

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #662,
In the President's Study at his Home
in Hyde Park, New York,
July 23, 1940, 11.05 A. M.

THE PRESIDENT: Charlie (Mr. Hurd), when did you get back? It is good to see you.

Q (Mr. Hurd) I just got back on the job, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: (addressing a local reporter) How is everything locally? You caught a murderer this morning.

Q Yes, or what it might develop into. We cannot tell very well.

THE PRESIDENT: Also I read in the paper about some awful trouble down in Wappingers?

Q I was going to ask you to comment on it.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about it except what I read.

Q Well, from time to time there have been minor disturbances -- I don't know whether you would call them disturbances. There was a religious society of Jehovah's Witnesses and then this Communist group did seek permits on different occasions. Of course, it is a village and they seem to exercise their own authority, more or less, in determining the ordinances and once in a while deny a permit. And, supposedly, this group did petition yourself in their behalf. I do not know just how official that was, but at least the Sheriff's office --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): How did the Federal Government come into it?

Q I don't know. It is just, I suppose, that this Communist group felt that they had certain civil rights and probably the fact that you happened to live in this County.

THE PRESIDENT: I guess that is it.

Q There isn't anything you would like to say about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I had not heard anything about it until I read it in the paper.

Q Would it be all right to mention that you were interested, or would you rather not?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I don't know whether the Federal Government has any jurisdiction. I suppose, whatever it was, it would be referred to the Attorney General, but I cannot comment on it because I do not know anything.

I think the only thing I have here is a request thing from Norman Davis. The Red Cross have had quite a number of letters from around the country saying that some form -- it is pretty vague -- some form of fifth column activities are trying to sabotage the raising of money by the Red Cross for supplying the people in Europe, and they are starting the rumor that the Red Cross war relief supplies are falling into German and Italian military hands, and Norman Davis is somewhat exercised because these reports of the stories come from various parts of the country, and he asked me to say, which I do with a great deal of pleasure, that those reports are utterly and completely unfounded and that all supplies that have gone over have been actually, physically, distributed to people in need. And it is expected that that will continue. Apparently somebody is starting one of those whispering campaigns. What is back of it I do not know, but it is a lot of smoke. I think that is about all I have.

The Ambassador (Ambassador Bullitt) and I have been doing a little chatting but there has been no conference. In other words, he is a house guest and occasionally he will mention something, or perhaps I will say, "By the way, you did not tell me about this or that," and

the very interesting story is gradually unfolding in a perfectly normal way. He talked to you yesterday morning. I do not think there is anything that can be added to that.

Q Is the Ambassador going to return to his post in France?

THE PRESIDENT: My Lord, he has only just turned around. I think he needs a few days' holiday.

Q Mr. President, have you given any consideration to the National Chairman to succeed Mr. Farley?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet, George (Mr. Durno).

Q When do you think you might get around to it, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q There was a story --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): I will probably see Jim in the course -- either in Washington the end of this week or the beginning of next week.

Q There is a story out of Chicago that he is going to tender his resignation as Postmaster General on Friday.

THE PRESIDENT: I guess that is just another story out of Chicago. (Laughter) Further comment is unnecessary.

Q Senator Reed has called a meeting of the Jeffersonian Democrats in Chicago. Have you any message to send?

THE PRESIDENT: Again? Well, he did it in 1932 and he did it in 1936 and I think he did it in 1928. He certainly is well qualified from experience. And, of course, on top of that -- I don't know what the date was but I think it was since 1936 -- as we all remember, that sweatshop matter came up.

Q That was under NRA, wasn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It may have been after 1932 and before 1936. I don't

remember the date.

Q Mr. President, still looking for a local story, there has been a suggestion as to the Dutchess County Fair, which I know is close to your heart, and I thought possibly you might use your own influence to maybe get some military unit there for one day, either going back and forth to maneuvers in New York, as a feature, you know.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I will look into it but it is a pretty difficult summer to do it because all the military units are working overtime on maneuvers this summer and I think -- I am not sure -- that those maneuvers in northern New York will still be on.

Q It is possible, because the Fair comes the last week in August, it is possible that some may be returning.

THE PRESIDENT: I will look into it. Kannee, make a note to look into it and see if there is any regiment on the way down on the Post Road at that time.

Q In that connection, they would welcome any suggestions of something new for the Fair, and I thought maybe you might have some suggestions?

THE PRESIDENT: You caught me off balance. I might, if I thought it over.

Q Do you expect to be there?

THE PRESIDENT: Who is running it?

Q Ben (Benson) Frost, as secretary. He is asking a Poughkeepsie committee to cooperate, to pep it up from that angle.

THE PRESIDENT: I will probably see Ben in the course of the next week or two and talk things over.

Q Mr. President, do you consider that the word "bolt" accurately describes Burke's action in going over to Willkie?

THE PRESIDENT: No. As I understand it, the Democratic Party bolted from him recently. (Laughter)

Q Would the word "bolt" accurately describe it? (Laughter)

Q How do you regard these Jeffersonian Democrats leaving the ticket?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, take another couple -- you take good old Lew Douglas and Johnny Hanes. Lew Douglas did not vote for the Democratic ticket in 1936 and I doubt very much if Johnny Hanes did. They were both in the Government and they are thoroughly honorable and amiable young gentlemen, and I think the Government found that their slant of mind ran more to dollars than to humanity.

Q Have you made any definite engagement yet to see Wallace (Secretary of Agriculture) on your return?

THE PRESIDENT: I think he will be back on Thursday.

Q You will see him at that time?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, have you any word from Secretary Hull as to the progress of the Conference at Havana?

THE PRESIDENT: Not directly, only through Sumner Welles. He talked to Sumner and said things are going very well. Sumner telephoned that up to me but I did not talk to the Secretary (Hull) himself personally. In fact, I was out at the time -- I was down at Newburgh at the time he called up.

Q There is an unconfirmed report around New York that some shift in the Labor Board is possible, with Governor Winant mentioned as a possibility?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard a word about it.

Q Winant is back in this country.

THE PRESIDENT: Is he back?

AMBASSADOR BULLITT: He came back with me.

Q Is Mr. Wallace going to continue as Secretary of Agriculture?

THE PRESIDENT: I assume so. Off the record -- this is off the record --

I was terribly amused; three papers that I have seen tried to differentiate between Hoover remaining as Secretary of Commerce when he was nominee for the Presidency and Wallace continuing as Secretary of Agriculture, and they made a wonderful differentiation -- the amount of money the two departments spent. In other words, it was all right if you spent only 40 or 50 million dollars but it was not all right to continue if you spent 300 million dollars. I think it was a perfect scream. (Laughter)

Q Can we use that for background without attribution or mentioning you?

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right, if you will mention the three papers.

Q There have been stories originating in New York about some destroyers being converted into possible troop transports for marines, and around the breakfast table this morning we were rather curious as to where they would find space to take any appreciable body of troops?

THE PRESIDENT: They would not take any appreciable body of troops -- a very small number. Really, that is an experimental thing and we are using a number of these old destroyers for certain experiments, and I think there were two of them that were being fitted out to carry a very small number of marines. I think it is --

(At this point Franklin Roosevelt, Jr. came in to speak in a whisper to the President.)

-- it is just an experimental thing and I do not remember -- I would be afraid to mention any number, but it is, of course, a very small number of men.

Q Could you say in what type of operations these destroyers would be utilized?

THE PRESIDENT: To get there "fustest" with the "mostest" men. Of course, those old destroyers are still capable of doing, oh, I suppose 32 or 33 knots. If you want the number, I suppose the easiest way to say is "less than a company."

Q This request that you sent up for the Export-Import Bank yesterday, Mr. President, do you view that as strictly supplemental to the cartel program which was being developed prior to the submission?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it is supplemental to it.

Q It will all dovetail in together?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q It won't interfere --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): Of course, as a matter of fact, the cartel thing depends entirely on the definition of the word. Some people define it one way and some another. The only way you can define it is that it is to improve the markets for certain Pan-American surpluses for the benefit of the Continent as a whole and the hurting of no one individual republic. That is the easiest way to define it.

Q Mr. President, with respect to the flax crop of South America, it is my understanding that North America has raised sufficient flax this year on the crop forecast to take care of all their needs. Is there any plan to buy the surplus purely on the basis of storing it away to maintain the economic level?

THE PRESIDENT: That is in the mere discussion stage. We have not got beyond that. No details of how and where.

Q There were reports floating around town yesterday that you had interceded with Great Britain and urged them to turn down Hitler's latest peace proposal?

THE PRESIDENT: I am afraid those are just wild reports -- very wild.

Q Any comment to make on the report that there is going to be a pretty definite case of mass starvation next fall in Europe? There is a report that France lost 50 per cent of their crops because of no planting and, generally speaking, throughout all Europe there is to be a frightful shortage of food.

THE PRESIDENT: There seems to be a definite thought to that effect but I cannot give any figures because, for one reason, there is very little information that is definitely reliable. It is very hard to say anything that is factual on it. Just for example, I was given an illustration. Oh, just about two weeks ago we got a report -- again it is not official, has not been verified -- that a very large portion of the cattle and poultry and pigs in Denmark have been -- one report said ordered destroyed and the other one said actually killed, and that the carcasses had been taken into Germany. Of course, if that is true -- I mean, the reports run as high as 50 per cent of all the livestock in Denmark -- and if that is true, it would be, naturally, a pretty serious thing for the Danish population.

Q The Government has no report as yet on the percentage of arable land which had, prior to the war, been cultivated and which is not being cultivated because there is no sufficient farm labor or because of war maneuvers?

THE PRESIDENT: It is all a guess and because of the lack of definite information -- Bill Bullitt will confirm that -- you cannot even tell about the whole of France. That we know more about than possibly any other country at the present time, and estimates run anywhere from, oh, 10 per cent up to 25 per cent. I would say that I would be awfully guarded in giving any definite picture because we have not the detailed facts.

Q In Philadelphia we had a discussion on that with Mr. (Herbert) Hoover, as a former relief administrator and not as a potential candidate for the Presidency, in which he painted a very, very black picture and said it was based on pretty detailed conferences with spokesmen for various governments. He forecast the worst famine in all history if this war went into the fall.

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, I would like to have that information very much. I would give anything in the world to have it.

Q Hasn't this committee that he is titular head of had any conference with you?

THE PRESIDENT: They are with the Red Cross and the Red Cross has had no specific information from them.

Q I was wondering how much he was talking in generalities?

THE PRESIDENT: I think probably the best way to check up would be to go to certain embassies and legations in Washington and you might find amongst them an ambassador who will give you a generalization, but, frankly, I doubt if those ministers and ambassadors have any detailed information whatsoever because, probably, in that case we would have it.

Q I am sure you would have.

MR. REYNOLDS: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, everything else is all quiet. I have this ceremony now (the presentation of the pin commemorating the President's twenty-fifth anniversary as an Odd Fellow), and outside of that I am -- oh, I will tell you what I have: I am beginning to unpack some boxes of books in the Library and several shiploads -- I mean, vanloads of mail have arrived, and this afternoon I am going to have a carpenter cabinet maker up here from Poughkeepsie, Mr. Lum, ^[Lumba] to go over with me

AD3 6-7-56

the building of stands to put these models on because there are a great many of these models that have been sitting around the tops of bookcases and on window sills in the White House. They have just been tucked away anywhere. They have to have stands made for them, so I am going to telephone to Mr. Lum^[Lumb] and try to get him to come up and work out some methods by which these tables can be made.

Q Those were the ship models and other marine things?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q What is it you are going to get from the Odd Fellows?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What is it you are going to get from the Odd Fellows?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. You had better stick around and see. It is a surprise. (Laughter)

Q What lodge is this that you belong to?

THE PRESIDENT: Hyde Park.

Q And it is twenty-five years?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, twenty-five years, but I think it is about two years overdue. I have been putting off this ceremony for about two years.

Q Is that scheduled, Mr. President, right now?

THE PRESIDENT: Right off; now. They are waiting outside. In fact, I don't know but that the cameramen are there. They can get a picture of this beautiful gift.

Q Is it another pin with a jeweled setting?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know, but it is something very important.

Q Do you plan to be back in Washington Thursday morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and then, off the record, I have the Luxembourg boys coming to lunch. Papa Luxembourg and six or seven children, so we are having a family dinner. And this -- also very strictly off the

record -- and Mama Luxembourg stayed behind in Lisbon and got rid of hubby and their seven children. Be sure to keep that off the record. (Laughter)

Q When do you expect to be back here again?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, in about ten days.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #663,
Executive Offices of the White House,
July 26, 1940, 10.40 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

Q Good morning.

THE PRESIDENT: My, it is sure hot. I think I have taken off two inches around my waist.

Q That is the only good effect of heat.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q It does not affect me that way, though.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only news I have is that I am going down, late tomorrow evening, down the Bay, and I am taking with me the Secretary of the Navy and Chairman Vinson of the Naval Affairs (Committee) and Senator Walsh -- I am trying to find him; he is up in Massachusetts somewhere and I hope he can get back in time -- and going down the River, down the Bay, and on Monday morning I am going to inspect the Norfolk Navy Yard and the new building operations there and then go to the Fleet Base and Training Station and inspect all the new buildings that have been put up there. That is one of our largest training stations. And then I am going to go across to Old Point Comfort and inspect the fortifications there and then out to Langley Field and look at the experimental work that is going on and then to the Newport News Shipbuilding Company and look at all of their new activities. They are running, I think, probably on a bigger schedule than they were during the World War, doing a lot of work for com-

mercial ships and also Navy ships. And then I will go back to the POTOMAC and back here Tuesday morning. I wish I could take the Press aboard but, as you know, there isn't any room. You will have to find your own way down to Norfolk.

Q Press Conference, as usual, Tuesday morning?

Q Tuesday afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not believe I will get back in time.

MR. EARLY: It is Tuesday afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, we expected some clarification of the embargoes of petroleum and scrap metal in your extension of the licensing system yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course it is not an embargo.

Q I said "extension of the licensing system."

THE PRESIDENT: It is not an embargo. Practically all the leads and headlines this morning that I read called it an embargo, which it is not. It is putting them under a licensing system and the only thing that needs to be done is the technical problem about categories and, sometime today or tomorrow morning, there will be a supplementary Order redefining the technical categories.

Q We have had reports out of Japan, sir, that the Japanese Government has made some representations about the application of this licensing system to shipments to Japan. Have you heard anything on that subject?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not heard anything about it. I think the Japanese Ambassador was told about this thing before yesterday.

Q Any connection between this and the closing of the Burma Road?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no.

Q Mr. President, --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. The only -- it is purely a matter of national defense. That is one of the problems still to be worked out and that is the problem of the shortage of aviation gasoline. That is the chief thing we are all concerned about because we have not got any large surplus stock of aviation gasoline in this country at the present time. Not that -- what do they call it? Octane?

Q High octane.

Q Mr. President, can you elaborate on your point that it is not an embargo? That implies there would be some shipments allowed. Can you tell us whether there is a quota being worked out?

THE PRESIDENT: That I do not know. You will have to ask State, Treasury, et cetera about it.

Q I have been requested to inquire, in view of the District suffrage plank in the Democratic platform, what your views are?

THE PRESIDENT: I think all you can say is that the matter is under study and that is stretching it a little bit because during the past week I have not thought about it at all.

Q Can you tell us anything about your conference with Secretary Wallace yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think the only thing you can say on it is that -- I can tell you a story which is fairly apt. Just twenty years ago, after the San Francisco convention, I came back here and saw President Wilson. I had been put on the ticket for Vice President and I said to the President, "When do you want my resignation?"

He smiled and said, "Well, you know, it happens to be one of the subjects which," -- I think he said -- "I wrote a thesis on once when I was at Princeton." Anyway he made a historical study of it and he said, "I have concluded, not only from what might be called the average of precedents, the historical precedents, but also from the point of view of the right thing to do, that you should resign when but not until you start active campaigning. And," he said, "when will that be?" I said, "I think I am going out, as far as I can tell, to Governor Cox's notification ceremonies early in August and then back to Hyde Park to my own notification ceremonies, and then come down here to Washington for three or four days at the Navy Department to pick up all the papers out of my desk, and then start west on a campaign trip." And that was when Steve (Mr. Early) and Mac (Mr. McIntyre) went along on that famous trip. And he said, "Well, that is all right. I think you should make your resignation effective the day before you start on the western campaign trip."

So that is the way it was done and I think it is probably a pretty good precedent and pretty good common sense.

Q When does Mr. Wallace start on his campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any idea. I should say offhand not for some time yet.

Q Does that preclude the possibility of a long leave of absence by Mr. Wallace rather than a resignation?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Wilson did not say that.

Q Anything about your National Chairman yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know; I haven't any news and I do not know anything about it.

Q On the radio yesterday Governor Stark (of Missouri) was mentioned for Postmaster General.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, really?

Q That is a local paper. (Laughter)

Q There is a report from the Havana Conference that you might go down there?

THE PRESIDENT: What is the Havana report?

Q There was a report from the Havana Conference that you might go down there?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no; that is a wild one.

Q (Miss Craig) Mr. President, who thought up the idea of Mrs. Roosevelt going to Chicago to make a speech?

THE PRESIDENT: You did, didn't you? (Laughter)

Q (Miss Craig) No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: You didn't?

Q (Miss Craig) No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought you did it.

Q (Miss Craig) No.

THE PRESIDENT: It spoils a nice story. I got that from several commentators, May. (Laughter)

Q (Miss Craig) Is that the answer?

THE PRESIDENT: That is the answer. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, the correspondents, American correspondents in Shanghai, some of whom were threatened with deportation and beaten, et cetera, cabled you asking that Japan be held respon-

sible for the safety of Americans in China, also asking that retaliation be taken against Japanese correspondents in this country if this treatment continues. Can you tell us what you have done about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I will refer it now to the White House Correspondents' Association.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything about your conference yesterday afternoon with Secretary Morgenthau?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, we were working on the Excess Profits Tax Bill and they were giving me reports on the tax yields of various suggested brackets. It is still in the preliminary stage. As I told you before, the general thought is that if this -- after all we have adopted the policy and that is that people should not profiteer out of the defense program. At the same time, we want to speed it up all we can. Now, there are two -- there are three things that we think ought to go together. If we repeal the limitations of the Vinson-Trammell Act, the 10 per cent profit -- 12 per cent profit -- the Treasury of the United States ought not to suffer thereby and that ties in rather intimately to the simultaneous passage of the excess profits tax, and in the same way, if we reduce the amortization period for new plans, again the Treasury ought not to suffer therefrom and, therefore, it should be -- the reduction of the amortization period should be simultaneous with the excess profits tax passage. That is the thing they are working on up in the Committee at the present time because, obviously, if we were to go ahead and reduce the amortization period immediately and repeal the

Vinson-Trammell Act without passing an excess profits tax, it would be a form of increased remuneration for private companies; in other words, making a great deal more money out of the defense program than they would make under the existing law, and the Treasury would lose money unless, at the same time, there was put through an excess profits tax.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us what the range of yields was that was discussed?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, my, no. I haven't got the faintest idea offhand. That is a purely technical question.

Q Have you any further program that you will submit to Congress that will keep them here until November or some such date?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I have heard of. Of course they have got the Selective Service Bill, which is very important.

Q I mean, any other requests for new additional appropriations that might keep them here?

THE PRESIDENT: Practically not. Of course there is, always a certain number of relatively small items which are needed from time to time to fill in items that you couldn't have foreseen. They are not of any importance whatsoever and would not make a sufficient reason for the Congress, because of those items alone, to sit here in session, but I am not recommending that they go home. It is entirely up to them.

Q I know your position. I was wondering if anything was happening abroad that would keep them?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Do you know, or can you tell us, if you do, how soon you will be

able to ship 3,000 planes a month?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got the faintest idea.

Q On that excess profits tax question, are you still in favor of having it apply both to corporations and to individuals?

THE PRESIDENT: Obviously, 99 $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent applies to corporations. We want to make quite sure that the law covers any existing or possible future loopholes in personal returns, such as, for instance, the method of organizing family trusts and so forth and so on.

[controlled?]

Q The German control of radio says that civilians have appealed to you and asked that you undertake peace negotiations or undertake to bring about peace between England and Germany?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it.

Q There are reports floating around that this Government might extend the combat zones to include the Iberian coasts, in view of the English blockade in that region. That might preclude shipments to Portugal and Spain?

THE PRESIDENT: I would put it this way: That is the last channel of communication that we have left and we will keep it open as long as we possibly can.

Q Do you want to comment on a bill before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to use American ships to evacuate English children to this country?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I would put it this way: There are two sides to it -- three sides to it. First, there is the British Government's attitude and there is our own very, very deep desire to do everything we can. Almost more important than either of those two is the question of the safety of the children. That

AFB 6-8-56

is the real crux of the matter and if we were reasonably certain that we could get American flag ships in and out with those children without their being torpedoed or bombed, that would be one thing. But in the absence of reasonable assurance of that safety, that is a pretty big responsibility for this Government to take, to send ships in there and fill them up with children and then have them sunk.

Q What would you regard as reasonable assurance, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: That is a question in each case. For instance, you read this morning of the sinking of a French ship under the French flag, full of French Naval officers and sailors, that were being repatriated from Portsmouth or Plymouth, I have forgotten which it was, over to France. The British say that they had a safe passage guaranteed by the Germans, and the Germans said they had no such thing. Well, now, that is a pretty good illustration. In other words, the British say, "We are sending these French sailors back in perfectly good faith, in a well-marked ship, flying the French flag, for repatriation in France." In spite of that, when the ship was out in the Channel, she was torpedoed, or anyway she was sunk with the loss of three hundred lives.

Well, suppose we should get assurances? It might be still taking a risk to bring children back through that war zone.

Q Are we trying to get them?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Are we trying to get such assurances?

THE PRESIDENT: Only in this way, that we are building up -- we haven't

quite got to that point -- we are building up this list of about 10,000 children in England with their passports and everything ready, and I suppose the next stage will be to ask the British what they can do on their own ships and find out next what the attitude of the British Government is towards sending them to this country on their ships that are still coming in here, or to Halifax, or Montreal, on the ships that are still going in there. So, we are just a little previous. It may come to that other stage a little later on.

Q Is there any thought of linking that with the relief problem in Europe, outside of Germany?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q It is a question of safe conduct.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #664,
Taken at various points, as indicated,
during the President's Inspection Tour
of Portsmouth Navy Yard, Norfolk Navy Yard,
Fortress Monroe, Langley Field and Newport
News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company,
July 29, 1940.

(The President spoke extemporaneously as follows, following his disembarkation at Portsmouth Navy Yard, 10.10 A. M.)

I am delighted to come back to Norfolk after a great many years, to see the splendid work being done, not only to facilitate new construction but also repair work.

I am very much reminded of 1917 and 1918 when this was one of the most important yards we had in the Navy.

(The following Press Conference took place just before leaving the Portsmouth Navy Yard, at 10.30 A. M. Admiral Manly H. Simons, Commandant of the Navy Yard, took part in this Conference.)

THE PRESIDENT: Admiral (Admiral Simons), stand right out here and tell the newspapermen what has been happening here.

ADMIRAL SIMONS: I think most of them have that broadcast. (Referring to the copy of his report to the President with respect to the activities of the Portsmouth Navy Yard.)

THE PRESIDENT: But they haven't what I want, quite. And now, I will just ask you some questions:

How many men do you have in the Yard, all told?

ADMIRAL SIMONS: 12,000

THE PRESIDENT: How many did you have a year ago?

ADMIRAL SIMONS: Last September we had 76 hundred.

THE PRESIDENT: On construction work, we are building the ALABAMA, the first battleship to be built at this Yard.

ADMIRAL SIMONS: No, sir; the first modern battleship. The old TEXAS was built at this Yard.

THE PRESIDENT: That was almost before you and I were born.

ADMIRAL SIMONS: Yes, sir; that was in the gay nineties, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: And we are preparing ways for one more battleship?

ADMIRAL SIMONS: The new submerged ways will take care of three battleships.

They will be 1186 feet long and will take 47 feet of water over the sills.

THE PRESIDENT: The Admiral told me one interesting thing that is worth putting down and that is the great deal of work that has been done the past few years by WPA labor. There are quite a number of these new ships that are being built by WPA labor. That is just as an illustration. It is a pretty good illustration. We have taken on, permanently, as permanent employees, about 40 per cent. Is that right?

ADMIRAL SIMONS: Those figures are correct.

THE PRESIDENT: Forty per cent of WPA labor, and they are now under Civil Service. In other words, that shows that a fairly high percentage of WPA labor is efficient. That is the easiest way of putting it.

ADMIRAL SIMONS: Yes, sir; and a good many of them would have been taken on had they been capable of meeting the physical requirements. A great many of them were unable to meet the physical requirements.

THE PRESIDENT: Anything else to bring out, Frank?

SECRETARY KNOX: I thought that the new machine shop was tremendously interesting.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that new machine shop.

ADMIRAL SIMONS: It is one of the largest shops that is under one roof in the world.

THE PRESIDENT: In the world. It certainly is bigger than any other Navy Yard.

SECRETARY KNOX: When running the Yard at ultimate capacity, what would be your total of men employed?

ADMIRAL SIMONS: I think between 16 and 20 thousand.

There is one point we haven't brought up and that is about our relations with labor at the present time. They are very satisfactory and a great many of the Union -- the biggest men in the Union in the Yard are wondering why we don't go on a six-day week. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: They want to make more money.

ADMIRAL SIMONS: They are willing to do anything in the emergency and I think they are all working with that spirit.

THE PRESIDENT: That is fine. And now we will go down to the (Naval) Base.

ADMIRAL SIMONS: Thank you, sir; I am very much honored.

THE PRESIDENT: I am very happy.

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(The President and his party then motored down to the Naval Operating Base, arriving there at about 11.40. Following inspection, he boarded the POTOMAC at Pier 2 at 12.30 P. M. and arrived at Old Point Comfort at 1.15. He commenced an inspection tour of Fortress Monroe at about 2.00 o'clock and then motored to Langley Field, arriving about 3.00. After the inspection and review at Langley Field the President and his party motored to the plant of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company, arriving about 4.30 P. M. Following his inspection of the plant, the following Press Conference was held just prior to leaving the yards, at 5.00 P. M.):

THE PRESIDENT (introducing Captain Roger Williams, Vice President of the Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock Company): Captain Roger Williams was one of my Navy boys in the old days. We used to cruise together and he is now Vice President of the Yard. I wanted Captain Williams to tell you what they are doing and what they have been doing the last year or two as compared with what they were doing the last ten years or so.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: 1933 was the low point and that year we were assigned two large aircraft carriers and two cruisers, the construction of the cruisers to be scattered over the following years. Those aircraft

carriers were the ENTERPRISE and the YORKTOWN. After that we participated in other Naval work, which came along. We got a few destroyers and considerable work for the Maritime Commission.

We built the AMERICA here; it left the Yard day before yesterday and has just gone to New York.

THE PRESIDENT: You have got a battleship, a sister ship of the one over at Norfolk.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: The battleship, that is the INDIANA.

Q Is that a 35,000 or 45,000?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: That is a secret. (Laughter) That is a secret. It is 35,000 off the record, but we do not know what it will be when we get through. We don't quote the tonnage. We ^{have} got the aircraft carrier HORNET about 45 per cent completed. And we have just taken on new contracts for seven more aircraft carriers and four light cruisers.

THE PRESIDENT: As many as that?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: Yes, sir. Today I made a terrific decision which involved 380 million dollars' worth of work. 380 dollars means a lot to me. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: How many men have you?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: 12 thousand, and we will work up to between 18 and 20 thousand. But we have got a motto around here, "no housee, no shippee." If you put that in the paper and work up the housing people, it will help a lot. They are doing everything possible; they have one 500-unit housing project and one slum clearance project which will take care of about 250 more, but we do need a much larger housing development and if you say, "No housee, no shippee," that will -- no ladies around here? (Laughter)

Q No, sir.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: We will put the onus on the U. S. Housing Administration or whoever does it.

Q (Mr. Durno) How does that 12,000 compare with normal?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: Our normal is 6,000, 67 hundred, 65 hundred.

Q (Mr. Durno) How many ways have you?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: We have nine ways and they are building two large ways in addition and one large machine shop and turret shop.

Q You said something a while ago, Captain, regarding seven more carriers?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: Well, we have actually got awards for three carriers and two cruisers but the award written today will be four more carriers and two more cruisers.

Q Did it break?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: Did it break?

Q The new award is dependent on the money being appropriated?

THE PRESIDENT: It is in that new bill of authorization.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: It depends on the money being appropriated.

THE PRESIDENT: This is not only one of the most successful Yards but also one of the happiest.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: That is perfectly true. I have spent ten happy years in it, not always active ones but always happy.

THE PRESIDENT: Nearly all of the people here are local people who are third-generation employees in some cases.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: That is true.

THE PRESIDENT: Also they have one of the most wonderful Naval museums that Mr. Huntington started. I am sorry we haven't time to see it.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: It is a mariners' museum.

THE PRESIDENT: It is a marine museum, all kinds of models, but more Merchant Marine than it is Navy. Mine at Hyde Park is more Navy

than it is Merchant Marine.

Q Anything else you can give us?

THE PRESIDENT: I should also say that it is good eye demonstration of what we have been doing for national defense since last summer. I think they told you at the Airport just now that over the last three years they have quadrupled the facilities and the actual work which is going on. At the Fleet Base, with all the new work that is going on, I should say we have increased it 50 per cent in the last six -- I should say the last year, and in the Navy Yard at Norfolk, I guess about the same thing. And I guess you have taken on 50 per cent more work in the last year?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: Yes, sir.

Q Would you regard what we have seen as an adequate answer to the Administration critics?

THE PRESIDENT: This is just a beginning. We are going to see a lot more, George (Mr. Durno), before we get through.

Q (by a local reporter) We hope some of it comes down this way.

THE PRESIDENT: I think you are doing pretty well down here. I don't think you have any kick coming. The whole Hampton Roads area is working over time.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: All we can handle.

THE PRESIDENT: Incidentally, do you happen to know about WPA? Have you taken a lot of people off?

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: We have not had so much of an unemployment problem down here. We have never really had it. We have always had something doing. You can always go fishing, if you can't build ships.
(Laughter)

Q In some of your speeches you have called attention to the fact that

Washington was once invaded by the British?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes?

Q Now that you have looked over the outer defenses, I wonder if you think that can happen again?

THE PRESIDENT: It would depend entirely on when it came and who it was, (laughter) which is a good way of putting it. But in about -- well, a year from now we are going to feel a lot safer.

CAPTAIN WILLIAMS: I feel very inhospitable in not being able to offer you --

THE PRESIDENT (interposing): It is all right. I have got to get back.

Q Does this trip indicate that you might make future inspections of Fleet Bases?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; not only that but of Army stuff and aviation, et cetera.

Well, I guess that is all. Captain, I have been quite happy to see you again.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #665,
Executive Offices of the White House,
July 30, 1940, 4.08 P.M.

Q Good afternoon, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, how did you recover?

Q Very well. We flew up this morning. It was a very nice flight.

THE PRESIDENT: Where did you stay?

Q The Monticello (Hotel, in Norfolk).

THE PRESIDENT: You did. You did not stay at the Chamberlain (at Old Point Comfort)?

Q No, we wanted to get the plane this morning. It was a nice warm trip.

THE PRESIDENT: Fine. I took off about five pounds, which is a good thing to do.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only thing I have got today relates to something I spoke to you about three or four weeks ago and that was the possible shortage and possible increase in price of pulp paper, and we have been working on it since then. I have a story here that Bob Horton will have more in detail in case you want it, but the net result is that two of the divisions of the Advisory Commission have been working on the problem of paper pulp and they have had an excellent meeting with the trade as a whole.

Mr. Henderson says, (reading)

"The recent survey of prices indicated that paper and pulp offered a dangerous possibility of developing an inflationary spiral. It appears, for the time being at least, that this threat has been removed as a result of a lengthy discussion between

representatives of seventeen of the principal producers in the industry and members of the staff of Mr. Stettinius' division and Mr. Leon Henderson's division. The spot prices of paper and pulp have been rising in recent months, due principally to the fear, fear of shortages that might develop from the elimination of Scandinavian imports, fear of increases in the export demands from our Americas, such as South America, which had been cut off from the European exports, and the possibility of extensive uses of pulp in making explosives under the defense program. Paper and pulp have a very wide general consumer use. Prices constitute an element of consideration in practically all the production and distribution activities. Runaway prices in such essential might have a serious effect over a wide range of our economy."

Mr. Stettinius' group, his division, surveyed the industry's capacity to produce and Mr. Henderson's group, utilizing the services of several Government agencies, canvassed the price situation and on that basis they had the talk with the representatives of the industry. They came to certain conclusions which are of interest to newspapers. First, there is no actual shortage of pulp, with the possible minor exception of a few special groups. Secondly, there is no immediate danger of a shortage because additional capacity can be made available readily. Third, the export of pulp may be expected to decrease because of the inability at the present time of France and Italy to utilize our markets, and the rayon pulp, which they have been taking heretofore, can be diverted to grades that we must need over here. Fourth, the imports from Canada are expected to increase and the excess of imports over exports will probably ease the American domestic situation, removing fears of depletion arising from anticipated export demands that might advance prices. Fifth, a striking spirit between public stock prices and contract prices

has existed, an important element because 90 per cent of pulp is sold on contract and a spiraling spot price is becoming the basis for contract renewals. Sixth, the present spread between cost and contract prices seems adequate to protect production necessary to meet foreseeable needs. Seventh, further price changes would result only from actual changes in basic costs, such as wood and labor and fuel and chemicals and taxes, but not through psychological factors. And, finally, the tonnage likely to be required for defense purposes is not expected to demand substantial diversion from the normal requirements of the industry itself.

The individual members of the industry, Mr. Henderson said, have assured us that they are firmly opposed to permitting an inflationary situation to develop. They offered full cooperation through individual price policies to prevent such a development. The representatives of the Defense Commission were assured the Government may at all times obtain complete cooperation in production for defense needs.

So that is another hurdle that has been taken.

I don't think I have got anything else. You can get copies of that from Bob Horton.

Q Did you know that Senator Barkley was going out to Missouri to speak in behalf of Senator Truman?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I did not know.

Q You did not know?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not know.

Q Mr. President, you said yesterday you would be making other

inspection trips. Can you announce any plans?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no; I haven't got any plans as to the other places I will go to. I do not know when.

Q Have you any word, sir, from Louis Johnson as to whether he is coming back into the Government?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not. He is out in the Bohemian Grove, I understand, and people do not --

Q (interposing) Do not get in a hurry out there?

THE PRESIDENT: They do not get in a hurry out there.

Q Mr. President, London reports say that the Duke of Windsor is coming over on the American liner EXCALIBUR and will be escorted by British men-of-war. Does that in any way --

(interposing)

THE PRESIDENT: /George (Mr. Durno), I do not know anything except what I read in the paper. Maybe the State Department has something on it, but I rather doubt it.

Q Mr. President, the Havana Conference is about to wind up. Do you care to offer any comment on the achievements?

THE PRESIDENT: Only to say that from the general reports we have had it seems to have been very, very successful.

Q Do you believe, sir, that the anti-trust action against many of the major oil companies would prejudice the national defense program?

THE PRESIDENT: That is too general a question. I haven't the faintest idea. I'd have to ask the Defense Council.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything about your possible selection of a National Chairman on Thursday?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the faintest idea.

Q They are coming in Thursday?

THE PRESIDENT: They are coming in Thursday at 12.00 o'clock.

Q You have not discussed it?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not discussed it with anybody.

Q Has Secretary Knox indicated that Mr. Compton is a satisfactory assistant for him?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not talked it over with him at all.

Q Do you endorse the principles of the Burke-Wadsworth Bill as it now stands in the Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think we can go into the details of that legislation at the present time. I already said what I have to say on it when I spoke that night on the general principles of the necessity of man power for defense -- that a whole lot of men without machines are not worth much, and that a whole lot of machines without adequately trained men are not worth much.

Q As I understand it, the Committee has delayed the bill while attempting to get your views on how this bill should be formed.

THE PRESIDENT: Will you check on that, because I am not sure that that is exactly what happened.

Q Mr. President, the British Government today extended its blockade to cover virtually all of Europe. Would that affect the application of our neutrality laws?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I'd have to find out about it. It is a little bit broad.

Q Any possibility of extending the combat zone to include the Spanish and Portuguese coast?

THE PRESIDENT: Not at the present time. The situation has not changed

on that since last -- what was it? -- Friday. Naturally we want to keep our one means of communication with Europe open as long as we can.

Q Mr. President, the extension of the British blockade would lead, almost directly, to the blockade of the Portuguese coast.

THE PRESIDENT: You see, there is the trouble. I cannot comment on an alleged British blockade until I find out exactly what it is. I don't know.

Q Mr. President, Mr. Wendell Willkie said in Colorado Springs that he saw no reason why Woodrow Wilson Democrats should not vote for him, that he stood more clearly for what they stood for. Do you have any claims on their fidelity?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think any comment is necessary.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #666,
Executive offices of the White House,
August 2, 1940, 10.57 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I have got any news today. I expect to --
put it the other way, I hope to go up to Hyde Park tomorrow sometime --
when, I do not know -- for a few days, and have no definite plans
about what day I will come back.

Q There is a very definite feeling, Mr. President, in Congressional
circles that you are not very hot about this conscription legis-
lation and, as a result, it really is languishing.

THE PRESIDENT: It depends on which paper you read.

Q (Mr. Essary) Well, I read my own, which I believe in. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, Fred, you know I was thinking -- I was thinking the
other day. It is just one of those things -- nothing new -- it has
been going on for about twelve years. I am in a definite position:
I am damned if I do and I am damned if I do not. In other words,
I am bound to be criticized whatever I do. Now, on this particular
bill, everybody knows that if I were to come out and send up to the
Hill a particular measure, what would you boys do, most of you?
You would say that the President is "ordering Congress." "Old Mr.
Dictator, he is just ordering Congress to pass his bill."

Well, of course, the actual fact was that back in 1933, when
we were in the middle of a very serious crisis, with all the banks
closed, et cetera, in that hundred-day session and in a very few
cases in the 1934 session, we did send up ready-made bills, all
ready-made, and they were put through, most of them, without hear-
ings and, of course, afterwards they had to be amended and so forth

and so on. It was a hurry job. There was no rewrite man, there was no copy desk that went over those bills. It was an emergency, we had to put them through and, believe me, I got panned, didn't I? I got terribly panned for sending up ready-made legislation and ordering Congress to pass it. Of course I did it; it was a convenience to the Government and a convenience to the Congress. However, I got beautifully panned.

So, somewhere around 1934, I got pretty careful. I am just talking to you, I might say from the heart, and very, very simply. I got pretty careful and we did not send up ready-made bills. We were asked on many occasions, by Committees, to submit some form of tentative draft, and we did it at the request of the Committees, whereupon one of you boys, or several of you, invented the word "must" legislation, and I got panned on that.

Well, of course I have been absolutely -- tried to be -- scrupulous in my relations with the Congress and I said -- I got tired of saying it after a couple of years -- that literally there was no such thing as "must" legislation. There never had been.

I would recommend certain policies, certain objectives, but from that time on we never sent up a ready-made bill with the request that that bill be passed.

Now, I was reading a couple of editorials this morning. One of them said, "It is an outrage; it is a terrible bill, a perfect outrage. We are in the middle of a crisis. Congress has got to do something -- quick -- quick -- quick." And the other one said, "My Lord! why rush this thing? This is a very big subject. We ought not to pass things without due consideration."

So, there you are.

Now, the very simple fact is, as I have stated, the lessons of this war do show very clearly that defense means necessarily total defense. Well, under modern circumstances, -- and we have learned a lot in the last year -- that means a great deal in the way of new machinery and equipment of all kinds, which we haven't got. We are beginning to get it and, as Knudsen said to me yesterday, we have let contracts for about -- either let contracts or the work is proceeding because a great many of these companies are proceeding with their work without actual contracts having been signed, and that applies in various cases to planes, armor, tanks, et cetera -- we are actually proceeding with the building of a billion, eight hundred million dollars' worth of materials. That is quite a figure; quite a figure.

Q Materials for what, machinery?

THE PRESIDENT: A billion, eight hundred million dollars.

Q What are some of the items on that, tanks?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, everything; everything.

Now, we also learned -- that is the material end -- we also learned from the European war that the people who have not had the trained man power to use those machines have been in a bad way.

I would rather you did not use the name in the following sentence -- this is off the record: England had no trained people to run their machinery a year ago and even eight, ten months after they got into the war they only had a trained armed force of about 350,000 or 400,000 men, most of whom were caught in Flanders. Well, today -- two months, three months later -- they have a better figure, they have 4,000,000 men in England. Of course they cannot have been as

thoroughly trained as they should be. You can't train 4,000,000 men in two or three months.

I always go back to the same old thing I harped on in 1917, when we built up an army of 4,000,000 men.

Q Is this back on the record?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I am back on the record now. Do not refer to England because I do not think it is a polite thing to do.

We built up an army of 4,000,000 men and they did not go into action for 13½ months or until the twenty-seventh day of May, 1918, before that fighting force was able to fight. In the meantime, during those 13½ months, remember that no shot was fired against us over here. We were completely free from any attack. Now, that will never happen again in the history of the United States. As far as I can see that was just a bit of sheer luck. In other words, you have got to have trained men.

O.K., and I will go back and repeat this: What is an army? An army consists of combat troops, supply troops, transportation troops, all of them in uniform. It consists of all kinds of mechanics, still in the army. It consists of all kinds of factory workers, specialized factory workers, who would not wear uniforms but they are still essentially a part of the defense forces of the country and they require training just as much as the man with a rifle requires training. And then, there is the final factor we all know and that is for the purposes of defense we got to have men who are already trained beforehand. In doing that, we save lives -- we save human lives. That is the important thing. We all know from experience that in an untrained force or an untrained army or an untrained navy, rela-

tively, the casualties from death and wounds are much higher than they are in the case of the trained army and navy. That is the human element. And that might also be said to apply to the sick in wartime. A trained army has much fewer casualties from disease and accident than an untrained army or navy. It is a case of saving lives.

Now, I have made it perfectly clear many times that you cannot get a sufficiently trained force of all kinds at the front, in the Navy yards and the arsenals, transportation, supply system, and munition output, you cannot get it by just passing an Act of Congress when war breaks out, and you cannot get it by the mere volunteer system.

That is why we figured out pretty well in 1917 that the selective training or selective draft was the fairest and in all ways the most efficient way of conducting a war if we had to go to war. I still think so and I think a great majority of the people in the country think so, when they understand it.

There is a debate going on with respect to certain details -- columns and columns written about the problem, the advisability of registering men up to the age of sixty-five. Well, it doesn't make an awful lot of difference whether you register the people over forty and up to sixty-five or not. It is a good thing to do. We are not going to put rifles in their hands and send them to the front, but it is a good thing to know the capacity of those people.

Well, I will give you a very good illustration: I happen to know a fellow who is volunteering. He is an absolutely first-class mechanic, one of the most highly skilled or, rather, specialized trades that I know of, and he has volunteered because he wants to go to the front as a soldier, with a rifle in his hand. Well, he is so

good at his regular skill that he ought not to be allowed to go to the front with a rifle in his hand. Now, there is an illustration and that is why I have made it perfectly clear that I am in favor of a selective training bill.

Now, when you come down to the details as to whether you are going to register people up to thirty-one or forty-one or fifty-one or sixty-five, that is purely a matter for the Congress to decide. Out of it all, out of all this discussion, I not only hope but I definitely believe that Congress is going to do something about it because it is very important for our national defense.

I think that covers it.

Q There is a very quotable sentence right there, if you will permit it.

THE PRESIDENT: What is it?

Q That you are distinctly in favor of a selective training bill --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) And consider it essential to adequate national defense. Quote that.

Q Mr. President, would there be any argument in your mind about having the voluntary service first and then the draft?

THE PRESIDENT: It presents just the problem of the young man I was talking about who wants to go into the wrong place by the volunteer method.

Q Mr. President, do you think that women ought to be trained in service for their country too?

THE PRESIDENT: Not in legislation at the present time. I think probably, as far as we can tell, that when we get to what we call home defense, and possibly without legislation, we will follow out what has been done of necessity by certain countries in Europe, where the women back home organize themselves into local methods of helping to the best of their ability.

For instance, I was talking last night to Mrs. Roosevelt. We took, as an example, the Town of Hyde Park. We would need, in case of a major defensive war, we would need probably to take quite a lot of trained nurses out of the Dutchess County Hospital. Now, those trained nurses -- we do not want to denude the country, the county, their places ought to be filled, possibly not by registered nurses because there won't be enough to go around, but by the -- what do they call them?

Q Practical nurses?

THE PRESIDENT: Practical nurses. Now, that requires a certain amount of organization beforehand so that if there were ten or fifteen nurses that were taken out of the St. Francis Hospital or Vassar Hospital in the City of Poughkeepsie, their places would be filled locally by local practical nurses. That is merely organizing beforehand, so as to know what to do.

Q How many men do you think are necessary to be drafted?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

Q Is that just detail, or aren't there some figures on it?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I could not tell you that because I am first getting down to figures.

Q Mr. President, after your conference yesterday with Mr. Herbert Agar, he said he had the impression that you were in favor of the sale of World War destroyers to Great Britain in the present situation. Is that a true impression, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is any news on that at all.

Q Mr. President, in connection with the arrest or holding of eighty-one people down in the Canal Zone, I understand that eighty out of the

eighty-one are Jewish refugees, technicians and what not, en route to South American countries and asked by the Army to stay there and work on the Canal.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any report on it. All I saw was what the Secretary of War said. You would have to see him.

Q Any indication from the British yet as to whether we can send food, under the \$50,000,000. appropriation, through the blockade?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q Did Secretary Hull talk to you about that yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just mentioned it.

Q Senator Hiram Johnson is running in the California primaries on the Republican, Democratic and Progressive tickets. Do you regard Senator Johnson as a Democratic candidate?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No, I do not think anybody in their wildest dreams could consider a very, very old friend of mine, because he is, dating back -- I don't know what -- nearly thirty years, as being in any way a Liberal or Progressive Democrat in the year 1940. He was a grand old Liberal and Progressive for a great many years -- I am still very fond of him -- but he certainly has changed an awful lot in the last four or five years. I guess that is pretty generally recognized.

Q Can you tell us anything about the Democratic campaign setup, what it is going to be?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the faintest idea, not the faintest.

Q Anything about your proposed trip up in New York State, in which you might touch Buffalo?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing arranged and I do not know when I will have a chance to go or where I would go. If I do go it will be later on.

Q May I ask, Mr. President, if that is in connection with the air research laboratory?

THE PRESIDENT: The air research laboratory? Where?

Q There is an engine research laboratory to be put up, costing about \$8,000,000. About fifty-eight cities are applying for it and among them Buffalo and Rochester. I thought maybe --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I don't know. I knew there were an awful lot of people after it but I don't think any decision has been made.

Q When is Mr. Farley leaving the Cabinet?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. We have not mentioned it.

Q Mr. President, are you going to make an inspection trip to Narragansett Bay sometime this summer?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any idea.

Q Any possibility you may do it in connection with the New York trip?

THE PRESIDENT: No; that would be a different trip.

Q In connection with the New York trip, do you plan to visit the camps up in northern New York State?

THE PRESIDENT: I had an invitation from General Drum, but, as I say, I haven't any definite plan. General Drum wanted me to come up there on the seventeenth or the eighteenth. They have 100,000 men at those Maneuvers, but I have not looked as far ahead as that.

Q The seventeenth of August, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q That is a bad day.

THE PRESIDENT: Why? What is happening? (Laughter)

Q Willkie is accepting the nomination. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I thought you meant it was my son, Franklin, Junior's,

birthday, (laughter) which it happens to be. (Laughter)

Q Could you give us a fill-in on your talk with Pat Harrison (Senator Pat Harrison, of Mississippi) yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think I can. There is a general agreement from Bob Doughton and Jere Cooper, whom I saw the day before, and yesterday from Pat, that we should put through, just as soon as possible, an excess profits bill -- again no laying down of the law by the White House -- an excess profits tax bill and at the same time clear up the question of amortization and the limitations in the Vinson-Trammell Act and several other Acts that have been passed since then. They hope to get fairly good speed on it.

Q Mr. President, have you said anything new recently on the sugar legislation? Have you been approached on that again?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I have not heard of sugar for a month.

Q Mr. President, have you any idea how long it will take properly to consider this excess profits bill and put it in some kind of shape?

THE PRESIDENT: I can only tell you what Pat said. He said he hoped they could get it through in a month.

Meanwhile, of course, on that thing there are a good many -- aviation, for instance, where they are proceeding, the manufacturers are proceeding to assemble the material and get their plant ready, even though the contracts have not been signed. Of course a great many have been, and there will be actual deliveries of planes as early as October.

I have got a long thing here which I am not going to explain to you because it only relates to three papers, three stories, which I think are what are known as black sheets, and I will (laughter) --

what are you laughing at? -- of course I have only seen them in three papers and I will let Steve (Mr. Early) go over afterwards these perfectly cockeyed stories with anybody that wants to go over them with Steve. In other words, they are broken down, paragraph by paragraph, as to the insinuation and the implication of the stories which are, completely, misrepresentation of the facts -- the implication. I am not going to take your time in going over them because, as I say, it is broken down paragraph by paragraph and they just don't happen to be true. So we will say nothing further about that and Steve will take the material and anybody that is interested can get instructions from Steve.

Q Do these airplane companies have a pretty good idea from you or the Administration in general that such legislation is going to be passed?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, my, yes; everybody --

Q (interposing) And they are going ahead on that assumption?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #667,
Held in the President's Study at Hyde Park,
August 6, 1940.

THE PRESIDENT: Let's see, I don't think -- I wish I had some news but I haven't.

Governor Lehman came up to supper last night, primarily socially. The only thing of any interest was the problem of Home Defense which we are working on in Washington. In other words, primarily from the point of view of the forty-eight states, if and when the National Guard is called into the Federal service on Federal training -- just how the several States will replace the regular regiments of the National Guard for purely home defense. Of course, that will probably be built up. The only thing we can say at this time is that it is still in the study stage, but it will probably be built up around the World War Veterans and their organizations such as the American Legion and the United Veterans of Foreign Wars. That, in other words, will be a nucleus.

And then tonight -- I was just talking to Bill Hassett as to whether I should tell you, as it is a purely social call, they always come over every summer -- Justice Frankfurter and Mrs. Frankfurter will spend the night.

Q Mr. President, Mr. (meaning former Governor) Brann is out here this morning. Anything on it?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q He is a candidate for the Senate?

THE PRESIDENT: He wanted to see me and is coming here instead of coming to Washington.

Q Justice Frankfurter?

THE PRESIDENT: No, Governor Brann.

Q Isn't he a candidate for the Senate?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you give us your defense tour?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't George, (Mr. Durno) not ready with it.

Q When do you think you will have it?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't even tell you that. You see the trouble is with these trips that there is necessarily a good deal of planning but there is no decision until the last minute. I don't even know when the last minute is going to come.

Q Would it be likely this week?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't even tell you that. You see what the trouble is -- if I say this week and then it were not this week, it would be called a change of plans, where it wouldn't be a change of plan.

Q In other words, you won't be starting out tomorrow?

THE PRESIDENT: Tomorrow is Wednesday -- no, you are perfectly safe in making your golf engagements for tomorrow.

Q Could you tell us, Mr. President, what the mission was that Wild Bill Donovan went on to London?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask the Secretary of the Navy and Wild Bill.

Q We asked Wild Bill.

Q Could you throw any light on your conference today with various Chairmen from the Habana Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: It isn't a conference, it is a social luncheon. And, of course, I expect to have a very delightful conversation with them, but we will probably talk over general aspects of what was an extraordinarily successful conference. And, of course, one of the things --

I think an awfully good thing -- well, I think you will agree that for the first time in the last few years we have been getting on to a social footing with our Latin American neighbors, so that things are not purely official as they were for many years. They have been put much more on a personal and social basis. In other words, we have learned to talk the same language, which is a great thing.

Q You referred to the Habana Conference as extraordinarily successful. Would you amplify that thought as to what in particular, or rather what general aspect impressed you as successful?

THE PRESIDENT: I think on the three main lines of the conference, the first relating to the defense of the hemisphere against any non-American power. We are at a meeting of the minds on that. And the second, on what is, because of the events of this world, looming much larger, and this is the mutual economic problem of the whole continent, North, Central and South. And finally, on the question of what we refer to as the Fifth Column, the boring from within, which is, of course, essentially a part of the other two, because it relates to non-American powers. We are not in the least afraid of boring from within -- within our own continent. It originates, without question, from outside of the Americas.

It could be fairly said that the unity of the Americas is more nearly a fact than ever before in history, without any question.

Q Do you have any comment to make on ideas put forward in the mass meeting at Soldier's Field in Chicago, with respect to our cooperating with Germany?

THE PRESIDENT: Never heard of it.

Q They had a mass meeting Saturday in Chicago. Colonel Lindbergh spoke and Senator McCarran.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is any comment necessary.

Q Then the suggestion is made that the spiritual unity of the American Republics has been accomplished, and that now they would be given further expression in the economic field. I understand that since we were at Habana you have taken numerous steps in that direction. Could it be presumed that this is part of a continued policy and purpose of strengthening these various material relations?

THE PRESIDENT: I think a very good illustration is the problem of aviation gasoline, which we find for defense purposes we cannot afford, on account of our own needs and Pan American needs, to have our gasoline go to European continents, or the Asiatic continent. And again, I think there is a complete meeting of the minds on that particular step. It might be called a Pan American defensive measure, and of course, the other Republics understand that thoroughly. One of the problems, of course, of aviation gasoline is the lack of refineries in a good many places. I think in the oil fields of northern Argentina and Bolivia, there are no refineries for aviation gasoline. Am I right on that? And I think in Venezuela there are no refineries. There are refineries in the Dutch Islands, Aruba and Curacao. So, we are looking at it from a hemispheric point of view.

Q Could you tell us your view, Mr. President, on the suggestion of General Pershing that we sell fifty destroyers to the British?

THE PRESIDENT: George (Mr. Durno), there is no news on that at the present time.

Q Have you been consulted by Dutchess County sources about establishing or enlisting your help in establishing, the State's million dollar Aviation Training School at New Hackensack?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't.

Q Any views on that?

THE PRESIDENT: That is more or less in the field of State Government isn't it? And I think there is one thing I will have to use as background. In other words, not as coming from me in any way. You have read about the increase in population in the County in the last ten years, and I think the county should think twice before it seeks a big training field where the flying would necessarily be over an extremely populous territory. You can't eat your cake and have it too. People don't like to live normally in a place where there are hundreds of planes flying overhead all of the time. They make a good deal of noise.

Q Do you plan to visit the new Vanderbilt National Park?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. Mrs. Roosevelt went up there and saw it the other day with some guests. I went up there about two weeks ago and found that the Interior Department had put on a fifty cents entrance fee. I thought that was going too high so I recommended it be cut in half. I think twenty-five cents is quite enough. I think it may have been done.

Q Yes, it has.

THE PRESIDENT: It has been?

Q Do you plan to replace Mr. Forrestal when he leaves as your Administrative Assistant?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Have you heard anything from Louis Johnson?

THE PRESIDENT: Not a word. Again, off the record, for your information, Tommy Corcoran did not fly out to see him. What happened was he had promised his bride a trip to the Coast.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Did you talk over politics with Governor Lehman?

THE PRESIDENT: No, only Home Defense.

Q You know he made that recommendation to the Congressional Committees?

THE PRESIDENT: What was that?

Q That they put in the resolution the authorization to the States to raise a Home Guard.

THE PRESIDENT: We discussed that. It is one of the things we discussed.

We have got to do something about it and I am trying to find out now what the recommendation of the War Department is. That is something that ought to be done. You remember what happened in 1917 and 1918 to some of the old defense regiments we had around here. We have to get something better than what we had.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.