

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #638,  
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 26, 1940, 11.40 A. M.

THE PRESIDENT: I want to know who sent me that message last night. (Laughter)

MR. BASIL O'CONNOR: Remember that two-spade bid? I figured it out this morning and that is 2,000 points.

Q Just a cup of coffee.

MR. O'CONNOR: Throw in a ham sandwich too.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know where the message came from, but I got it all right. I do not know whether it came from the Goats' Nest or Cottage No. 2. It was a quarter past three this morning -- a petition from the Press that I should go out this afternoon and see Pine Mountain Valley.

Q There is a traitor in our ranks.

THE PRESIDENT: There you are, a quarter past three in the morning too. There was nothing I could do. I said, "All right." This morning, while the others were sleeping, I arranged to go to Pine Mountain Valley at two o'clock.

Q We can't take Pine Mountain Valley and Lake Crescent in the same week.

THE PRESIDENT: I am going over there, going to meet Tap Bennett and I am taking Doc (Basil O'Connor) and taking Missy. You do not have to go because there won't be any news. I am going to drive through.

Q Any little girls singing?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q No Jack Frost?

THE PRESIDENT: You did not ask for it last night and so I did not arrange it. I am just going to drive over and talk and drive through.

Q How far is it over there?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it depends on who you talk to.

Q It is about seven and a half (dollars) on the expense account. (Laughter)

Q That is the reason I was inquiring.

THE PRESIDENT: Ask some of the old-timers, like George (Mr. Durno.) He knows how far.

Q All the roads are good now.

THE PRESIDENT: All except the first part along the mountain here and I think the last part is dusty too. (Laughter)

Q When do you plan to go home?

THE PRESIDENT: Outside of that I do not know any news except we leave sometime tomorrow and get to Washington Sunday morning.

Q Have you any afterthoughts on the neutrality Proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no; it told the story.

Q Has Norway declared war against Germany?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I don't know. I mean officially and formally, I do not know what their formalities are, whether they have to have a meeting of the Storting and things of that kind. It is impossible to answer that question.

Q Any comment on the Georgia action yesterday on the delegation to the Convention?

THE PRESIDENT: Only what I read in the Constitution (Atlanta Constitution) this morning.

Q You do not plan to stop anywhere on the way back?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have got to go right back.

Q It is some time since you received that report from Jackson (Attorney General Jackson) on the marine oil situation in California. Have you gone through it yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not got it. I thought I brought it but it is not in the basket. I will have to dig it up when I get back.

Q That is fortunate. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That is lucky, isn't it?

Q Have you received any word from Washington of any consequence that you could tell us about?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing that you haven't got already. I got the usual message from Steve (Mr. Early) this morning. I have not talked to anybody on the telephone. I probably will, after lunch.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Who is in the (golf) finals, by the way?

Q (Mr. Durno) Tommy Thompson and Charlie Daly play and the winner of that match I suspect will play Al Waldron.

Q (Mr. Reynolds) I do not like that guy Durno. He (Mr. Waldron) has to get over Reynolds first.

THE PRESIDENT: When are they going to have the finals?

Q (Mr. Trohan) Did you see the rules?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q (Mr. Trohan) The driver of the car bearing the initials "F. D. R." will keep off the course during the tournament for the good of the players.

THE PRESIDENT: Really?

Q (Mr. Durno) That is the rule.

THE PRESIDENT: Who did I fuss?

Q Several players.

Q Hacky principally, I think.

MR. O'CONNOR: How do you feel this morning?

Q (Mr. Durno) Fine; how do you feel?

MR. O'CONNOR: All right.

THE PRESIDENT: All right parenthesis.

MR. O'CONNOR: Do you remember that two-spade bid I doubled, fellows?

Q (Mr. Durno) Well, I have no complaints; come back again.

THE PRESIDENT: I really don't think there is going to be any story. I recommend that none of you go. You can, if you want to.

Q There aren't going to be any special guests?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going over the mountain, drive down and come back.

Q We will all go if we can get Jack Frost.

Q Does that recommendation include the photographers?

THE PRESIDENT: You fellows haven't been over there for some time.

Q Oh, yes, we have. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Send one man to take the pictures for everybody.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #639  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
April 30, 1940, 4.08 P. M.

THE PRESIDENT: Earl (Mr. Godwin), you look awfully glum today. What is it?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Got a cold; I should not be near you.

THE PRESIDENT: Give him a respirator.

Well, don't you think they came in good shape from Warm Springs?

Q Perfect health.

THE PRESIDENT: Perfectly grand.

Q Your new Commissioner is going to deliver a patriotic speech right down  
back of here tomorrow afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: No! At the Washington Monument?

Q Somewhere down there. Massing of colors and he is going to give them old  
18 or 19.

THE PRESIDENT: Say, I think I will go down. It will be more fun. I will  
just park the car at the curb.

Q I see where your wife had him (in her Press Conference) this morning.

THE PRESIDENT: I told her to. He might just as well accept his new respon-  
sibilities. It is all right.

(General discussion -- off the record.)

Q Did you get out for a ride this afternoon?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; I went out for an hour.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Silence, please; Mr. Godwin wishes to ask a question. I do  
not know whether he does or not. Do you?

MR. GODWIN: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: All right. Next.

Q Mr. President, is a modification contemplated of the Civil Aeronautics Authority Order?

THE PRESIDENT: Is a what?

Q A modification contemplated of the Civil Aeronautics Authority Order. Are you considering a modification of that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, of course not.

Q There has been a good deal of agitation over it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, so much so that I got Steve (Mr. Early) and one or two others to prepare a statement which he can give you afterwards. It is perfectly polite but it has implications.

(Reading) "Since the transmittal of Reorganization Plans Nos. III and IV a flood of misinformation has engulfed those sections dealing with the Civil Aeronautics Authority. Much of this has fallen of its own absurdity and needs no comment. This morning, however, we saw a group of well-intentioned people --"

Mind you, that is a frightfully polite phrase.

"staking out an exclusive claim to a so-called "lobby to save lives."

Of course that sort of thing, all that sort of misinformation -- this is not in the statement -- but, obviously, it comes from one of three sources, whether it is lobbying or in Congress or in the press or special writers -- it comes from three things, either ignorance or gullibility or politics. It is rather an interesting analysis that, I think. Those three things are the source of most of our public troubles, ignorance, gullibility or politics. Luckily, the people of the country are more or less onto that fact. I think this is the first time it has been put in words.

Q What is the distinction, Mr. President, between gullibility and politics?

(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I think there is all the distinction in the world. Ask around the press room. They will tell you.

"The implication that we are not interested in saving lives, which is certainly contradicted by the record of our progress in civil aviation during recent years, compels me to restate in simple terms the basic features of the reorganization plans affecting the Civil Aeronautics Authority.

"I might say here that everybody is for the abstract idea of reorganization in the interest of increased efficiency and economy. However, there is a rather discouraging collapse of enthusiasm when concrete proposals are made. In selfish protection of their own special interests we always find particular groups who hitherto favored reorganization arising in protest.

"As it now stands, there are three agencies --"

I have just read one of the afternoon papers that said we now have a centralized control over aeronautics. Of course, it is not at all.

"-- three agencies -- the Civil Aeronautics five-member Authority, the Administrator, and the Air Safety Board -- all autonomous groups, none of them represented at the Cabinet table. The inherent problems confronting them were intensified by friction, particularly within the Air Safety Board."

I do not have to go into that, you all know it.

"For five months the Administrative Management Division of the Budget bureau made a study at my request of the operation of the Authority. It became obvious that a change was imperative if we were to continue to move forward in civil aviation. Here, in simple summary, is the proposal:

"1. Despite handicaps, the federal program for civil aeronautics has now achieved a stature and an importance which justify bringing this program more closely into the federal family."

And, incidentally, probably, as those of you who have read the Constitution know, the President is, unfortunately for my own peace of mind, the Executive. In other words, there cannot be any executives except those that are responsible under the Constitution, through the President, to the country.

"The proposal will place it within the framework of the Department of Commerce where it will have a closer relationship with the important reporting services --"

Other services which are tied in definitely with aeronautics.

"-- of the Weather Bureau --"

Which, of course, is extremely important for the safety of life.

"-- and the essential air navigation chart service of the Coast and Geodetic Survey."

Mind you, nobody ever thought of that until this came up. You see, these are all tied together, the Coast and Geodetic Services and the Weather Services.

"More than that it will provide representation at the Cabinet table for a program of basic significance to our national transportation and our national defense. Present world conditions make the merit of this phase of the proposal obvious.

"2. The present five-member Authority which has received such widespread praise remains as an INDEPENDENT Civil Aeronautics Board performing the basic regulatory functions. It will continue to appoint and control its own personnel and submit its own budget.

"3. Certain of the Authority's functions are transferred to the Administrator --"

Because they are purely administrative --

"-- to eliminate a blind spot created by the failure of the Civil Aeronautics Act of 1938 to carry out the intention of Congress to distinguish clearly between the functions of the Administrator and the Authority."

There are an awful lot of headaches because the language of the bill as drawn did not carry out the intent of the Congress.

"4. The function of investigating accidents is transferred to the Civil Aeronautics Board which, unlike the present Air Safety Board, will not be helpless --"

But has an entirely separate entity within it, as I said the other day, the Bureau --

"-- to take positive steps toward preventing the recurrence of accidents. Unlike the Air Safety Board, the Civil Aeronautics Board will have the power to prescribe air safety rules, regulations, and standards, and to suspend or revoke certificates after hearing. Not only does this continue the present independence of accident investigation, but it also makes possible prompt translation of findings into corrective action.

"5. Not only are we advancing the cause of air safety by these changes but we will also realize appreciable savings. Several highly paid positions on the Air Safety Board will be eliminated and other economies made possible."

At the same time the personnel will be kept, of course, substantially the same.

Q Mr. President, when the bill, the Civil Aeronautics Bill, was passed there was a great deal of talk that the old board was the lawmaker, judge and jury. Now, is this not a return to that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. just the other way around.

Q I thought you said they make the regulations and then they investigate --

THE PRESIDENT:(interposing) No, the Board has regulatory functions, the five-man board --

Q (interposing) Makes the rules?

THE PRESIDENT: Makes the rules. It can also investigate an accident and make rules to prevent it from happening again, but the administrative end is now put under an administrator.

Q What does he do in that case? I remember in the Bronson Cutting death, in that accident there were objections because the old board was making the rules, enforcing them and then, when anything went wrong, it investigated itself.

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THE PRESIDENT: I know, because they are investigating at the present time. You have three investigatory bodies covering accidents. You have the CAA, you have the Air Safety Board when you have an accident, and the National Advisory <sup>[Committee]</sup> Commission for Aeronautics, three different groups. Here you have two different groups.

Q The CAA makes the rules and the Safety Board, which is independent, makes its investigation --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): And recommends the rules, which is exactly as they do now. It is an entirely separate bureau, a separate thing, and the CAA, as such, hereafter will not investigate the accidents.

Q Who will?

THE PRESIDENT: Their bureau, the Air Safety Board minus those three people at the top who were fighting each other all day long.

Q Now we are getting the real --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): Yes. They will do the investigating and the CAA won't. Then they make, as they do today, recommendations for new rules.

Q Will not this group be under an Assistant Secretary of Commerce?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no; they are independent. They report to the President through the Secretary of Commerce.

Q They report to the Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: They report to the President through the Secretary of Commerce. They won't report to the Secretary of Commerce. They will report to the President through the Secretary of Commerce, which is a different thing.

Q Have they been reporting directly?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but they have forty-five people at the present time reporting. If I had eight or ten or fifteen people it would be a lot easier. As you probably know, I spend more time than any President within the memory of man in reading these reports and getting them from forty-five different agencies. It is impossible; most people could not do it.

Q (somewhat inaudible) Well, this particular agency had forty-five --  
(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Sure, that is right.

Q Do you know anybody else that can do it? (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin, who spoke simultaneously with the President, and whose question, therefore, passed unnoticed) Who are you cutting it down for?

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid most people would die under the strain or, as

some people in the past have done, they just would not do it.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything yet about the First Circuit Court of Appeals Department?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet. They are still looking into it.

Q Will you comment on the suggestion at the Capitol that --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): On what?

Q -- that the 75 per cent requirement -- limitation -- for payments under the farm parity program be eliminated and it be made 100 per cent instead?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot because the thing is in conference and I am not familiar with what is going on every day on it. I do not know what the present status is.

Q Anything you can tell us about your conference with Senator Guffey?

THE PRESIDENT: He just came in to tell me the good news that he had carried the primaries in the State of Pennsylvania.

Q What did you say to him, sir? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I shook him warmly by the hand.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment on the new book called "The American White Book" which purports --

Q (interposing) "The American White Paper."

Q -- "The American White Paper" which purports to be an authentic recital of the background of American diplomatic moves in the last few months?

THE PRESIDENT: Did little Krock ask you to ask that question?

Q No, he did not. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I heard a rumor that he was going to get somebody to ask that question.

Q The rumor is unfounded in this direction.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is extremely interesting. That is a good answer.

Q That is as far as your comment will go?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is extremely interesting. If it were not for the fact that it might be considered advertising somebody else's wares, I would say that I took great pleasure in reading it.

Q Do you have any comment on the Texas delegation situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Which situation?

Q The peace move between Mr. Rayburn and Mr. Johnson of the Garner delegation.

THE PRESIDENT: Only what I read in the papers.

Q Mr. President, did you talk to Mackenzie King about the defense of the Northeast in connection with the Newfoundland air bases?

THE PRESIDENT: We had just a nice, pleasant, social call at Warm Springs and here. That is what he told you, wasn't it?

Q Yes. (Laughter)

Q Since this visit you have not been asked about the St. Lawrence. Anything on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no news on it at all. I think they are still working on it, aren't they? on the Treaty?

Q I do not know. There was a story at the time of his visit here that it would be signed.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think that is through yet. They are just drafting.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #640,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
May 3, 1940, 10.49 A. M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got a thing that I have had copied for you, which Bill, (Mr. Hassett) will give you afterwards. It is a letter from the Director of the Budget to Mr. Hinckley, Bob Hinckley, giving certain interpretations of Plans Nos. III and IV and -- well, you will have to read it -- making it perfectly clear that the Civil Aeronautics Authority remains an independent agency in its functioning. And (also) a copy of a letter from the Attorney General to the Director of the Budget saying:

(Reading) "I have examined your letter of this date to the Secretary of Commerce in which you set forth your interpretation of the provisions of Reorganization Plans III and IV relating to the Civil Aeronautics Authority, and I agree with the conclusions reached by you."

So there is the legal sanction end of it. I do not think --

Q (interposing) Does it break down, Mr. President, the three anticipated savings planned for, to show how much of that is Civil Aeronautics?

THE PRESIDENT: No, this is the legal end entirely.

Q The Legal end?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, as to the effect of it, the legal end.

I do not think I have got anything else.

Q Mr. President, every time there has been a crisis in the offing in the past you have intervened directly with the would-be belligerents. There is a crisis now in the offing in the Mediterranean. Have you done anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think that probably what the Acting Secretary of State told you yesterday is the only thing you can get out of it.

Q Is there anything else outside of the news?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not think so. We are striving, as we have right along, to prevent the extension of the war to other areas and other nations, and that is all that can be said.

Q Would that cover the inquiry as to what you were saying to the Italian Ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q To prevent the extension of war?

THE PRESIDENT: Of war to new areas and other nations.

Q Mr. President, I would like to ask you a question about your conference with the two Congressmen who were here yesterday, Gore, I think, and was it Monroney?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q With respect to the new housing bill -- the program which seems to be hung up with three or four various groups attacking various angles. Can you tell us anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I can cover it in about one or two sentences. The U. S. Housing Authority has got to the point where it has accomplished a great deal in the way of slum clearance, as we all know, and latterly they have been extending this work to smaller communities; in fact, almost down to what might be called the agricultural community and, so far, the cooperation of the different localities has been fine. The Administration has felt that they ought to have more authorized funds for continuing the building program. Now, how much that should be, as I told the two gentlemen yesterday, is in the discretion of the Congress but we do not want to stop the work. That, I think, covers it.

Q That was an O. K., I take it, for a going program?

THE PRESIDENT: To continue a program. Now, I am not saying exactly what the

sum should be -- it should be in the discretion of the Congress. I do not want to wind up slum clearance because it is doing an awfully good job.

Q Mr. President, Mr. Gore objects, I believe, to the system being followed under the present U. S. (Housing) program. Would you be willing to accept any modifications of the present setup to meet his objections?

THE PRESIDENT: The trouble with that is --

Q (interposing) He objects to the 50-year basis, for one thing.

THE PRESIDENT: Personally, I feel that fifty years is too long, largely because we, in this country, are a very young nation and our physical locations of population change so frequently that a building which is put up today in a suburban area or in an old slum area may very easily, through the processes of business, change and be in the middle of a business district in another thirty or forty years. The older civilizations of the world do not change their community geography as fast as we do --

Q (interposing) Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: -- and there are various differentials also, probably, between the city type of apartment house and the suburban type of small house, the individual small house or the three or four or five-family house. Now, all those have to be taken into consideration when you come to the length of life of the project. We are learning a lot. I would say there isn't any hard and fast rule that can be laid down yet. It is going through -- the whole housing problem is in the evolutionary process and, on the whole, I think we are improving the work that the Government is doing each year.

Q Mr. President, there are reports on the Pacific Coast that some sort of direct or indirect Government pressure has been brought to halt shipments

of copper to Russia by way of the Pacific?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it. You will have to ask somebody else.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us what steps are being taken by this Government to prevent the spread of war to new areas and other nations?

THE PRESIDENT: We are doing everything we can.

Q About all Mr. Welles told us yesterday about the conversation with the Italian Ambassador was to refer us to you. Can you tell us whether you received from him or from our Ambassador in Rome any assurances about about the Italian position?

THE PRESIDENT: I think what I said to Earl (Mr. Godwin) covers it pretty well, that we are continuing to work for peace.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment on the efforts of certain farm processing groups to get the Wage-House Act amended in the House?

[Hours?]

THE PRESIDENT: To get it amended how?

Q In the House.

THE PRESIDENT: The Wage-Hour Act? Heavens, haven't they been at it for six days? Do you know what they have done? I don't know. I do not think anybody knows what the exact status of it is today. I do not think it would be intelligent for me to comment on it.

Q Is there anything in common in principle between the Government's efforts to maintain wages and to maintain farm prices?

THE PRESIDENT: Do the two go together?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, sure; why not?

Q Mr. President, is there anything you can say or comment on Secretary of the Navy Edison's statement with regard to battleships needing more protection against airplane bombs?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, only that this is just another event in the history of

national defense. It has many parallels, even in our own short history. Defense is an evolutionary process and people are very apt to draw all kinds of silly conclusions when some battle happens somewhere. There are one or two very good examples of it: When you and I were boys we remember the fight of the four or five wooden Union ships down at Hampton Roads -- (Laughter)

Q (interposing) Who are you speaking to, Mr. President? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: -- and there came sneaking down out of Norfolk a strange thing, a queer looking craft, and it started in, systematically, to destroy the Union ships and, having done a pretty effective job one day, it retired for the night and started in on the second day when, in through the Capes, came a "cheesebox on a raft". They had a grand fight, perfectly grand fight, and the MERRIMAC had to withdraw. Whereupon everybody in this country said, "Ha, at last we have found an invincible, unsinkable ship," and the Union Government proceeded to build them just as fast as the Lord would let them.

Well, of course, they were not unsinkable ships because that very heavy turreted, armored turret type of ship -- No. 1, it could not go to sea; it was perfectly grand to anchor in the mouth of a harbor or in very good weather, in the summertime, it might go from one harbor to the other. But we were all convinced -- go in your own memory (laughter), just think how thrilled we were that at last we had discovered the unsinkable ship.

Of course, in a very short time the other side of warfare came into play. A gun came along that would sink the unsinkable ship and somebody, a little later on, came along with a torpedo. It is entirely a process of evolution.

Now, you children who are here today (Laughter), you remember what

happened in 1914. I was asked to write an article (when I was) in the Navy Department by -- what was his name? -- George Harvey, who ran the North American Review at the outbreak of the war in 1914 when the submarines, German submarines, were sinking everything in sight. At last here had been discovered, not an unsinkable ship but an offensive type of ship that could sink every other ship in the world -- the exact opposite. So I wrote an article for the North American Review, pointing out that the submarine might, for a few months or for a few years, raise havoc with merchant ships and warships but that, judging by history, the defense would develop pretty fast, the defensive weapon, and not the submarines, making attacks would be curbed.

Well, the article was published -- I think it is in the September number of 1914. And -- this is just a little sidelight for some of you who, like myself, have written for pay -- I supposed that George Harvey would send me a check for this article. It was the lead in the North American Review. And no check came. I did not like to write to George Harvey and say, "Where is my pay?" Well, finally, way on in October, I got a letter from George Harvey saying, "Dear Mr. Secretary: At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the North American Review a resolution was passed thanking you --" (Laughter) "-- thanking you for your splendid leading article in the September number and, in token of their esteem and appreciation, they have voted to send you the North American Review, free, for one year." (Laughter)

I learned a lesson. I use the contract method first now. (Laughter)

Q Would you say that was the start of the surplus commodities idea? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is right.

Now, of course, on this Navy ship business, it is true we are studying all those things. We have got very little information out of Norway,

out of the North Sea operations, very scrappy information, just a little piece here and a little piece there. We are keeping in just as close touch with it as we possibly can. Undoubtedly there are lessons out of it. What the final implication or import of this is, is not yet wholly clear to anybody, I suppose not even to the British Navy itself. And we are trying to keep up just as fast as the technical knowledge and requirements, based on known facts and events, will warrant us to go.

Q Mr. President, where do you think General Billy Mitchell's views will fit into that picture?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q General Mitchell's views, which were hazed (?) over a long period of time?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will tell you what it is like. It is like trying to say, "What would Jefferson say if he were alive today?" In other words, Billy Mitchell was talking about conditions of one era -- he was a very great friend of mine -- and we are talking about conditions of another era. I do not know what he would have said if he were alive today.

Q Mr. President, I am not quite clear as to your conclusions. Is the old row of battleship versus airplane, is it still in status quo?

THE PRESIDENT: There never has been a row, Earl (Mr. Godwin).

Q Well, there has been a controversy between --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): Oh, it makes good copy, both for the Press and for officers.

Q All right. Well, then, as far as naval strategy is concerned in the defense of the American Continent, then, there isn't any difference today as between the strength of a battleship, in your mind today, as opposed to last month?

THE PRESIDENT: Battleships, airplanes, torpedoes, submarines are all weapons of war, all of which fit in together, and you cannot say that there is

a permanent fight between one weapon of war and another weapon of war. They supplement each other. The battleship has its place, the airplane has its place, the torpedo has its place, the mine, the net, everything else. They all fit into a picture.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us which little bubble will eat which at the finish of this thing?

THE PRESIDENT: It never comes to that. It never has yet in history.

Q Do you think we have given its due proportion to our air defenses?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so.

Q (interposing) Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Of course it reminds me -- I told you the story before -- about T. R. (President Theodore Roosevelt) and Portland, Maine, and people representing Maine papers might copy. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, in connection with the same subject of modernizing war equipment, both General Marshall and General Arnold have testified in the last couple of days, before the Senate Military Appropriations Committee, that experiences of this war, so far, have shown that our Army is not equipped with a good many things that have proved to be vital and which the Germans and some of the others have. Have you followed that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; we are learning all the time. I will just give you an example: I got yesterday a request for a good many millions of dollars worth more blankets. Now, that is just as important in running a war as rifles are, as Napoleon has remarked in somewhat similar terms. We need several millions of dollars worth of blankets because our blanket supply is just barely big enough to go around once and if a fellow lost his blanket he would be out of luck. Now, there is an illustration.

Q I was referring particularly to (anti-) aircraft guns?

THE PRESIDENT: Aircraft guns? Probably, as far as we know, on the other side they have developed a larger type of guns for planes than we are using at the present time and we probably have to put on larger types of guns.

Q How about gasoline tanks?

THE PRESIDENT: Same thing. Of course we have been working on that. We have got something that is pretty good. We don't know that it is as good as the German type.

Q How about the reserve supply of tin?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have got a good deal of tin. Probably (it would be) a good idea to get some more.

Q I think the generals have suggested that the authorized appropriation for the next couple of years be telescoped in the next year and the Budget Bureau cut them down. Have you any comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: The answer is a very simple one: We are spending this year on appropriations more money than we have ever spent before for national defense -- a great deal more, if you add up the figures together -- and in some cases we are using facilities of the country, supply facilities, to the utmost and the appropriation of more funds would not get us more goods. But, if Congress wants, after studying the thing correctly, to add to those appropriations -- well, that is entirely up to the Congress. Only, I am not going to, if I can help it, except in certain obvious cases -- well, like, for instance, blankets -- I am not going to ask Congress for more money at this session. But they have a perfect right to appropriate more money.

Q Will changes in the design of our ships, which are planned, authorized and appropriated for, seriously delay any addition to the numerical strength

of our Fleet?

THE PRESIDENT: Not very much.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President; a good story.

THE PRESIDENT: I tried to illustrate.

Q It is an awfully good story.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #641,  
Held in the Observation End of the Presidential Special Train,  
En route Hyde Park, New York, to Washington, D. C.  
May 6, 1940, 3.20 P. M. E. S. T.

THE PRESIDENT: Hello, Mr. President (Mr. Felix Belair, president of the White House Correspondents' Association), how are you?

Q (Mr. Belair) Pretty good, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I did not have any complaints this time. Were they all right?

Q (Mr. Belair) They were fairly good. They missed the roulette wheel but, aside from that, everything was good..

THE PRESIDENT: Now, who did I ask to look up that roulette wheel?

MR. HASSETT: I am afraid I am derelict there, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you look it up? I am perfectly sure somebody gave me a roulette wheel for Christmas around six years ago and none of my family have the money to play roulette so I thought I would turn it over to you.

Q None of my family do either.

Q Not having the wheel, the boys could not gamble but, aside from that, it is all right.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, anybody want a pardon? (The President had a large pile of pardon cases in front of him.) It is a good chance.

Q I will take one.

Q (Mr. Qualters) Any blank ones, sir? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I can always fill your name in, Tom. It is all right.

I do not think I have any news at all.

Q What prompted you to go back this afternoon instead of tonight, Mr.

President? Anything in the international situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing; nothing in particular, just the general feeling that

I have sometimes in these days -- if I stay away too long, I begin to get nervous about the general situation. There isn't anything to justify it but after I have been away from Washington a few days I say to myself, "My God, what is going to break this afternoon on the European front?"

Q There has been no indication that Italy is going to move?

THE PRESIDENT: No; no, we have not had a thing. I talked at lunch time today and there wasn't any news other than appeared in the newspapers. In fact, there was a great deal less news than appeared in the paper, for obvious reasons. Is that perfectly all right, Carlton?

Q (Mr. Smith) Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Any other question?

Q I have had several inquiries about the cotton crop insurance bill. There are reports in Washington that you have or are about to veto it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you will have to wait until we get to Washington because, off the record, I do think that I vetoed it before I left. It was to go up to the Hill but -- do not use this because somebody may have appealed to Rudolph (Mr. Forster) to hold it up until I get back. But do not use it.

Q Nothing to be said about it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, for the reason that if I did veto or do veto it, the reason for it is consistency. When we put in the wheat insurance, it was distinctly understood by everybody, both on the Hill and the White House and the Department of Agriculture, that it was an experiment, the thought being that crop insurance by the Government ought to pay for itself. It ought to be -- I do not know whether you can put crops on an actuarial basis, but there should be a sufficient premium, based on experience, to have the Government come out even on the thing as a whole.

Well, we have had wheat insurance now -- I think we are in the second year of it -- and we have not yet come out even. This year on it, as I remember it -- this will save me the trouble of telling this at the next Conference -- I think we are out of pocket about one and three-quarters million or two million dollars.

Q Is that one year's operation?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know, Felix (Mr. Belair); I do not know whether it is one year or two. Therefore we feel that we ought not to extend crop insurance to cotton until we know more about it. The veto is based on what might be called a general understanding with the Congress that we try out the experiment on wheat first and then, if we can make it work, to extend it to other crops.

Q Can we use it for background?

THE PRESIDENT: Do not use it today. Use it when the bill is vetoed.

Q Next week?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q We have had another inquiry about a request for a pardon for Dr. Frederick Cook, the man who did not go to the North Pole.

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard about it.

MR. HASSETT: I found, on further inquiry, that it went directly to Washington and was referred to the Department of Justice. It was not received at Hyde Park at all.

THE PRESIDENT: There again, you know there is a general rule that I brought to Washington from Albany where I had put it into effect way back in January, 1929. I found that there was no particular rule about restoring people's citizenship and it depended largely on who was Governor and who the person was and who his powerful friends were. There was altogether too much of that and so I put in a rule in Albany that anyone who had

been discharged from prison and from parole, in other words was completely free and did not have to report any more, would have to go a full four years before applying for a restoration of citizenship. That has had a very, very salutary effect because it means that if a fellow, when he gets out of jail and through the parole period, if he really wants to make good, he does not have to use his friends, he has to have a good, clean record for four whole years. It has had a very excellent effect all the way through in Albany and so I brought the same rule down to Washington.

Of course, in the case of some horrible crime, I let it go a good deal longer than that. Then, I have had one further rule which all the narcotics people have got onto, the peddlers: I never give a pardon in a narcotics case unless it is perfectly obvious that it was some poor creature who acted as a messenger boy and had nothing to do with the actual obtaining and distribution of the narcotics. I have had two or three of those but there is a general rule against any form of pardon in a narcotics case.

Do not use that in connection with Dr. Cook. This is just for your own background.

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to be again entirely off the record and entirely frank. When Bill came up this morning and talked about a pardon for Dr. Cook, I said, "My God, what did he do besides claiming the North Pole? I never knew he had been in jail."

Q He had been in jail for some time.

Q He served his full term and was released in 1930.

THE PRESIDENT: I wonder that he did not apply for a pardon to restore his citizenship because if he was let out in 1930, he could have applied for

a restoration of citizenship four years later.

Q I believe it was 1930 that he was released. He was on parole then,

THE PRESIDENT: That would not have been more than a year or two years at the outside. I wonder why he did not apply.

Q He did not apply now; this friend of his has.

THE PRESIDENT: Some of them do not know and do not care. I restored citizenship to a fellow who went to jail in 1900 for six months for some liquor deal down south. He served four or five months; they took away his citizenship and he never applied to have it restored until 1940, forty years later. Isn't it amusing? Upright citizen; nothing against him all those years.

Q Mr. President, can you enlighten us any on the present status of the United States Film Service? The House and Senate both rejected the appropriation of \$106,000 and it looks like it is going out of the picture unless something is done. I wonder if anything is contemplated?

THE PRESIDENT: All you can say is that they have the right to cut the appropriation and it is too bad because it was of interest to a great many people, millions of them, all those three pictures they have done. It is about as good an expenditure of public money as you can find. All the film producers were for it. The plains one and the erosion one and the third one, that is the last one -- what was it?

Q The birth of a child.

Q It never had a specific appropriation before, did it?

Q It was paid out of Farm Security?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can it live on that premise still?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think it can. I think the Comptroller has ruled against it in view of the present language, but I am not sure.

Q (Mr. Cornell) Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot think of anything else. I had a quiet time at Hyde Park and I hope to go back in two weeks.

Q Did you find your mother in good health?

THE PRESIDENT: Fine.

Q Any particular appointments tomorrow -- the Big Four?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose they will be in in the morning as usual.

Q Have your plans for the western trip been developed any since you talked to us in Warm Springs?

THE PRESIDENT: I won't even think about that until I know something about Congress going home.

Q How about the Isle Royale Park on the Great Lakes?

THE PRESIDENT: We might stop on the way back.

Q That would entail a cruise on the Great Lakes?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The first President to cruise on the Great Lakes?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. As a matter of fact, I am not going to think about that trip in any shape, manner or form until I know when Congress is going home.

It is rather pathetic -- one of the girls saw Mac (Mr. McIntyre) at Asheville on the way back and Mac was announcing that he was going to make that trip. Of course the doctor would not let him go on the trip for anything in the world. But he just made up his mind that he was going on the trip.

Q If Mac went on that trip we would have to stop at Asheville on the way back.

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely. Of course we will see him in Asheville on the way down. We are going to turn over the arrangements for Great Smoky Park to Mac. It is all right.

Q Somebody took down that Marvin McIntyre Possum Preserve sign at Warm Springs.

THE PRESIDENT: I wondered about it and complained about it. Of course, Mac might have had it taken down himself, and the Harry Hopkins place is in very bad repair too.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, look; I will give you a story. One of you asked what I thought about the Hatch Bill in the House and I said that I hoped very much that it would get out in the House and be voted on and passed. Well, that is all. That is good enough.

Q How many people would that affect, sir? Any estimates made of that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I do not know. You would have to read the Congressional Record.

Q (Mr. Belair) That is good for a column and a half anyway, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Sure.

Q (Mr. Reynolds) Every Scripps-Howard paper in the country will have it late this afternoon.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #642,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
May 10, 1940, 11.45 A. M.

Q Good morning, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

(There was a pause while the correspondents were coming in.)

Still coming in?

Q This is probably the biggest crowd you ever had.

THE PRESIDENT: And probably less news.

Q I did pretty well this morning -- 1.30.

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't you (Mr. Reynolds, United Press representative) sit down in the chair?

Q (Mr. Reynolds) Good.

Q (From one of the correspondents who had been standing behind Mr. Reynolds) Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: We will give him more room. He sits in the chair and ten people move up.

Are they all in yet?

Q A big crowd this morning.

Q (Mr. Qualters) Still coming in, sir.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I hope you had more sleep than I did. I guess most of you were pretty busy all night.

There isn't very much I can say about the situation. I think it speaks for itself. I think I can say, personally, that I am in full sympathy with the very excellent statement that was given out, the proclamation, by the Queen of the Netherlands, and let it go at that.

It is worth reading.

I do not think there is any possible news that I have. Of course there are a great many things that are being studied and I think probably it is time not to call news or write as news things that are in a study stage. I do not know what we will have during the rest of the day from here but there isn't anything at the present time.

Q Mr. President, would you care to say at this time what you think the chances are that we can stay out?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that would be speculative. In other words, don't, for heaven's sake, say that that means that we may get in. That would be, again, writing yourself completely off on the limb and sawing it off, as it happened before. I think you can put it this way: I see no change in the situation in that respect. That is pretty clear.

Q Since your speech regarding the peace blackout, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q No change since your speech regarding the peace blackout?

THE PRESIDENT: No change.

Q May we also quote your observation about the Queen of the Netherlands?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Would it be possible to restate what you said, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What did I say, Kannee?

MR. KANNEE (referring to his notes): "I am in full sympathy with the very excellent statement -- "

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): I said something before that about "personally."

MR. KANNEE (reading): "I think I can say, personally, that I am in full sympathy with the very excellent statement that was given out, the proclamation, by the Queen of the Netherlands, and let it go at that."

THE PRESIDENT: And let it go at that.

MR. KANNEE (reading): "It is worth reading."

Q Will your speech tonight touch on the international situation?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know because I have not written it. I am awfully sorry to spoil some stories but it is literally true; I have not written it.

Q Mr. President, there has been up to last night a rather strong effort to get Congress adjourned around the first week in June. Do you believe this situation warrants Congress remaining on longer?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't given it any thought.

Q Mr. President, shall we take up another domestic matter? Have you authorized the Justice Department to go ahead in connection with this submerged oil land?

THE PRESIDENT: What is that? Oil land?

Q The submerged offshore oil land that they reported to you about?

THE PRESIDENT: That is still -- I do not know where it is. I told someone to dig it up. I thought it was in my basket and it isn't.

Q There was a report that they are preparing now to file a suit and that you had given them a green light on it.

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to find out what happened. I have not thought about it since our talk about it about a month ago. Steve (Mr. Early), will you look into that?

Q Mr. President, did you arrive at any conclusions on procedure in the immediate future during the conference which you just completed?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no.

Q Mr. President, when the war broke out I believe the German Government gave you a pledge that it would not resort to bombing of open towns. In the light of that pledge, have you taken notice of the reports from our representatives that Brussels and open towns had been bombed?

THE PRESIDENT: That is one of the things which is under study.

Q Mr. President, do you have any information as to the possibility of extending the combat zones so as to include the Dutch West Indies and East Indies and so on?

THE PRESIDENT: Combat zones?

Q Under the Neutrality Proclamation?

THE PRESIDENT: There is no change contemplated at the present time on sea areas.

Q Mr. President, do you see any distinction in the effect on American interests between the Japanese control of the Dutch East Indies and the acquisition of them by Germany through the conquest of the Netherlands?

THE PRESIDENT: I counted them -- you have got seven "ifs" in your question that cannot be answered. (Laughter)

Q The "ifs" are getting smaller.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #643,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
May 14, 1940, 4.05 P. M.

Q Still hope to make Hyde Park this week end?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I am not on twenty-four hours' notice; I am on about twenty-four minutes' notice.

We will have to build a new room.

Q Build a gallery.

THE PRESIDENT: Is that it?

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I apologize for my coatless condition. I did not have time to put it on. It is a somewhat timeworn excuse but a perfectly good one.

There are a lot of things I could tell you but of course I know you will understand that there are probably a good many things it is better not to discuss in too much detail these days. They are somewhat difficult days for the whole world.

I am sending up -- I do not know yet whether it will be tomorrow or Thursday; it depends on whether I get the figures in and whether I have time tonight to dictate a Message to go with the figures -- to Congress, this Message on national defense. If I get through with it, it will go up tomorrow and if I do not, it will go up on Thursday. I cannot give you any figures because I am not ready yet. I am afraid it will be pretty high and I think it should be made clear that there are two primary reasons for doing it at this time. The first is the matter of what has been gained in the way of knowledge from experience in the last two weeks, -- months. The other is the -- what shall I call it? -- the progress of military events which inevitably, in the last few weeks, has brought the defense picture of the United States a little closer to

the United States.

I do not think there is anything in particular that I can say more about it. I think Steve (Mr. Early) told you about a simile that I used this morning, which I think he told you about. If there is a fire going on in a big city, almost inevitably it is going to affect the expenditures of the city in the following fiscal year, and it may affect even the real estate values -- in other words, the tax collections in the following fiscal year. But the newspaper men and women who are covering the fire do not make the following year's budgets the lead of their stories. It is a homely way of putting it that you can all understand.

This defense appropriation and contract authorization running to a large sum of money, of course it is going to be paid for by the Government some day, but the main thing to do is to put the money to work at the present time. It can come, of course, out of taxes or it can come out of borrowings, or it can come out of a combination of the two, but the important thing is the national defense rather than the next year's method of payment. So I am suggesting, very gently, how I would write the lead. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, yesterday on the floor of the Senate there was considerable point made of the fact that we spent about six billion dollars on national defense in this Administration, and the question was raised whether we had got our money's worth out of it. What do you figure as to that? Do you think there is just criticism in that, or not?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will ask you what you think.

Q What?

THE PRESIDENT: I will ask you what you think.

Q I do not know: that is why I am asking you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hoped that you would know because it seems so perfectly obvious. In other words, these expenditures have been for two things primarily. One has been to keep up with the expenditures in other countries and we have, as far as the best information we could get, been spending the money for the same kind of military equipment as other nations have been doing. We have felt that we were up to date in what we were doing. Of course that type of equipment costs a lot of money. That was one thing -- that was to keep abreast of this race of armaments that was forced on us and do it the same way that the military and naval experts all over the rest of the world were doing it. The other reason was that, beginning in '33, we had to make up for a lot of lost time. In other words, as you know, the Navy had had very, very little money spent on it between nineteen hundred and -- the end of 1921 and 1922, the Disarmament Conference, and 1933. There was a great deal of replacement that had to be done, a great many gaps that had to be filled, and of course the Army was in exactly the same position. So we had, first of all, to catch up and, having caught up, we had to keep up.

Practically all of these new expenditures are for needs that have been developed by the actual competitive methods of actual war -- the new things. The airplane that was appropriated for in 1935 at great cost, delivered, say, a year and a half or two years later, is today on the scrapheap. The Navy ships -- our ships are probably the equal of any ships in the world, of all ships in the world, of every other navy -- you have to have certain other alterations made to them and you have to have new ships of slightly different design because of the experiences of the past few weeks, and that will be done in every navy.

Those are just the high spots. I think the rest of the story

speaks for itself.

Q Will your Message deal solely with appropriations or will it require some authorizations also?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose it will take some authorizations and, on the appropriations, it will take two things: it will take actual appropriations for the expenditure of money out of the Treasury in the fiscal year 1941 and also the authorization to make an additional amount of contracts which would not have to be paid for until the year 1942.

Q Mr. President, has there been any revival of the discussion of the need for a two-ocean Navy, in view of the German gains in the air over the British Fleet?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, when you talk about a two-ocean Navy in regard to our naval defense, I don't know. I think it probably goes back to the days of -- when did we first get California? 1847, wasn't it?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, it is an entirely outmoded conception of naval defense and it has been since about 1847 when we first acquired California. I just never discuss two-ocean Navy in one way or the other because it is dumb to talk of naval defense in those terms.

Now, think that over, May (Miss Craig.)

Q (Miss Craig) I just do not understand why it is not all right to have a two-"notion" Navy.

THE PRESIDENT: Two-notion Navy. (Laughter)

Well, of course you are supposed to have a Navy that will go anywhere for national defense purposes and no human being can say where it will have to go -- nobody.

Q Isn't it conceivable we may have to split the Fleet if something happened out in the Netherlands' Indies and then --

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid that is a leading question.

Q It would take ten years to create another Navy like this one?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and then ---. Suppose you got an attack from three angles instead of two and then you would have to have three navies. In other words, it really, honestly, is a stupid conception that nobody who knows anything about defense would ever use. Nobody has ever used that term that knew anything about defense.

Q Mr. President, if we cannot have a two-ocean Navy, would it be logical to have two canals between the Atlantic and the Pacific?

THE PRESIDENT: Personally, I wish we had ten canals because the more communications you have, which are capable of, more or less, of defense, the better it is. I wish there weren't any isthmus. I wish there were a big open space down there.

Q Mr. President, I do not mind seeming dumb, but if we have two oceans why wouldn't it be a good idea to have two complete Navies, one for each?  
(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, because, May (Miss Craig), it is just exactly like Portland, Maine. If you break things down in those terms, we ought to have Navy ships at the mouth of every harbor to protect that harbor against any possible attacking for us because, you see, they might attack Portland, Maine, and Boston, Massachusetts, at the same time. Now, wouldn't that be awful? You really ought to have two Navies.

Q Well, I just do not think that is the same thing because you have got oceans --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): That is what you call reductio ad absurdum.

Q What is the answer then, larger fleets of bombing ships?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What is the answer then, flying fortresses?

THE PRESIDENT: Now you are coming down to the old relativity business. You have to be complete and perfect as far as you can be and as far as you can afford to be in every weapon of war. That is what we were talking about the other day, Pa (General Watson) -- in every weapon of war. In other words, as I was saying to a couple of the Chairmen (of the House and Senate) this afternoon -- now, you can use this in terms of an army or in terms of a fleet -- in terms of an army, if you have two equal armies in every weapon except one, let us say what, light artillery? -- equal in heavy artillery, equal in machine guns, equal in infantry, equal in the air, the army that has no light artillery is going to be beaten by the army that has light artillery. The army that has no airplanes is going to be beaten by the army that has airplanes. In the case of a fleet, the army (fleet) that has no battleships will be beaten by the fleet that has a lot of battleships. The fleet that has, as a fleet, traveling with it, no submarines, two things being equal, the other fleet being equal, the fleet that has submarines is going to beat the fleet without the submarines. In the air, the fleet that has planes is going to beat an equal fleet with no planes. It is just a question of equality in every weapon of warfare. Right? It is hard to understand but it is awfully simple.

Q Mr. President, there was a severe break on the New York Stock Exchange today and prices came tumbling down. Do we have any information that this break may have been the result in part of operations abroad?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know; you will have to ask the Treasury Department or the Federal Reserve.

Q Secretary Hull said that Americans are being asked to leave Italy. Is there any special reason for that?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. I told them a long time ago to get out

of any place that they might be in danger.

Q That does not indicate we are expecting Italy to get in?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Do you expect this request of yours to prolong the session of Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I see no special reason why it should. As I said to the Vice President and the Speaker and the two Leaders yesterday morning, and I think they all agreed with me, that when the Congress has completed the legislation that is before it, the important legislation, there is no particular reason why they should stay in Washington because they have the knowledge, the very definite, certain knowledge, that in case there was need for any certain legislation of any kind, I would call them back immediately. If you will remember, last August there was a certain division of opinion as to whether there would be a world war or not and some of the people, I think Mrs. Rogers, wanted Congress to keep on staying all fall. I assured them that if anything happened and the war broke out, that I would call them together again and I did. Of course I would do the same thing if they went home early in June and we had to have them back here on our hands this summer.

Q Would you renew your request to have the Leaders stay in town for consultation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I will. Not in town but within easy reach. I would not keep them from campaigning -- it is all right.

Q Mr. President, you said that expenditures would have to be met by taxes or by borrowing. Would you make any definite recommendation on increasing the statutory debt limit?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q No recommendation?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Do you think it is necessary at this session to do that, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is a completely minor detail. I hope this money will be appropriated and spent for national defense and I am not frightfully interested in which way it is met, either by borrowing or taxes. I think it is a minor detail because the Government has got to spend the money anyway.

Q It was stated this morning that you had informed the Iowa delegation that you had no intention of running for a third term. Have you any comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't remember it. (Laughter)

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #644,  
Executive Offices of the White House,  
May 17, 1940, 10.42 A. M.

Q (Mr. Earl Godwin) Good morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Why, hello, little stranger; how are you?

Q (Mr. Godwin) How are you?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not seen you for a long time.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I went trout fishing.

THE PRESIDENT: Did you really?

Q (Mr. Godwin) George Washington National Forest, over here in Reddish Knob,  
143 miles, just beyond Harrisburg (Pennsylvania).

THE PRESIDENT: Very good, with all the dogwood out and everything.

Q (Mr. Godwin) It is great stuff that the CCC boys have done for roads and  
everything else.

THE PRESIDENT: And you didn't get all the trout?

Q (Mr. Godwin) I left a few there but, say, you ought to drive down there  
some day -- 143 miles.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not know there were any good roads.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Through the forest, just as good as in the back yard here.  
That is one of the things they have done and they have not put it on  
the State road maps. You can go for miles and on beautiful roads. You  
ought to try that.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Before the hoi polloi get in -- you and I -- (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes, just so. (Laughter)

Q We have to pay.

THE PRESIDENT: Damned right. Earl and I are going to get the first fish  
and you boys can come in later. (Laughter)

Q What is the outlook on Hyde Park this week?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am not going to go.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going away -- not going to Hyde Park this week end.

Obviously, the trip to dedicate everything in the world (Laughter) is probably off. I guess that is about all.

Q Means no western trip, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt it very much. I probably will be able, sometime during the summer, of course unless things clear up, to go down overnight and dedicate the Great Smoky Park, but that would be all.

Q Mr. President, the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy and head of the Maritime Commission have written to the Committee, the Senate Education and Labor Committee, expressing their opposition to the proposed labor act that is now under consideration on account of national defense. They fear it might seriously impair national defense and the American Merchant Marine. I wondered if you have any comment you would care to make?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not because I did not know they had written and I have not read the bill. I will try to check up on it.

Q Can you give us some light on what you will probably do with the hundred million dollars that you have requested in the bill?

THE PRESIDENT: As I said before, probably the bulk will go to the increase of production for planes and for antiaircraft guns and for ammunition to go with it, over and above the amounts that are carried in the other appropriations. Then, of course, it should be perfectly obvious that there are a great many things that you cannot foresee at the present time and put down in a line item.

Well, I will give you an illustration: This particular thing

happens to be up today but suppose, for the sake of argument, it had not come up until after Congress had adjourned -- there would be no money to carry it out. It is under discussion at the present time to commission, that is to say, to take out of -- we had already taken them from the category -- these are the old destroyers, thirty-five of the old World War destroyers, which are still out of commission; all the rest of them have been put into commission. Some of the thirty-five, maybe all of them, may, for national defense reasons, have to be commissioned. Of course it costs a good deal of money to put a ship that has been out of commission a great many years, especially a Priority III ship, which is a ship that has been longest out of commission, into full commission. Now, as I say, it so happens that this is coming up at the present time while Congress is here but, suppose the question, the problem, had not come up until after Congress had adjourned? I would not want to call Congress back to give me six million dollars to put these thirty-five destroyers into full commission. I ought to have some leeway to do a thing of that kind.

Well, I will give you another example that may come up: There may be some orders for machine tools later on this summer which have been placed by other citizens of other nations, private orders, with American manufacturers. Later on this summer it may be advisable, because of a bottleneck on machine tools, for us to say to the manufacturers, "We want to buy those. We are awfully sorry but we need them for national defense purposes." And the manufacturers would turn them over to us because they have, there are, on practically all orders of that kind, there are clauses in the contract which would allow the manufacturers to sell to the Government for the same price as you would get from the foreign order. Now, things of that kind may come up during the summer.

Furthermore, I am going back to the question of planes and antiaircraft guns and ammunition, we are working at the present time on several different types, methods, by which additional facilities, plants and machine tools will be paid for. We hope that private capital will put up as much as possible and they may be able to get the RFC to help on financing new plants, but still, over and above that, there may be some need of some cash and the hundred million dollars ought to be available to make the wheels turn to get things done for increased production of all kinds and for items such as I have mentioned: putting out-of-commission destroyers into commission, buying machine tools that are on foreign orders, things of that kind. No human being can anticipate all of those items ahead of time. There will be new situations which will have to be met.

Q Mr. President, is this comparable to the 150 million dollars that President Woodrow Wilson got in 1917 and 1918 and which was a purely discretionary amount, as I understand it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so, Pete (Mr. Brandt); I think so.

Q (Mr. Brandt) As I recall it, that was never accounted for. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Was that why you asked the question? Can't you say, "Yes"?  
(Laughter)

I will tell you what I will do. I will tell you what I will do if I get it. You would be willing to serve the Government for a dollar a year in addition to your present job?

Q (Mr. Brandt) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: All right. I will make you a committee -- the chairman, in fact, of a committee of three to attend to the accounting of this hundred million dollars. (Laughter) All right. Now, that is a bargain. It will -- it will take a little work every day.

Q (Mr. Brandt) Not too much. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, someone in Congress spoke of these two items as "blank check" items. There was another in there of 186 million dollars --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): That is the authorization.

Q Has that the same explanation?

THE PRESIDENT: The same, yes. The difference between the appropriation and the authorization is that the authorization allows one to make obligations for which there would be no money paid out of the Treasury until later on.

Q I understand that, sir, but I think the previous question was the hundred million dollars.

THE PRESIDENT: That was appropriation.

Q And, Mr. President, part of it goes to train airplane pilots?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, if necessary, if the other part, the line item, is not enough, we will be able to use part of the hundred million dollars to train additional pilots.

Q Can you give us any idea of how you plan to handle the expansion of airplane production facilities? Will that be done by the Government building standby plans?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have been getting that all -- oh, I suppose there is, we might say, a constant conference going on with the manufacturers at the present time.

Q Mr. President, in meeting the productivity needs of all defense materials, et cetera, is it your thought to use a part of this money to build Government owned and operated plants or merely --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): No Government operated plants.

Q Government owned but not Government operated?

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe; in other words, that is a question to be taken up with

the people.

Q With whom?

THE PRESIDENT: With the manufacturers. In some cases they would rather not put their own money up; they would rather not borrow the money from the Government and take the title to the plant. In some cases they would rather the Government kept the title and they run it.

Q Would you consider expanding the Youth Administration work experience school as a feeder for the workmen we are going to need for this program? Where are we going to get the workmen?

THE PRESIDENT: We have got to do a lot of training of workmen through all kinds of methods -- half a dozen different methods -- the NYA among them.

Q (Mr. Godwin) There seems to be a suspicion that the entire program, the two billion dollars, the regular appropriation and this extra national defense, is too much for the present machinery of the country and that it cannot digest the thing without something very drastic in the way of expansion. I think you know what I am talking about. Can you explain that or is it worth while explaining?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose, Earl (Mr. Godwin) -- I think I know what you mean. If people say that we cannot do this, they might just as well not do it at all and we might just as well not have any defense because -- suppose there were a definite, concrete, immediate threat of attack on us: We would probably have to expand infinitely more than this program. Now, if we cannot do this program of a billion dollars more in time of peace, obviously we could not do a five billion dollar program in the face of a concrete, immediate threat.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: And, anybody that says that, they might just as well advocate no national defense at all on the grounds that the country could not

handle it -- it would be too big.

Q Mr. President, in that connection the oil industry is quite concerned over what will be expected of them in providing aviation gasoline because present productive capacity is not capable of producing what will be required by these 50,000 planes and the subsequent air fleet. Have you any plans along that line at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. That is one of the things that is under study. I should doubt very much if the program should be stopped on the assumption that we could not provide the gasoline. I think we can provide gasoline.

Q Are you going to accumulate stock piles of aviation gasoline?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a thing they are studying at the present time. I can tell you this, that the preliminary study shows that we do need more standby cracking capacity -- I think that is what they call it -- but that we do not need very much more storage.

Q You do not need much more storage?

THE PRESIDENT: No, probably not, but more cracking facilities.

Q Do your plans contemplate protection for those refineries on the Coast, which produce this and where one bomb would dislocate production of a lot of aviation gasoline?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, obviously.

Q You would?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, just like all sorts of other critical points.

Q There is considerable discussion of the bottleneck in the Navy Department and the War Department, discussion of the fact that there will be a distinct shortage of skilled labor which would be needed in this kind of program, and there has been some discussion of the 40-hour and 32-hour week at the Navy Yard, et cetera, which are handicapped because you

haven't a second shift of skilled labor to put on?

THE PRESIDENT: We do need a lot more skilled labor, Just as I said before, we have got to develop and train more skilled labor and there will be some kind of recommendation on it to the Congress.

Q Any prospect of suspending the 40-hour week?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know but we probably need some legislation.

Q Mr. President, there have been some reports that Colonel Frank Knox might come into the Administration in some way, shape or form. Did you cover that yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we talked about the temper of the country.

Q In connection with industrial mobilization plants, do you contemplate any appointments to head up that work in the nature of Executive Assistants to the President.

THE PRESIDENT: There will have to be -- I do not know; I cannot be specific yet as to what the titles will be but undoubtedly there will have to be some people brought in to help us.

Q Do you contemplate anybody in particular at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q For background purposes, can you tell us some of the things you are discussing with private airplane manufacturers?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the easiest way to put it is just increased production, because that covers all kinds of things. What have you in mind?

Q Is the meeting going on now, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose so. There are two or three of them -- three or four of them.

Q Do you see any immediate need -- putting it another way, the increased production up to the point you spoke of, 50,000 planes a year, is pretty large. Is that in sight within six months or a year?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you had better not ask that question yet, Earl (Mr. Godwin). I would hate to tie myself down. Probably in the course of two or three weeks we would have some idea of it.

Q Most of the airplane manufacturing plants at present are located on one or the other seacoast --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): Yes, that is one of the things, a very important matter, that is being discussed at the present time. If you were a manufacturer or I were a manufacturer, obviously I would prefer to add to my existing plant, if I had the acreage to put it on, because I would have everything right together. In other words, from the point of view -- from my point of view as a manager of a plant, I would rather have it all together. But the Government says to me, "H-m-m-m, we doubt very much whether you ought to put more production close to either seaboard and therefore we would much prefer to have you go out somewhere between the Alleghenies and the Rockies." Well, it is human nature that they should say, "No, I'd rather stay right here and add to my plant right here." So, one of the things we are going to do as much as we can on new production is to put it between mountains.

Q Would that go for gasoline too, as far as practical, to the refineries on the Gulf or seacoast?

THE PRESIDENT: Frankly, I do not know.

Q Mr. President, the Budget Bureau has turned down a bill for the extension of the Northeast Naval Air Base. It is an authorization. Have you anything in mind to speed up construction of air bases?

THE PRESIDENT: The reason that was turned down was that that would be a permanent base, with steel and brick and concrete buildings and it would take a long time to build and cost an awful lot of money.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look --

Q (interposing) Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): Yes?

Q In asking for this defense program, do you want that to take precedence over the relief bill which is now pending?

THE PRESIDENT: That is why I said, "Wait a minute." I want to talk about relief. Of course relief has got to go through just as soon as it possibly can, because we are approaching the first of July and, while I am not familiar with all the provisions of the bill or the minority report in the House, I think there are certain principles that ought to be made perfectly clear. I do not think the country can afford to cut more people off relief this summer or next fall. We are taking care of only a percentage -- by no means a hundred per cent -- of needy families. We are just not doing it -- we are not giving them work. Personally, I would like to see the amount increased so that we could take care of all needy families. For anyone to say that by earmarking relief, that it will give just as much employment as the present methods, it just does not hold water because it is not true. In other words, the Public Works' process of providing jobs does not provide nearly as many jobs for the actual individual families on relief as the WPA does.

We have -- I would like the people to think about it in this way: analyze just a figure -- oh, let us call it what? -- a million, eight hundred thousand dollars, depending on what period of the year we are taking. It may be a million, five hundred thousand or it may be two million. That is not just a figure. They represent individual people with names. Every one of those people has got a name, he lives in a particular place, he is working at the present time on a definite project and he is getting so much a month for working. All right. Now, if, in

place of that, the Congress says, "A hundred miles away we are going to put in an earmarked project to construct a new dam or a new schoolhouse or something of that kind," in the original place there are a hundred people on relief. Do you suppose they will all be employed on that project? Of course not.

No. 2, on earmarked projects, in other words the PWA method, a very much larger proportion of the money out of the Treasury goes to materials which will come from the mines and the forests and the brickyards and the cement works and the steel factories, and automatically, for the same amount of money, it decreases the present list of human beings who are engaged on local WPA projects, with the net result that if you earmark or if you curtail the present scale of relief, you are going to have a very large number of people, with names, who live in a given place, and who are in need, thrown out of work.

Well, exactly the same way, this defense program: it will put people to work, of course. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that it gives a lot more employment in the steel towns: how does that take care of the people on relief in Watertown, New York? Or in Manchester, Georgia? Of course it does not. It will increase employment, yes, but it does not mean that these people with individual families and individual names and individual localities are going to be given work because of the mere fact of spending more money on defense. Yes, it is going to give work, a great deal more work, but it is not going to handle all of those people on WPA any more than earmarking is going to do it.

Also, there is another great danger: I don't mind pointing out that if the Congress starts to earmark money that goes for relief, you are going to make the relief legislation merely another pork barrel.

Everybody is going to try to get a project for their district. Every little group is going to try to get something for them. The Association of General Contractors is going to get just as many earmarked projects out of that bill as they possibly can. Why? Because they are just like most people, including ourselves. They are selfish. They want more jobs for the contractors. But a contracted job does not take care of these individual people, individual families, individual names and individual localities who, today, are in need. It throws them off. So there you are.

MR. BELAIR: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Mr. President, would you care to elaborate any further on the Northeast Air Base, dropping work there and not pursuing it any further?

THE PRESIDENT: We are not starting on it this year because it is a permanent thing. It takes a long time to build and they want some tin sheds up there. That is it.

Q We can't handle more news.