thank you.

Q Suppose Germany occupies Greenland, any part of it? Won't the political question arise --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think you are awfully hypothetical, Fred (Mr. Essary).

Q Well, there are a lot more like me. I hear it discussed everywhere and read discussions of it in nearly all the papers I read.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is grand that the American people are learning something about a subject that very, very few people have thought of before. The number of people in the last three days or two days that have come to me and said, "By gosh, have you looked at the map?" "Sure, I have been looking at the map." Everybody has been pulling out an atlas and they have been reading the Encyclopaedia Britannica, just the way I did, but it is all to the good.

Q Don't you think a globe is better? (Laughter)

Q Is this interest of yours in this statement relating to the possible relief of the Eskimos something of your own or was it suggested to you by the Danish Government?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. I will tell you how it came about. Mrs. Ruth Bryan Owen, Mrs. Rhode, on her way back from Denmark four or five years ago, stopped off in Greenland and took a lot of pictures and showed them to us at the White House one evening and I got quite thrilled. I have been thinking a lot of those people up in Greenland the last few days, thinking in terms of these pictures, the very interesting life they are living. I invented it; it is all right; nobody else.

Q Iceland is not included?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am thinking in terms of Greenland.

Q Do you consider, sir, that Iceland, by its flora and its fauna --
(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I only had time to do Greenland last
night. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, could you straighten us out on your conversation
yesterday with Commissioner Fly?

THE PRESIDENT: I wanted to find out what the Commission was doing
about this television thing. It is a very, very -- it reduces
itself to a comparatively simple statement but a rather difficult
problem. Television, undoubtedly, has a great future and there
are all kinds of claims made for it, that it is going to put mil-
lions of people to work, et cetera and so on. Well, it will put
some people to work that are not now working but it won't be any-
thing like the advent of the automobile or the advent of the radio
for the very simple reason that in people's homes the development
of television will mean that one set, the present radio set, will
include television. It will put more people to work but nothing
like these exaggerated claims.

But the more important question is the question of monopoly
control and that gets into the technical realm. The Commission
wants to be quite certain, and I think they are right, that in
this new art we will have the same kind of competition on three
angles that we have in things like radio and things like the auto-
mobile -- when the automobile patents were pooled, the old -- what
were they, the Winton patents, around 1908 -- way, way back?

Q (interposing) The Seldon patents.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Now, that causes a technical question. We do not want to get into a position in this country where one company can control all sending. Now, in the radio field we have a pretty effective competition: we have a number of national broadcasting companies; we have a great many regional broadcasting companies; we have a great many local, purely local, broadcasting companies. Now, that is the transmission end. On the reception end, any home in the United States can pick up any broadcast it wants to pick up. (You have) complete freedom as to who you are going to tune into and the development of the television ought to follow the same general line so that on my television set, as the thing develops, I would have a choice of stations under a competitive system -- I would have a choice of picking up a prize fight or a Town Hall meeting -- it is very much the same thing, of course, but at least I would have the choice. (Laughter)

Eventually, I would be able to get a foreign television broadcast -- not ready for that yet, but it will come -- so all the Commission is doing is working along the line, absolutely, in favor of the development of television just so long as the country is absolutely sure that it is going to be put on a competitive basis with no one organization controlling all of the sending and every set in the homes being able to pick up any television band that it wishes to pick up.

As I say, it is technical; it is being studied and I think probably in the course of this spring and summer the thing is going to be worked out so that the television sets can be put into production.

Q Can you tell what is the attitude of the industry towards this feature of monopoly?

THE PRESIDENT: There are quite a number of companies that do not want it monopolized. Well, for instance, -- do not use this because I do not want to advertize the company -- for instance, Philco, which I think is one of the largest manufacturers of radio sets, they want to be quite sure that whatever television set they add to their radio set will be able to get reception from a number of different sources, which is reasonable. The industry is -- the bulk of the radio industry today, I think, wants it put on the same basis as radio is today.

Q Mr. President, the Jones-Weaver Farm Credit Bill -- does it have your approval?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know enough about it to answer the question. I am going to study it the next few days.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #636,
Executive Offices of the White House,
April 18, 1940, 10.46 A. M.

Q Spring is here.

THE PRESIDENT: Got your summer clothes out?

Q Is that a new suit or is that the nice old one you have?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the old one. I have had it two years.

Q It is grand looking stuff.

THE PRESIDENT: This was made at Hyde Park; it is very nice.

Q Do they still make it up there?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Nellie Johannsen.

Q Great stuff.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought I would have a Press Conference today so that it would not interfere with the little game on the train tomorrow going down. (Laughter) What are all you laughing at? (Laughter) Don't you wish you were going, Earl (Mr. Godwin)?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I wish you were.

In about twelve minutes -- you will have to hold it until it is actually ready because there is a letter Steve (Mr. Early) has for you on relief. It is not a Message. I would say it is a letter to the Speaker, which would be referred to the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee. It says:

(Reading)"In submitting to the Congress my budget for the fiscal year 1941, I included an item for relief and work relief which provided the amount of approximately \$975,000,000 for administrative expenses and the cost of project operation of the Work Projects Administration. This represented a reduction of approximately one-third from the amount which was

made available for these purposes in the current fiscal year, and if used for the twelve months of the fiscal year 1941 will provide an average employment of only about 1,330,000.

"In the message transmitting this budget, I commented upon the item for relief and work relief by saying: 'If conditions fail to meet our hopes, additional funds may be necessary.'

"The preparation of the budget was completed in December, 1939, at which time industrial activity in the United States was at a very high level. I regret to inform you that the hopes which I entertained at that time and which were based on the industrial outlook then prevailing, have not been sufficiently realized and that it is therefore in my judgment now necessary to adopt measures for dealing with the situation which exists today and which may be quite confidently predicted for the next few months.

"The industrial production index of the Federal Reserve Board for December stood at 128, an all-time high. In January it declined to 119, and in February to 109. The preliminary index for the month of March is 105. It is hoped that it will not go lower than this."

Of course, it is way above this time last year.

"It is extremely difficult to predict at this time the volume of employment in private industry that will be provided throughout the whole fiscal year 1941. The present indications are that leaving out any violent fluctuations which may occur due to events abroad, private employment in the fiscal year 1941 will be as high as in the fiscal year 1940."

Well, that is the only prediction that is made in this letter.

"There is certainly at the present time no information available to justify a reduction in the program of the Work Projects Administration below that which has been carried on in the current fiscal year with an appropriation of approximately one and one-half billion dollars.

"In my judgment the most logical action that the Congress could take at this time would be to appropriate the budget item for the Work Projects Administration but to lodge discretionary authority in me or in the Commissioner of Work Projects to expend this amount in the first eight months of the fiscal year, on condition that unemployment conditions in the country are such as to require such expenditure within that period. I can assure you that if this discretionary authority is provided in the Appropriation Act, the appropriation will not be expended within the eight months unless it is absolutely necessary to avoid suffering and hardship.

"If the appropriation is made with the provision which I have just described, the incoming Congress will have the period from January third to March first, 1941, to deal with the question of the need of providing funds for the last four months of the fiscal year, if such need is then apparent. It may also be necessary, in connection with the consideration of this question, at that time, to give attention to the related question as to whether taxation will be necessary in order to provide the needed funds.

"I would like to make it clear that I am asking only for authority to exercise a limited discretion in the expenditure of the appropriation, and that I am not asking that the principle of apportionment which is written into the current Appropriation Act be abandoned. I believe it is entirely proper and advisable for the Congress to include the apportionment principle in the Act, but this principle can just as logically be extended over the eight months period as over the entire fiscal year."

So that covers that pretty well. Are there any questions on it?

Q It has been suggested, Mr. President, that that recommendation amounts to an eight-months' appropriation. Anything you can say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. That is exactly the point and it is an awfully difficult thing to describe in a headline but I think you can describe it in a lead. Obviously, anybody with any common sense knows that this year, far less than any previous year, are we able to predict what is going to happen during the fiscal year 1941. We do not know. All you have to do is to read the daily papers and listen to the reports from the other side to realize that we haven't got the foggiest idea about whether we are going to have a boom or not in this country. The economists do think that the fiscal year 1941 will provide as much employment as the fiscal year we are in now. Now, that is all they are willing to talk about. If it does provide as much, we will probably have to spend a large part of this \$975,000,000 in the first eight months -- no question about that. But, if there is more employment, it would stretch further. Now, nobody can tell, not even a member of Congress can tell how much employment there is going to be in the fiscal year 1941.

Q Why do you say "not even a member of Congress"?

THE PRESIDENT: Because I saw in the papers this morning that quite a lot of them have very definite ideas on the subject.

Q Mr. President, are you going to say anything more about raising the debt limit or taxes?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. You see, on your debt picture -- again it is awfully difficult to do much more than guess. If we do not have the \$460,000,000 taxes that we recommended on the third of January -- and, of course, we all know that in all probability Congress is not going to give us 460 millions of additional taxes at this session, then the question comes, "Well, what happens to the final deficit estimated for the fiscal year 1941?" That is pretty hard to tell but there are various possibilities that are worth thinking about. Maybe Congress will cut the total of my Budget estimates for expenditures in the fiscal year 1941 a couple of hundred million. Now, that is always possible. Then we have got to remember that an appropriation that is made by this Congress is not necessarily spent in the fiscal year 1941 as, for example, the famous case of the item they added in the Senate, the parity payments. Well, of course, everybody knows that that particular appropriation probably -- practically none of it will go out of the Treasury in the fiscal year 1941 because it applies to crops that mature in the summer of 1941. So; there is a chance -- and I am very keen to see it happen -- that the total appropriation by this Congress that would be spent in the fiscal year 1941 will be two or three hundred million dollars below my Budget.

And it is also entirely possible that the tax receipts in the fiscal year 1941 might be up another couple of hundred million dollars so, from those two sources, two or three hundred million less expenditures than were budgeted and a couple of hundred million more in addi-

tional taxes, there you have got an amount maybe equal to the 460 million of taxes which we are not going to get.

Now, is that clear?

Q Mr. President, I think it is perfectly clear --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): I have tried to make it as simple as I could.

Q -- may I ask you this: Do I gather that this is your hope or your definite prediction on this?

THE PRESIDENT: Hope, hope, and again --

Q (interposing) Would that be true of additional expenditures for relief?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Would that be possible with additional expenditures for relief, assuming that there is an additional expenditure for relief?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there again you are assuming there is going to be. I do not know. I haven't any idea and I do not think we can assume it.

Q Can you tell us what you think of Senator Pepper's suggestion for a deficiency appropriation for relief now?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard of it.

Q You are assuming that the parity payments will go through?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily. There was some discussion yesterday of doing -- in the long run it is as short as it is long -- instead of appropriating the money, of authorizing the Secretary of Agriculture to enter into contracts with farmers, parity contracts, very much the same way that we used to enter into contracts, and still do, with the governors of states in regard to building highways, which means an obligation on the Congress next year to pass the appropriation for it to be paid out in the beginning of the fiscal year 1942.

Q Has your main legislative program been submitted to Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Any further --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): I do not think there is anything else.

Q Are you looking for any oil legislation at this session?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I have not followed it lately; could not tell you.

Q On the matter of oil have you advised the Justice Department yet as to what course he thinks they should follow in this controversy over the submerged oil lands in Southern California, the row over title?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not; I have got a report from the Attorney General somewhere in the bottom of that basket and I am going to read it down at Warm Springs.

Q Read it down there?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Do you expect to submit the St. Lawrence Treaty?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. Do you know when it is going to be signed, when and if?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: Neither do I.

Q Would you care to say something on the implications of Secretary Hull's statement last night on the Dutch East Indies?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I think what he told the Press yesterday covers the thing all right.

Q What was that?

THE PRESIDENT: The Dutch East Indies. What the Secretary of State told everybody yesterday, I think covers the situation pretty well. In other words, we all hope that the status quo in the whole of the Pacific area can be maintained in the general interests of peace.

Q Mrs Rogers, of Massachusetts, suggested yesterday that the United States establish a protectorate over Greenland and I understand that the May

Harper's Magazine has an article suggesting that we buy Greenland. Have you seen that suggestion in the magazine or --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): No.

Q -- or any comment on --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): Of course, Senator Reynolds has some suggestions about the West Indies and a lot of people have happy thoughts these days.

Q Can you tell us what you and Jim Farley talked about yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, we talked about a lot of things. (Laughter) We talked about the permanent chairman and the temporary chairman of the convention.

Q Talk about candidates?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, I think the Young Democrats would like to have you say that you are going to address them by radio and if so, where. Is that next Saturday?

THE PRESIDENT: I am to address them from Georgia Hall at Warm Springs -- is that Saturday night?

MR. EARLY: Saturday.

THE PRESIDENT: Saturday night. I have not written it. I am going to try to write it going down on the train tomorrow. It will be short and sweet and probably to the point.

Q Can we take that as an announcement that you are going to Warm Springs?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to leave sometime this afternoon or tonight, early in the evening or in the middle of the night, and the train will be kept ready, I suppose at Atlanta, so that within two hours the train will be fueled up and I will motor from Warm Springs to Atlanta to come back, if I have to. Which reminds me of the terrible commotion -- what was it? just about a year ago -- when I said goodbye at Warm Springs and that I would be back if something did not happen, if there was not a war. And,

of course, I was terribly criticized for this by the people who had better information about international affairs than I had. And this year I am going to Warm Springs and I might just as well say it now, probably, without any fears of criticism, that I am available to come back on an hour's notice in case things get worse.

Q That is the way to put it.

THE PRESIDENT: And they may -- I do not know.

Q Aren't you to see the editors this evening?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes, that is right. I would not leave until I had seen them.

Q If you were not going to see them, you could tell us now what you were going to tell them. (Laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #636-A,
With Members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors,
Held in the State Dining Room of the White House,
April 18, 1940, 9.00 P. M.

(There were about 275 present, each one of the members being greeted personally by the President.)

MRL DON STERLING: Mr. President, the members of the American Society of Newspaper Editors are truly grateful to you for receiving them for the eighth consecutive time in this historic mansion.

And to my colleagues who are your guests tonight I would again sound a note of caution. Whatever the President of the United States may say to us on this occasion is "off the record". And by "off the record" I mean "off the record" in every way the phrase implies.

The good faith of the organization is pledged that nothing said here by the President will be published or repeated in any form, nor used as a basis for publication or repetition.

On other occasions a few of our members, subsequent to the White House Conference, have innocently become the means of transmitting some of the information acquired here. I urge members to refrain from discussing what transpires at this session with any save fellow members of the Society.

Mr. President, we would welcome from you any comment you may care to make on the foreign situation, national defense, labor relations, unemployment, public debt limit, taxation -- and may I have the temerity to add -- any other subject that may be uppermost in our minds.

(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: The first order of business is that Don will give me that list of subjects.

MR. STERLING: Here they are.

THE PRESIDENT: I can hardly realize that this is the eighth session that we have had. It has given me, probably, a good deal more of a kick than it has you during these previous seven sessions to talk things over. We have had all kinds of questions and all kinds of replies.

There is only one thing I want to find out: You remember last year I raised the question about Dutchess County, that Dutchess County was not represented in this room. I understand they applied for membership later on. Is there anybody from Dutchess County here?

Q I am representing Dutchess County. I am from Westchester and I represent Mr. Dick Coons, who asked me to tell you that his application is in.

THE PRESIDENT: All right; as long as you represent Dick Coons, it is all right.

I do not know that there is anything in particular I can say at this time except perhaps to go back a little bit into the past. As you know, I am accused of being an optimist. I never have been nearly as much of an optimist or Pollyanna as you gentlemen, not once in all the seven years. I have been an old-line conservative. I have viewed with alarm all kinds of things that were happening, whereas you were not.

As you will remember, last year you thought that I was -- oh, let us say an "alarmist" about the situation of the world and, after our Conference in April last year -- I do not know whether it was a case of cause and effect or whether it was pure mental telepathy or coincidence -- after I saw you in April we went through May and June and well into July and I think I told the members of the Congress of the United States just what I told you, that events in the world were not so happy and might result in war. But I was solemnly assured by brethren who were in the legislative branch of the Government, some of them who have now passed to the great beyond and others who are still alive, that I was all wet,

just the way, in effect, you told me last April. But the fact remains that I was right and most of you, the majority of you, were wrong, and a lot of things have happened since then. We won't go into that; you know them just as well as I do. I am only wondering, from the point of view of giving information to the country, as to whether the country realizes the possibilities, the potentialities of a world situation and I am trusting very largely to the press to bring the situation frankly to the attention of the American public because I think they are entitled to know it.

You can do it just as well as I can; I do not have to tell you anything. All you have to do is to read the dispatches from across the ocean.

I think -- I do sense in the past couple of weeks, perhaps, an increased desire, a willingness on the part of the American public, to think things through. I can tell you this, because this is all off the record, as you know: My wife came back from a lecture trip of three weeks and she noticed, even in the past week, that people were beginning to take their heads out of the sand and beginning to say to themselves and in questions to her, in the last week of this trip, "What is going to happen if? What is going to happen if?"

Before this Denmark episode and the Norway episode, there weren't nearly as many questions by the public.

"What is going to happen if?" That is the first time that I have seen a more general willingness on the part of the American public to say, "What is going to happen if?"

Well, I think that you gentlemen are just as able to write forecast stories and to think things through editorially as they are in the newspaper columns -- because there is still a thing known as a colored news

story after all these years; I think I talked about it seven years ago for the first time. I think you can get people thinking just as well as I can on that question of what happens to the United States "if". I think you have got a very definite duty to start that thing going around the country -- and not take a positive line on it because no human being can do that. There isn't anybody that can answer the question, "What happens if?" I cannot; the State Department cannot. But you and I and the public are beginning to realize a little bit more that there are certain rather more clear implications by way of answer to that question as affecting the American future, and I cannot help but feel that it is a pretty good thing for this country to analyze the question.

As I have said to a lot of people that have come in to see me lately -- they have talked glibly about all sorts of foreign nations -- I have asked them the simple question, "Where the hell is that country, the country X?" And in an amazing number of cases -- members of Congress, members of the Senate, members of the press -- when I pinned them down as to where that place is, they have not known. Now that is the plain fact. Of course I do have to admit that we do know an awful lot more, as a nation, 130 million people, about international geography, international populations, international implications, than almost any other population in the world, and what has happened since 1914 has been an amazing performance. I have commented on it in these meetings before. We are carrying in our newspapers more foreign news than in the newspapers of any other nation in all the world. But it did not start until 1914. We carried probably less than our share prior to 1914. But, during those war years, the press of the Nation got -- what shall I say? -- geography-minded and since then our Nation, even in the little county papers, has increased (its foreign news) in proportion in an extra-

ordinarily satisfactory way, so that the American public is better informed. But I do not know that I can say that that is a real accomplishment, because I think the American public, the best informed in the world, is still very badly informed about the world. In other words, it has got a long ways to go.

Well, I am going to ask you all to ask me any questions you want afterwards. I have got Don's list of things.

National Defense: I think I can say one rather interesting thing for those people who think in terms of the Budget more than they do of any other topic in the world, that this year we will probably spend over two billion dollars on the current national defense bill of the United States. And that does not count the other bill, pensions for former wars that run to another billion dollars, interest on the public debt, half of which is due to former wars. In other words, a total of about a billion and a half as the cost of former wars. The total deficit, in very round figures, this coming fiscal year, beginning on the first of July, is going to be somewhere between a billion and a half and two billion dollars and national defense, in other words the current maintenance and operating budget of the Army and Navy and Marine Corps, is responsible for two billion dollars. Then, former wars, by way of pensions and the old portion of the national debt that can be charged up to the World War, are responsible for another billion and a half. So, we have two billion dollars for national defense and a billion and a half for former wars, which is three and a half billion dollars, and the total deficit will be only between a billion and a half and two billion, so you can draw your own conclusions as to one reason why we are continuing in these days to create a national deficit.

Then we come down to the third subject, Labor Relations: I don't

know -- I suppose the easiest thing to do for you good people would be to ask to come to your formal dinner, Bill Green and John Lewis, and give them a half hour apiece and then a free-for-all for another hour. So much for labor relations. (Laughter)

On Unemployment: The gentlemen whom I referred to the other night, at the Gridiron, as having a well-developed sense of rumor, the columnists, the interpreters, had a perfectly grand time this month as to unemployment figures, so I sent for one or two of the so-called economic advisers -- oh, more than that, five or six of them -- some of them in the employ of the Government, some of them in the employ of private business, and I said to them, "I notice that you have given a figure on unemployment in the United States. Who is an unemployed person?" Well, they began to hem and haw and no one of them ever gave me a definition.

I used certain examples which, perhaps, were not fair. I said, "I have got a girl friend, a graduate of Vassar College, been out about three or four years. She was not very happy at home, stepmother, so she said to her father, 'I think I have got to go my way and live my own life.' And father said, 'All right.' 'How much are you going to allow me?' 'Well, you know I am a poor man. I appreciate the living conditions at home are not so easy; I will give you ten thousand dollars a year.' She said, 'Is that all?' He said, 'That is all; I am a stern parent.'

"So she went her own way on ten grand and she tried to get a job. She got a job with Delineator; she had no training -- she thought she was good -- and they fired her at the end of the month. Then she went to Vogue and Vogue fired her at the end of the month and now she is hanging around the night clubs saying, 'I belong to the great army of the unemployed and when the census taker comes around I am going to

tell him all about it. I am unemployed.' All right.

"Up in a place, a certain place I know, there is a fellow making fifteen hundred dollars a year. He has a daughter, twenty-eight years old and, looking at her, I would say that she will probably never marry. However, she was brought up to be a musician and she knows how to play a piano and does know the technique of music. She lives at home and during December, January, February and March she gives music lessons and makes enough out of those music lessons to go to Poughkeepsie and see the movies and buy a few ice cream sodas and so on. She is a nice girl, perfectly happy at home with Mama and Papa, and makes \$250 a year in the winter months and that is all she wants to make. She has a happy home and she maintains herself as far as clothing and pin money go.

"A census taker went around the other day and said to Annabelle, 'Are you unemployed?' 'Sure, I am unemployed.'

"Of course she is not unemployed.

"All right; how about the carpenter back home? He gets twelve dollars a day and works an average of 125 days a year. Well, they are making about fifteen hundred dollars a year and these days, in the last few years, they have been making around an average of fifteen hundred dollars a year. They are not starving, not on relief, but during about -- well, probably a majority of the total days in the year, they aren't holding down a job because a carpenter's job, in most cases, is on a job-to-job basis or it is seasonal.

"You will always catch on any given date, the eighteenth of April or the twenty-eighth of April, you and I know that we always catch a third of the carpenters of the United States out of work and yet that third of the carpenters are not on relief and they are making enough to keep them off relief, although it is not as much as they ought to make.

"How about the army of wives? They go into the department stores right after Thanksgiving and stay through, right after the first of January. That is the Christmas season. They have been doing it for years. They sell goods. It is part of their scheme of life. The family is helped by the couple of hundred dollars they earn in the Christmas season.

"Around comes April. 'Are you unemployed?' 'Sure, I am unemployed.'"

In other words, this violent controversy among the columnists is probably a good thing. They use the usual language of columnists -- against each other this time -- and it was rather choice. (Laughter) Dorothy Thompson said some unladylike things about Hugh Johnson and he said some ungentlemanlike things about Dorothy Thompson. Fine; it is all right; I am all for it. (Laughter)

Now, no human being knows or will know how many unemployed people are in the United States until we all get together and define "unemployment." Nobody has had the wit yet in the newspaper world to bring that fact out. That is an absolute fact -- David Lawrence knows that. Nobody in the newspaper world has as yet demanded a definition of "unemployment." That is a very interesting and startling fact, so how the hell can I talk about unemployment until you fellows define it? Is that fair?

Q That is fair.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the only thing I can do is this: I go back to the sample census that we took, that was taken by John Biggers, who is a grand person, two years ago. At that time -- these are very rough figures -- at that time we had about three million people on the relief rolls. Mind you, I am not talking about the unemployable unemployed, who were being taken care of in a fashion in the communities, the states, but the employable unemployed. We had about three million of them on

the Federal relief rolls. We had a waiting list of about three-quarters of a million. John Biggers' estimate was that there was another, as I remember it, two million or perhaps a little less, about one and three-quarters million, who ought to have work for economic reasons, who are not on relief, who are not on the waiting list of the relief organization, the work relief organization, but who ought to have work. There were somewhere, as I remember it, about one and three-quarters million people out of the total population, which Biggers totaled up, out of about five and a half million unemployed who can work and who ought to have work.

Well, that is, again, more or less of a generalization, although John Biggers' test questions were pretty sensible and gave, in effect, a pretty good definition of who an unemployed person was.

Probably, at the present time, we have put a substantial number of that five and three-quarters million people to work. We only have two million, one hundred thousand on the relief rolls now. We have, roughly, one million applicants. That brings it up to three million and my own guess is that in the John Biggers' category of people who were not on either of these lists, that there are about a million and a half, instead of what he had then, a million and three quarters.

Well, if you add all that together it would mean that in this country there are about four million, six or seven hundred thousand, as opposed to the Biggers' survey of two years ago of five million, seven hundred and fifty thousand.

Therefore -- this is just -- heavens, it has to be rule of thumb more or less -- I think probably we have decreased the needy unemployed numbers a little over a million people in the last two years.

Now, that is as fair and honest a statement as I can give you. Now,

of course I think it is criminal, literally criminal, for a free press to keep on printing figures about ten, eleven and twelve million unemployed in the United States without finding out the definition first.

What do you do? You take some figures from somebody's statistics or a political candidate or a labor organization and print them as fact without defining it. Now, the press is very largely guilty of doing that and thereby doing something that, just plain, is a bit of a fraud on the public.

Public Debt Limit: Well, I am trying to stay within it. I am trying to stay within it and, as you saw today on the relief proposition, I am still trying to stay within it. I am not saying what will happen after the first of July, 1941 and, well, maybe, as you all know, -- maybe -- maybe -- it may be somebody else's job and not mine. (Laughter)

And, finally, Taxation: There is nothing new on taxation that you have not had a year ago, literally. No new taxes have been added. A few so-called "unfair taxes" were lightened last session. There isn't anything substantially new on taxes except, perhaps, for one thing: I think we pay awfully light taxes in the United States, compared with any other nation in the world.

Now, I think that is the only comment that is necessary. Very light taxes, considering that we have a successful democratic form of government, considering the fact that our national defense program is adequate and not running an awful lot over the Budget and considering the blessings that we have at the present time without any guarantee as to whether those blessings are going to continue or not. I am no seer.

I think we are pretty well off.

I do not know, Don (Mr. Sterling), if there is anything else. I have covered all your subjects here. Now, if you want to start in, I

will give you this (the list) back. Got any more ideas?

Q (Mr. Sterling) I think some of the gentlemen would like to ask questions, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Fine, perfectly fine.

Q (Mr. Sterling) Mr. White, what have you got to ask this evening?

Q (Mr. William Allen White) Any questions that I would ask, I would hesitate to ask them because I would not know how to answer them. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. David Lawrence) May I suggest, if it is feasible, that you might tell the editors what is your appraisal of the condition of our Navy and our national defense in relative terms or in terms of three and four years ago. What have we done by way of preparation in the last two or three years?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, when Dave Lawrence says that, he happens to strike on what might be called a sympathetic chord in my heart, going back to the old days of the war.

Our armament program is not caused in any way because I am a militarist. In fact, I do not think there was anybody in the United States who rejoiced more at the time of the Harding administration when Secretary of State (Charles Evans) Hughes put through the Disarmament Conference in Washington. I thought it was just one thousand per cent. I still believe it was a grand idea; but it did not work in the long run and I still think we were right in scrapping four major battleships that were on the way. I thought it was the right thing to do. It took courage on the part of Secretary of State Hughes to put that thing across and if a whole lot of other things had happened to click, as we had hoped they would, it might have worked out for the permanent benefit of the whole world. It was not any fault of the United States that it did not click; we had already agreed to stay out in every way from the League of Nations--

that was over the dam entirely -- and the subsequent events since 1921, the time of that conference, were not of our making, so that everything we have done since then, we have done at a very late date through sheer necessity. It was brought upon us by other nations.

Going back to when I came in here in March, 1933, we had practically not built a single warship. We had cut the Army down; we cut our reserves down; we cut our equipment down pretty steadily in the hope that the world would not rearm and it had become pretty evident at the time of the 1931 London Naval Conference that we were in a hopeless minority and the other people were going ahead. So, in 1933, we had to go ahead and, in a sense, catch up for lost time. We have been doing it on a pretty even, steady basis year after year since then. We haven't gone wild; we have built up the Army and built up the Navy on a reasonable, proportional increase each year so that today, quite aside from the number of men in the Army and Navy -- it costs money, of course, -- we are much better off on the material side, even relatively, than we have been at any time in my memory.

Now, of course, there is the silly, fool, old question of the pacifists: "Who are you trying to protect us against?" In other words, asking us the direct question, "Who is going to attack? What nation? Name it. Where? On our own coasts? South America, Central America, Hawaii, West Indies, et cetera?"

Well, I suppose the events in Europe of the past two weeks have answered that kind of a question. Which one of you would have said three weeks ago that the next attack is going to be the occupation of Denmark and the occupation of Norway? I think probably one of the greatest stories in American history is what happened a week ago Monday afternoon when the junior Senator from North Carolina got up on the

floor of the Senate and made a speech. He made that speech at 5.15 P. M.; the speech had been carefully prepared and given out to the press beforehand and I think a good many of you, if you will check, you will find that it had been set up with appropriate headlines to go into the next morning's papers. Bob Reynolds was telling the Senate that everything was all cockeyed with our American neutrality, and that if the United States would abandon the foreign policies of the President and Secretary of State and adopt the foreign policy of those great Scandinavian nations, Denmark and Norway, the country would be safe. (Laughter)

And he enlarged on it -- there were two or three columns -- and, as I say, probably a lot of you had it set up.

Well, at that particular time, 5.15 P. M. our time, Copenhagen was in the hands of the Germans and so was Oslo. He did not know it and neither did you people, but there is the fact.

Now, I can't answer the question. There is one man, one editor in this country, who has got a lot of courage. He does not use any arguments to support it but every Monday morning Cap (Captain) Patterson writes an editorial on national defense which ends with the words, "Two ships for one."

Well, if you come to analyze it, it does not make sense but there are a lot of good things which do not make sense. It is a slogan. Of course, we cannot have two ships for one over any individual navy or combination of navies against us. As I say, it is wholly illogical, but Cap Patterson's slogan, "Two ships for one," is something that makes American people think. Think what? Well, for one: What is American defense?

I am going to repeat something I said in the Cabinet meeting about three or four years ago. I said, "Suppose Alaska is attacked? Are we

going to defend it? It is a long ways off. Are we going to defend Alaska? The attack might come from a combination of powers on the other side of the ocean. I do not have to name names; you can readily imagine what a combination of Asiatic powers, including Siberia, might mean." The Cabinet was unanimous; "Sure; sure, the American flag is flying. That is a cinch, of course."

I said, "All right." I said, "Come on down the line: Canada attacked by a non-American nation, either Asiatic on British Columbia's side or European on the Atlantic side, or simultaneously by a landing in British Columbia and a landing on Nova Scotia?"

"Oh, we cannot have some European nation trying to land in Canada."

"All right." I said, "How about Mexico, on the other side?"

"Yes, of course we would have to defend Mexico against an European nation."

I cited the days of Andrew Johnson and General Sherman in 1865, when the French troops under Maximilian were in Mexico. I said, "How about Costa Rica?" Well, this is not derogatory to the Cabinet of the United States; probably you fellows would be, proportionately, just as ignorant. Somebody said, "Where is Costa Rica?" "Well," I said, "I am asking the question; I am not telling you where it is. Suppose the independence of Costa Rica were threatened?" "Well, I guess maybe we will have to defend it. Isn't it somewhere near the Canal?" I said, "Yes, the next state." "Well," they said, "I guess we will have to defend it."

"Well," I said, "how about Colombia?" Somebody in the Cabinet said, "Colombia? Colombia? Colombia, that is South America, isn't it?" (Laughter) Well, listen, there is just as much ignorance in this room, proportionately. It may be a laughing matter but, at the same time,

there is equal ignorance on the part of the public throughout the country.

"Well," they said, "if Colombia is near the Canal we will have to do it."

I said, "How about Venezuela?" "Well," they said, "that is a long ways off." I said, "Yes, in one of those new bombing planes you would be two hours and fifty minutes from Miami." They said, "What?" I said, "In one of those new bombing planes you would be two hours and fifty minutes from Miami and, of course, if they happened to take a base in Cuba, it would be a lot easier." "Well," they said, "if it is only two hours and fifty minutes from Miami, I guess we will have to protect Venezuela."

I said, "How about Brazil?" "That is a long way off." "Well," I said, "from Brazil to Venezuela is only about four and a half hours. You can fly right across." "Well, that is a long way off." I said, "Of course, Uruguay and Chile and Paraguay, they are a long way off." "Well, I don't know; I don't know." A big question mark. I said, "Oh, well, let us stick to the old question about the Monroe Doctrine in the Americas and," I said, "suppose an European nation, a nation which had at that time 5,000 planes which could fly from the Cape Verde Islands to Brazil" -- and we knew it, 5,000 bombing planes, do not have to name the nation, three years ago. They said, "Five thousand bombing planes?" I said, "Yes," They had printed it but not even the papers had commented on it. I said, "They could put 5,000 bombing planes into Brazil." I said, "Seven hours from the Cape Verde Islands and that is about fourteen hours from the home base in the European unmentioned country." That was three years ago.

"Well," they said, "I guess we will have to go the whole hog on the Monroe Doctrine." I said, "In other words we have to guarantee the safety of Brazil?" "Well, I guess so, because if they get a foothold,

they could stop at Venezuela and then they would be established within two and three-quarters hours from Miami."

And then, to one of them, who came from out Bill White's way, I said, "It is not very far from Costa Rica and from there to Mexico. Suppose there was a base in the Tampico region, I would rather live on the banks of the Hudson River, from the point of view of family safety, than I would in Kansas." And that, literally, is true. You (turning to Mr. William Allen White) would be nearer to danger than I would be on the banks of the Hudson River because the attack on me would have to come from somewhere out in the sea and big bombing planes could not be launched from out at sea, but from Tampico to the middle of Kansas is just a couple of hours' jaunt. You are in real danger and do not realize it.

I am trying to scare Bill; it is all right. But really, honestly, it is not a laughing matter.

Now, then, I went on in this meeting -- it is a very good example -- and I said, "We believe that the British Empire, to a certain extent, has stood more nearly for the democratic way of life and has been less trouble to us than some of these newfangled countries that believe in Nazism and Bolshevism, et cetera and, on the whole, Canada has been a pretty good neighbor to us and we have never had any threat against us by Bermuda or Jamaica or by any of the Windward or Leeward Islands. Ever since we got our freedom we have not had any trouble."

"Oh," this fellow said, "you are pro-British." I said, "No; I am not. I know they have never caused me any trouble as a neighbor and I have a hunch that one of these newfangled countries, with different kinds of government, might cause me trouble in my old age if they were my neighbors."

"Oh," said this fellow, "you are pro-British." "No," I said, "I have known the British ever since I was a small boy. I am onto their tricks; I know them, every one of them. I know them when they are trying to slip something over on me. One reason they like me is that when I catch them, I tell them. And they have got to the point now where they say, 'I guess I can't fool the President; he is onto us.'" Well, it is a good thing to be in that position. To go back, I said, "What about Australia? Suppose some non-white nation tried to take Australia?" "Well," said the Cabinet unanimously, "that is too damned far off for us to have any interest in that."

Well, that is three years ago. I do not know what would be the sentiment of the American people today. I made a very bad mistake in psychology a week ago. I do not suppose that any of us had ever given much thought to where Greenland was. Let us be honest; we never thought of Greenland in terms of the United States. I haven't. The Press came in the other day and asked me whether Greenland belongs in the Monroe Doctrine. I stalled. I told them that I had looked it up in the encyclopaedia and that the fauna of Greenland and the flora of Greenland were more American than they were European. They picked up the question and they asked me, they pressed it home, and I took a very righteous tone, saying that I am more interested in the humanities of it, in the 17,000 splendid Eskimos who are living in Greenland, than I am in the Monroe Doctrine, and I am still stalling. (Laughter)

Now, wait a minute. Where I went wrong is this: I did not think the American people would support me if I said that Greenland belongs in the Monroe Doctrine. But the American people are way out ahead of me and I think I am right in saying that most of the American people today, as most of you sense, would O. K. it if their Government said tomorrow

that Greenland is inside the Monroe Doctrine. They are ahead of their Government. Now, that is the actual fact.

Now, to go back to our Army and Navy: In one word -- I do not want the country to get excited over it -- we are using our facilities for the construction of ships, the construction of this, that or the other thing, without building up too large and unnecessary amount of productive facilities. If we are going to have peace at the end of this war, there will be a lot of this new airplane factory work that will have to be discarded. But, taking it by and large, we have been proceeding -- ships, Army, aircraft -- along pretty sound financial and economic lines and, incidentally, we have helped our own cause, in case we are attacked, by building up our facilities very largely through the efforts of the present belligerents.

I think that covers it pretty well. I have talked an awful lot about national defense -- it is a hobby.

Q Mr. President, will you tell us something about what your thoughts might be on any likelihood that we might find ourselves with many new ships, near completed, that are made archaic because of new warfare methods?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because everybody else would be in the same boat. In other words, if somebody comes along and devises something absolutely revolutionary, all nations will be caught with obsolete material in equal measure. That is the easiest way of putting it and, incidentally, nobody in all of history has ever devised a revolutionary weapon of attack that has not been met within a very short time by a revolutionary weapon of defense. It always compensates.

Q Mr. President, have you seen, perhaps, a summary or transcript of the conference we had with Mr. Welles (the Under Secretary of State) this afternoon? I asked because I thought there may have been something in that

on which you might care to enlarge.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so; I do not know what he said.

Q I thought there might be something on which you would care to talk.

THE PRESIDENT: The only thing -- I do not know whether he mentioned it or not -- going back to what I first said on the world situation, I think every man, woman and child ought to ask themselves the question "What is going to happen to the United States if dictatorship wins in Europe and the Far East?" In other words, what would be the logical steps taken by that kind of victorious cause? In other words, what would you or I do if our name happened to be Hitler or Stalin? What would we do, having the same kind of background that they have got? It is almost human to want to extend victory over Europe, isn't it? Wouldn't you or I, as victorious Hitlers, want to extend? It is natural.

When Napoleon started out, he had no idea of dominating all of Europe. When Alexander started out across from Macedonia, he did not think he was going to try to conquer Persia. The thing grows, as the French say. If you and I were Hitler, isn't it just common sense to say that, having conquered Europe and destroyed the British Fleet and the French Army, and having no opposition, and being in a position to attack all the British colonies and commonwealth and dominions and to capture all the French colonies all over the different hemispheres, well, what would you or I do next? That is a fair question -- your or I in the position of Hitler? Why leave an entire continent, North, Central and South America, absolutely all alone? Why would we do it? We are within one "yump" of world domination. Why not take the "yump" and why not say to the United States, "Now, son, go back and get behind that nice wall which you have not built up and which we are about to build up around you."

Now, that is a different concept. That is not your isolationist's

concept over here, because he wants to build a wall around himself and we have not let him. I am speaking about the Hitler concept and he would have, probably, from the point of view of physical force and a certain amount of, what shall I say? misguided common sense -- and you and I in his place would do the same thing -- built a wall around the United States.

Well, it would not be a very difficult thing to do it. Why? Here is a very simple example: We are all Hitler, a conglomerate crowd, constituting itself into a victorious Hitler. What would we do as a mass Hitler mind? I know what we would do. We would say to the Argentines, "Listen, sweetness, you people are dependent for your existence on selling cattle to Europe. The United States won't buy them." You know that. They won't buy Argentine cattle. I do not have to tell you why and, of course, it is not just this year but we never will. Right?

"The United States won't buy your mutton or sheep -- they never will. They won't buy your wheat because they have a surplus supply. They won't buy your corn or hogs because they have a surplus supply. So, sweetness, isn't it obvious that you are dependent for your existence on those agricultural crops, on selling them in Europe?"

And Argentine would say, "Yes, my God, I guess that is right."

All right. So we, in that conglomerate part, will say, "Now Mr. Argentine, we will let you sell to England and France and Italy and Germany and Scandinavia and the Balkans through the -- what will we call it? -- the Germania Corporation. You cannot sell it anywhere, not even in Ireland, except through the Germania Corporation."

Well, the Germania Corporation hasn't any foreign exchange because the United States has got all that -- they have all the gold in the world.

"Well, what is foreign exchange based on? Gold? Well, that is out

of date. We will devise a barter basis for you and we will tell you how much of your cattle and your sheep and corn and your wheat you can sell to England and Belgium and Hungary and Sweden, Italy. The Germania Corporation will tell you how much you can sell to each of those countries and they will tell you what the Germania Corporation will pay you in automobiles, cheap automobiles, cheaper than the Ford or any car that the United States will produce. It will give labor -- put people to work all over Europe and we will pay you in pulp, in paper, we will pay you in steel products, we will pay you in chinaware, tinware, everything else that you do not make yourselves. But we will decide what the medium of payment will be and we will collect a two-way commission, one per cent of raw products coming in and one per cent on our manufactured products going out."

Now, that is what we would do if we had any intelligence and I think most people in America, including editors, have some intelligence.

And then, where will the United States be? We could not trade with Europe.

Well, suppose the same thing happened out in the Far East? Suppose the Yangtze remains permanently closed to American products, the China Treaty ports, Cochin-China, Hong Kong, Siam, the Straits Settlements, the Dutch Indies?

Well, if we want to live within ourselves, we had better say so and say so darned quick because it is going to take a lot of preparation to live within ourselves.

It is all right; if the United States wants to, it has a perfect right to do so. So, watch out; watch out.

Q It is a sort of international two per cent club? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Right; right. Only -- only in this case we cannot even indict them.

Q When we were here last year you told us there would be a fifty-fifty chance that there would be a war. Events proved that you were conservative.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. Listen, I am a master of understatement and always have been.

Q Will you answer this: You also told us that if, as I remember it, if Russia joined in with the Allies, or, rather, joined in with Germany, considering Germany's overwhelming mastery of the air, if Russia joined with Germany, the chances were fifty-fifty that Germany would win. Do you want to change your odds?

THE PRESIDENT: I am still offering the odds and you can take either side.

Q Inasmuch as all law and order depend upon force -- even the traffic signals here on the corner depend on the ultimate use of force -- can you envisage a world of international order in which there would be an economic revival of peace and prosperity, in which the United States would refuse to contribute any of the force?

THE PRESIDENT: I think your premise is wrong in the implication of it. In other words, I think I can envisage a world of peace for as far as I can look ahead -- twenty years, twenty-five years. I do not pretend to have any idea of what will happen after that. I have talked very often with a very great friend, as I was, of Woodrow Wilson -- David Lawrence -- and we have talked about the idealism of those days, and I think most of us believe in the inherent sincerity of Woodrow Wilson in his effort to bring about an end to war. But he was looking too far ahead; he was looking toward the permanent ending of war. Well, because of hindsight, because we have seen what happened in the last twenty years, we have all learned a lesson, and I cannot look any more further ahead to a world that has ended war than a limited period, twenty or twenty-five years.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): Can I finish the sentence? And, back of it all, is this idea that force, armed force, is in the long run the thing that people are afraid of and, therefore, in any twenty or twenty-five-year peace, the elimination of the fear of aggression by the forces of aggression, offensive weapons of war, is the first consideration and, that at the end of this particular war, there may be a period of exhaustion when people will say, "Let us get rid of the offensive weapons."

Now, the European victors of the World War did that, in effect, with Germany through the Treaty of Versailles. They told Germany that she could not arm, that she could not have certain weapons, but there were no effective methods by which that could be enforced through the period of years. We all knew that Germany was rearming and the European nations could not decide what to do through 1930, 1931, '32, '33, '34 and '35, and so on, to prevent Germany from rearming.

Now, I conceive this -- I may be entirely wild and it will only come about through a period of exhaustion -- that the twenty-one American republics have got a possible role to play and that is to act as the inspectors of a disarmed truce -- a disarmed peace. The aggressor nations in Europe and in the Far East can be inspected. They won't trust each other to inspect each other. We people over here are pretty well trusted by them because we are not aggressors, and I am just thinking out loud, but there is a possibility, after this whole thing is over -- it may be four or five years, Lord knows -- we will be able to fill the role of inspectors of peace and, automatically, have some method of punishment of violators and of disarming them before they get to the point of being dangerous to other nations.

Now, that is just a thought that I am throwing out; it is chimerical at the present time.

Q I am very much interested in what you said about Greenland. I wonder if everyone here is cognizant of the very, very important thing that Greenland presents to us right now? There is a matter -- I am getting into a new role here by being a member of this organization; I am a member of Congress -- and that has to do with the taking over of Greenland by the United States. The person who proposed it said to me yesterday -- Mrs. Rogers of Massachusetts -- that she wondered if we were going to let that go. Undoubtedly, under the very strict construction of the Monroe Doctrine, Greenland comes in under that Doctrine. I am also very much, seriously, very much disturbed as to whether Canada comes into that.

THE PRESIDENT: I settled that two years ago -- three years ago. (Laughter)

Q I know you did but, under the Monroe Doctrine, a very strict construction, Canada does not come in. That is a difference of opinion but it seems that is the way. If Greenland does, we have a serious proposition right now. Is Greenland a part of Denmark or, under the present situation, is she a part of Germany? Denmark, having been occupied by Germany and having been taken over by the German Government, is she (Greenland) a part of Denmark or is she not? That is a very serious question.

THE PRESIDENT: Let me answer it this way: If you have ever followed the proceedings in a domestic relations court, you will probably realize that the first time that the husband and wife come before you it is not necessary to make a final decision. (Laughter)

Q In your early remarks you complimented us as editors before questioning our intelligence --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): I was questioning my own just as much. It is all right.

Q You said we could interpret dispatches as easily as the Administration, or words to that effect. I wonder if you or anyone in the Administration

or any of the editors here read that dispatch in the Washington Evening Star the evening before last, which said that the Norwegian Government had broadcast last Monday to all the Norwegian ships at sea and in ports, a warning to disregard instructions coming from their owners in German-occupied Oslo. And here is the direct quote:

"'Telegrams --'"

quoting the Norwegian Government --

"'-- telegrams which you receive from Norway signed by the owners are dispatched by German authorities,' the warning said. 'Orders received from the Norwegian Legation (in Washington, D. C.) or broadcast over the British broadcasting station are authentic.'"

How do we interpret that dispatch, that Washington is being used as a distributing point by a belligerent nation? How do we interpret that fact?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me put it this way: Suppose you are a Norwegian citizen and suppose your country has been raped, and I use the word advisedly. You have a lot of property out on the high seas and you are still a loyal Norwegian. Would you think it was an awfully friendly act on the part of a friendly nation if the President of that nation said, "I am going to enforce the pound of flesh, the letter of the law, and tell the Norwegian Minister he has no right to open his mouth about your ships while he remains in Washington, D. C.?"

Q Merchant ships.

Q Do you recall the unpleasantness over a man named Bernstorff who used the Embassy (the German Embassy) as a clearinghouse for belligerent messages when we were neutral? (Laughter, indicating that the President need not answer the query)

Q Would it be fair to ask if you have been receiving of late any unpleasant communications from any particular group with respect to the mission to

which you assigned Melville (Myron) Taylor?

THE PRESIDENT: Not lately. I did so, up to about a month ago. And here is one thing I think will probably interest you, but again, it has got to be kept awfully dark, completely off the record, because it is still in the very preliminary stages.

I felt all along that practically everybody in the world who believes in God -- lots of different kinds of gods -- the faith and teachings of the major religions of the world are opposed to murder and robbery and sudden death and a few things of that kind and, therefore, that in order to mobilize the moral forces of the world, which are not all Christian, it was worth while to extend that effort to other forms of religion. Well, the first and obvious thing to do was to get in touch -- communication is the better word -- with the heads of those religions. Well, of course here in this country it is comparatively simple. I can get hold of the Federal Council of Churches, or any other Protestant church that does not belong to the Council, by the mere sending of a telegram. It is easy to establish communication. In the case of the Jewish Church, there are a number of leading Jews who can rather effectively speak for not all but a great majority of the Jews in this country by coming down to Washington to see me. In the case of the Roman Catholic Church, there isn't any one person -- I have to talk to the head of that church, who lives in Italy, and therefore I have sent someone over there to be my communicating agent with him over there, rather than recognizing, in this country, the apostolic delegate here in Washington, because that might be construed as a diplomatic full recognition of the ^[temporal?] Templar Power.

But that is only a prelude. I am taking up at the present time -- I am trying to work out the idea of establishing a moral communication, practically, with the Greek Orthodox Church. Well, that is a little bit

APB 4-26-56

difficult. Why? Well, because there isn't any canonical head. There are a number of patriarchs in different parts, around the Aegean and up in the Black Sea area in Russia. I discovered a couple of days ago that this patriarch, the senior patriarch, that he lives in Constantinople, not Istanbul. Well, that is more a venerable (?) rather than a canonical headship of the Greek Orthodox Church, which, incidentally, still maintains quite a lot of influence in the moral religion throughout the Soviet Republic.

So, I am probably -- as I say, this has to be kept dark, although it is an awful lot of people to expect to keep it dark -- so I am going to probably send some kind of a representative of mine to talk with the senior patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church.

That is No. 1, outside of what we have done already.

The Mohammedan Church we are very apt to think of as being represented by the scimitar. It is quite a long time since the Mohammedan Church went to war as a church, and I am trying to carry out a step of getting in touch, probably through the King of the Hejaz or through President Inonu of Turkey, with the leaders of the Mohammedan Church, which extends, of course, not only over Northern Africa and Asia Minor and the Near East, but also down into India and has several hundred million followers.

Mind you, as I say, I have not got to the point of actually appointing somebody yet but it is coming along pretty well and I think that when American Christians get to understand that this is a worthy move for internationally decent moral relations among people that believe in certain religious teachings on morality, there isn't going to be much local trouble.

Q I was very much interested in your statement about Greenland, especially

as it applied to the public opinion in this country. I wondered if you have any opinion to express which would be of interest to us, if you agree with me that two beliefs we have today are, perhaps, contradictory? On the one hand, I believe that the majority of the American people are firmly sold on the idea that we should stay out of this conflict. On the other hand, I also believe that the majority of people -- and I will confine that to my own section of the country -- are convinced that we have a very definite stake in this conflict.

Now, is it possible that we can overemphasize the first to the point where we will weaken our position with regard to the second and will not be prepared to take steps which would be very right in protecting our position in the latter?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course on that we have to look at the realism of the case.

It is a great deal easier -- I am not including Canada, which is a belligerent -- but our most northerly ports that we could use for the protection or the relief of people in Greenland, it is a lot longer voyage to go to Greenland from there than it is, perhaps, from the Norwegian Coast. Therefore, you have got to think in terms of practicality. Furthermore, there are a lot of things that we have been accustomed^x to devise, new instrumentalities. For example, we have in civil life the theory of trusteeship, in other words the person who takes over, for the benefit of cestuique trust, takes over their property, looks after their education, looks after their physical needs, builds up their estate and protects them against accident or attack for no remuneration, no profit. That is a new conception of relations between a great powerful nation, like ours, and a very, very small, new and rough country, 17,000 people, like Greenland. I am thinking a little bit at the present

time in terms of trusteeship. It is a little too early to tell. We have got to be practical. I am not going to stick my neck out.

Q Has the antagonistic pressure regarding J. Edgar Hoover in the FBI assumed any serious proportions?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so; I had not noticed any.

Q Any basis for those charges, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I do not believe so. Of course the thing started, as you know, from Rhode Island and was directed originally by the FBI and then it turned out that Bill Vanderbilt, an old friend of mine, the Governor of Rhode Island, was the fellow who had had the people do the wire tapping. Of course, in any big organization there may be some fellow -- well, I will give you an illustration that I just got late this afternoon: Down in Georgia some of the SEC people received complaints about the Georgia Power Company giving corporate funds to help reelect Senator George two years ago and, like all complaints in the Government, you cannot say, "Forget it." They sent some people down there and one of these bright young men who went down there in two instances asked people who they had voted for in 1938, as if that made any difference whatsoever. Now the SEC is going to fire that bright young man. As you know, in your own business sometimes you get a fellow who does something that he ought not to do and you get rid of him. I have no doubt that in a far-flung organization like the FBI there may be one or two investigators who exceed their orders. It does not mean the whole thing is crooked.

Q Will the NLRB be allowed to fire that man? (Laughter) (The questioner had evidently meant to ask, "Will the NLRB allow them to fire that man?")

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I suppose he comes under the Hatch Act anyway.

MR. DON STERLING: Mr. President, we have overstayed the time that you asked us to remain. I just want to thank you on behalf of the entire group.

And, as I have lost my prophet's license, I will not venture at this moment advance request of our 1941 conference with you. But whatever the future may hold, you have our gratitude and good wishes.

THE PRESIDENT: It is good of you and perhaps next year I might buy the Rhinebeck Gazette and come down here as one of you.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #637

Held while the President was seated in his automobile
On the road in front of the Veeder (Press) Cottage,
At Georgia Warm Springs Foundation, Warm Springs, Georgia.
April 21, 1940, 11.15 A. M.

THE PRESIDENT: I hope you know more than I do; that is not saying much.

Q Very little news here.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely none; I don't know a thing.

Q Mr. President, is Mackenzie King coming down?

THE PRESIDENT: He is coming. He is leaving wherever he is leaving and he will be here in the morning and stay until the next afternoon.

Nothing particular about it. He always comes and sees me every time he takes his spring holiday.

Q Mr. President, I have --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): What have they given you, George (Mr. Durno)?

Q (Mr. Durno) -- gotten a report that the United States Military Attache from Norway was killed.

THE PRESIDENT: We got that too. There is nothing more you can say. It was most unfortunate. He was, of course, acting in the performance of duty.

When did you get here (looking at Mr. Lauchlin Currie)?

Q Mr. President, we were somewhat intrigued by the presence of Mr. Currie, the big figure man. Are you planning any Budget work?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not Budget work. Probably will talk that old science called economics. It means everything and nothing.

Q Will Mackenzie King stay at the cottage?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Do you plan to see any of the Georgia people -- have you any appointments?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I have not got a single appointment. I am just playing.

Q What was the reaction to your speech?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I saw a bunch of telegrams; very nice. So far a hundred per cent approval.

Q Who was that Republican aspirant for the Presidency? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Ask your office. (Laughter)

Q We answered that right here, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a perfectly good line -- ask your office. It is all right.

Q How long are you planning to stay, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hope, if nothing breaks, to stay until Friday or Saturday.

Q Can you tell us what you said to Pat Harrison?

THE PRESIDENT: No. All I told Pat was -- oh, I don't know -- you have not very much today, have you? Here is just one of those purely tentative things, that if the European situation permits and if Congress goes home -- this is awfully "iffy" -- I may go out to the -- you heard part of this before -- go out to the Coast, if Congress adjourns about the end of the first week in June. And, if I go to the Coast, I hope to go first -- this is really carrying out last year's plan which never came off -- go down and dedicate, open the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and then go from there through Mississippi --

Q (interposing) How about Birmingham, Alabama?

THE PRESIDENT: I would miss that because it is not on the route and you know I have got to make time -- and either in the State of Mississippi, either have some kind of a ceremony to dedicate what has been done on the Natchez Trace, which is up in Northern Mississippi, or go to Natchez itself, which I have never been to.

Q You have not?

THE PRESIDENT: I have never been to Natchez and always wanted to go there.

And then I will go on from there to Fort Worth, Texas, to see Elliott and the family. And then, from there on to California and dedicate our newest National Park, King's Canyon, and then from there up to the long-delayed visit to the San Francisco Exposition, and then go on and up to No. 3, the Olympic National Park, which has to be dedicated.

Q You are going to have a weary bunch of correspondents.

THE PRESIDENT: And it is going to be one of them trips. There is one thing on those western trips -- sometimes you get a whole twenty-four hours when you are not stopping.

Q That would mean that you would be on the road during the Republican National Convention?

THE PRESIDENT: It might mean I will be in a National Park. (Laughter)

Q No speeches?

THE PRESIDENT: Only on conservation.

Q On what? (Laughter)

Q It is a non-political trip?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, entirely. The principal subject will be conservation.

Q Any possibility of Alaska on that trip?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it would depend a little bit. If I got very much interested in conservation, I might do what I planned to do last year, go up to Juneau and back.

Q We would like to see the LANGLEY again. (Laughter)

Q Provided it does not bounce.

Q You could bring in the Philippines?

THE PRESIDENT: He does not even know where they are and they are not far from the Celebes -- quite close and if you keep on going you get to the Andaman. Get an atlas.

Q How long will these trips take?

THE PRESIDENT: Twenty-one days, that is about all.

Q Starting right after Congress adjourns, if it gets through?

THE PRESIDENT: I would probably stay for a few days to get the bills because there are always a lot of bills that come in. Of course this is terribly "iffy" because I cannot tell what will happen in Europe and cannot tell what will happen with Congress.

Q On the subject of travel plans, do you expect to be in Hyde Park on May fifth?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I am going up there the first chance I get to see the trees.

Q Why don't you bring your mother (to Warm Springs)? I thought she would be here.

THE PRESIDENT: You see this trip was so indefinite that I could not tell until the last minute.

Q Bring her next time.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: That will give you enough.