

CONFIDENTIAL

Conference #649-A,
Held with Representatives of the American Youth Congress,
In the State Dining Room of the White House,
June 5, 1940, 8.50 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose I might as well begin by reminding myself that this is the first time I have had a party like this since last April, when I had my annual gathering, about this size -- a little bit bigger -- of the editors and publishers of America, a very formidable group.

I was scared to death the first time, in 1933, and I have been getting over it bravely ever since.

I told them -- I asked them a question, in a way -- I said, "You editors and publishers, you are responsible for the dissemination of most of the news in the United States." I said, "I have got no quarrel with you whatsoever if you act to the best of your own ability and in accordance with your best conscience and in accordance with the news -- news. But not if you act and put, base your policy on what you read by the commentators who contribute to your papers."

In other words, there is all the difference in the world between straight news, honestly written, factual, and a whole lot of people -- of course not confined to editors -- but there are a lot of other people who make comments to the general public, sometimes not in accordance with their own conscience. I illustrated that to the editors and publishers by a remark that was made to me by one of the nationally known commentators. I said to that commentator, "I believe that in your column, three days

out of six, you are consistently taking a crack at every known kind of social reform or betterment program of the Government that we have been trying to put through in the last seven years. Why is it?" I said, "I have known you for a great many years and you are not as anti-social or as unsocial personally."

"Well," he said, "of course I am not; of course I am not. But I can sell my column if I take this line that I have been taking now ever since you have been President. I can sell my column to sixty papers and if I commented the way I really feel, I would not have any clients left."

Now, that is a sort of human interest story but it also goes to show that an awful lot of people in this country believe an awful lot of things they are told because they see it in print -- and I can illustrate that -- because they see it in print or because they have been told by somebody that they respect. And I can illustrate that by telling you a little story about the 1928 campaign:

Al Smith had been placed in nomination and duly nominated and I had worked at headquarters that same summer because I believed that Al had made a fine governor and put through a great deal of legislation that was really of definite social benefit. That fall, in September, I went down to Warm Springs.

One morning, when I was sound asleep, it was around about daylight, about 5.00 o'clock, somebody banged on the shutters and kept on banging on the shutters. So I got into a little wheel chair and went over and opened the shutters and there was an old gentleman from over in Shiloh Valley. And I said to him, "I do

not want any eggs this morning; I do not want any chickens -- I got plenty in the larder. Why, in God's name, do you waken me at this time of the morning?"

He said, "Mr. Roosevelt, I did not come to waken you at this time of the morning -- I don't want to sell you chickens and eggs. We are all upset over in Shiloh Valley."

I said, "Why?"

He said, "Oh, we are all upset about you."

I said, "Why?"

"Well," he said, "we people over in Shiloh Valley, we are sort of old-fashioned and we believe the written word. We believe the written word."

I said, "Yes, and what happened?"

"Well, the preacher on Sunday, after church, he gave us a lot of handbills and," he said, "if what those handbills say is true, we do not see how you can be supporting this fellow Smith."

I said, "Why not?"

"Well," he said, "we could not go along with Smith. We have been Democrats all our lives; we never voted anything but the Democratic ticket. And we cannot go along with Smith. We don't see how you can because when you first came down here to Georgia we thought you were a damned Yankee but," he said, "we got to know you. You haven't got any horns. You did not go through Georgia with General Sherman and, well, we like you and we respect you and you understand us. And, what we can't understand is why you, a friend of ours, can be for Smith." Just because of this written word -- the written word.

I said, "Let me see it." So he goes down into his pocket and hauls out a couple of posters, handbills, and the first handbill says, in large type at the top, "Do you know that if Al Smith becomes President you will be living in adultery with your own wife! (Laughter) Because" -- a great big BECAUSE -- "the Roman Church does not recognize any marriage as valid unless it has been performed by a Roman priest."

So I said, "That is pretty bad, isn't it?" I said, "Funny sort of thing. That fellow Al Smith has been Governor of New York for eight years and, after all, a question of marriage is purely a state question. It is not a Federal question. And," I said, "I think I am still legally married to my wife even if Smith has been Governor of New York for eight years."

I said, "Let's look at the other one." It said, "Do you know that if Smith becomes President all your children will be illegitimate?" And then the same reason, that the only legitimate children are children that are baptized into the Roman Catholic Church.

I said, "I have got five pretty husky kids" -- one sitting over there now (indicating Elliott Roosevelt) -- and I said, "I have every reason to believe that they are still legitimate."

Well, that is just an illustration of a form of being credulous and believing all sorts of things that you are told or that you read in the printed word, without going any further, any more than this old man from over in Shiloh Valley did. He did not go down into the facts of the case. He believed what he read and there is an awful lot of that in this country, not only among the uneducated -- because they are mostly uneducated people over in

Shiloh Valley -- but also in much more highly educated circles in every state in the Union.

That is one reason why, when Mrs. Roosevelt asked me if I would come down here and talk informally about some of these problems of the present day, that I said I would do it, because I believe in talking things over, although there are some people you cannot talk with, even Senators.

About a year ago, nearly a year ago, I had the Foreign Relations Committee come down -- you read about it -- and I pointed out at that time that I thought there were certain dangers to civilization. I pointed out that, very unfortunately, we were faced with a very great growth of physical power by certain systems of government, a growth that had got so big that it was possible that they would extend their sphere of control over various parts of the world and weaken certain relationships that the United States had had with most of the world for 150 years, and that I, frankly, thought that we ought to change the Embargo Act, that we had made a couple of mistakes in the past, quite frankly.

I think this will probably interest you because Mrs. Roosevelt mentioned it to me the other day, something that perhaps you don't know because, there again, the papers have not printed all the facts. Remember this always: 85 per cent of the papers of the United States are opposed to this Administration -- 84 per cent of them, because they regard the Administration as being too damned radical, and one per cent because they regard the Administration as being too conservative. So we have practically an 84 per cent opposition from the conservative press of the country

and they do not always print everything.

Well, let me just go back a little ways: In 1920, 1919, there was a thing that was started in good faith, called the League of Nations. The people over here were scared to death that we would get put into a war if we joined it, that we would have to send troops to the other side. It did not do any good to explain that the League of Nations did not provide that in the covenant, because the question of participation in any action by the League would be subject to review by the Administration and by the courts. It did not do any good because the people were afraid and, therefore, we did not go in. Nevertheless, the League was set up, as I say, in great part in good faith, and there were a lot of people that said, "It is a grand idea but it won't work. It is a useful experiment because we will learn from this new League that has been set up later on what to avoid. There will be a smashup of some kind" -- and they were right -- "but out of it all, out of the lesson of cooperation we may get, later on, something that is better than the League," and they advanced all kinds of reasons why the League would not succeed. Well, whether their reasons were right or not, the League did not succeed.

The thing came along to probably the first instance of an open and clear violation of international contracts that happened, and that was the case in 1931 when Japan violated three or four different treaties and went into Manchuria. The United States at that time, -- Harry Stimson was Secretary of State -- asked the other nations that were signatories of what we call the "Nine-Power Pact" whether they would go along with the United States in

this rather flagrant case of a violation of an international agreement and put an embargo on Japan as a practical method of arraignment of a nation that had violated its written word.

Well, the other nations said, "No; no, Mr. Stimson, we cannot do that. There will be a war. Anything to avoid a war. It will mean we will all have to go to war in the Far East. We are terribly sorry. It is a long ways off, an awfully long ways off and it is not our business."

"Well," Mr. Stimson said, "we made it our business when, a few years ago, we signed these treaties."

They said, "No, it means a war and it might extend to other parts of the world."

So, the other nations would not go along with the American Secretary of State and Japan had a completely free rein in Manchuria and, of course, some of us who have studied the subject know what has happened to the population of Manchuria since 1931. It is not a very pretty story. And the League was responsible -- not the League, the eight powers -- the seven of them who would not go along with us in calling Japan's hand for failing to keep its international word.

And that is half the trouble with the world today. People have been making a lot of promises and they have not been living up to the promise. The promise has become an unused agreement in the covenant, to be taken out, trotted out, shown around, with no idea of ever living up to the solemn word.

And then came 1934 -- Ethiopia. And there again, Italy violated three or four promises -- covenants. The question of inter-

national decency was raised. In that case it went to the League of Nations and the question of sanctions came up and the League of Nations people said, "My God, do not do it; it means a war." So, because of fear of war at that time, they let pass unchallenged the violation of a solemn covenant between nations.

And then came Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Oh, yes, and in between, the other things: one was the Spanish War and the action that was taken by our Congress at that time was based, in the case of the Spanish War, not on the desire or the policy of the Administration, but because the League of Nations was afraid, afraid of war, a general European war, unless they put a complete circle around Spain. Well, as a result, Franco won. The action taken by our Congress at that time was in complete violation of our normal, usual practice, which was to help maintain in power, by selling arms and ammunition, the government of that nation that was in power at the time and not indirectly helping the revolutionists by saying to the constituted government of the country, "You can't have arms and ammunition."

What I am trying to say is the fact, not easily understood, but the record is perfectly clear that the reason the other nations -- the primary reason the other nations, led by Scandinavia -- it is a thing you got to get into your heads -- led by Scandinavia, Norway, Sweden and Denmark -- put a ring around Spain was because they feared that if they went in and in any way assisted the Government in Spain, it would have meant an European war. Then Holland and Belgium joined in, and all the other nations joined in, and the League of Nations said to all the other nations in the world,

whether they were in the League or not, "Draw a circle around Spain and don't let anything go in."

Of course you and I know that things did go into Spain both ways.

It was fear of war that led to Manchuria, later on to the present war that is going on in China. It led to Spain. It led to any other action, Austria or any other place, because the nations of Europe said, "Do not do anything, it will mean a general war if you do it." In other words, the desire for peace led to war.

Now, that is a perfectly simple historical fact.

And the thing came along from bad to worse, and I do not think, frankly, it is an awful lot of use to talk about the past, as to whose fault this was and whose fault that was. I do not think you get a long distance forward in trying to pass judgment in a very critical time today on episodes that are closed episodes. I really do not think you get very far.

It is an awful thing to say, but what good does it do? Where do you stop? Why not go back to the Franco-Prussian War and ask questions about that? It is not so long ago -- seventy years ago -- why not go back twenty years, thirty years, forty years?

I am not, frankly, interested in past history because current events that are beginning to form history are of much, much greater importance than trying to go back and rehash things in the past. Mistakes were made -- of course they were. The fact is today the world is facing -- well, when you come down to it, a choice, from our point of view, between different kinds of government. If you

realize it, it is the simplest way of putting it. In the last analysis, it is a question of different forms of government.

Frankly, I have seen a good deal of the world, probably more than anybody in this room, first and last, and a war. I don't think I would like to live, if I were eighteen or sixteen -- I don't think I would like, knowing what I do, what we have, having seen it all -- that I would care to live the rest of my life under Communism or under Naziism or under Fascism. If I did want to live that way, I think I would probably go over there and join them. If I wanted to live under our form of government, I think I would stay here and I think I would do what I could -- yes, to improve it, but also to support it.

So I think, if there are any questions that do not relate to the too distant past but relate more to things of the immediate -- as I said to the editors -- I will conduct this just like a Press Conference, in which I have certain formulae. One of them is "off the record." "Off the record" means off the record --

MRS. ROOSEVELT: (interposing) I told everybody that before.

THE PRESIDENT: Right. You understand what it is. Of course it is much better and we can talk much more freely. They (the Press) all understood it perfectly well and we have been getting on now for seven years. There have been, oh, some apocryphal stories that have come out a week or two later in the columns as to what we said but, on the whole, they have lived up to the gentlemen's agreement pretty well.

I think we can go ahead on that basis and if any of you have questions that are pertinent -- some of them we won't be able to

answer, either because of lack of knowledge or because there are things that, from the standpoint of national interest, cannot be disclosed at the present time, obviously -- you can go ahead and shoot.

Q I speak from the standpoint of those who share in great concern for the democratic form of government and who come from states where more than half of the citizens who should be voting according to the democratic form of government and our Constitution are denied that right today and, when they try to vote, are in some instances, as some of us know, beaten up by thugs and thrown into jail because they are trying to do the thing which they think they have the responsibility to do, to vote and to get their fellow citizens to vote.

THE PRESIDENT: What are we going to do about it?

Q What are we going to do about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell you one thing, you can't change it in the year 1940 or you can't change it in the year 1941. I will give you an illustration: I was in Chattanooga two years ago and I drove around Chattanooga with old Judge -- I have forgotten his name -- an old Tennessean.

We were driving through this street and, if you know your geography, you know the State of Georgia comes right up to the city line of Chattanooga. We were still out in this street, a big wide avenue, in the State of Tennessee, and there was a large portion of the population out in the streets, and they were waving their hats and yelling, "Hello, Mr. President."

I said to the Judge, "Do these people vote?" "Yes, there

are about 80 per cent of them vote." I said, "What? In Tennessee?" He said, "Sure, not in every part of Tennessee, but they vote in Chattanooga."

Then we came to a sign, a little sign and it said, "State of Georgia." We went over past the sign, still in the same suburb, and the colored population was standing there, not saying a word. I said to the Judge, "You don't vote in Georgia, in this suburb in the same city?" He said, "No; none vote in Georgia."

I said, "Judge, what is going to happen?" "Well," he said, "there is going to come a time, largely through education."

I said, "How long?" He said, "I think they will begin voting -- it is a gradual process -- I think in Georgia they will begin voting in perhaps another five years."

I said, "That is a long ways off." I said, "What about the court ruling, the Supreme Court?" He said, "That is a possibility." He said, "I think we have got to pursue all possibilities and bring it along as fast as we can." He said, "I have always worked for it in the State of Tennessee and now we have caught on substantially in most parts of the State and now it is spreading."

There is a time element. You cannot get it in one year or two. We are all working and in time it will happen. Of course, part of it is the problem of education and, as you know, in my State of Georgia what education there is, is not so hot, poor whites or otherwise.

Q In the Workers' Alliance we were considerably disturbed in January when, in your Budget Message, there was a proposal for approximately a billion dollars more for armaments, for war purposes

generally, and about a billion dollars less proposed for relief to the farmers, the youth and the unemployed --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is not true.

Q Perhaps my figures may not quite jibe with yours but we will spend an aggregate --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) In other words, the Message said in regard to unemployment that I would send to the Congress -- if you look it up -- when I knew more about it, in April, the spring of the year, an estimate in accordance with the new figures, and it has gone in on the same basis as in previous years.

At the same time, on the farmers, that was definitely deferred until we knew farm prices. That went in for \$350,000,000. additional already this session, over and above the Budget Message, in accordance with the statement made.

Q Well, it was our understanding then, from sources that we considered to be authoritative, or in the know, so to speak, that the President felt that he did not have sufficient control over Congress to ask for additional funds for relief. He did, but it could not get through --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) At that time, in January, yes, but with the proviso that we would do it in April and I did it.

Q However, since that time we have had indications that the President is now in control of Congress, which is an unusual thing for the last year --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now, wait a minute! (Laughter) Now, you see? Now, we will check right there. You are a little bit as if you came from Shiloh Valley. Today and tomorrow there is

up in Congress an effort to completely emasculate the National Labor Relations Act, and there is a distinct possibility in the House that that bill that Congressman Smith of Alexandria proposed may go through. I am utterly opposed to it, as you all know.

In other words, a statement that I am in control of Congress is just like the Shiloh Valley statements about the illegitimate children -- it is a half-truth.

At the present time, I could ask for another billion dollars on top of four billion dollars for national defense and I will get it. But I am not in control with respect to a thing like the National Labor Relations Board or the effort to emasculate the wages and hours thing.

So your statement is a statement -- a generalization. It is true as to one thing and false as to the other. You see the point?

Q I believe I do. But we felt the President could ask for more and get more, and we suggested to some of the Congressional leaders that that could be done and that we felt that there would be no more by way of opposition than seventy-five votes on the President's Budget recommendation, including his recommendation that the money be spent in eight months if necessary.

THE PRESIDENT: That I am going to get.

Q And our feeling in that matter was borne out because there were only twenty-one votes against it, which indicated considerable strength.

We feel, in the light of the recommendations of the President for increased armament expenditures, that the President has not been, let me say, diligent enough in calling upon the Congressional leaders in his own party to push through additional appropriations

for relief. There are now over a million people who have been investigated by local relief authorities and certified for W.P.A. employment, including, we estimate, between 2 and 3 hundred thousand youth of less than 25, who have never yet had an opportunity for a W.P.A. job.

On this basis we suggested, and a major portion of the organized labor movement endorsed, a minimum of 3 million W.P.A. jobs.

We feel that internal defense in this respect is vitally necessary and we would like to ask the President -- I would like to ask tonight, as an individual in this meeting, Why hasn't the President insisted upon that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, a very simple reason: If there had not been this war -- I am not at all sure and I suppose, whether I like it or not, I suppose from somewhat long experience with different kinds of legislatures that my case is as good as your case -- I do not know if it is any better but it is at least as good as yours -- and if there had not been this war problem, I am not at all sure that Congressman Woodrum and his Committee would not have prevailed in limiting the appropriation to a billion dollars for a whole twelve months.

That is rather a startling statement but it is given in accordance with the best guess I can make, and that would have meant a further serious curtailment of W.P.A. in point of rolls, very serious. As it was, as you probably know, the subcommittee reported out the bill to the full Committee with that provision, that the billion dollars should last for a whole year, and in the

full Committee we only carried what I was after, which was a billion dollars in the first eight months, by two votes in that Committee. If we had not carried it in that Committee -- and that was after this war started -- if we had not carried it, I am not at all certain, with the knowledge I have, that I would have gotten a billion dollars for a whole year -- twelve months.

In other words, I am inclined to think we have got the maximum we can possibly get out of this Congress. It has not gone through the Senate yet. Now, I can assure you if there is a hope or chance of getting an additional amount out of the Senate, when that relief bill comes up -- I have talked to them all and they know I want more.

Q May I ask another question, and that is in regard to the layoffs now taking place. It was our understanding that the President was interested in seeing those layoffs stopped. However, I do not recall having seen a public pronouncement by the President to that effect. We were hoping at least that, since the layoffs have taken place during April and May, that now the President would ask for an immediate effectuating of the present bill, the present Act, which is now before the Senate Appropriations, so that at least approximately 200,000 layoffs scheduled for June may be stopped.

THE PRESIDENT: I have been asking for that since the fifteenth day of April. It is in the record. I wanted it to apply to May and June and they adopted the very simple expedient of not taking action on the bill until the end of June. Therefore we are not getting it.

Q I represent one of the largest colored groups in our country, inter-

ested as much as anyone else in preserving this way of life and political form of government despite all the difficulties. We are certain it means far more to our life and happiness than any other form I know.

We are all interested in the defense of our country and we use the term "our" very strongly. But we are a bit alarmed about asking for so many fighters and planes and then not receiving any help or interest on the part of a great many individuals by their not taking cognizance of the desire of Negroes to represent their country too. For instance, we would like to get into aviation or get into other forms of defense, taking the situation as it is and not saying whether we ought to go to war or not.

But that has always been the case and we were wondering whether, in the policy of boards being set up, whether Negroes are to be considered -- to be considered by people who are in closer touch with our own side, for there is another side -- we have the peculiar problems of Negroes.

We are wondering as to two things: one is the policy of not using Negroes, and the second thing, on various committees of Government, whether we are to get representation. What can be done about it? What can we do?

THE PRESIDENT: On this specialized training of all kinds, the thing we are examining at the present time -- is Harry (Mr. Harry Hopkins) here?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Harry, what are we doing right now on the specialized training? We talked about it a week ago and Sidney Hillman is

going to get here -- he has got the flu -- next Monday and he is going to take up the question of this specialized training.

MR. HOPKINS: It is perfectly clear on that -- you know perfectly well that amongst the Negroes there are two schools of thought about negro representation on the committees. Some Negroes believe that Negroes should be represented on the committees because they are Negroes, that on all committees there should be a Negro representing the Negroes. Then I think it is fair to say -- I might be wrong but I think that most of the liberal Negroes do not agree with that. They believe people should be on committees, should hold jobs, because they are competent to hold them and not because of their race or religion.

Now, I do not want to state that or push it unduly, nor do I want to seem to indicate that Negroes are adequately represented in various places.

On the training course, Mr. President, where we had 10,000 pilots trained last year and 20,000 this year, and 45,000 will be trained this coming year, those to be trained are trained out at universities and colleges in America, and Negroes are included in that group. I think the young man, however, is talking about something else, in terms of fighters rather than that.

Q I want to say something in this situation with respect to the point of view of labor: Looking back a little while -- not too long -- to the period of even N.R.A., when the right of labor -- when they were permitted to organize and collective bargaining was protected and then denied and then, recently, through the National Labor Relations Board, was once again reemphasized, it seems a little con-

fusing to us that in this present situation, this whole program of national defense, that the Administration has taken no stand on the recent attacks and indictments under the antitrust laws of the labor unions, amongst whom is my own, the Fur Workers' Union, for no other reason, as the Judge and others have stated, than that it is a conspiracy for the purpose of organizing the whole industry. And many people --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What industry did you say?

Q The fur and leather. I am vitally concerned with this whole recent attack on the trade union movement and the need to protect the recent gains of labor, especially in this emergency. I would like to know your stand on these questions?

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid I am a little confused. Can you specify a little more?

Q Yes, the Sherman antitrust indictments.

THE PRESIDENT: Who have they been against?

Q The Fur Workers' Union, the Teamsters' Union, the Electricians' Union --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) The Teamsters' Union, as we know, certain local teamsters' unions are perfectly clear-cut rackets, you have got to admit that. Some of the building trades in New York and other places have been rackets. That is why antitrust indictments. And it was not only the unions that have been involved, but there have been rackets and combinations and conspiracies among the owners of the industry -- you know that. What I have been rather surprised at is that some of the leaders of those particular international unions have not come out and made more of an effort to

get rid of the rackets in some of the locals.

Q In our own field, in the C.I.O. --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I do not mean the field. A fair case --

Q (interposing) I do not think they found against us.

THE PRESIDENT: What was the indictment based on?

Q Conspiracy to organize the entire industry. For instance, there were some three thousand people in New York organized and their conditions radically altered for the better under this whole so-called conspiracy. That was the indictment.

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to see that indictment because I cannot imagine any indictment that would hold water over ten minutes that was based on an effort to organize the whole industry. I do not think it lies and I would like to read it before I answer your question. I am quite sure, if your statement was right, that the indictment was based on the attempt to organize the fur and leather industry, and you stop there, that when you get to the next court they will throw it out on its ear. I hope they will if that is true, and I think they will. I know enough law -- I am not an expert lawyer -- that that is not the basis for an indictment.

Q That may be, but Thurman Arnold represented the Department of Justice and I presume he is an Administration appointee. He conducted, very vigorously, the whole affair. The result was the conviction (indictment?) in an effort to break up the union and the industry.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will read it.

Q Mr. President, I was particularly interested in Mr. Hopkins' answer to the questions raised by Mr. Robinson because I think it reflects one of the things in which all negro youth in America are particu-

larly interested on a general scale, and that is our equal participation in all phases and opportunities in the government and the life of America. It is for that reason that I want to hark back, for a moment, to the first question raised and that was the question about poll taxes.

Now, you said that in your opinion the solution to this problem will come through education?

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q Well, I want to raise the question: Is it not true that the people we have to educate today are Congressmen and Senators? For instance, there is a bill that has been proposed by Representative Geyer of California, the Anti-Poll Tax Bill, which would eliminate the poll tax as a requirement for voting in Federal elections --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) And if it is constitutional, it ought to go through. I hope, frankly -- I could not give you my opinion as to whether it is constitutional because that has to go through the courts -- I hope it is constitutional.

Q I hope it is too, and I would like to talk, just for a moment, on the assumption that it is constitutional because, at the present stage of the game, the only people of America that are backing this bill are organized, such as the one for which I work, the Southern Negro Youth Council, and there are other organizations --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) And you ought to get more people because it is a difficult thing, as you know, in our civilization unless you have sentiment. You take the voters in Dutchess County, New York, where that problem of poll taxes does not affect their lives: we are all human and I think probably most of the people of Dutchess

County, New York, if it was explained to them would get behind the bill.

Q The point I am trying to make is that I think the fact that our Senators and Representatives, people in official positions who should be supporting this bill but are not today, is a fact which creates a great deal of uneasiness in the minds of American youth, for the reason that we connect their attitude of lack of activity on this question with the fact that they are concentrating all their efforts on the program for rearmament and are neglecting not only the poll tax effort but it is true also in another case, another piece of legislation that particularly affects the Negroes, the Antilynching Bill, for which we had achieved a majority of signatures in favor of this bill. Now we find that these Senators refuse to take action to bring the bill to the floor and have a vote on it.

Now, it is the general impression, not only of Negroes in America but probably of the majority of people, that one of the dangers inherent in our present rearmament program is that such pieces of legislation as these have not only been sacrificed -- they have already been sacrificed -- but will continue to be, despite pronouncement that we may make to the contrary, unless we are able to organize our Senators and Representatives and people who have the power to form our national policy so that the security and civil liberties of the American people may be preserved.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is a very good point. You have to remember on that point that when you get to a crisis of this kind, you also avoid the repeal of a lot of good legislation we already have.

Especially in a campaign year, it works both ways. I think we have to keep pushing all our social legislation to improve Government machinery.

Now, you spoke about that Antilynching Bill: You have got a situation up there on the Hill which goes back well over a hundred years, when the Senate began calling itself the greatest debating society in the world -- the most exclusive club in the world -- "We operate without any rules whatsoever." One of the inherent rights of a Senator is to filibuster just as long as he can stand on his feet. "We operate without rules." Now, one of the things that is a perfectly practical thing for everybody here, and that is to put to every candidate for the United States Senate the question, "Are you in favor of the Senate continuing its right to filibuster and prevent bringing to a vote certain legislation that a minority of the Senators, a rather small minority, is opposing -- the majority in favor of it?"

If you can get a vote on the Antilynching Bill in the Senate it would go through -- we all know it.

Q For that reason, the question I want to emphasize, and it is one which should be of particular concern to all who are here, and that is, What can we do, what can you do, Mr. President, in your position as the official representative of our Government, to see that our Congress takes some position, some stand, on these issues, for the very serious reason that, I believe, among a large section of the population, the program for defense and rearmament, in some places, is held in suspicion because they feel that the first line of defense of America should be that of the social needs of the

people, and that this is the thing that our Senators should certainly concentrate on with equal ardor as their concentration on our military objectives.

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing more than you would have done right along. It means getting ninety-six Senators to say, "Go out and take a vote on the Antilynching Bill." You have had some rather definite accessions of strength this year. Take the Vice President and several other southern Senators: they have given up and said, "Yes, we think it is better to take a vote." We are gaining on it but you won't get it this year.

Q I was very much interested to note in your statement, after the rapid development of the emergency and after your bill for the extended arms program, that the hard won gains of labor should not be lost sight of in the present situation, and then the Congress, by a voice vote passed the Vinson Bill, which would, I think, be an opening wedge for undermining the thing that has been so slowly built up.

THE PRESIDENT: I have been trying to get it eliminated in the Senate.

Q That is what I want to ask you, What will happen in the Senate?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope it will be eliminated. I do not know yet; they have not taken a vote.

Q What would you advise us to do?

THE PRESIDENT: If they do pass it, of course, obviously, I will have to sign the bill but with it will go a statement that those clauses will not be used.

Q In other words, those clauses are virtually voided by the way you sign the bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q And will that be true of legislation of a similar type?

THE PRESIDENT: I have been fighting it right along.

Q Because, what we have been struggling for, for eight years, is being eliminated in the course of a few weeks.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. And then, of course, another thing too -- on the actual administration, people want to get things done. Now, in one of the departments I caught the other day an order going out for the Navy Department to the effect that any commandant of any industrial plant, Navy yard, has the right to work people forty-eight hours a week without reporting it back to the Navy Department and to me to get permission. I just caught it by pure chance. It is legal to do it. As soon as I caught it, I said, "No commandant is going to get that authority."

Now, we all know in a Navy yard, for example, there may be some special trade like die sinkers. Well, if you know anything about die sinkers, you know it is practically impossible to find a die sinker today. Therefore, in that case, a very, very small trade, in order to keep the rest of the plant running forty hours a week, you may have to employ your die sinkers forty-eight hours a week. There are not very many of them.

Now, that is the kind of an exception you have to have for the benefit of the other ninety-nine per cent of the workers in the yard.

But the general rule from now on, although they have the authority -- I caught it and they are not going to work forty-eight hours except in those special cases where one trade has to

work for a period until they can get more people in in that trade, that highly skilled trade. That will be the rare exception to the rule and we are going to keep to the regular standard of forty hours a week.

Q Mr. President, I am chairman of the Connecticut Youth Council. In our State seven thousand young people are aided by N.Y.A. out of 125 thousand people that need it on relief certification. That is still the most important problem for young people within our borders. We know that you, on January fourth, said that the plight of youth was the special concern of Government. We feel that such a tremendous problem must be a constant concern to the leaders of our Government. On February tenth we heard from you that ten, twenty, thirty years ago unemployment had no such worries for young people as now. Since then we have not heard anything to the contrary. Nevertheless, the N.Y.A. and the C.C.C. are at the same figure that they were last year so that the disparity between those that are given and those that need help still continues. We want an answer from you and we want a concrete proposal.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think Mr. Hopkins has the general figures and plan on that. We are extending, when we get this bill passed, we are extending the C.C.C. and N.Y.A. and, of course, the C.A.A. employment. What do you suppose the total will be, Harry (Mr. Hopkins)? Have you got any idea of the additional number?

MR. HOPKINS: I think it will probably be about two million young people all together.

Q May I ask a question of Mr. Hopkins about that program? I am very, very much concerned that in the kind of training, apprenticeship

training particularly, which these young people are to be given, that it ought to be of sufficient breadth so that after the war we do not have the same situation for young people that we had after the last war. In other words, a necessity for a reorientation of skills and occupations for a vast number of people who have been trained with such a narrow conception of training, because of the emergency, that they have not the kind of skill which can be reoriented. Will there be provision, or will the plan involve a sufficiently broad training so that there is possibility of a rather rapid reorientation after the crisis is over?

MR. HOPKINS: To the best of my knowledge -- I find this going around the Government -- that is a difficult objective to identify with defense and the desire on the part of the Army and the Navy and the Air Force to meet a potential enemy. Obviously, that ought to be organized with all the brains and intelligence that it can be.

I know a good deal about the difficulties of some of the training prior to and during the last war, when we had all these people under mobilization and demobilization and I doubt whether it is possible to organize the thing as meticulously as you indicate. None of the experts in that field whom I have seen think that it can be.

On the other hand, I think the problem you raise is one being given consideration by the people who will manage the program because these people are very critical of the kind of training we got last time. I do not want to underestimate the problem you present --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It is practically a new subject that we have been only talking about, discussing, the last five or six years and, of course, into it enter a whole lot of things that are new to all of us. Well, I always cite the thing that happened to me when I was Governor (of New York). They passed two bills through the Legislature to provide two new normal schools for the State of New York, one in Long Island and one in the western part of the State. Before I signed them I sent for the Commissioner of Education and I said, "You have got a list, I think, of school teachers, that is to say certified school teachers, who are looking for jobs?" He said, "Yes." I said, "How many are there?" He said, "I don't know."

So he went and checked up and there were six thousand men and women, certified men and women, who had gone through Hunter College, normal school, teachers' colleges, et cetera, and who had been certified for employment as teachers. There were six thousand in the City of New York alone who had no job, and there were seven thousand up-State who were certified and looking for jobs. Now, they had gone through the entire educational period. They had become qualified teachers and there were thirteen thousand more in the State of New York than we had jobs for.

Well, what is one of the answers? There was a little girl up in Hyde Park Village, a nice kid, seventeen years old. She wrote to me and said, "I want to go to normal school over in New Paltz." I said, "Why do you want to be a teacher?" "Well, I don't know. I rather like the idea. I think I would like to be a teacher."

Well, she did not have any particular qualifications, any more than the average girl in the world when it comes to teaching. Nobody had ever looked her over. If she had gone to normal school she would have waited three years and then gone on the list because she did not have personality. She was a nice kid but no personality. She might have been employed teaching in the grade school somewhere but I wouldn't have picked her out, if I were running a school, as the kind of girl to teach those youngsters.

Well, why? "I think I would like to be a teacher." Well, I talked to her and I said, "I would not like to go to normal school if I were you." So, instead of that, she went down to a business college and became a stenographer and is doing real well. It so happened down in that region that there was a need for stenographers.

Eventually, out of this study we are making we are going to present a lot of misfits in life, people who want to do a particular thing for which they are not fitted.

I don't know what kind of an examination there will be -- we do not know enough about it, but we will have to pick and cull the people for this particular trade, that particular occupation, that particular profession.

Well, you take one very practical illustration of this problem: Almost everybody tells me -- it is a good many years since I was in college -- that there are an awful lot of boys and girls who ought not to go to college but who do go to college and, as you know, take a graduate class today, I think probably in most of the colleges in this country you will find that the majority

of boy and girl graduates in those colleges come to Class Day, Commencement Day to get their diplomas and they haven't the foggiest idea of what they are going to do in life.

Q Mr. President, I would like to get back to the question of the rights of the negro people because I feel that the final test of any group that is interested in extending and preserving democracy is the position of the negro people. There are 15 million American Negroes who still do not enjoy full citizenship rights and we are in entire agreement on the proposition that the first line of defense is the security and well-being of the citizens of any country.

The negro people are particularly interested in this theory because they feel that they do not have complete welfare and security in the United States, which is a democracy, and we feel that since defense is the burning question, that certainly the Administration should go out vigorously, even perhaps more vigorously, on the question of the rights of Negroes as being as much a part of the program for defense as any other thing.

Things that have been brought up here are just a small part of the vast question with respect to the rights of Negroes. In the South they are under the system of Jim Crow; in the North it is more subtle but it has its forms and I feel there should be a vigorous indication on the part of the Administration on the stand it takes on the negro question.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you are dead right. I do not know much about the women's end of the negro question, but I know a lot about the men's end. I went down to Tuskegee a year and a half ago and at that time, because of our tremendous forestry program, we were

looking for two types of trained people. One was the graduate forester. Well, that means just about as much time as it takes to become a bachelor of laws. And I said to Dr. Patterson, "Is there any school in the country that has ever graduated a negro forester?" He said, "As far as I know, no."

"Have any of them gone to the northern forestry schools?"

"Not that I know of."

Secondly, we need a tremendous number of what is called "working foresters" who have not had the long three-year course but have had the short two-year course, which does not require a college degree. Now, there is no school in the United States, no negro school that teaches forestry. Did you know that?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: That is a true thing.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Would they have been taken on if they had taken the course?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and particularly in the South because there is a tremendous need. There is a profession at the present time where there is demand. It is as big, bigger than the supply -- graduate foresters and working foresters.

Q They work in groups, do they not?

THE PRESIDENT: No -- what do you mean?

Q You don't send one lone forester to a special place; you send a group?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You would have to send a unit of colored workers?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily. Believe me, they are so scarce today

that they would take anybody. There are a good many things we have not gone into along that line for definite occupations for negro men and negro boys. We are not teaching them. Take simple engineering. Out through the West, on these soil erosion control projects, we have not got enough young engineers that know the practical engineering field work to fill jobs on the different projects that we are running all through the Middle West and the Prairie States. There is no place to train them.

- Q The question I am raising is that there are definite policies that have grown to be such a definite part of our American system that we have come to accept them, that prevent Negroes from taking a full part in the life of America.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not so much interested in the statement of policy as I am interested in the training. What I am trying to do is to get negro colleges to train people in the work where there is a real need for them. That is practical.

- Q I think, since we have had all of these Yankees speaking, we ought to let a Southerner speak. Down South we are having an awful lot of talking these days, and newspaper editorials, about fifth columns. In Nashville there was an old man who had a map in his pocket, I believe of Memphis, and they had banner-head columns, "Fifth Column Man Arrested," and two days later they released him. He was not an agent of a foreign government. He was a little demented.

Down in Houston, Texas, we had a young Negro who was to speak on the un-American activities of Mr. Dies. The American Legion protested to the agency that had charge and the permit was with-

drawn. Many people, nevertheless, came to the meeting in carloads but the policemen came with the speaker to the meeting to see that the meeting was not held.

We have all sought in the South to find out about the un-American activities. What I wonder is where are these un-American activities that we are having and do they exist? I have asked a lot of people coming down in the train, "Do you see any fifth column?" At first people say, "They must be here because the editorials say so." I wonder whether the great interest in your speeches and other speeches of people in the American Government about the dangers of foreign elements working among us, and if the increased appropriation for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and if the subtle and, I think, partial endorsement of the Dies Committee which you recently gave in saying that you got some information from the Dies Committee -- I wonder if you yourself and members of the Government are not partly responsible for this great scare and I wonder if the fifth column activities actually exist among us?

THE PRESIDENT: They do, very definitely. I will give you a very simple example: There are at the present time, within the past couple of months, I suppose there are at least between forty -- that is a guess on my part but I think it is about right -- about forty or fifty factories in this country where somebody in the factory has attempted to destroy the tools in those factories. That is fifth column. That is the easiest example I know of. Those are perfectly known cases.

Q In your Reorganization Order, which transferred the Alien Immigration

Bureau from the Department of Labor to the Department of Justice --
I did not have a chance to read it all -- did it provide at all
for the defense of aliens?

THE PRESIDENT: It does not change the law.

Q It did not change the law at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Doesn't it seem to you like -- I think it has been shown that the
aliens are brought up before this commission. It is not a trial
in the sense that it is a court, it is an Administration commis-
sion appointed by the Administration and the Administration halts
there. Although these aliens in the past have had the right to
counsel, it is a sort of hazy right and not many of them have
lawyers. Don't you think, especially in these hysterical times,
these persons --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Do you know of any cases where, before
these commissions, there has been any denial of justice proven?

Q I know in the World War, right after the World War there was defi-
nitely, I think.

THE PRESIDENT: I think there was. I think a good deal of it went on
at that time, which accumulated into the bomb that was set off up
here on R Street to try to blow the Attorney General of the United
States into small atoms. It was hysterical, of course; no question
about that. In the same way, I do not know how many judges you
have got in this country all told, but thousands and thousands.
Well, in any large number of officials you are bound to find prob-
ably the same number, the same percentage of people who go off
half-cocked, of people who do stupid things, the same number as

you do in any other walk of life. There are probably just as many stupid or crooked people among the lawyers or the clergy as there are in the American Youth Congress.

Q I know a lot of people.

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, you are bound to have down at the bottom, in those things, certain denials of justice. What we are trying to do is keep the percentage as low as possible.

Q If I could go on a little more. It seems, though, in this situation -- I believe you are in favor of the public defender system -- that in these Administration trials, that these persons should be allowed some sort of counsel because the rules of evidence are different in Administration tribunals than they are in the courts and, in hysterical times, with the Department of Justice being the tryer and prosecutor, unless --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, because the same people are going to do that. The personnel has not changed. There will be no change in the personnel.

Q I think, as you probably know, the majority of American young people support the national defense policy and internal actions against fifth columnists. But I think the thing that worries a great many of the progressive young people -- there are two things that really worry them: one is the fact that so many people who have been opposed to all the social legislation of the New Deal are now suddenly coming around and giving support to armaments and things like that, and the second thing is the point made here about so many evidences of real hysteria among such men as Governor Rivers, who are coming out against the fifth column. I know of

German Americans who say that people are spying on them and making life miserable.

There are two questions I have: (1) How can we guarantee that a rearmament program, the national defense program, will not fall into the hands of reactionaries who have always been against us?

THE PRESIDENT: Eternal vigilance is the only thing I know. The fact that some of these people have suddenly shifted over is probably a good sign. Some of them I did not think could ever shift over.

Q But in local organizations, in the R.O.T.C. and C.C.C. and other places, there is always a danger that education and everything else will be in the hands of traditional militarists and others who are pretty reactionary people, and it seems to me -- I think that many people who have questioned this thing could feel so much more certain in their support of the arms program if we felt that there wasn't a greatly strained relation going on and people who are suddenly coming to the support of the arms program might not automatically --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Eternal vigilance.

Q And the second question is, Just who are the fifth columnists in the United States besides the obvious spies? Aren't there people like Mr. Girdler and Ford and others who really are the fifth column?

THE PRESIDENT: Just exactly the same category -- I agree with you -- people who avoid the consequences of it, the Girdlers in life as well as the people who try to put emery into the machinery. I think eternal vigilance is the only answer. You are going to have

a certain percentage of cases, like I said, that will be badly handled and everything else. You have got to watch that, the individual case.

Q You suggested in your speech at the beginning of the meeting that the choice of the people of the world today was a choice between forms of government, so my questions are these:

First, do you believe that the Allies are defending any particular form of government, whether they are concerned with democracy?

And the second, if that is true, is it borne out by their imperialistic policies?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think that is the question. I would put it the other way around. Where would you rather live, in France or Germany, today?

Q You are asking me?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Is there much choice today? I would answer that I would much prefer living in the United States.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but between France and Germany I would certainly much rather live in France. After all, the civil liberties in France have always been, on the whole, pretty good. The French people are an extremely independent people, if you know anything about them. I think their form of government is very cumbersome and I think this changing of administration every few months is an extremely bad way of running a government in any country. But they have a pretty free method of life and you will find that the average French family has a great deal of civil liberty. Now, if

I had to choose between the two, I would rather live in France than in Germany.

Q The question now is whether I would enjoy living in the French colonies and I would have to answer, "No."

THE PRESIDENT: I agree with you. I am talking as between France and Germany. I would say this -- have you ever been to Martinique?

Q No.

THE PRESIDENT: Martinique is a French colony and they have a very interesting form of local government for nearly all Negroes. They get on extremely well with the small number of French white people who are down there. They never have any trouble. They have a low standard of living but that is so all through the West Indies. They are a happy, cheerful people and, surprisingly, they have much better education among the Negroes of Martinique than we have in most of our states in the South. Now, that is an interesting fact and that is a French colony. The same thing applies to Guadelupe.

Q Not in Indo-China?

THE PRESIDENT: Indo-China, no.

Q I don't want to prolong this discussion but I would like to ask one more -- the first question I asked you, whether you believed that the Allies were fighting for democracy, whether they are concerned with --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Put it the other way around. They are fighting for a better form of democracy, certainly, than Germany is fighting for. I would say it is an ideal.

Q Do you believe that England can regain the democracy that the British

people have recently given up?

THE PRESIDENT: Who is suffering from that?

Q Well, I would think that in the long run the world is suffering.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am talking about England.

Q The British people.

THE PRESIDENT: Most of the people in England who are going to be caught by that last order in Council are the richer people in England. They are the ones that are going to have their property taken away from them. And, furthermore, knowing history, I do not believe for a minute at the end of this war that they are going to continue a thing like that, not for a second.

Q May I bring a message from the Midwest?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q May I bring a message from the Midwest? I come from the State of Wisconsin, the home of the elder Senator La Follette. During the past four or five years I have been working there in the Y.M.C.A. and during the last three years for the National Peace Council. In talking with some of the "Y" people throughout the country who have been following these questions of the American relationships in the international scheme, I find there are quite a few questions that come into the offices with respect to what is the best defense policy for this country to follow. That seems to be a question that is before most of the persons who are asking these questions at the present time.

The questions seem to run along these lines: First of all, What is the best defense policy for the United States to follow? And then most of them raise a second question: Where is our real

enemy? Most of them, they tend to indicate in their letters and in their statements that they feel the real enemy is within this country, that there is very little danger of the United States of America being invaded by a foreign invader, that if we are going to adequately protect this country and the things for which it stands and the Western Hemisphere stands, we have to talk in terms of the defense of the democratic privileges of the members of all the minority groups, of all the different class interests in this country. And many of them are wondering why, when the question is raised in the various places, the Administration or the Congress, that when the question is raised more attention is not given to what they consider to be more important, the question of defense from our enemies who are within this country instead of talking in terms of the distance of certain points in the United States from possible air raid bases, and the question of a foreign invader, and the question of protecting ourselves by building up armies against that foreign invader, which they think will protect us against a foreign enemy?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a little bit a question of the English language. If I say to you, "What is the total of five apples and four pears? give me one word that describes it," you cannot. It is still five apples and four pears.

What you are doing and so many people are doing, perfectly naturally, is to fall for the misuse of the English word "defense." That word "defense" means two separate things, just as different as apples are from pears. You are talking in one breath about the American's defense of his way of life and trying to build up

within our own Nation a better way of life. We have got to have, for the future of the Nation, irrespective of armies, irrespective of navies, irrespective of aviation, we have got to have better, stronger, more prosperous and better living people than we have got today. Now, that is one problem.

Now, you cannot talk about that problem exactly, using the same words, as you do about the possibility of the invasion of the United States, or letting people put a stone wall or a concrete wall or an armed wall around our country. That is an entirely different subject, just as different as apples are from pears.

Now, I am all for what you are talking about and what they are talking about in the Y.M.C.A.'s throughout the West. Of course we are talking about it but do not let us make a comparison between that and a different subject, because it is a different subject.

Q I think also there is a distinction between the two subjects. My point is that many of the inquiries that come in believe that the most important of the subjects is not being stressed adequately at the present time.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, perhaps it is not. It is a little bit difficult in our system of government to pursue two equally important things with equal emphasis at the same time. That is darned hard.

Q Mr. President, the C.I.O. Executive Board has been in executive session here for three days and that Executive Board adopted a resolution on national defense based on the fact that we believe that one of the most important elements for national defense is keeping up the morale of the people and their confidence in our country and its institutions and, in order to follow that out,

that it is absolutely necessary to maintain the rights that the people have gained, particularly the rights and gains made by labor the past few years under your administration.

It was during these sessions of the Executive Board that it was reported there that many employers are using the war hysteria and using the cry of patriotism and national defense as an excuse to try to take away from labor some of the gains that labor has made.

Now, the question is this: We know your position on this because you have stated it clearly and positively. Would it be possible for you to issue an Executive Order which would provide that in every contract made by the United States Government for arms or for any other goods or services required by the Government, to include in there, as a condition of this contract, that every employer shall adhere to and shall obey the laws on the statute books, such as the National Labor Relations Act, the Wages and Hours law and such other legislation as has given to labor and to the people such rights as they deserve?

That does not require any legislation. It merely requires an Executive Order by the President instructing the administrative agencies of the United States. It certainly would be a tremendous sign to labor and the people of this country that, as far as the Administration is concerned, that it intends to see that these laws, which will maintain morale and which will heighten confidence, are going to be enforced, and that at least every possible effort is going to be made to enforce them. Would it be possible for such an Executive Order to be made?

THE PRESIDENT: When Sidney Hillman gets down on Monday -- it is a little bit of -- what do law students call it? -- it is a bit of surplusage to say in a contract that you have got to live up to the law because they have to anyway. But I will talk to Sidney Hillman. You mean the moral effect of it?

Q Because, actually, our experience has shown that employers are using the situation, the cry of patriotism, the cry of "We have to do everything for national defense" to break down the morale, the organization, and create the thought in the minds of the people that perhaps this war is a pretext to produce tremendous profits for employers and misery for the people. We have got to stop the development of that psychology or else the internal part of the national defense, the morale of the people, will be broken down and create a situation detrimental to the country.

THE PRESIDENT: There is, I believe, in the present Government contracts a clause to the effect that this contract is subject to the full force and effect of all statutes, et cetera, of the United States. I imagine that is in all Government contracts still. I am not dead sure. Anyway, I am glad you mentioned it. I will take it up.

Q During the coming summer I shall be at a lot of conferences of church youth and, as you know, they spend freely of their time in the discussion of social and political problems. One of the questions -- in the multiplicity of them there are conscientious objectors -- and they are again asking, and I know they will be asking all summer, "Will America give the same assurances and the same guarantees that England is giving to her conscientious objectors?" The last

war showed a lesson we all remember and the question is whether they have learned that lesson?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; sure. There is no doubt about it.

Q I wanted to get back to the question of jobs. In the Youth Commission reports last November it was pointed out that there were so many more youths today than there ever have been before and would be in another decade. It was pointed out further that even in a normal expansion of war industries there would be few jobs open to young people and that the Government should sponsor some type of Federal projects, I presume similar to the N.Y.A. or the W.P.A., but on a national scale and on a much more substantial and secure basis, presumably something like the American Youth Act.

I would like to know your expression of opinion on that recommendation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course this thing divides in about fifty or a hundred different ways. As Mr. Hopkins said, we are going to have a great many more opportunities for young people to get jobs.

Right, Harry?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, sir.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Have you got that appropriation or is it still subject to Congressional action?

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't any money. There hasn't been a bill gone through. I haven't a penny in my pocket.

Q Mr. President, one of the main groups that suffers from or is in danger of suffering from the fifth column talk is the group of refugees in this country. I know, in working with church groups who are trying to place refugees, that recently the groups that

would naturally take and try to fit in refugees have been very much disturbed as to whether or not these refugees, driven out by injustice, were not likely to be fifth columnists. We were wondering if something could not be done from headquarters which would tend to allay the suspicions of aliens as such, particularly those who have come to this country as refugees.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are trying to be just as fair on that proposition as we can. Luckily, the refugees have got interested in them a good many private organizations. Now, it is up to those private organizations to see to it that no discrimination is shown to the refugees. Now, of course, the refugee has got to be checked because, unfortunately, among the refugees there are some spies, as has been found in other countries. And not all of them are voluntary spies -- it is rather a horrible story but in some of the other countries that refugees out of Germany have gone to, especially Jewish refugees, they have found a number of definitely proven spies. It sounds like a horrible thing but, in most cases, the reason for that is this, that the refugee has left Germany and then has been told by the German Government, "You have got to conduct this particular spy work and if you don't make your reports regularly back to some definite agent in the country, you are going to -- we are frightfully sorry, but your old father and old mother will be taken out and shot." It has been spying under compulsion and it is an amazing story that we have rather fully. Of course it applies to a very, very small percentage of refugees coming out of Germany but it does apply and, therefore, it is something that we have to watch. Isn't it rather a horrible thing?

Q Mr. President, I was going to follow up with this C.O. (conscientious objector) question: One of the problems we have is whether the group they will have to come before, a tribunal or whatever they happen to be, is a sympathetic group, or what kind of approach they have to make -- whether it will be the War Department or the Justice Department that will handle the cases, or whether it will be under civilian control, like under the American Friends' Committee, or something like that?

THE PRESIDENT: We are going to try to keep all the existing machinery without putting in new machinery and, of course, the existing machinery is civilian machinery.

Q In your analysis of one of the reasons why cooperative efforts to prevent aggression failed, you mentioned specifically fear of war on the part of people everywhere that led them to fear the application of sanctions. I think there was also an element of fear caused by groups of people who did not want to halt aggression. I think that reactionary forces played on the fears of people and led them to refrain. We are told that international growth of disorders results in growths of disorders at home.

The big problem for the future, and the problem that agitates young people more than anything else is, what hope -- I think it is a real problem -- what hope is there that even if the Allies do win, that even twenty years from today that the same thing won't happen? that we won't go through the same tragic story? Doesn't it affect the domestic organization of the country whenever we have nations in power? I do not know whether you can answer that question, but what possibilities are there for the future

which will keep this thing from happening all over again?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, again you are getting into a guessing field, but let's put it this way: Since -- well, the Napoleonic era -- practically there hasn't been any real serious, widespread aggression on the part of nations that call themselves democratic -- since about 1815. There have been minor episodes, yes, but no widespread military effort to dominate the world. I mean, that is history. That is 125 years.

On the other hand, there have been certain very definite efforts to expand the field of military aggression to very, very wide areas and very, very large numbers of human people on the part of non-democratic nations and, just on the doctrine of chances -- well, let us take a simple problem: Suppose in 1918 Canada passed into German control. Well, we would have a very difficult problem in our relationships with Canada today, twenty-two years later, than if we had an armed Canada under a more or less democratic form of government like ours. That is on the doctrine of history. I think that is the easiest way of putting it.

Q I agree with that, Mr. President, but let's take this assumption that the world, the people of the world entrusted you to write the next peace and you had to meet around a conference table with representatives of other nations to discuss the treaties of peace? How would America be effective in establishing democratic governments if that is the clue to future peace? I do not know that I am making my question clear --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) We have a pretty good idea of what we would seek. That is something. In other words, we have a program

that is no secret. It is the elimination -- I have put it that way on several occasions -- it is the elimination of four fears. Well, let us take them: first, the fear they have in a great many countries that they cannot worship God in their own way. That is another way of saying, "freedom of religion." In autocracies they do not have freedom of religion. That would be a condition of the peace.

Secondly, the fear of not being able to speak out, the fear of repression of the press, of news services, and in autocracies you have not got freedom of expression. Therefore, freedom of expression is one of the cardinal principles for peace.

Then you come to two other fears: first, the fear of arms and the only way to eliminate the fear of arms is to stop arms. That is something to work for and the country is working for those things. Whether we will have any success, God knows, but at least we are working for them and have got a program.

And the final thing is the fear of not being able to have normal economic and social relations with other nations. In other words, what we are after is freedom of commerce and freedom of culture, because the two go hand in hand.

There are four things, four fears we are trying to remove, four objectives we are trying to attain. That is something to think over, something to work for.

Now, we may not have any influence at all when it comes to making a peace at the end of this war. On the other hand, when we have a nation of 140 million people, with a fairly well understood program, it may have some influence on other nations of the

world.

Q But in Germany, in a sense, after the World War, those four fears were eliminated. There was democracy in Germany, freedom of religion. Germany was given an opportunity by other nations. I will qualify that: Germany did have some opportunity to get loans anyway from other nations. And yet, Germany went autocratic, Germany went fascist because of the inability of the economic system to function within Germany. Doesn't it seem there should be a fifth item, that of giving people economic security in all countries?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that is the fourth point I am making. Freedom of interchange of goods, of articles of commerce, and human beings -- culture.

Q Do you think the men who built up Hitler, if they should be around a conference table with you, would be the kind of men that would give that kind of freedom to their own people?

THE PRESIDENT: Not under present conditions. No, not for a minute.

Q I live in Pennsylvania, in a county where I am afraid the Republicans are going to think I am in the fifth column. (Laughter) The question I ask is, What do you think of making a statement to the Nation to allay this fear: We are living in a world of fear and when a statement on fifth columns comes from the President, it frightens them a great deal and it seems to me all the papers took it up. For example, the Ledger in Philadelphia is running an expose' -- they are not exposing anything but they are creating fear in the minds of people. Could you make a statement to stop this fear, which is a wastage of the --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Of course I have said that, in effect,

on several occasions, it does depend on the individual case. If you are not guilty of anything, for God's sake, don't get scared. When people like the Ledger make all sorts of glittering statements, somebody should say publicly, "What are you talking about? Who are you talking about? Come down to brass tacks."

Q You spoke in your speech of the fifth column. That fanned the flame.

THE PRESIDENT: I spoke for a half hour and I had to cover fifty subjects in half an hour. I could not go into detail.

Q But it adds fuel to the fire -- the war hysteria.

THE PRESIDENT: You know, when I start one of those things I have, from different groups around the country, requests saying this, that or the other thing. This last Fireside Chat, if I had put in, talked about various requests made to me, I would have had to talk for three hours and a half.

Q If Hitler should win this war, there has been all kinds of talk about readjustments that this country would have to go through, the loss of foreign trade, and building up a tremendous armament machine. Now, has the Administration gone into that? Have you any ideas -- can you give us an idea of what sort of readjustment, reorientation, this country may have to go through if Hitler should win the war?

THE PRESIDENT: First of all, I have to ask you to consider yourself

Hitler. Suppose you were a victorious Hitler, what would you do?

I do not know him, never met him. I know all sorts of stories.

I have heard the story that he wanted to go back and paint pictures -- that that is his one desire, to go back and paint pictures. He may do it. I don't know. It is anybody's guess. Or he might do like other successful conquerors; he might say, "I have got a third of

the world and I have fixed up relations with another third of the world, the Far East. Why should I stop? How about this American third?" I am not saying that is a probability, because it would be silly. I am saying it is a possibility, which is correct, and therefore, if it is a possibility, which it is, we have got to say to ourselves, "We have got to prepare against it."

And then we go back to Hitler's mind and say, "How is he going to do it if he adopts that thesis?" And we are going to say, "Well, one obvious thing would be to go down to the Argentine, where we have a large German population that has never assimilated with the Argentine people." They are not like our Germans, they have remained by themselves. They have over a million Italians down there.

He (Hitler) would say to the Argentine Government, "Now I have a nice little trade bloc here. It is very nice. Do you want to join it?" (Argentine would say,) "No. What are the terms?" (Hitler would say,) "Well, you can't live in the Argentine unless you can export your beef and your corn and your wheat. You will all go broke. We will give you a quota and we will take so many tons of beef and take so many bushels of wheat and corn, and we will tell you where to send them. We will allocate them and you have got to sell them through the Germania Corporation at a charge of two per cent commission on it. And we will tell you where to send it. We don't like the way the Belgians are behaving; now, they can fend for themselves this year." So next year they don't like the Danes, so they will keep Argentine corn out of Denmark. It will be completely in the control of a little group.

"Well," says the Argentine, "how are you going to pay us?"

"Well, there is no such thing as gold in the world; we will pay you in steel rails." "Hell, we don't want steel rails." "Hell, you have got to take steel rails." "Well, there is no longer any independence when we do that." And then Germania, the Germania Corporation says to the Argentine, "Take it or leave it. By the way, we forgot, you cannot have planes or an army, except planes and an army and a navy that are run by German officers." Argentine says, "We cannot do that. We will lose our independence. We are Argentinians." The Germania Corporation will say, "Sorry, we can't take it. Sell your surplus products to the United States," knowing darned well that the United States has a surplus of beef and wheat and corn of its own.

Well, that is not infiltration; that is something very, very different. That is highjacking.

Q It seems to me we are all getting critical, talking about our American way of life, and we have had demonstrated clearly here tonight that democracy does not exist in the United States --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is some statement.

Q In fact, it does not -- the poll tax and such things as that -- we know in peacetimes and even in the best times it is not a fact. Well, it is going to be worse in the event of war. And the first thing is that there is much talk now -- the Dies Committee -- of un-American activities, Communists and fifth columns. Well, I would like to know who is going to define them, what they are and what is happening to them. I think the first indication of what is happening to the American people as a whole is this attack on Communists.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think the first definition to put in that class are those people who prefer to live under the Communist system of government instead of the American system.

Q Isn't that a democratic right?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes.

Q Then why do we permit laws to be passed which keep such people off the W.P.A. rolls?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a democratic and, incidentally, it is a constitutional thing, but you have not got a chance in these times and you never will have, in my judgment, of establishing the Communist form of Government.

Q That is not the question.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it is sort of silly to waste time on it.

Q Isn't it against the Constitution, its provisions?

THE PRESIDENT: You can amend the Constitution any time you want.

Q Has it been amended?

THE PRESIDENT: You have a swell chance of doing it on that law.

Q On the question of civil liberties, we see in the Senate an amendment introduced by Senator Reynolds whom, by his associations, it has been established, many people consider to be one who is not particularly a friend of the American Communists. This amendment pertains to barring aliens, Communists and Nazi Bund members, from industry engaged in interstate commerce.

We see a sequel to this in the House where there was, not reported by the Committee but from the floor of the House, without discussion, accepted by the Committee, an amendment introduced to the Relief Act of the same kind. And I wish to speak particularly

about this as it would apply to people who are unemployed and who desire to remain members of an organization, such as the organization I am a member of. But first, let me say that both of these amendments will have a tendency to work a great hardship on people who may choose, at the present time, to disagree with the boss, whether on W.P.A. or on any other jobs. I think there is a great danger they may be immediately branded as subversive or fifth column elements because they disagree with the boss, and thus railroaded out of their jobs.

Now, let us deal with the Relief Act. It already has one clause which prohibits employment to anyone who advocates the overthrow of our Government. Secondly, there is a clause which, by the way, all members of the Workers' Alliance have taken, and in the Act it applies to supervisory and administrative personnel who are to say that "We hereby pledge to defend our Constitution and our country against all enemies, foreign or domestic."

It is our feeling -- I should say it is my feeling -- I speak as an individual here tonight -- that this kind of amendment in the Act should not be permitted to go through but, rather, this clause, pledge, or if it is already in the Act, should be substituted therefor and made mandatory for project workers, and it should say that any worker who takes this oath to defend our country against all enemies, foreign and domestic, including aliens, if you please, should have the right to work, because the right to life and the pursuit of happiness includes the right to work.

We feel that this clause is directly contrary to law, which provides for \$2,000. fine or two years in prison or both as a

penalty for anyone who discriminates or disturbs anyone because of race, religion or politics, also another section which prohibits discrimination against anyone because of his support of any political campaign or the support of any political party.

And lastly, we feel that these amendments are all unconstitutional. I had a discussion a couple of days ago with Senator Thomas, Chairman of the Committee on Education, who concurred in that view.

In view of this and the danger of this, and the fact that this seems to have been thrust in here because of the war situation, we feel that that should not be permitted to get past your desk.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the Senator Reynolds' amendment is utterly stupid and the other amendment is wholly unnecessary, and I am doing my best to get them out in conference.

Q Mr. President, --

Q (interposing) Mr. President, --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Who has not spoken? (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, I have come here tonight in order to ask one very simple and one very basic question and yet it touches rather deeply everything that was said here tonight. I want to go back a little bit, keeping in mind your warning, to the time you came into the Presidency, and it occurs to me as we are sitting here tonight that for a long time there we looked to President Roosevelt as a leader who, in the case of civil liberties, in the case of the rights of aliens, in the case of the right to work, in the case of expansion of opportunities for young people for jobs, for train-

ing and education, in the case of the housing program, in the case of the health program, was a fighter, was a man who did not offer to us the excuse that such a thing could not be got by the House, that there were forces in the Senate who would not listen to this or that proposal, but a man who carried the fight to the people and from the people he got the support which pushed these bills through the House and pushed them through the Senate.

Now, what has alarmed us and the reason we gather here tonight is that something has happened, something serious has happened, that this war has caused the President, has caused the members of his Cabinet to somehow forget this very important, this first line of defense, of social security, the peace and happiness of our people, and has definitely, and I think we may say very positively placed in a secondary position these things that we require, food and housing and clothing, and has placed in front of those things the needs for national defense, which we all grant -- we are all in unity, we grant these things, but we demand -- yes, I say we insist -- that first, the lines of defense, must come our homes, must come our training, must come our education. And we are becoming very highly suspicious that billions of dollars are forthcoming for rearmaments, guns, battleships, and yet millions of dollars are not forthcoming for a job-training program, are not forthcoming for a program of relief, are not forthcoming for a health program and a housing program.

And also we are very -- shall I say, are sick? -- yes, but at the same time we are a little bit angry that the President and the members of his Cabinet have not carried this fight once again

to the people. It is all right to say that the Congress is opposed but if the Senators and Representatives are opposed to the expansion of a public works program, et cetera, if the fight is carried to the people, they will force them to act. But they need your leadership, they need it badly because the people of America have been stampeded, stampeded by a war hysteria and, in some way, it appears the responsibility for that hysteria must be put here tonight.

When we in St. Louis heard one day the military experts of the Military Affairs Committee express the thought that it was militarily impossible for the United States to be invaded by air, and then went on to state these various reasons why heavy bombers cannot fly here or there --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Whoever told you that?

Q I believe you will find those statements made in the Naval Affairs Committee. I mean statements showing just how far the bombers will --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. I guess the old preacher down in Shiloh Valley gave you that.

Q All right, the preacher down in Shiloh Valley gave --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Young man, I think you are very sincere. Have you read Carl Sandburg's "Lincoln"?

Q No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the impression was that Lincoln was a pretty sad man because he could not do all he wanted to do at one time, and I think you will find examples where Lincoln had to compromise to gain a little something. He had to compromise to make a few

gains. Lincoln was one of those unfortunate people called a "politician" but he was a politician who was practical enough to get a great many things for this country. He was a sad man because he couldn't get it all at once. And nobody can. Maybe you would make a much better President than I have. Maybe you will, some day. If you ever sit here, you will learn that you cannot, just by shouting from the housetops, get what you want all the time.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Isn't it true? I would like to elaborate on that a little because I think there is one thing they do not quite get, namely, they think of carrying a fight to the people as carrying it to people who will think as they do, whereas you think a bit in the terms of what you get as the opinion of the people through what Congress reports on as their backing at home and, therefore, you are bound to take that because the people have elected Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and so often the individual Congressman or the Senator is way behind the people and the people have got the responsibility of bringing him up to date. I don't have to name any names. You know a lot of them. They are Congressmen and Senators who are way behind the people from their own districts.

Merely shouting from the housetops -- you cannot do it that way.

Q I am sorry I gave any impression such as that. But what I did say and what I maintain is that here tonight and for the past several months we have consistently allowed, contrary to the opinion of the majority of the people of this country, allowed the problem of national defense, the need for military armaments in terms of steel and guns --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Do you know an interesting fact? It costs Government money and Government expenditures to give work to -- a large proportion of it gives work. In the first place, every thousand dollars we spend, we have to employ more people right in the Government to run, to supervise the expenditures. The fact is that this fiscal year of 1941, instead of all these curtailments, you are talking about, the Government is spending more money than it did last year or the year before, not counting the armaments program. That is a very interesting thing. I will give you an illustration:

We are spending quite a lot of money on the housing program, which will continue to be spent through next year, of last year's appropriation and this year's appropriation. I do not know whether I am going to get it (this year's appropriation) through or not. I have written letter after letter. I must have seen -- I must have had twenty visits, where I have brought Congressmen down, trying to get them to give me more money for the housing program. When I started off I asked, as you know, for a \$600,000,000. increase in the housing program expenditures. Up to two weeks ago I did not expect to get one dollar. I have had conference after conference; I have written letter after letter and I hope now, but I am not sure, that I will get \$300,000,000. Well, I suppose I spent a good part of twenty or thirty days talking to these people, "For God's sake give me all you can. If you can't give me \$600,000,000., give me all you can." They started out with \$150,000,000. I said, "No." I said, "That is ridiculous." I did the best trading I could. I said, "Give me \$500,000,000."

They came up to \$200,000,000. and I think now maybe I have got them up to \$300,000,000. I don't know. I have done everything I humanly could. There is a practical illustration.

Q Mr. President, will the Administration protect the right of labor to organize and, if necessary, to strike in those industries which are vital to our national defense?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends entirely on the circumstances, and I will give you a darned good illustration: Up at Kearny the other day -- in New Jersey -- the contract had run out and they had negotiated another contract and the representative of the men had signed it. It was subject to ratification and they did a stupid thing. They called a ratification meeting for the evening of May thirtieth, and there was a group in that Kearny plant -- we all know about it; I mean it is not subject to question at all -- and that group went out in a perfectly deliberate effort to have a strike called. May thirtieth was a holiday and a good many of these people had had a great deal of beer to drink. We all know -- the C.I.O. told me. They were horribly upset that the day laborers had not got the same increase that the skilled or semi-skilled trades had got, and they went in lit to this meeting -- the most of them were just right on the crest of the wave -- and they howled ratification down.

Well, the thing was all straightened out a couple of days later and now it is all right. But, suppose it had not been? What did I have? I had a group of cruisers, destroyers and other Navy ships in there. Those ships have got to be built, strike or no strike. Now, that is the power of Government that has to be used.

Q Is the power of Government going to be used to compel employers to bargain in good faith with unions?

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely. Now, this union had gone through the complete bargaining. The C.I.O. was completely satisfied. The employers were satisfied. But there were a lot of people that said, "We won't work; we won't back our leaders." Under those circumstances, if they had not gone back after their collective bargaining had come to a successful conclusion, well --

Q (interposing) Will employers, such as Bethlehem Steel, be required to bargain with their employees?

THE PRESIDENT: You bring any case that violates the law about collective bargaining right to me.

Q I think that question is going to be called to your attention by the C.I.O. because they are faced with that proposition. I know something about the Kearny plant and that dispute, and we had a similar case in an industry I represent in the Westinghouse plant in East Pittsburgh. There was a general agreement in the industry not to pay common labor above a certain amount and we found that the company was willing to give \$300,000. increases to skilled labor rather than \$60,000. to common labor because the \$60,000. would apply to common labor and they had agreements with other corporations and that same agreement affected the Kearny plant. That is one reason why we had the difficulty in that area. I think we will have the same difficulty in other types of armament industry. The radio machine industry, composing a large part of the machine industry, is faced with that problem. We took steps several months ago to protect that situation and we had great

difficulty, some calling us dictators and others called us irresponsible. Of course that is part of our problem.

The question I would like to put is one I face as chairman of the C.I.O. Committee. We asked the Government to call a conference of the economic forces -- employers, labor, agricultural groups and others, and have the conferences called by the Government and have subcommittees established, subcommittees established which would deal with the major questions, which would represent these factors, and they would take up the principal question of attaining full employment. The C.I.O. believes in proper defense but I believe it is their opinion that proper defense, the best defense today, is full employment where everyone would have a stake in our democratic institution.

I cannot see why the Administration has not called such a conference to work out the reasons why we do not have full employment in this country.

THE PRESIDENT: Because there are two simple things: In the first place, that conference has been going on every day for seven years -- that same thing. In the second place, if you had them in here, you would have a beautiful lot of words and, so far as I can tell you, you would have no permanent solution. You can make a little gain here and there but you cannot get, from a conference of that kind, a permanent plan that you can get anybody to agree to. It just won't work. Practical people will tell you that it is beautiful window dressing but it is mostly window dressing. We are engaged in that every day that goes by.

Q I am afraid that we are not engaged in it in the sense -- at least

the proposal -- as it was intended and that was that the leaders of industry, labor, finance, and the leaders of what groups we have organized under the agricultural workers, that they should be called into conference and the problem placed before them and then broken down into subcommittees. One committee would have before it the question of foreign trade, another compensation, another labor legislation, and we would see whether or not some -- of the fears that we have and employers have about certain legislation -- this is real, the fears are real. I have participated in a lot of conferences with employers and I find we are in almost complete agreement on a great number of questions. You have a great number of leaders in the electrical industry and we have a lot of discussions and I doubt if we can find a point of difference on many questions. I think if that matter was placed before the country in that way, with the leaders participating, I think we can have greater national unity than otherwise. I do not think it can be done by sacrificing the confidence of the masses of the people by saving the confidence of a few.

Q Coming back to the question you cited before about apples and pears, that you could not add them together, it seems to me it is a question not so much of apples and pears but of asking a person whether he prefers to starve or freeze to death. I think it is essential we neither starve nor freeze. If it is a question of concentrating on national defense, if national defense is the one and only thing to absorb our attention, we are, perhaps, not going to starve but freeze to death because national defense is being used --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You are dead right.

Q -- not only for the reactionary influence in Congress, but in private philanthropy and social service and all over there is a dominant retrenchment going on which is curtailing services and curtailing labor and employment. You cannot go to young people and say to them, "Well, we have to concentrate on national defense and therefore we cannot do anything about these other things. Perhaps in five years or ten years you will get a job, or perhaps you will have an opportunity to go to school or develop yourself." Before those five or ten years go by, those people will freeze to death.

What are we going to do to answer them? We do not want to say, "No guns, give us schools!" We say, "Give us guns and airplane production but we have to have the others too."

THE PRESIDENT: You want the apples and pears both?

Q That is right.

THE PRESIDENT: That is right; I agree with you.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: What they ask is, "What can they do?"

THE PRESIDENT: The only thing to do is to keep on demanding the apples and the pears.

Q Young people whose voices are not very effective in a lot of places--- we are told that the pears are important and that we cannot have the apples.

THE PRESIDENT: They are both equally important and you can say I said so. Here is one trouble in this particular period we are going through. You have got to realize it existed long before there was any question about defense or war. It is a curious thing that a great many social organizations, and I think it is true of charitable organizations, that they found a certain lack of response in raising

money to carry on their work because a lot of people, who have money or some money to give, sort of got the idea that this radical Government down in Washington was going to do it all and that they would not have to do it. Have you run up against that? I think that really is the fact. Now, that has nothing to do with defense. It was the idea that the Government had taken over a lot of functions that had been previously handled through private charity and people used it as a defense, if not an excuse, not to support the charitable institutions of their own community. And it has been harder, since the Government stepped in to do these things in the last seven years, it has been harder for the private organizations to carry on.

Q I want to ask you a question: There was a law passed in 1916 that stated that in the event a state of war existed or a state of imminence of war, a National Defense Council would be set up. I would like to know what is the imminence of war that exists today that necessitated the setting up of the National Defense Council of the United States today?

THE PRESIDENT: Because you cannot tell what some people are going to do next. That is it and that is all.

Q The question of apples and pears brings something to my mind and it is this: Somebody formulated the same thing in a different way by saying that Congress had the choice of deciding whether or not they should feed and clothe the American people or defend them, and they decided to defend them.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think that is a fair statement at all because you are implying they abandoned everything that has been done.

Q Not that Congress has abandoned but there are indications which point to the fact that things are being abandoned, the social security, the appropriations to W.P.A. --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) The W.P.A. is going to be as much as it was last year and, I hope, more. It is not going to be lessened from the present fiscal year. The social security program has not been weakened -- it is going ahead.

Q The health Act has been abandoned.

THE PRESIDENT: But the present program has not been weakened at all. Now, we have got to expand social security. There are only 38 million people who come under the old-age at the present time and they are nearly all old workers. Now, we have 90 million more people who do not come under the old-age pension. We have got to find means to reach them. We have not slid back from the gains we have made.

Q We are certainly not going forward as fast as we should.

THE PRESIDENT: I agree with it. But that is a different thing. I am perfectly willing to say that we are going forward this year or last year, even if it is not as fast as we ought.

Q The N.L.R.B. (National Labor Relations Board) has slipped back in the sense that the appropriation has so curtailed their staff that they have been --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) We will have to get a deficiency appropriation on it. There is more than one way of skinning a cat.

Q After the experiences of the last war, in the last development of the armaments program in this country, many people were gladdened by your statement that there would be no millionaires in the

present armament program. We wonder if you could give us any intimation of what has been done to implement that statement?

THE PRESIDENT: I have recommended to the Committees that if they can put on this present tax bill an excess profits tax, it ought to be done now. I hope too, if it can be done at this session, that the provisions of the income tax laws will be further tightened so as to prevent a new crop of millionaires.

Q Could millionaires come into being within the existing tax law?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Could millionaires be made within the existing tax law?

THE PRESIDENT: Not if they put an excess profits tax on. Pretty hard -- pretty hard.

Q Am I correct in stating that the Treasury has recommended a tax program that will increase most of the indirect taxes a flat 10 per cent?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not at all.

Q Where did that statement come from? I mean because --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I do not know.

Q I mean because the general opinion is that the general program is an increase in liquor taxes and cigarette taxes and 10 per cent of income taxes.

THE PRESIDENT: No, that happens to be the Senate Finance Committee that is recommending that.

Q Is the Administration going to recommend a tax program?

THE PRESIDENT: You know the way that thing works out. We tried two or three years ago to get a four-way tax bill and we got absolutely nowhere. The Committees come back to the Treasury and say, "We

are interested in jacking up the cigarette tax or the liquor tax. What will it bring in?" Of course we have to give the figures. We have recommended none of those things.

Q In 1933 there was an emergency in the banking system and the Administration used that to institute all kinds of national reforms in the banking system. It would appear there is that opportunity now, as far as the fiscal system is concerned.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought so until ten days ago but I do not think so now.

Q You do not think that will pass?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think you are going to have a tax bill that will not be a particularly good bill. But it is the best I can get.

I have got to run along; the Secretary of State is waiting to telephone me. I don't know about what.

Q Recently the so-called imaginary line of the Budget debt limit of 45 billion dollars was passed, overcome, and I think the record of public spending indicates that as soon as public spending is decreased there is, naturally, a lowering of the standard of living here. I wonder if you foresee a time when there will be a possibility of stopping public spending, or do you think it is not necessary to stop it, or if it is forced to stop, what alternative there is?

THE PRESIDENT: You will find the answer if you will read several Messages of mine. It is figured out. Mind you, anybody's figure is just as good as anybody else's as long as it is sincerely and honestly done. The people connected with the Administration, have held for three or four years that if the national income as a whole can be brought up to between 80 and 90 billion dollars, from between

60 and 70 billion dollars, where it is now, in other words, raised that amount, that it will give substantially a great deal more employment at that national income and that, by the same token, the Government expenditures entering into this total picture of 80 or 90 billions will be balanced because of an 80 or 90-billion dollar national income per year. The taxes that come into the Treasury of course will be very greatly increased. So, therefore, we get a balanced Budget. Now, that is the theory and it is about all one can say. It is about the simplest theory I know of, but it has not been accepted by a large number of people in the Congress and, until it is accepted, we are going to continue to spend and will have to spend more money out of the national Treasury.

Q The question that worries me is the following: In Washington we have been working very closely with young people, the 16-year old group, making a survey and endeavoring to spot youngsters. We find that when you reach the age of 16 in Washington you are automatically thrown off the relief rolls because you are considered physically able to take care of yourself and, if you are 16, you are not eligible for relief. There is the C.C.C. and the N.Y.A. but there are many more applicants for them than there are positions and, consequently, we have a lot of young people for whom there is absolutely nothing. And the question that it seems to me should be raised is that if the Government of the United States can find ways and means to raise money for defense, to spend money for armaments, but can't find ways and means to give opportunities to young people, what is there for me in the democratic way of life? I think that is one of the most dangerous things that face

us today. I think it would be tremendously easy to build a youth movement with these people on the basis of no opportunities for these people and, very frankly, I could not answer a young person who asked me that question because I do not think there is any answer because, in Washington, we have a very serious situation in that, politically, we have no rights. There isn't a thing we can do.

THE PRESIDENT: I am glad you brought up that example. That is a thing that ought to be stopped -- these age groups of 16 to 18. Something ought to be done about it. It is the first time I have heard of it. Harry (Mr. Hopkins) will make a note of it and that is all I can tell you at this time. We will find out about it.

Harry, do you want to come over here? Because I have got to telephone to the Secretary of State. I am awfully sorry. Harry will answer any more questions you have in mind.

It has been a really grand evening and I am glad to meet all of you. I have had a grand time and I hope I have done something to clarify questions in your mind and to point out why we have to keep our feet on the ground and do the best we can if we believe in our system of Government, and I believe everybody in this room does.

Good night. (Applause)

* * * * *

Q Are you ready to answer questions?

MR. HOPKINS: First, we are going to have some beer. (Laughter)

I think any questions you ask me would be a terrible anti-

climax to what you have been going through the last couple of hours.

Q I would like to ask a question about the N.Y.A. and the kind of project it is going to expand into?

MR. HOPKINS: Defense projects for this defense work -- military defense, naval defense -- so that if a boy is going to be called into the Army or Navy he could be moved into the Army and Navy quicker and into industry quicker in the event of war. That is what it is going to be.

Q In this auxiliary defense program, how many people of the estimated 4 to 5 million young people now out of work will this take up?

MR. HOPKINS: I think probably another million. Are you going to ask me now if I think that is adequate? I can give you the answer -- the answer is, "No."

Q Is there going to be a continued fight, then, for an expansion of N.Y.A., such as through the American Youth --

MR. HOPKINS: I do not think you can put it by the N.Y.A. specifically. I do not think that is -- the answer might be "No" if you talked about N.Y.A. particularly. If you talk about the question of opportunities for young people, for the unemployed, I think the answer might be something else. I think the agency is unimportant. The problem is important.

Q I just want to say that our problem has been, for a decade, of dealing with young people and of trying to give them some help about this problem of unemployment and any information you can give us --

MR. HOPKINS: (interposing) You know what is being done just as well as I do.

Q You suggested there were some other things being done?

MR. HOPKINS: There are some things planned to be done and there are things that are going to be before Congress in the immediate future. But you know what is being done probably a good deal better than I do.

Q I would like to pursue the question I raised before: There has been a great deal of argument about not being able to find people for skilled trades in terms of our President's program and I think if one takes a trip, as many of us take, between here and New York City, on the railroad, one finds a thousand or more plants where those in skilled trades, 3 million or more, earn their living. I think the C.I.O. and the A.F. of L. ought to be cognizant of this too, that there are a great many people who would like to be skilled individuals. There are a great many individuals who are not Grover Bergdolls and not unwilling to do their bit, as the President spoke of, and yet there is an attempt, for example, on the part of the Navy Department to keep out those individuals despite their need. It is not a question of giving those individuals a chance -- it appears that the Negroes have to fight to get into the Navy in order to die for their country and so forth.

Now, my question is this: What can the Administration do to assure the opportunity of fulfilling the obligations that the individual has to his country and to his people? And second, Can the Administration or will the Administration desire to do it, to say that the Negro is acceptable in all these activities? The best example is here in the City of Washington where \$2,000,000,000. is appropriated for an armory which the Negro will not be permitted

to use, or it is not to be opened to Negroes, according to General Cox.

We ought to get beyond the stage of platitudinous terms and say something concrete and definite about the Negro.

MR. HOPKINS: You are making a speech and now you want me to make one. Well, I have had this discussion many times in the last ten years, men and women of your race who have made exactly the same statement with just a little shading in the words. And I think you have made this statement many, many times because it sounds like it.

I do not want to, by any implication, seem unsympathetic with what you have said. In the first place, nobody knows better than you what this Administration has done for Negroes in the last seven years -- nobody. I am not going to recite those things because I know you know them just as well as I do.

Now, what you get down to is this: that you have not got everything you want and ought to have and deserve and which, in a democracy, you think you are entitled to. I know that. You are not telling me anything new. I know there are Jim Crow cars in America; I know you have difficulty in becoming Army officers or privates; I know you have problems in housing; I can repeat, just as well as you can, the whole list from beginning to end. And simply because this Administration has not been able to expedite all the things for Negroes that ought to be done in America and will be done some day, does not mean for a moment that this Administration does not understand them, is not sympathetic with them.

And you know perfectly well, too, why some of these things cannot be done. One does not need to be naive about these things. You know perfectly well some of the problems here. If you and I were talking together, alone, you would bring them out just as well as I do because you know them just as well as I do. I know there are certain great injustices with respect to Negroes. Anyone who knows anything about the problem knows it.

Some of us happen to be in administrative offices for a time -- in power -- and then you fellows say, "If we believe in these things, why don't we get them?" Well, in a democracy it does not work that way. You do not get everything like that. And if you could just project that negro problem - - - and, of course, the real one is unemployment. Everything we talk about, I don't care what it is, gets back to that. I feel very strongly that the whole difficulty with this democracy is that everybody should be working instead of talking about a million youths and 500,000 Negroes. Of course the whole population should be put to work. Hitler puts them to work; the whole kit and caboodle of them are working for him and everyone in Germany is at work and I could say that it provides great unity and great strength and there is nothing I would like to do better. You ask us why we don't do it. Did you ever bump up against this Democratic Congress in a realistic way in Congress? We never have had enough money for relief, yet this Administration has spent more money for relief and will spend more money this year than all the administrations before in the history of the United States -- just in one year. I know there has never been enough money for relief, there has never been enough

money for the Youth Administration, there has never been enough money for anyone, housing or anything else, but I know this Nation never had any relief, I know the Government of the United States never put a soul on the payroll in the whole 150 years of its history prior to this period. I know no young person was ever put to work before this Administration came in here, and we have got 6 or 7 hundred thousand of them today that are getting benefits every month.

Now, I am quite frank to say that I get irritated about this sometimes because I get the assumption from you people that you are the only people that think anything about trade unions and C.I.O. and industrial unions. Who put the Wages and Hours Act on the statute books? Who did that? Who really went to town and bat for labor? It is this Administration went to bat for labor and I think this Administration is going to continue going to bat for labor.

Now, you know the headaches we have had. You know this political system. You might be a Democrat but that does not mean anything. It is how you feel and what you believe in.

Now, you can jump on this Administration and you can point to people who do not believe in organization of labor and you can point to people who do not believe in the Youth Administration. But my contention is that a good fight has been made.

Now, I agree with everything you say when you talk about this double-ended defense. It is perfectly absurd to have a powerful military defense and not have a strong civil defense. People ought to be working. People ought to live in decent houses.

Now, this Administration -- certainly the President -- certainly most of the people under him, especially those people under him who have these particular jobs in hand, are trying to handle this. If you fellows knew the number of headaches and heartaches that go on in this town, you would know about the difficulties of getting what you want to get. You know that this business is not very simple. It is awfully easy to sit and talk but it is not so easy if you have the responsibility yourself for these jobs.

Now, there may be some in this room who could have got more money for relief in the last seven years than I did. I have no doubt you could have. But remember one thing: We made every effort to get every nickel we thought we could and we did not take "No" easily. I never felt we got enough and I know perfectly well we have not got enough today.

(Several people in the audience endeavored to interject questions.)

Now, wait a minute. I promised to make this speech and this is the last speech you are going to get.

This Administration knows and believes that the defense of this country centers primarily in the well-being of its people. Now, if we do not get everything, you can bet your bottom dollar that we are just as unhappy about it as you are, just exactly as unhappy as anybody in this room, and just as understanding as you are of what goes on in the homes of the American people who have not got anything. Just as much as anybody in this room.

Now, in a month's time the whole temper of the American people, it seems to me, has changed. The American people now, I think,

have made up their minds that we are going to take care of ourselves in a tough military way. And I think it is important that every one of you -- it don't make me mad and I take everything you say at face value, that you believe in this defense program but you want to make darned sure that this third of the population does not get kicked around. I think we should take the two together. I think the other program should move fast just because we are in danger. The men out of work -- somebody asked about the fifth column -- the fellow out of work, broke, busted, who hasn't got anything, potentially, it seems to me, potentially he could be a fifth columnist.

Now, I am going to shut up right now.

Q I want to be excused, I have a reservation on the plane.

MR. HOPKINS: That is quite all right.

Q What is the Administration doing to get these measures forward? It was the people of the United States that put tremendous pressure on the Administration. It was the Administration that gave the leadership. It was the people of the United States that did this because the Administration was acting in defense of their needs. Now, today, that partnership no longer exists. We are standing still, as the President himself says. We believe that we do not defend democracy unless we keep moving forward.

I would like to ask you this brief question: Which way is America going if plans are already set up so that two million troops can be sent from the port of New York?

MR. HOPKINS: I do not understand your question.

Q The Port Authority of New York --

MR. HOPKINS: (interposing) You have got some information that I have not got.

Q It was in the newspapers about a month ago.

MR. HOPKINS: You have got some information that I haven't got.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: It was also in the newspapers that there was a full draft system and draft blanks printed and yet I cannot find that there is any such blank anywhere in the Government, nor any such plan. I have been unable to find anything of that kind anywhere.

Q May I ask a simple question? Dorothy Thompson advocated that we declare war today. What is your opinion?

MR. HOPKINS: I would not declare war.

Q Under what conditions would you declare war?

MR. HOPKINS: Oh, well, now --

MRS. ROOSEVELT: You cannot declare war very well. You have to wait until Congress declares it.

Q This is merely a point of information. It seems in the last war the Defense Council was headed by a group of prominent men and, as you all know, they were very busy. It is probably the lesser men who carried out the work. The gentlemen on the Commission supervised it or, it would seem from the experience then, they did not supervise it at all. What are you doing now to prevent the mistakes that were made then?

MR. HOPKINS: Well, they certainly have combed over all the mistakes they made last time in the hope they won't be made again. I have no doubt some mistakes will be made but I think every effort is going to be made to avoid that.

Q I was very much interested in your speech because I felt there was

in it a certain implied criticism -- perhaps not implied -- of the groups who push out beyond the point where the Administration is. Now, part of my work with the Y.W.C.A. is on the economic section of our problem and I find a very strong feeling in some quarters that the President and the whole Administration is up against a very critical and tough situation; therefore, any effort to say what we have said this evening in terms of the emphasis upon the work that must be done is blocking and is adding to the problem which the Administration is facing.

MR. HOPKINS: I can only say that I do not think that at all. I think some of the most useful things that have been done around this town in the last two weeks have been by people, principally individuals, who push awfully hard on some proposal to move the thing substantially ahead. I think, if I may be completely frank with you, I think if I showed any feeling of being disturbed about it, it is because of the impression I got that you implied that we do not see the needs of this Nation as well as you do.

Q My question is, What is the best way to push, in the given political realities, to push for the kind of things you want?

MR. HOPKINS: If you knew the answer to that you would know the answer to democracy almost, if you knew how to get home with all the things you want done. I do not know the answer. I can advise you on some things but I would rather not do it right now.

Q Certainly one way would be to push a little further than the progressive people in the party in order to counteract the effect of the group that are wanting to draw back.

MR. HOPKINS: I certainly see no difficulty about that. Quite the con-

trary.

Q I have two questions on health.

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, I have been sick. (Laughter)

Q There is a lot of feeling circulating in medical groups that the great strides that were begun with the Educational Committee on Health have been halted. A great deal was done to start to life one of the great social needs of our country, an adequate health program. I think it ranks before the others. Since the war hysteria has begun and in the very recent past, the Wagner Health Act has been forgotten, the civilian program has been curtailed, money for it has been withdrawn. In fact, one of the people in the Commonwealth Fund, which has a great deal to do with the program, has stated that funds are being withdrawn so rapidly that all of the advances gained are sliding back.

MR. HOPKINS: I will give you my frank opinion about that one. I do not think it had any public opinion behind it. I don't think it had a real wallop or punch on the Hill. Never anything like that heard about unemployment insurance or old-age pensions. I think some men, some of them a group of House members and others who were genuinely interested, got a resolution passed by a lot of organizations. That helped and we got newspaper publicity, but I do not think that thing had the kind of wallop that could put it through Congress, and there is no bill that I would rather -- that is not true, there are other bills -- but I would like to see that go through. I have talked to some people; they sit around and pass resolutions about the Health Bill and it seems to me to be a perfect waste of time. There are about fifteen people in

Congress, and that is all, who have been approached to pass that Health Bill. It is my private opinion that that thing never had a real public wallop behind it.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Harry (Mr. Hopkins), I would like to say one thing which I sense from this meeting tonight is not really in the minds of most of the people here, and that is that anything that you want to get done in a democracy has got to be wanted by the majority of the people and, if you believe in democracy, you have got to work for that majority and you have got to be willing to wait for it. You see? Now, I sense that you feel very much the way I have often felt in my life. "My gosh, I am tired of waiting!" And yet, if you believe in democracy, you have to wait and you have to work for that majority, and it goes just as much for the Health Bill. I think it is one of the most important things we have but you won't get it until you get from your people back home, back of that Congressman, a demand for the Health Bill.

Now, until you can get that, until you can do that -- I have done organization work practically all my life and I know that until you organize a thing down to the precincts and get a real demand from there up, there is not that majority demand for the thing and you cannot get it.

Q It just seems to me that some of the people -- perhaps you are right about not having a wallop. On the other hand, I do not believe that American people themselves do not believe about health. That is one of the inadequacies. That it is not organized in small groups, is true. But it is because people, mostly closely associated with the medical societies, have been people that have

strangled the growth.

It is one of the principles and policies of the Administration to promote the health of the people and in a situation of this sort I think they can well find a widespread appeal amongst the people because I think we all feel strongly about this. But they are blocked in many ways from expressing it and any leadership would effect a tremendous following because there are very few people, because the majority of people in the country do not get medical care and there would be very few people against it.

The other point I wanted to bring up was the request that many people have been making, namely, that war hysteria is sweeping our country and there is a fear that many things we know and love in democracy will go with it, that under the influence of war hysteria many of the things that happened in the last war will recur. There isn't anybody who would not lay down their lives for their country. But everyone is worried that the machinery and everything else may be twisted by the people who got us into the last war. It is reassurance that the American people need, the reassurance that we will never leave our shores.

Q There have been several statements made tonight to which I should like to make a contradictory statement. The statement was made by several people that the partnership between the Administration and the people is gone, particularly on the defense program. I want to say I think that partnership is not gone, and I want to say that I think that large masses of young people are with the Administration on the defense program and will continue to fight for the other defense program.

MR. HOPKINS: I want to say this: I know if any one of us were talking individually with you people -- because I know many of you -- you know perfectly well and I know you would say, "You have done a lot of good things but you have not done enough." Tonight you have not had time to tell us about the good things we have done and therefore you tell us only about the things we have not done. I do not want to appear irritated because I know that you know that as well as I do.

Q Mr. Secretary --

MR. HOPKINS: (interposing) This business of being called "Mr. Secretary" --

Q (interposing) Is that the right term?

MR. HOPKINS: That is the right term. You are supposed to call me "Mr. Secretary." (Laughter)

Q I have been attending a meeting in the last few days, a meeting by Catholics, Protestants and Jews on unemployment and there has been a sifting out of various viewpoints, quite a wide variety. Certain things have become apparent. First of all was the unanimous agreement that defense is not the only element, that after the war we would have more serious repercussions than we have had at the beginning. It is ruled out. Consequently, national defense, as it has been remarked here tonight, is not the answer.

Then there is the question of where the money is coming from. As it is, it is certainly a stopgap. That does not solve the problem of unemployment fundamentally either.

The only way that seems open is to increase consumers' consumption -- let the consumers begin consuming -- and that can only

be done by increasing production, and the two work together hand in hand, and they can only be brought together either by lowering the cost of production or raising the consumer dollar. We have been talking about raising consumers' wages but not about raising the production. And one of the solutions brought out at this particular meeting that got more support than any other -- and I want to ask you if the Federal Government is doing any planning along that line at all -- is the term of "incentive taxation." Has any thought been given to incentive taxation?

MR. HOPKINS: Yes, there has.

Q Any hope yet?

MR. HOPKINS: Of course my personal belief is that you should not increase taxes when you have 10 million unemployed, that you do not take money away from the consumer at the time you want the consumer to be spending.

In the first place, the national income is going up this year, under any circumstances, and the taxes will go up close to a billion dollars, even if you do not do anything with taxes. I think the national income is going to continue to go up. At some point of the game we are going to tax it and you will know that it is taxed. A Cabinet Officer of the United States gets \$15,000 a year and last year I paid \$1400. and six in indirect taxes. That is \$2,000. Suppose I paid \$4,000.? That would be nothing. In other words, we are taking in 6 or 7 billion dollars and if the thing gets above that and you have got to have money to do this job, you can raise 15 billion dollars if you want to. Personally, I think it would be bad economics to raise the tax rate

and that is why I am glad Congress is not shooting at it in a big way. All the Budget balancers are out of town. There aren't any more.

Q Also exemption tax for married couples?

MR. HOPKINS: I personally don't think much of that either. I do not think this tax thing is very important.

Q I think a lot of people in this room tonight have underestimated the ability of the President of the United States. I myself have the greatest respect for his ability because no man in the country can swing public opinion as he has and as he will in the future. For that reason, insisting also on your frankness, I want to ask your opinion about this problem which bothers me:

We have this problem of the poll tax and we want the people in Dutchess County to know what is going on in the South. They do not understand there are millions of people in the South who do not vote. Well, it is my opinion that the President could convince the people in Dutchess County and make them come out against the poll tax. I think that same thing is true of the apples and pears problem. I think that there is an equation and that they are both fruit. We do not believe there has been enough done in the way of social legislation although I think the Administration has done a great deal. The question is not alone of holding and of not sliding back, but of how we are going to make progress in the future.

The President indicated that he felt this country was a one-horse show, that you could take only one problem at a time and could not work on both. I do not see it that way because we have

never had in this country as easy a way of getting social legislation. There is always money for national defense and I think the way we can create a demand for that (social legislation) is the way we created a certain demand for the present defense program. The President certainly laid that thing down; he explained the need, explained his proposals in concrete terms and lined up a tremendous amount of public opinion. The 85 per cent of the newspapers which opposed his election in 1936 joined with the remaining 15 per cent in complete support of that program and I think that was a magnificent piece of work that the President did in lining up the Nation's public opinion.

I think it would be a tremendous help, not only to one-third of the Nation but -- what I think is inevitable -- the majority of the population that wants the advance of social legislation, if they got the same kind of leadership, not only on the defense question but on social legislation. I think the President could be of tremendous help, of great help, in lining up the country. Of course it has been said that Congress won't stand for it, but I would like to ask your opinion on this:

MR. HOPKINS: (interjecting) I will give it to you.

Q I said that we could always, in this country, find the money for anything that looks like a battleship or a gun and only with difficulty find taxes for things that look like houses.

MR. HOPKINS: I have got an opinion about the general point you make and it seems to me that what goes on in your mind is this: Here are the problems about which you feel deeply. Let us say it is the poll tax or the Housing Bill or the Health Bill or the Vinson

Bill, which you think is pretty bad and on which I agree.

Now, what you say is that if you were sitting in the President's chair and with this situation now, the way it is right today in the world and the stuff on the pages of the newspapers, with the things which are going on and being discussed in every home in America and every time a few people get together -- if you were the President you would take up these various things. Each of you feels strongly -- you may say about the problem of unemployment and one of you feels very strongly about the poll tax and another may feel very strongly about labor legislation and you, each of you have your emphasis which you put on the social program and, in effect, what you say is that if you were here, if you were the President, you, today, would go out and project a great public campaign to get public support behind one or the other of the things you are talking about, or all of them.

Now, I think the real problem there is this: After all this man is President. He would agree with most of the things you people agree on. Not all of them. I am sure he would not have a meeting of minds with you about all things.

But, really, what, in the last analysis, you are doing with him is saying to him, "Now, I think you are making a great mistake. You do not sense what public opinion is. You could move this thing this way, if you wanted to." And, furthermore, it seems to me you go a little further and say he is making a serious mistake on broad defense fronts, including both the apples and the pears.

Now, after all, that gets down to a matter of opinion. It

is not a factual thing, it is an opinion thing. That is your opinion. Now, his opinion may be different as to where public opinion could be taken. After all, anybody who has watched him in the last seven years knows he is a pretty good judge of public opinion and where it is. Now, I think you got into a long and pretty needless discussion of your point.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: Harry (Mr. Hopkins), you could illustrate, give them the fact that a year and a half, two years ago, he said every single thing on defense that he said aloud today to individual members of Congress and gave the very same reasons.

It is not what he wants -- and the reason that he can get them today is that circumstances hit the people of the United States in the head. He saw all these things and I think you could pick out members of Congress -- am I telling the truth?

MR. HOPKINS: Right.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: -- to whom he said, "We should do thus and so now." And they said, "Oh, no; oh, no, you are dreaming, Mr. President. No, those things are not ever going to happen. No, Mr. President. Such a thing is ridiculous to contemplate."

Today, they are all running to him because the circumstances, the life of the world, have hit them in the face. And they are all saying, "Oh, Mr. President, yes, we are ready to do it." But they were not ready two years ago, when he could not get it done. You see the difference?

It is the same thing about the other thing. The day that the other thing hits the people of the United States hard enough, they will want it. That is the reason, in 1933, you got a lot of other

things done. That is the reason that, before that, you could not get it done. There were too many people who were comfortable and too few who were pushed. In 1933, too many people got uncomfortable and you could get a lot of things done.

I have heard it said again and again that we only progress by coming up against a bad time when somebody says -- like what has happened -- "We must do something about it right straight off." And I am afraid that, looking at people carefully, that is exactly what happens. We don't realize a thing until it gets so bad it hits us right in the face. That is the reason why we move so slowly.

MR. HOPKINS: Don't you people ever want to go home? Mrs. Roosevelt, do you want to say a word before you go?

MRS. ROOSEVELT: I just want to get a train and that is the reason I have to go.

Q I think we want to express our thanks to Mrs. Roosevelt for this opportunity.

MRS. ROOSEVELT: The President was very much interested by you or he never would have stayed so long. You made your own opportunity.
