

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #679,
Held in the Study of the President's Home
at Hyde Park, N. Y.,
September 10, 1940, 12.25 P.M., D.S.T.

Q Good morning, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning. I am sorry I kept you waiting. I was shooting all over the place.

Q Beautiful morning (Laughter -- it had been drizzling all morning)

Q Damp weather.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I asked Steve (Mr. Early) if there was anything at all and he said there was nothing nationally and left it to me whether there was anything locally, and I said no, there wasn't even that. Nothing at all. Going back tonight.

Q Can you tell us anything about your speech?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, if you will define what is political and what is not.

Q (Mr. Hurd) We have to see the speech first.

THE PRESIDENT: You could not tell then. Well, the speech will probably say something about American history. Now, whether American history is political or not, I do not know, and not even do the broadcasting companies know.

Q (Mr. Carlton Smith) That is still open for interpretation from day to day.

THE PRESIDENT: If I were to mention what has been done for organized labor in the past eight years, that is American history. It is gone, finished. Now, is that political, or isn't it? Nobody knows, not even Carlton. So, you see, it is a great question on how you define the word "political."

Q (Mr. Smith) You have to watch your inflection, too. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: And that does not appear in the copy.

MR. EARLY: Mae West got into trouble. (Laughter)

Q How far back will that history go?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the speech isn't written yet.

Q Mr. President, you didn't change the date of Labor Day, did you?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q You did not change the date of Labor Day, did you? I see that --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) My gosh, George (Mr. Durno), it is too late. It happened.

Q Wendell Willkie says something -- which I do not think can be done -- about organization for aggressive action after Labor Day.

THE PRESIDENT: When did he say that?

Q In the Times (New York Times). (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No! (Laughter)

Q Any comment on the Maine election?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not read anything about any complete returns yet; I do not know.

Q Can you tell us something more in detail about Mr. Taylor's (Mr. Myron Taylor) call beyond what Steve (Mr. Early) gave us?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so, except just what Steve told you, that of course the Vatican is doing everything it can to bring about a more peaceful world -- so are we.

Q Mr. President, I am tempted to ask one political local question: Would you like to say something about the candidacy of Hardy Steeholm for Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you can put it this way: that I expect to vote

for him -- and not just because he is a Democrat.

Q (Mr. Durno) Just because he is running against Ham Fish? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I think that statement of mine is pretty good. In fact,
I think it is rather clever, don't you?

Q What is his name?

Q H-a-r-d-y S-t-e-e-h-o-l-m.

Q Mr. President, any developments on the National Labor Board vacancy?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet.

Q Expect to have something soon?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Was that Commissioner Carey that left here just a moment ago?

(William P. Carey, Commissioner of Sanitation, of New York City)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Any special message from the Mayor?

THE PRESIDENT: I expect to see the Mayor -- I hope to see him and the Canadian members of the Joint Board, if they have not finished their work today and are able to stay over tomorrow in Washington -- I hope to see them tomorrow, to meet them and probably talk with them and get their ideas on this problem of permanent joint defense.

Q (Mr. Daly of C.B.S.) Any developments as to when you expect to call out the Organized Reserves? George (Durno) was threatening to ask if I did not ask this question --

MR. EARLY: Charles is in the Naval Reserve.

THE PRESIDENT: What are you talking about, the Army or the Navy?

Q The Navy, sir. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, as I understand it on the Naval end, that relatively

we are so small -- I mean, the Navy is so small -- I cannot say "we" and we must not put that down because the Army kicks about it. I always talk about "us Navy people," you know, and it is not done. When it comes to the actual recruiting of the volunteers from the Reserves, they are doing so well at the present time that I have not heard, frankly, of any plans to call out more of the Reserves than we have got out at the present time.

Q That is the big story of the day for Daly.

Q And a big disappointment to Durno, Mr. President. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Charlie, what is your rating?

Q (Mr. Daly) Lieutenant, junior grade.

THE PRESIDENT: Fine. Deck duty, or engineering?

Q (Mr. Daly) Special.

THE PRESIDENT: He does not have to worry. They never would put him down in the fire room because he would get even skinnier.

Q (Mr. Daly) Then I shan't put on any more weight.

THE PRESIDENT: There are some others around here that would be very good. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Hurd) How about the Army Reserves?

THE PRESIDENT: That, frankly, I do not know. I'd have to ask about it; I do not know.

Q (Mr. Daly) I do not dare get any bigger; I won't be able to get into my uniform.

THE PRESIDENT: Have you got one yet?

Q (Mr. Daly) Yes, and the gold braid is getting rusty, too.

Q Mr. President, may I ask if, this morning, you happened to visit any of the schools or anything?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I did pass one of them and pointed it out. The Commissioner said it was very beautiful and Mrs. Carey said it was very lovely.

Q Do you have any plans for further speeches in addition to the one Wednesday night?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The next one I have is the twentieth of September, University of Pennsylvania, and the one after that is that I have to take part in the dedication of the three schools. By the way, that is a story for you, if you haven't got one.

Q Tentatively, only?

THE PRESIDENT: As far as we know, it is all set for Saturday afternoon, October fifth. You had better talk to Smith, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees.

Q Dedication of what, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: The three schools, the high school and grade schools. Instead of trying to dedicate them in three different places, the idea is to have one ceremony at the high school.

Q Is that Hyde Park?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, the high school is out on the Van Wagner Road, off the Creek Road.

Q You are very well pleased with it?

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely, and the people from the outside, who have seen those schools, are tremendously keen about the looks of them.

Q Will that be a political speech, Mr. President? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. All I can say is, off the record, that I hope nothing will be printed about these schools because somebody will say that I am trying to practise professional architecture without

a license.

Q Have you read the story in the paper about the Maine returns?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I only got -- whatever it was -- the city edition of the Times this morning. They had about -- what? 125 districts out of something, 600. I haven't had any more.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

Q I think that is where we came in; that was the first question asked you.

Q We will do better on Friday.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #680,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 13, 1940, 11.09 A.M.

Q (Mr. Godwin) What is it? The old filibuster?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Thought perhaps you might be having a filibuster somewhere.

THE PRESIDENT: No. It is the old memory. I forgot it (the Press Conference). That is all it was. I forgot it was Friday the thirteenth.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I see.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got to apologize to everybody for being late. I guess it is the old Friday the thirteenth jinx. I told Earl (Mr. Godwin) I just plain forgot it was Friday.

I have got two things that are of some interest. The first was an Executive Order yesterday -- it wasn't an Executive Order, it was a Proclamation, which subjects the following additional materials to license requirements for export from the United States:

"Equipment used for the production of aviation motor fuel and tetraethyl lead or any plans or specifications useful in the design, construction, or operation of such equipment or in connection with such processes. Plans, specifications and descriptive or technical information of any kind setting forth the design or construction of aircraft or aircraft engines."

And these items are in addition to the products themselves, and Steve (Mr. Early) has got a copy of it for you. In other words, that is merely an attempt to tighten up on the processing of certain gasoline, to keep it from going out, except under a license.

Another item is a Message that is going up in fifty minutes, which is not for release until it is delivered, either to the House or the Senate. I can tell you about it now. I have got a copy of it. Steve (Mr. Early) will have plenty of copies for you.

It is for the information of the Congress that (reading)

"The National Defense Advisory Commission on September 6, 1940 unanimously agreed to and adopted general principles governing the letting of national defense contracts. On August 31, the Commission also unanimously adopted a statement of labor requirements as a guide for contractors who have received national defense orders from the United States Government.

"I consider these two documents to be of such importance as to justify my sending them to the members of the Senate and the House of Representatives as a matter of information. The values of these policies and principles to the government, to industry, agriculture, labor and to the country, sectionally and as a whole, will be seen at once."

And then it goes on to describe the general principles governing the letting of defense contracts. (Reading)

"1. Speed of delivery of all items on the Defense Program is essential. This means:"

I am just summarizing as I go along. (Reading)

- "a) That orders should be placed in such a manner as to insure the most efficient use of each particular facility from the point of view of the program as a whole;
- "b) That proper consideration should be given to contributory industries, such as the machine tool industry, to avoid creating underlying bottle-necks;
- "c) That once delivery dates are fixed, assurance be given that they will be met by the supplier.

"2. Proper quality is also of prime importance. It is therefore necessary to determine first of all whether or not the supplier can meet the quality requirements, as specified. There should be a willingness on the part of both the Army and Navy, on the one hand, and of the supplier on the other, to adjust specifications on a cooperative basis in order that such specifications may come as near as possible to meeting commercial standards while at the same time fulfilling the military requirements.

"3. Price, while not the sole consideration, is of outstanding significance, and every effort must be made to secure a fair price. This must take recognition, among other things, of determination of proper cost factors.

"4. The impact of the defense program upon the consumers must be recognized. This relates to such factors as:

- "a) Due regard to the necessity of protecting civilian needs and morale;
- "b) Proper health and housing conditions among employees;
- "c) Consideration to possible off-season production in order to dovetail the military program into production for civilian requirements. Off-season production should also lead to lower overhead and consequently to lower prices for both the consumers and the Government."

I think probably the easiest illustration of that is the garment industry and, as you know, the garment industry in the country has, roughly, two slack periods in the course of each year and, in making garments for the Army or the Navy we are trying to dovetail the orders in so that they can be, in part at least, filled in those slack seasons of the normal garment industry. That means less dislocation of the industry than if we try to put up completely new plants for it. (Reading)

"5. Adequate consideration must be given to labor. This means compliance with the principles on this subject stated by the Commission in its release of August 31st, copy of which is attached hereto.

"6. Undue geographic concentration of orders should be avoided, both as to procurement districts and as to industrial sections within any such procurement district."

In other words, that is to give us a geographic spread. (Reading)

"Reasons for such decentralization relate to factors of military strategy, as well as avoiding congestion that will slow down production.

"7. Financial responsibility of the supplier should be examined. Ability to post a bond does not necessarily dispose

of this problem. The probability should exist that the supplier will be able to continue in business, at least long enough to complete his contract satisfactorily. Further, an ability to finance himself through private sources should take preference over necessity for securing government aid.

"8. The avoidance of congestion of transportation facilities should be sought. The same applies to warehousing facilities.

"9. Due consideration should be given to the adequacy of power facilities, particularly where furnished by public utilities.

"10. A general preference should be given to firms having experience with so-called educational orders.

"11. The moral responsibility of the supplier is important, and in some respects, fundamental. There should be evidence of honest and sincere desire to cooperate with the Army and Navy in producing what is called for, and on time, without profiteering; to assume some risks himself rather than attempting to shift all such risks to the Government; and to furnish a correct statement as to his capacity and his experience. The supplier's general standing and reputation among reputable business men (as distinct from his financial rating) is one index of such qualifications.

"12. The Commission recognizes that competitive bidding is the better procedure in certain types of industry and circumstances. However, it is often impossible to make sure that the principles outlined above are followed when contracts are placed on the basis of price alone and are let to the lowest bidder. Therefore, in cases where competitive bidding will not fulfill the above stated needs of national defense, the Commission recommends that the use of the negotiated contract be authorized where necessary in order that these objectives be obtained in making defense purchases."

Then that is based on the labor policy that they passed the previous resolution on, which is very important. They have had that, haven't they, Steve (Mr. Early)?

MR. EARLY: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: You have had that. It is very well worth reading again because it carries certain desires, objectives relating to all this rearmament work. That is worth carrying again, if you will refer to

it, because it is part of the whole scheme.

That is being sent to the Congress today so as to keep the Congress acquainted with what is going on.

Q Is that point one in there general enough to take care of priorities?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q That is one of the reasons for point one, the priorities?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The other one as to licensing --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes?

Q Is that part of the Department of Justice plan of keeping patents in this country? In other words, not having international cartels?

THE PRESIDENT: Patents, designs, formulas, et cetera and so on.

Q This interchange of patents with foreign countries, that will stop that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but that is only incidental.

Q That reminds me to ask you, are you aware of any action you might take with regard to scrap steel or iron in some of these licensing policies?

THE PRESIDENT: No. On scrap steel and iron there have been a great many suggestions, by people who do not know the whole story, about starting a pickup campaign for tin cans and old scrap iron. We would, undoubtedly, from that get a good deal if it were needed, but the cost of such a local campaign is fairly high and the question of transportation is involved. The experts tell me it is not yet necessary.

Q I was thinking particularly of some possible action of yours with regard to --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, on the export thing. That is a different thing. I am not ready on that yet.

Q Any comment on the passage of the Transportation Act?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet; it has not come to me yet.

Q Mr. President, back again to your Proclamation, is there anything in that which can be construed to limit or restrict the international circulation of technical magazines and other publications which, from time to time in the past, have carried certain plans of aircraft engines and designs and, in fact, they had some that we never knew about before.

THE PRESIDENT: You had better ask somebody. I do not know.

Q Who would you recommend, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I would ask Knudsen and Stettinius, those two. They probably know a lot more about it than I do.

Q Mr. President, there are some reports that the success of the anti-aircraft barrage in London is due to the use of American range finders on guns. Have we released our detector to the British?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q We have not?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment to make on your conference on Monday on the St. Lawrence Waterway?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only thing that can be said on the St. Lawrence is this: On this question of defense needs, the immediate thing seems to be to look forward to the need for additional power as entirely distinct from navigation and we are making, we are talking now with the Canadians and among ourselves about the possibility of

the development of more power. But that leaves out entirely the question of navigation. In other words, the power factor looks as if it might be serious in the course of the next two or three years, and to develop power takes two or three years.

Q Mr. President, do you plan to send to the Senate soon the convention adopted at Havana in July?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

MR. EARLY: Yes, I think that is ready, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve thinks it is ready but you had better check.

Q Do you plan, on the St. Lawrence, to send any Message to Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: That I do not know. I mean, we haven't got to that stage yet. Certainly everybody will be kept in touch with it.

Q It won't be immediate?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q That would not prejudice the development of navigation at any future time?

THE PRESIDENT: No. But that is not the immediate problem before us.

Q Have you any week-end plans, sir, you want to announce?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I thought I would go down the river, to give you all a holiday, tomorrow afternoon late and come back Sunday afternoon.

Q Anything about your plans for next week, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends a little bit. I am going up to the 200th Anniversary of the University of Pennsylvania and whether I do anything else up there depends largely on Congress, because I am told by the press that they might adjourn the end of next week.

Q Well, sir, they have anticipated --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Or recess. Now do not get it wrong.

Adjourn or recess. It is up to them. (Laughter)

Q Which do you think they should do?

THE PRESIDENT: It does not make any difference, in my judgment, whether they recess or adjourn because, obviously, if anything is needed in the way of legislation, they would come right back whenever it was needed.

Q Have you anything to say about the cornerstone laying at the Washington Airport?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is on for --

MR. EARLY: (interposing) Tuesday afternoon.

THE PRESIDENT: Tuesday afternoon. I would like, you know, out there to tell the history of the legislation of the building of the port without legislation, but I am going to leave that to the local papers. (Laughter)

President Coolidge started it, didn't he?

Q I think so.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I wasn't around when he started it. I know this much: when you get through with that thing, there are about four or five thousand relief workers from Washington that have got to find other jobs. Can you start something else? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, scrape the old bean and give me a suggestion.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Commissioner Young and I are doing that.

THE PRESIDENT: That is all right; that is fine.

Q Are you considering making our ports available to British warships, if necessary?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, my God; I don't know what you mean. I should say

that is a double "if" question. (Laughter)

Q What?

MR. EARLY: Double "if."

THE PRESIDENT: Double "if."

Q Can you tell us what items will be needed in the final Deficiency Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: It is in the Budget at the present time. Of course, the great bulk of it will undoubtedly be the pay and maintenance and housing and food of the National Guard and the selective service people. I cannot give you any figures but that will be the great bulk of the bill.

Q Will there be anything necessary, Mr. President, any appropriation at all necessary in this session for the new Naval bases?

THE PRESIDENT: No; no.

Q May I ask one more question about the St. Lawrence Waterway? Are you contemplating hooking up the St. Lawrence with the grid system that was discussed some time ago?

THE PRESIDENT: What system?

Q The grid system, connecting New England with the T.V.A.?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think so. I don't think it has anything to do with preliminary plans. What we are concerned about is the immediate need for power on both sides.

Q Any news on the Labor Board?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Soon?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know.

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

(General Watson spoke to the President.)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes; General Pershing is coming in this afternoon to get the D.S.C. in the presence of the Cabinet at 3.30.

Q Who?

THE PRESIDENT: General Pershing; eightieth birthday. Giving him the D.S.C. It will be a nice party. I do not know whether we will allow the photographers in or not.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #681,

Held while the President was seated in his automobile, just before leaving the Philadelphia Navy Yard, September 20, 1940, 11.30 A.M., D.S.T.

(The President had just completed his inspection of the Navy Yard on League Island, the inspection trip having included the various shops; two of the new type torpedo boats, near completion; the battleship WASHINGTON, launched and 70 per cent completed; the battleship NEW JERSEY, under construction, and the keel of the WISCONSIN.

The President also inspected the shops of the Naval Aeronautical Station, saw some of the pursuit planes under construction and had demonstrated to him a biplane which took off from the ground with a short run of not more than fifteen feet.

Seated in the car with the President during the inspection trip were Senator Guffey and Mr. Kelly of Philadelphia and Admiral A. E. Watson. Captain McCleary met the President's car at the exit gate and participated in the Conference.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you have seen an awful lot, a great deal more than any of you realize, and just as a general idea you have seen one of the new battleships over 70 per cent completed (the WASHINGTON), and alongside of the keel of the NEW JERSEY that has been laid. A great deal of structural material is on hand for her. And then there is another ways alongside of that, which will be occupied by the Wisconsin.

We are speeding up on the construction and some of those shops are new; in fact, most of the shops have been put in, the larger shops, in the last few years.

Then, let us see, the aviation plant, which was my child originally, when did I build it? 1916? I think so.

ADMIRAL WATSON: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: 1916. That was the first effort on the part of the Government to go in for its own aviation manufacturing and ex-

perimental work. About a third of the plant is now used for manufacturing, confined principally to what? training planes?

CAPTAIN McCLEARY: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: There will be, shortly, the production of sixty a month, most of the planes going from here to Pensacola. That is about one-third of their work, and the other two-thirds is Naval experimental work. Captain, what else? Oh, on the total number employed --

CAPTAIN McCLEARY: (interposing) About 19,000 men.

ADMIRAL WATSON: About 19,000 men in the yard today.

THE PRESIDENT: Taking them all together. In 1941 you will get up to what? 25,000?

CAPTAIN McCLEARY: Almost 30,000.

THE PRESIDENT: Almost 30,000 by next year. A year ago what did we have? about 8,000?

CAPTAIN McCLEARY: 8,000, about that; yes, sir.

ADMIRAL WATSON: The expansion started when we started to recondition.

THE PRESIDENT: Then another thing is this: The expansion in this yard dated from the order of last September putting a portion of the old destroyers back in commission and, as I remember it, we had here, that you put back, about thirty, I think.

ADMIRAL WATSON: Yes, sir,

THE PRESIDENT: About thirty of the old destroyers of those were back here in the basin.

ADMIRAL WATSON: About fifty originally.

THE PRESIDENT: But last September only about thirty were recommissioned. And you see, now they are recommissioning the final lot

of the destroyers and the final lot of the old submarines.

ADMIRAL WATSON: Everything that can be restored to use.

Q (Mr. Cornell) Any of those destroyers part of the fifty? (Referring to the fifty to be turned over to Great Britain)

THE PRESIDENT: You saw some of the famous fifty this morning.

(Mr. Durno said something, in an inaudible tone, about a destroyer No. 81, which the motorcade had passed.)

THE PRESIDENT: Fifty. You heard me the first time. (Laughter)

Q Are you pleased with the progress you have seen here?

THE PRESIDENT: Very much. This whole thing is a very amazing illustration of what has been done in the Navy Yards. One of the interesting things is that we are stepping up on our time -- the time of construction is a great deal less than it was a year ago and the time of repair is less than what it was a year ago. We are learning the art of speed in an emergency.

I cannot think of anything else, can you?

CAPTAIN McCLEARY: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: We are going to the Naval Hospital now.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #682,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 24, 1940, 3.03 P.M.

Q Here we are again.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. How were things over the week end? I did not hear a peep.

Q We kept them very quiet.

THE PRESIDENT: How was the bowling? (Referring to the bowling match held in Poughkeepsie)

Q Pretty well, a few broken backs and a few Charley horses.

Q Still trying to get a date for that game at Lowell Thomas'. It is darned near impossible, I guess.

THE PRESIDENT: A lot of his teams quit on him. They are voting the other way and he cannot hold them together.

Q Well represented here this morning. (Referring to the number of newspapermen in the room)

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have got a blessed thing.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think the only thing I have Steve (Mr. Early) stole from me and gave to you about this communications study committee. I do not think there is anything else.

Q Can you tell us anything of the conversations with the oil people that have been going on?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I cannot. You will have to ask the Attorney General and the people who saw him. The only person I saw was -- what is his name? -- was Rosier (Mr. Charles Rosier) and he said so far it is going along all right.

Q Mr. President, is any consideration being given to an embargo or any other economic measure against Japan because of this Indo-China business?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask the Secretary of State. I have not seen him yet since I got back and I am going to see him later on this afternoon. I don't know.

Q Did you say this discussion was on anti-trust (that we are) to see the Attorney General?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment on your conference with Mayor McDonough (Mayor John McDonough), of St. Paul this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No. He came in at the same time with the Mayor of Atlanta and I shook him warmly by the hand and had a very nice social visit. We did not talk politics.

Q Mr. President, on the subject of oil, there have been some suggestions that there might be a new effort to put that Cole Bill through that is up there for Federal regulation. You remember last spring you wrote a letter asking the House Interstate Commerce Committee to do something about Federal regulation of the oil industry. Was that discussed by any chance?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we did not discuss that.

Q Nothing --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You know the general attitude is that as long as it can be regulated without Federal regulation -- and, as I remember it, the Cole Bill did not set up Federal regulation. I have not heard anything of the Cole Bill for several months.

Q Still hoping --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Right.

It is a dull day; I do not know a thing.

Q Can you give us any background on why, up to this point, no nomination of a conscription director has been sent up?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not got around to it, that is all. We have been working pretty hard, over time, as you know.

Q Going to sign that Export-Import Bill shortly?

THE PRESIDENT: It has not come to me yet. It ought to be here. I don't know even if it has come down to the White House. Do you know?

GENERAL WATSON: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know if it has actually got here yet but when it comes, it goes over to the Attorney General.

Q Mr. President, on the subject of coal, there is a bill which has passed the Senate and is now in the House Committee to set up a Federal safety inspection of mines. Will you comment on that and the bill, as to whether you favor the idea?

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't that the bill the Bureau of Mines recommended or supported?

Q Yes, it was recommended.

THE PRESIDENT: I can only talk to you background on it, that the objective is probably necessary because we have been having too heavy casualties in mines, due to what might be called the uncoordinated or insufficient inspection. Now, on this particular bill I cannot say anything because I do not know what it contains, but the objective is to make working in mines safer. And I think the Bureau of Mines has approved it.

Q Mr. President, do you care to comment on the conscientious objector on the Selective Service Bills?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not unless you can define what a conscientious objector

is, and you cannot do it, so I cannot answer.

Q Mr. President, --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Read some of the volumes of regulations as they come out. That is the easiest way. I did not even read the whole two volumes, I had to have them briefed for me before I approved them.

Q When will we get the remainder of those volumes?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know, Fred (Mr. Essary). They will be briefed for me as soon as they come across this way. Of course you will read them all?

Q (Mr. Essary) Oh, without a doubt. (Laughter)

Q Is there anything new that you can tell us on the St. Lawrence Waterway?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not heard a peep since we talked about it last.

Q Mr. President, there have been complaints or, at least, objections -- not complaints -- from one or two communities. In the City of Philadelphia, particularly, they are complaining about the fact that they do not have the money to pay their local registration boards for the work to be done on the sixteenth of October, and they do not quite know how to get it done. Any comment you can make?

THE PRESIDENT: That is complaint No. 2. I got a telegram yesterday from one man in a rural county -- I won't even say where -- that they wanted to be paid, and that is the only county out of 3,150 that has objected to the voluntary system. And I have heard nothing from Philadelphia.

Q Without mentioning the City of Philadelphia, is there any general feeling that you have on that subject, sir, of cooperation from the local communities? (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, only this: that I have talked in the last two months, I think it was, with lots and lots of governors, almost every governor that has been in here, and almost every mayor that has been in here. I said, "What do you think about paying these draft boards or making them voluntary?" and I haven't had, so far, a single recommendation for pay. Now, that is a pretty good general cross section of the country because all you have to do is to check back and see the governors and mayors that I have seen in the last two or three months. As they say, it covers the country like the dew.

Q Mr. President, in connection with the St. Lawrence development of power and navigation, is there any plan for the improvement of the scenic spectacle at Niagara Falls?

THE PRESIDENT: The scenic spectacle? (Laughter)

Q I thought I'd fool you on that one. I wanted to say that instead of "beautiful."

THE PRESIDENT: I will tell you, the only thing I can think of is more floodlights. (Laughter) (Shaking his hands in negation) That is a bad pun, isn't it?

Q In view of your recent trip to New England and the inspection of Naval facilities up there and other defenses, do you think there should be additional coastal defenses along the New England shoreline?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean guns and permanent emplacements?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: I feel there should be no more. In other words, I have ceased talking in terms of 1890.

Q Excuse me for asking.

Q Have you set a date when you will go up to dedicate the new Pennsylvania turnpike?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Well, that road is ready to be used (laughter) and the Commission -- some of the Commissioners say they are losing a lot of tolls every day that you do not go up and open it.

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't they open it and dedicate it afterwards?

Q Is that all right?

THE PRESIDENT: It is all right with me. You know, my engagements -- I cannot make them far ahead and I can only make little flying trips these days. I hope to get there as soon as I can but I cannot set a date.

Q You think they ought to open it and --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I do not know about their finances but, as you say, if they are losing money, it is a good way out.

Q On these gun emplacements, you said you should not talk in terms of 1890?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think all you have to do is to read the papers for the last year and find out all about it.

Q Mr. President, do you contemplate a trip out to Ohio to look over the defenses out there?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I wanted to go. As you know, I wanted to make these flying trips within an overnight radius and I would like very much to go and see what they are doing in the general Pittsburgh area, and I would like to see what they are doing on aviation in several places.

Q Is there anything definite in that connection, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that I have been asked to speak at the opening of that new short-wave station in Cincinnati, which is supposed to send broadcasts to Latin America. They have set the opening date for around

the twelfth of October, Columbus Day I think it was. I do not believe I can get as far as Cincinnati because I think I would be a little far off first base. I would like to go out and see some of the aviation factories and fields on the other side of the Alleghenies as long as I do not get too far off base. I haven't got anything specific in the way of plans.

Q Mr. President, could you comment on this Harriet Elliott's report on nutrition as a problem of national defense?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't know. Nutrition -- of course, here is the thing that everybody ought to keep in mind: We are trying to keep the words "national defense in an emergency" limited, as far as possible, when we use that term, to things that definitely and directly affect the immediate problem of national defense.

Now, of course -- well, for example, as to whether ladies are eligible for White House Press Club dinners, is a matter of national defense, but it is not immediate. Do you see what I mean? As to whether my Christmas trees are a success this year, in the long run affects the national prosperity as well as my own. But, in the same way, you can talk about health and education and things like that. The matter of health, nationally, is an exceedingly important thing for the ultimate defense but not the immediate defense of this country, except in one particular. The same thing with education. Malnutrition of children is a serious thing in this country. Now, what this Defense Council is limiting itself to is not the general nutrition problem of young people all over the United States, but it does relate to malnutrition or good nutrition among the children of people employed in turning out defense things. As, for example, if you start a new

plant. I always go back to the old Bridgeport case, where you double or treble the population of the normal city, as we did in 1917 and 1918. There are not enough doctors to go around. The food supply is insufficient, locally. There are not enough schools to go around. So you have, in some way, to look after the health and the education of that extra hundred thousand people, which has suddenly come to town. The work of the Defense Council draws the line somewhere between the immediate needs, because of this present current defense program, and the general definition of what is going to be good for the country in the next fifty or one hundred years. Do I make myself clear? I draw the line -- I have to.

Q Have you received a protest from the Pittsburgh Board of Education against this proposed \$40,000,000. appropriation for N.Y.A. for training for national defense purposes -- industrial training?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it.

Q They are supposed to have sent you a wire of protest and they are pretty much aroused. They say it ought to be done by the schools.

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it.

Q Along the lines of your coast defenses, is it because we have acquired these British bases that no further work is needed on them?

THE PRESIDENT: What bases?

Q British?

THE PRESIDENT: Where?

Q Is it because we have acquired the outlying bases from the British that no further coast defenses are needed here?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. The answer is "No." (Laughter)

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #683,
Executive Offices of the White House,
September 27, 1940, 10.50 A.M.

(Mr. Godwin told the President that Mark Sullivan was wearing Indian moccasins.)

THE PRESIDENT: Is he, really?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Is he here?

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I think we ought to have an exhibit afterwards on the big table.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes, a war dance.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Just a little light pleasantry in the front row. Some of the colleagues of Mark are telling me about what he has got on his feet, and I suggested a little exhibit of Indian moccasins on the big table outside afterwards -- admission ten cents. (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) That is Tammany stuff. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know where Mark is but I am told he is here.

Q (Mr. Sullivan) I am here, Mr. President. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think I have got anything today. I am going to leave tomorrow night, probably fairly late, around six, seven o'clock, and go down the river and up the bay to Aberdeen Proving Grounds, getting there on Monday morning, about 200 miles, and inspect the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, and if you people, the whole gang goes with me, if you want to meet me there about ten o'clock in the morning, I think you can make it in about two hours by motor or train. And then we will

spend about an hour there and then be met by cars and motor back to the Martin bombing plant -- the Martin whatever they call it -- the Martin Company plant, which is -- what? -- the northeast section of Baltimore, and from there go to Camp Meade, which I have never seen, although I was here in Washington at the time it was being built. We will get back here to the White House about four o'clock in the afternoon. No speeches.

Q Will you stop at the Chemical Warfare plant? It is within a stone's throw of Aberdeen.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I suppose so. I think so. Fred (Mr. Essary), is there anything else I should see around there?

Q (Mr. Essary) Yes, sir; there are a few little matters over there that I will confide to you. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: All right. (Laughter) You and Pa (General Watson) can go into conference. It is all right.

Q Mr. President, you are aware of the tripartite treaty -- I believe they call it -- between Japan, Germany and Italy, signed this morning? You know about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't -- I just heard the rumor. I cannot say anything about it because I haven't had anything official.

Q It was not unexpected, was it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well -- yes and no.

Q Will they inform you, Mr. President, of the treaty officially?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I suppose we will get news of what has been done. They may have it in the State Department by now.

Q They never have. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I am sending to the Senate a long list of appointments, which

look formidable, but they are merely to bring the rank in the Army up to the very large number of additional men who will be in the service. There are about thirty, I think, something like that, brigadier generals to be promoted to major generals, in other words the rank of a division commander, and a lot of colonels to be promoted to brigadier generals.

The point that I think should be made in fairness is that these are all temporary promotions, which can be rescinded at any time in the event of a lesser number of men. It is applying, in the case of the Army, what we did in the World War -- gave all sorts of people temporary rank because of the importance of the command, and when the war was over they reverted to their regular rank. Just in the same way, in the Navy we have a number of admirals and vice admirals. The title goes with the place and, as soon as you leave the place, you go back to where you were before.

There is only one thing -- this is off the record -- at the request of Mr. Early, who was not promoted, he wanted me to call your special attention to his colleague, Mr. Watson, who was promoted (laughter), and there is a little hard feeling in the office about it (laughter), but that is a thing --

Q (Mr. Godwin, interposing) Is Pa a major general? Is that right?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (Laughter)

(Mr. Godwin exclaimed, "Uh, uh!" in what your reporter might describe as a mixture of cynicism and amusement.)

Earl says, "Uh, uh!" What do you mean by that? (Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) What division will he command?

THE PRESIDENT: You see, the White House staff is getting so frightfully big.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Are they going to have any privates around here?

THE PRESIDENT: You come to me afterwards and we will work out your rank.

Q Any political significance to your weekend trip?

THE PRESIDENT: Political significance? Figure it out, please. I can't.

Q Mr. President, have you decided on a director of the draft, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q May I ask, Have you decided whether it will be an officer of the Army or a civilian?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't tell you, Earl (Mr. Godwin), because we have -- this is off the record again -- we have selected a person and the question is whether he can accept the place and we have not heard yet.

Q Mr. President, there is a report that the British are not as eager for the flying fortresses as they were because the present flying fortresses have no rear gun turrets, and that negotiations have now about been completed so that the British get at least half the present production of new flying fortresses. Can you tell us the facts on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know anything about it.

Q In view of the need of the national defense, do you plan to put an embargo on the export of oil?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask the State Department, Constantine (Mr. Brown).

Q Mr. President, have you followed your customary procedure, or the procedure which has become customary, of sealing certain and sundry envelopes of political predictions this year?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q They are all sealed?

THE PRESIDENT: I have got one right here in the desk. But you know I always understate things. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, will free entry of fish processed in Newfoundland by the German Sea Foods Company be a condition of leasing the base there?

THE PRESIDENT: Of what?

Q Fish processed in Newfoundland by the German Sea Foods Company be a condition of leasing the base there? There have been stories published in Newfoundland that it will be one of the factors in leasing the Newfoundland base?

THE PRESIDENT: I saw the gentlemen who came back the other day, who have been selecting sites, and fish were not even mentioned. I did not even ask them whether there were fish. I am sorry. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, have you had occasion to talk with or get a report from General Strong on his operations in London?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not seen him yet. I expect to see him tomorrow or Monday or Tuesday. I have a preliminary report, which is just a summary, and the main report is now being written.

Q Can you tell us whether you agree with his conclusion that the British can and will win the war?

THE PRESIDENT: You do not even know what is in the report, do you? In other words, it is a purely confidential summary to me, that is all.

Q I have reference to his statements?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you any report from Admiral (Thomas C.) Hart of Shanghai on conditions in the International Settlement?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask the State Department. I suppose between the State Department and the Navy we get reports at least once a day and have right along for several years.

Q Is Major General Watson going to stay at the White House?

THE PRESIDENT: Stay there?

Q At the White House?

THE PRESIDENT: Do you mean I have to give him a room in the White House?
he

Q You said when/ goes to the place he gets the rank and when he leaves it he gives up the rank, or something like that. I was just wondering whether there is going to be a change in his status?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just one of those rank stories. That is all right.

(Laughter)

Q (Mr. Godwin) God Almighty! that is terrible. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, any thought being given to additional licenses on exports?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing special. Of course they are checking all the time on a great many different things. I don't think there is anything new on that, Pete (Mr. Brandt).

Q Mr. President, have you taken up the question of appointing a new Transportation Board under the Transportation Act?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not. I have not done a thing about it.

Q How about the Labor Board?

THE PRESIDENT: Same thing, no news. Same thing with the Naval Academy Board -- no news yet. That is the celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the Naval Academy. Baltimore papers please copy.

Q (Mr. Essary) They will. (Laughter)

Q The last time an official party visited the Aberdeen Proving Grounds Lester Barlow attempted to knock over some goats for the boys. Will they try to have some such show with an aerial torpedo?

THE PRESIDENT: I think there are no goats this trip. You will be perfectly safe in going. It is all right. (Laughter)

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #684,

This Conference was held in two parts, a morning Conference at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, after completion of an inspection tour through the Grounds; and an afternoon Conference at Fort Meade, following completion of the inspection there, September 30, 1940.

(The President had transferred from the POTOMAC to the RANGER about 10.00 A.M. Shortly thereafter he disembarked from the RANGER at the dock and immediately started on his tour of inspection. Seated in his car with the President were Assistant Secretary Patterson, Governor O'Connor and Major General Wesson. In the order named, the President inspected 8-inch railway mounts, 37-mm. anti-aircraft guns, 90-mm. antiaircraft guns, 3-inch antiaircraft guns, B-17-A and B-23 bombers, tanks and other mobile equipment, including mounts for antitank guns and antiaircraft guns. He inspected, at close hand, various types of submachine guns, a Springfield army rifle, and was given a firing demonstration of the new Garand rifle. He was shown the various types of shells in use for antiaircraft and anti-tank guns. There was also drawn up for his inspection various types of artillery and trench weapons, one of the latter being demonstrated to him.

Upon completion of the inspection at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, and just prior to leaving the grounds, the following Press Conference was held at 11.45 A.M.)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you have seen just what I saw. They are getting along awfully well. You saw a lot of things that have just begun to come into production and also quite a number of things that are still models that have not yet got into production but the contracts for which have been let.

Anything else, Bob (Assistant Secretary Patterson)? We are talking about the guns and tanks.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY PATTERSON: That covers it, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that covers it pretty well except this, that we have got to the point now, from what you have seen today, to where we can say that while we are continuing to experiment, this type is the

standard type and will be manufactured and carried out without change. That means greater speed.

One of the difficulties in the World War, as the General (Major General Wesson) said, was that we spent an awful lot of time, practically all the way through the war, in changing the design after the contract had been let.

Q Specifically, Mr. President, to what are you referring?

THE PRESIDENT: Guns, tanks. Guns of all kinds, including bombs and aviation.

Q How long a time, Mr. President, do you think this standardization will take?

THE PRESIDENT: It is standardized today.

Q That antitank gun that was bogged down there, was that standard?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I did not even see it bog down.

Q It got out, anyway.

THE PRESIDENT: He says it got out.

MAJOR GENERAL WESSON: The gun did not bog down, it was the commercial truck that bogged down.

ASSISTANT SECRETARY PATTERSON: Very good.

MAJOR GENERAL WESSON: It wasn't one of Mr. Knudsen's.

THE PRESIDENT: As long as it wasn't one of his trucks it is all right.

Can you think of anything else, General?

MAJOR GENERAL WESSON: No, sir. I think you have given a very good description of it.

Q I understand you are the first President ever to visit this place?

THE PRESIDENT: Really? Really? Well, it carries me back -- this is an old story -- to 1917 when we had a joint conference, the Army and Navy, and decided that we would put a joint proving ground down at Solomon's Island. Having decided that, there was some trouble over the price of

Solomon's Island, so we moved up here and down to Dahlgren. That's how it happened.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

(Accompanying the President in his car during the ride from Aberdeen Proving Grounds to the Glenn Martin plant were Mr. Knudsen, Assistant Secretary Patterson and Governor O'Connor. On arrival at the Glenn Martin plant, Mr. Glenn Martin was invited into the President's car and explained the operations as the President made his tour of inspection through the plant. The President's car was driven into one building where small parts were being stamped and fitted together for inclusion in the new bombing planes. He also inspected at close hand the final assembly lines in the hangar set aside for the Army bombing planes.

Following the inspection at Glenn Martin, the President motored to a secluded spot off the main highway, where luncheon was served to the President and his entourage.

Luncheon was concluded about 2 P.M., and the party started for Fort Meade. Seated in the President's car in the ride, along the outskirts of Baltimore, to Fort Meade, were Governor O'Connor, Senators Tydings and Radcliffe and Mayor Jackson. Mayor Jackson left the President's car on reaching the Baltimore city line.

Colonel Gilbert M. Allen met the President at the entrance to Fort Meade and was invited into the President's car. The President immediately started on his tour of inspection through Fort Meade.

The President was particularly interested in the new barracks being constructed to accommodate the draftees. The construction operations were explained to the President by Major S. W. McIlwain, Construction Quartermaster in charge of the work.

The following Press Conference was held in front of the Headquarters building just before leaving Fort Meade, at about 3.25 P.M.):

THE PRESIDENT: Gather around and the Colonel (Colonel Allen) will tell you something about this. The gist of it is that we are building up the main center of this Corps Area where the troops will come in, will stay a relatively short time and then go out. The capacity will be increased from what?

COLONEL ALLEN: 2,000.

THE PRESIDENT: To 25,000.

Q What was the first figure?

THE PRESIDENT: 2,000 to 25,000. These barracks here, which are relatively new, are to be turned into the Medical Center for this Corps Area, and will be a 1200-bed military hospital. The other new barracks will be used for troops, and the rest of the troops will be put into those two-story wooden barracks you saw going up. They are ahead of schedule and will be ready to receive the troops as soon as the troops can be sent here, which will be about what? February?

COLONEL ALLEN: No, sir. They will come in between the second and eighth of January.

THE PRESIDENT: The first week in January.

What else shall I tell them, Colonel? Everything seems to be coming along in fine shape.

COLONEL ALLEN: The Recruit Center will be open in December.

THE PRESIDENT: The Recruit Center will be open in December.

Q What is that?

COLONEL ALLEN: The Recruit Center, which will take care of 1500 men. Of course they will stay only for two or three days at a time and then we will turn them over at the rate of 300 men a day.

Q You are spending seven to eight million dollars here?

COLONEL ALLEN: Well, counting the Recruiting Center, practically \$30,000,000. -- no, I mean, \$10,000,000. The Twenty-ninth Division setup will cost about \$7,500,000. The Recruiting Center will cost about \$3,025,000., and then they are now contemplating building temporary barracks to take care of the troops in the first permanent barracks, and I do not know what the cost is.

Q That will run close to \$11,000,000.?

COLONEL ALLEN: It will be more than that when they get the other thing in.

Q Over \$11,000,000.?

COLONEL ALLEN: More than that. I just heard that this was to be done this morning and I have not seen the figures and don't know what it is going to be.

Q You say \$3,025,000 for the Recruit Center?

COLONEL ALLEN: For the Recruit Center.

Q This will be sort of a gigantic receiving barracks for the whole Nation?

COLONEL ALLEN: Just this Corps Area.

Q This is the Reception Center for the Third Corps Area?

COLONEL ALLEN: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q What tank detachment do you have here, sir?

COLONEL ALLEN: The Seventieth, one battalion.

THE PRESIDENT: An antitank battalion.

COLONEL ALLEN: The Ninety-third Antitank Battalion. Then we have an Evacuation Hospital, Ordnance, Quartermaster and Medical Detachments besides.

Q What is the strength here now?

COLONEL ALLEN: 2,000, 2100.

Q Will the tank activities be continued here?

COLONEL ALLEN: I don't know.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know either.

(Mr. Douglas Cornell asked a question, evidently about some of the old World War tanks, of which quite a number were lying in the open field.)

COLONEL ALLEN: Hardly. There are no spare parts for them.

THE PRESIDENT: They have taken about forty of them for training purposes.

Q Is it going to get up to 25,000 next summer?

COLONEL ALLEN: About the first part of February. That is the plan.

Q And that will be National Guard and Selective Service?

COLONEL ALLEN: Yes, and Regular Army.

THE PRESIDENT: The main point is that the reception facilities will be ready when the men are ready.

Q Will they be in tents, some of them?

COLONEL ALLEN: No. All permanent or temporary barracks.

Q All permanent or temporary barracks.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Food and clothing goes with it. It is all right.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #685,
Executive Offices of the White House,
October 1, 1940, 4.05 P.M.

(The President had asked Mr. Godwin why he had not taken the trip to Aberdeen, Glenn Martin plant and Fort Meade. Mr. Godwin replied to the effect that he let the other fellows do that.)

THE PRESIDENT: It's just too bad, these poor millionaires like Earl, that they can't go out on trips like that. Just think what they mean.

One thing, this excess profits tax is going to catch them.

Q (Mr. Godwin) I am just worried to death.

THE PRESIDENT: Worried to death and getting thin over it.

Q (Mr. Godwin) Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: (referring to the cigarette case which Mr. Godwin was examining) That is what I wanted.

Q (Mr. Godwin) It is beautiful. I remember the night they gave you that.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It is a grand thing because it is pretty heavy to carry in my pocket, so I keep it on my desk. It keeps them (the cigarettes) from getting too dry.

Q (Miss Craig) What is it?

Q (Mr. Godwin) The Press Club membership gift.

THE PRESIDENT: The women never gave me anything like that. (Laughter)

Q (Miss Craig) You are not a member of our club.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is any particular news except Lowell Mellett has been appointed Administrative Assistant to the

President -- general handy man.

Q Does that relieve him of his duties in the --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Still supervises that work. But that does not mean it will be more than a portion of his time on that.

Q Mr. President, if you have read the papers in the last twenty-four hours you will notice that a Presidential candidate has been subjected to rather harsh treatment in Michigan. I think it was throwing cantaloupes or something at him.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not read it because the only paper I read this morning was the Washington Post and I did not see anything about it in that. But Steve (Mr. Early) told me about it and all I can say is that it is thoroughly reprehensible to do a thing like that. I imagine under the laws of almost every state it is criminal and it is an assault. And the only other thing I can suggest is that Steve says it is an R.F.C. employee and the employee should forfeit employment, of course, for doing a thing like that.

Q What was the last part, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: The employee should forfeit employment for doing a thing like that.

Q The French Ambassador, following a call on you this morning, was represented as having said that you think the United States and the French Governments were in substantial agreement on the French proposal to fortify Martinique. Will you comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Who said that?

Q The French Ambassador.

THE PRESIDENT: He did?

Q I did not hear him, sir, but I understand that was the purport.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think they should carry that. It is safer not to.

Q Mr. President, there has been some complaint in the press about the kind of clothes the newspapermen wear. I wondered if you had noticed --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I can tell you why, because I talked about dear old Mark's (Mr. Sullivan's) moccasins, and he said I was guilty of levity, and so I cannot be guilty of levity and therefore I cannot say anything about the other clothes of the Press.

Q Can you tell us anything further about Mr. Mellett's duties as Administrative Assistant?

THE PRESIDENT: Odd jobs.

Q Will that have any connection with press relations, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I haven't the faintest idea.

Q Anybody take his place over there, or will he keep on?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I guess he will keep -- what do they call it? -- a motherly eye over it -- a fatherly eye, I should say.

Q Is J. Warren Madden among those still under consideration for the vacancy on the Labor Board?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any news on it; I wish I did.

Q Have you any objection to the expenditure this year of funds authorized by Congress totalling \$6,000,000. for the Boston Dry Dock?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not know. I did not know I had. What is it for?

Q To expand the facilities of the dry dock. I think you wrote a letter on it.

THE PRESIDENT: I do not remember; I may have. You will have to dig it out for me. Frankly, I have no recollection of it.

Q Mr. President, I have missed the White House news the last three or four hours, at least. Have you made any appointment, or will you make one, for the Director of the Draft?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. I have not heard yet.

Q Mr. President, is there any background you could give us about the fortifying of Martinique?

THE PRESIDENT: We have had absolutely nothing -- at least, we had not a couple of hours ago -- from France in regard to that story, so I just hesitate to talk about it. We have had nothing.

Q Mr. President, you had a lengthy conversation, I think, with the Attorney General, and I believe Mr. Welles (Under Secretary of State) was in part of the time. Can you tell us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I guess it was just happenstance that he (Mr. Welles) came in about the time the Attorney General left, about the same time he was going out. There was no connection.

Q Last Friday, following the Press Conference, the day of the announcement of the mutual aid pact (between Germany, Italy and Japan), you saw a delegation from the British Embassy, also a delegation from a committee to defend America by aiding the allies, and then a Cabinet meeting. Is there anything you can tell us since our last Press Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: Except pure coincidence; that is all.

Q Reading the Washington Post this morning, did you chance to see a story on page one which says there was a broad measure of Administrative support for the proposal to modify or repeal

the Johnson Act, in order to allow the Government --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I never heard about it before and I haven't since.

Q Anything you can tell us about flying fortresses, Mr. President, at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: I do not think there is any news on it at all, one way or the other.

Q Three governors from the Mid-West were in here today. Were you able to give them any assurances that more defense orders will go to the interior?

THE PRESIDENT: They had seen several people on our Defense Council and, I think, the Army and Navy, and I think they were completely reassured on the subject of our building up facilities in the central part of the country as fast as we can do so without loss of time.

Let me talk to you, just for a minute, off the record, on that. Some of you went along yesterday and saw the Martin plant just outside of Baltimore. The question came up -- this is off the record, just for background -- the question came up a little while ago as to adding to the Martin bomber output and we, all of us, wanted to put the necessary addition to the plant, which meant doubling the plant, wanted to put the addition somewhere out in the Middle West, and then came the question of time.

And the production experts believe that to double the plant by putting it, the other part of it, out west under the same management would cost several months in time of starting production over building another unit within a mile of the old plant.

Well, that happened to be the decision on that particular case, that particular company. It is a question of administration, management, et cetera. In the case of some other company, the experts decided they would not lose time by going out to the Middle West. There are a great many management factors that none of us understand. We have to take the word of management experts and it was felt in this particular case that you had yesterday that it was better to build the other plant just one mile from the old plant. In the case of the North American and Curtis Manufacturing and perhaps the Vultee, and one or two others, they felt there would be no loss of time in putting the new plants, instead of the old place, putting them in some new point in the Middle West. So each case is being taken up on the merits of the individual case, with the objective of putting as many new plants in safer places than they would be on either the East Coast or the Pacific Coast, there being certain exceptions to the general rule, as we saw yesterday.

MR. EARLY: The latter part is on the record?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I think not, because that brings in an individual plant. I am just telling you this because I wanted to give you an idea of how they are going about it and the why for it.

Q Can we use this for background without mentioning any plant?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Has there been any disposition on the part of the owners of these plants to insist on the East and West Coasts? They say that freight rates and trained personnel are not available. Is there anything to that?

THE PRESIDENT: I think very little, Pete (Mr. Brandt). They have been very cooperative and it has been decided wholly on the merits and not only on the merits but with the approval of the plants themselves, the companies.

Q Mr. President, to go back to the Draft Director a minute, is President Clarence --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I cannot tell you any names and don't tell me any names. We ought to hear soon.

Q Mr. President, do you have any general observations to make about your trip yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Not any more than I told the boys yesterday, that work is going on and we are trying, as a general proposition, to avoid changes in all kinds of things after the contract has been let. In other words, when we decide on a light tank, to keep on building light tanks of the plan that has been decided on, rather than make minor changes every two or three weeks after the order has been given. The idea is to get production.

Q Mr. President, we had an item from Spain yesterday, apparently cleared through the censor there, to the effect that you had sent some kind of communication to Franco. Is there anything to that at all?

THE PRESIDENT: Certainly I have not, and I do not believe the Secretary of State has, or I would probably have heard about it.

Q Mr. President, is there anything you can tell us about your son, Elliott, getting a captain's commission? There has been some criticism on it.

THE PRESIDENT: No. I read what Hugh Johnson said and I read what

Elliott said about Hugh Johnson and I guess that holds it pretty well.

Q In connection with freezing the designs of munitions for the Army, has any policy been adopted about freezing the designs of ships of the Navy after contracts are let?

THE PRESIDENT: We made very, very great improvements in that, but those improvements have been going on for over two years. In other words, two years ago we gave a hurry-up order to all the yards, private and public, that were building ships. The length of time, three years to build a destroyer, was perfectly terrible and we found the reason that both the yards and private ship-building companies gave was that no sooner had they started to work on blueprints than the (Navy) Department here changed the blueprints on them. For the last two years we have been making steady improvement on retaining and sticking by the original design.

Q And by doing that, sir, you speed up the procurement of ships?
Is that so, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Very much. You take our present destroyers that we are taking, the ones that we let about five years ago they were taking thirty-six months for completion, and the destroyers of the same size that we let this past winter ought to come out in twenty months. Well, that is a whole lot better than thirty-six months.

Q Have you read the article in the New Republic, the current issue, on that subject?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Who by?

Q I think the name was David Mitchell.

THE PRESIDENT: No. Do you know who he is, Dan (Captain Callaghan)?

CAPTAIN CALLAGHAN: No, sir; I have not heard.

Q It was along the same line but it blamed the lack of control over the different bureaus in the Navy Department.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that was one reason, it is perfectly true. I have not read the article but it is perfectly true that there was divergence, as you know, last spring between the Bureau of Engineering and the Bureau of Construction Repair. So we put them both together and you have the Bureau of Ships, and now it is all one bureau, with one man at the head of it, with control both over the designs of hull and machinery.

Q Mr. President, do you have any other travel plans or inspection trips?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I am going up to Hyde Park to dedicate three schoolhouses on Saturday and maybe -- this is purely tentative -- probably not -- it is just possible I may go to Watervliet on Monday and come back here from Watervliet. But, instead of that, I may come straight back here. I do not know yet.

Q Regardless of any particular measures, can you tell us whether or not the Johnson Act should be modified with preference to Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: I have made no recommendations and expect to make no recommendations.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.