

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #740,
Executive Offices of the President,
May 2, 1941, 10.50 a.m., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: Are we taking Earl (Mr. Godwin) with us? I thought you were going to be Apple Blossom Queen (laughter) -- I mean Apple Blossom King.

MR. GODWIN: No, sir.

Q What gender did you say?

THE PRESIDENT: Are you going to do that down there?

(Mr. Godwin laughs)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I thought that's why you were going. I didn't say Applejack King, I said Apple Blossom King. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: I would like to go. They forgot to tell me.

Q You'll have to hitch-hike. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: The Applejack King! (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: In the old days in Dutchess County -- (to the reporter) don't take this down --

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) I may be down there tomorrow.

THE PRESIDENT: That would be nice. Yes, yes.

You have had this mimeographed? (turning to Mr. Early)

MR. EARLY: It's all ready.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have sent a letter to Mr. Knudsen and Mr. Hillman. Steve (Mr. Early) will have it ready for you when you go out. It is:

"My recent discussions with you have emphasized in my mind the urgent necessity of expanding and speeding up the manufacture and use of critical machine tools. I have watched the steady and substantial growth of the machine tool industry during the past months. At the same time I have seen the critical machines in our defense plants used in an ever growing number of hours each

week. I know that this increase has been caused by the hard work of yourselves, of your associates and of the men who manage and work in the plants throughout the nation.

"But it is not enough. The ever increasing demands for munitions, planes and ships, caused by the critical situation which confronts our nation, requires that they be produced in even larger quantities and ahead of the schedules assigned to them. It is essential that industry continue to increase the number of vital machines manufactured and that every single critical machine in the United States be used the maximum number of hours each week.

"Every effort should be made to utilize to the very limit those critical machines; if they be in defense plants by increased hours of operation on the work at hand; if in other plants by finding defense items or parts for them to make or, as a last resort, by moving the tools to defense plants where they may be urgently needed.

"Our problem is to see to it that there is no idle critical machine in the United States. The goal should be to work these machines twenty-four hours a day and seven days a week, relieving the machines only for such time as is required for overhauling and repair.

"The country should be further combed for men who have had experience on these machines. We should ask them to transfer their efforts to this operation which is so essential to our defense. No effort or justifiable expense should be spared in speeding this program, in order to obtain the objective which our national interests require.

"Workers and managers will, I believe, join with you with spirit and determination in pursuing and achieving this goal at the earliest possible moment."

Q. Mr. President, in that connection, have the plans been worked out to speed up plane production by having auto and plane manufacturers turn out about 500 four-engine bombers a month?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you any figures, but naturally, of course, that has been under way for several months; getting auto manufacturers to turn out something. It is not a complete plan -- turning out parts toward a plane.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, your reference to the men to work the machines strikes me as being an interesting part of that letter. I think the

country thinks that there are not enough skilled workers on those machines.

Is that correct?

THE PRESIDENT: There are a great many skilled workers who are capable of running machines who haven't been married to the machine yet. In other words, they are doing something else, and that includes, of course -- a thing which we are beginning to realize from experience, and there are a certain number - not very many - in other words, it's not worth a lead -- all people who are subject to the draft or have actually been taken for Selective Service who are capable of working these machines.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) So the War Department at the present time is making a recheck and a new study, so that we will not turn into an artilleryman, or an infantryman, or engineers, the younger men under 35 who are perfectly capable of running the machines. I might say the same thing -- this re-study based on experience is being made in certain professions. Well, just for example, a young man who is on his way to being a doctor or an engineer, he probably should not be turned into an infantryman because we want to keep the flow of the young men of the country into the -- what might be called -- the necessary defense professions. We know probably that we would need to keep the flow going in doctors and engineers.

I was talking yesterday with the Cabinet -- we were all joking more or less -- as to what professions would work in and what would not, and we decided that lawyers, like myself, and newspapermen, like you, would not come in as an essential profession. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, did you say that you can put these machines on a 24-hour, 7-day basis and they will find enough men --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, we think we can.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, as I happen to be a member of this local draft board machinery, it is perfectly impossible from the War Department's stuff that we have before us to differentiate these men. They have got to get somewhere near the draft or into the Army before the War Department will ever find out that they are capable of working --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, that's it. That's exactly what I mean.

Q Does this imply a new inventory of machine tools in the country?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you that, whether they have got it now or not; I don't know.

Q The National Association of Manufacturers made a great to-do on turning over to Knudsen and Hillman their survey of the middle-sized plants, and the Army and O.P.M. already have the large-sized plants.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Now, how much farther does this go?

THE PRESIDENT: It goes down to the smaller plants.

Q They claim they go down to five-men plants.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that's right. Perhaps the Army had some of them beforehand. They may have had a lot of smaller plants too. In other words, this is a pool of information.

Q What I am trying to get at -- what could Knudsen and Hillman do now?

THE PRESIDENT: Just as I said in the letter. In the first place, to get a pool of all the useful or potentially useful machine tools in the country. Whether it is -- whether there is one of them in the garage at Hyde Park, we will be under the five-men plant basis, right down to the smallest plant that you are talking about.

Number two, either use them where they are, or move them where they can be used.

Q Oh, yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And the third, to comb over the men again to see if we can't get enough of them to man all of these machines.

Q In that connection, what about the man who is already in the Army and it is then found he could operate one of these tools?

THE PRESIDENT: That is part of the study.

Q Shouldn't he be taken out of the Army and put on this job, or would part of his job --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is being studied now.

Q Mr. President, the London reports this morning speak of a British desire for more active participation on our part in the economic blockade of Germany. Would you care to comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: You would have to ask the State Department.

Q It speaks particularly of the desire for general freezing of Axis funds.

Q Do you have a new job for Myron Taylor (President Roosevelt's special representative to the Vatican)? I understand he has taken a house here. Is he going to be given some new set-up?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. I don't think that he is quite ready to work yet. I hope his health will be improved very soon, but I do not think it is to be taken up yet.

Q Is there anything new on the Coast Guard?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Mr. President, did you see John Cudahy's (Ex-Ambassador to Belgium) story this morning that the German government had made a study of a possible invasion of the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, anything new on the appointment of a minister to New Zealand?

THE PRESIDENT: Minister to where?

Q New Zealand.

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't heard a word.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything about the mission of your son,
Captain James Roosevelt?

THE PRESIDENT: About what?

Q About the mission that he is performing?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the faintest idea. You would have to ask the Marine
Corps.

Q Mr. President, as a matter of fact, in your letter to Knudsen, did you say
that there would be sufficient machines supplied so as not to increase
the hours of work?

THE PRESIDENT: We hope so.

Q Mr. President, is there anything new on the appointment of a Supreme Court
Judge?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. (laughter)

CONSTANTINE BROWN: Mr. President, any amount of stories are floating around
about large quantities of gasoline and oil going to Japan persistently
up to now. I have not checked this. It is difficult to check up on
that, but do you know anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: You can get the figures. Of course, you have to differentiate.
When you come down to -- gas and oil is a pretty broad term. I think
the State Department and Department of Commerce have the figures on what
is going out in some of the categories that fall under the term.--I
haven't got them, --

Q Is there any plan --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) -- octanes, and things like that.

Q High strategy.

Q Is there any plan to reduce those exports?

THE PRESIDENT: No. You would have to ask the State Department.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Mr. President --

(laughter)

Q (interposing) Mr. President, there has been a report here that you might transfer some of the administrative agencies to the Middle West.

THE PRESIDENT: No, you know what the housing problem is here. I think that Mr. Carmody (Administrator, Federal Works Agency) has been looking around to see if there was any modest, self-contained unit which could be moved out of Washington to some point nearby.

Q Mr. President, nearby?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got any details.

Q One of the agencies mentioned was the I.C.C. (Interstate Commerce Commission). I thought that might go to the Middle West.

THE PRESIDENT: I hadn't heard that.

Q Thank you, sir.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #741,
Executive Offices of the President,
May 16, 1941, 10.40 A.M., E.S.T.

(Press Conferences for May 6, 9 and 13 were canceled due to minor illness of the President)

MR. GODWIN: How do you feel, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Coming along all right. Still feel a little weak, but otherwise I am coming along all right.

MR. GODWIN: You look swell.

THE PRESIDENT: Complexion is better, and everything else. It's a good thing.

FEMALE VOICE: He looks very nice.

Q I see Steve (Mr. Early) sneaked away.

THE PRESIDENT: Isn't that funny? It appears every time that this Pinehurst tournament is on, something terribly important is on too, and we catch Steve out.

Q Is he inspecting something?

THE PRESIDENT: I understand last night he had to issue the White House statement through McDermott (Michael J. McDermott, Chief, Division of Current Information, State Department).

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

Q We understand it too.

THE PRESIDENT: Poor old Steve called up from Pinehurst this morning. (he laughs)

I don't know why everybody's coming in. I haven't any news, and I haven't prepared any news.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that I have any news. I have got so much that

I haven't even tried to find something for you.

(slight pause here)

Q Mr. President, do you think there is likely to be a change in the status of Martinique?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't answer hypothetical questions.

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Are you asking Admiral Leahy (U. S. Ambassador to France) to come back and report?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a hypothetical question too. I don't think there is anything in it.

Q Mr. President, what is the status of Franco-American relations on the basis of the statement which you issued last night?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is any more news than what you have got; you have got all there is.

Q Er -- if there should be any --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Hypothetical! (laughter)

Q You mean the status, Mr. President?

Q Isn't it true, sir, that you made that statement -- that is, your statement that was made over the heads of the government to the French people?

At least that is the way --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Just spoke for itself.

Q And at the same time our Coast Guard took over?

THE PRESIDENT: That is interpreted perhaps on your part. (he laughs)

Q Does the diplomatic status quo remain?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't frankly do any interpreting, obviously, on things these days. They speak for themselves, and they are too serious to try to interpret.

MR. JOSEPH K. SMITH: Mr. President, if it was necessary to take some action in regard --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) How did you start the sentence? (laughter)
(In a previous Press Conference -- #738 of 4-25-41, Mr. Joseph Kingsbury Smith of I.N.S. had addressed the President "Mr. Secretary".)

Q Mr. President, are there any further steps on French escorting --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I have no news on that.

Q Mr. President --

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) One more chance -- what about those two shiploads of wheat a month?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Really, I don't know.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) That is really a straight answer.

Q The pact at Havana with the 21 American Republics provides for taking over the islands of any European nation if they are a threat to this hemisphere. Do you plan any action?

THE PRESIDENT: You would have to ask the State Department.

Q Mr. President, here is a specific one. Ships will soon leave for North Africa to distribute food there. Has that plan been changed?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know.

Q Mr. President, can we take up a domestic subject for a moment? Did you know in advance about the regulations that the Federal Communications Commission issued two weeks ago on broadcasting?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Can you say how you feel about those personally?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't read them.

Q Thank you.

Q Mr. President, is the Ethridge statement --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q Did you receive --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Did what?

Q Mr. Ethridge's statement to the N.A.B. (National Association of Broadcasters) said that you had been deceived and almost betrayed by --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. I have been thinking -- frankly, it is an awful thing to have to say, but there have been more important things in the last two or three weeks.

Q Mr. President, this is the first opportunity to see you since Secretary Stimson made his speech. Does that speech have your approval, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: You know the usual answer to that question. I have had it so many times and I have always made the same answer.

Q Mr. President, do you intend to send any representative to General De Gaulle's government?

THE PRESIDENT: General who?

Q General De Gaulle's government?

THE PRESIDENT: What about it?

Q Do you intend to send any representative to his government in London?

THE PRESIDENT: Never heard of it at the present time. Not a subject for discussion, obviously.

Q Mr. President, does this dispatch from Vichy indicate the actual --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) From where?

Q From Vichy, indicating the extent to which the French government has agreed to collaborate --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) You would have to ask the State Department about that -- about dispatches. They won't tell you anything. (laughter)

Q I wonder, sir, if you have had any direct communication from Admiral Leahy?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you would have to ask the State Department. They won't tell you.

Q Can you tell us anything about your conference with Commanding Officer King of the Atlantic Fleet?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except that we do it right along.

Q Mr. President, what is the --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Sometimes you hear about it and sometimes you don't.

Q Mr. President, how successful -- how successful do you consider the patrol system to be, as it is now operating?

THE PRESIDENT: How old is Ann? How old is Ann?

Q Well, we thought perhaps that Admiral King answered the question 'How old is Ann?' -- and how successfully the patrol is operating.

THE PRESIDENT: You would have to ask Admiral King. He won't tell you.

Q Mr. President, would you comment, sir --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Now of course, that is a question -- let's be perfectly frank -- you know it is perfectly silly. These things are matters of current action right along, things that happen from hour to hour, from day to day. I cannot talk in hypothetical terms; neither can I answer questions that call for glittering generalities like that last one, for instance, "Is the Atlantic patrol working?" -- a thing like that -- I just can't do it. I am not trying to lay down on this, but those are questions when things are terribly serious that I can't create hypothetical news for all of you good people. You have got to go on facts as they happen. No human being can prognosticate or guess what is going to happen tomorrow.

Q Mr. President, is this specific --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I would like to say all these things, but I just can't.

Q This is a specific instance -- do you recognize the action of the German government in extending combat zones to the Red Sea area?

THE PRESIDENT: I think things -- things of that kind are a question of fact almost entirely. Almost entirely a question of fact.

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In other words, it is a little bit like this -- You remember that way -- way back, I don't know how long ago, certainly a hundred years ago, there was the question of 'when is a blockade', and I am just using that as an analogy, a simile you might say, in which there are a good many points of difference because of change of method in warfare, but along during the -- back as far as -- certainly as far as the Napoleonic era, and possibly before, they were then called blockades, and it became pretty well recognized at that time that a blockade would be -- I won't say recognized, because that was a question more of state departments -- the question of a blockade was its effectiveness. You couldn't simply by a decree create a blockade. Furthermore, the whole idea of blockade involved something else, which was freedom of the seas, which was an historic American policy. I have given you a lead, if you want to follow it up.

In 1803 or 4 -- you all know the story, I have used it so often -- there had been ten years or fifteen years of depredations by the Barbary Corsairs against our commerce. We bought them off. We sent them gold, and finally they demanded a fully fitted-out frigate as a gift, and the United States Government, in order to pay that tribute to assure the

safety of ships over there, actually built and paid for a frigate, armed her, put on her guns, and sent her over as a present to one of the Deys (a governor of Algiers at that time) in North Africa, and hoping to buy peaceful commerce. The thing did not work, and they kept on capturing American ships, and finally it got to the point where they said in effect -- they said, "The Mediterranean is closed to American commerce. We say so." In other words, "We hereby create a blockade of the Mediterranean against American ships." Well, the first question was also the effective number, because they were only able to capture perhaps one ship in a dozen, and number two, it was interfering with the -- with the freedom of the seas, and we sent Commodore Preble over there, and in a couple of years we made the Mediterranean Sea free for American commerce.

A little bit the same thing without the blockade element which happened before that down in the West Indies -- the French privateers, and the English privateers and the Spanish privateers -- mostly French --, and we, without declaring war, we sent the infant Navy down there, and we cleaned up. I think they had something like 101 different actions -- engagements -- in the general West Indian area, and made it -- the whole area -- safe for American shipping. The thing last two and a half years.

Q Do you think --

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Again, freedom of the seas. I don't think -- that's just a little lead for you to follow up. Read the history books about it.

Q Mr. President, what is the present status of the Civilian Defense program, -- Home Defense?

THE PRESIDENT: Almost ready.

Q Where have I heard that before?

THE PRESIDENT: It really is. I really think it is. Probably over the week end or by Monday I will have something on it.

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Mr. President --

Q (interposing) I was just going to ask if there were any modern counterparts of the Barbary pirates?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I told you to use your haid. (the President used this pronunciation) (laughter)

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, has Mr. Hopkins been sworn in, or is he functioning, or what is --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I haven't seen him this morning. Last night he was functioning. (loud laughter)

MISS MAY CRAIG: Has he been sworn in?

THE PRESIDENT: Sworn in? I don't know.

MISS MAY CRAIG: What is his job?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. You will have to ask the fellow that pays him.

MISS MAY CRAIG: I don't know where that is.

THE PRESIDENT: Uh huh!

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Well, ask Bill Hassett to find out for you where he gets his pay. Then go and ask the fellow that pays him. Then go ask the Comptroller General, and then the Treasury. Finally you will find out just how he is functioning.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Well, that's what I would like to find out. (laughter)

MR. RAYMOND P. BRANDT: Mr. President, have you or the -- reached any point yet where you can say anything about a ceiling on price legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think, Pete, the thing is under study at the present time, and I ought to probably begin to get reports on it within -- well, within the next week.

Q Will that include wage rates and other compensation?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know.

Q Mr. President, you saw the Argentine Foreign Minister yesterday. Would you say a word about your visit with him?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we had a very delightful talk, and we talked about the general problem of the Americas, but only in general terms; nothing specific.

Q Mr. President, does our Government consider Petain a free agent?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I would have to do a lot of studying on that question.

Q Mr. President, do you have any suggestion as to whether the million dollars that Secretary Morgenthau suggested could be cut from nondefense expenditures, where that million -- billion -- could be cut?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I would like to have some suggestions on that for the protagonists of that theory. They would be very helpful.

Q Have you asked Secretary Morgenthau for them?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I am asking you for them.

Q I think he would be a better authority.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know there are a great many people who say it is so easy to cut -- why don't they go ahead and cut? Then this group of people who write or ~~talk~~ along this line, you say to them, "Give me a lead for a bill, give me a suggestion." And then the answer is, "I don't know anything about it, it is none of our business". It is a very clever game; beautiful game. Passing the buck. And whose responsibility is it? Well,

I should say at the present time it is primarily the responsibility of the people who say it can be done. (emphasizing)

Q Doesn't that include Mr. Morgenthau, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q He said it could be done, sir?

Q That's right he did.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Do you think it can be done, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: It is up to the people in the House and the Senate who say it can be done. Now, let us hear from them.

MR. GODWIN: Here are three items that have been mentioned -- National Youth and C.C.C., and I think that Farm Parity.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) Those have been definitely mentioned and so far as I know there have been no attempts to follow up that suggestion.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Let's do a little analyzing on those three.

On the N.Y.A. we are turning out at the present time, through N.Y.A., a very large number of men and women -- young men and young women -- who are being taught to be useful in defense industries. Now, that is a tremendously important thing. Now, I don't care particularly what appropriation it comes out of, but we do need their skill. Somebody ought to teach. Therefore, I don't believe that from the practical point of view it would save anything toward this department if we were to cut down on the N.Y.A. and do the same thing -- teaching these people through some other appropriation. It's as short as it's long.

Now the C.C.C. is, of course, a little bit different, because most

of the boys are below the draft age, and something undoubtedly will be done to tie their work in more closely with that of the Selectees. We are not quite ready yet, because frankly we haven't any bill that everybody has approved, but we are working on it.

As to the change -- possible change -- in the Selective Draft age, I think we can be quite certain that the C.C.C. will work in more closely with the general training for National Defense than it is at the present time. Again, if you cut off the C.C.C. you probably spend the same amount of money in other forms of defense in which these same boys would be used. Then the third thing that Earl (Mr. Godwin) suggests is this Agricultural bill, and of course, that hasn't come to me yet. The total amount involved is far greater than the estimates which I sent to the Congress. I think that is a very fertile field to consider, but the total is not anything like a billion dollars.

Q Mr. President, Secretary Morgenthau's suggestion related to the \$500,000,000 A.A.A. soil conservation --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That's it.

Q Already appropriated and provided for.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, look, I suppose the easiest thing to do is to mention something that I haven't seen mentioned, and that is -- I think it would simplify things for the country.

They talk about parity. What do they mean? They mean the total amount of money -- cash -- that a farmer gets for his crop, and the figure is based on certain -- a certain relationship that did exist between Agriculture and industrial wages. Way back -- I forgot -- what was the period, 1910 or 1911?

Q 1914 isn't it?

Q 1909 to 1914.

THE PRESIDENT: That was called -- that was set as an objective for cash -- let us say money to go into the hands, the pocketbooks of the farmers, and when that amount was fixed a good many years ago, it looked like an almost unattainable ideal. The parity for cotton the farmer was to get was as I remember it -- I think -- around fifteen cents. At that time cotton was selling around $8\frac{1}{2}$. Well, that was a long ways to go. That was, what? -- $6\frac{1}{2}$ cents more to go.

The parity for wheat that the farmer was to get was around, -- oh, -- \$1.15, and wheat was selling at around 67¢. Well, that was a long ways to go. And so, in order to help to bridge the gap and at the same time do a lot of future good for the country, we put in payments, direct payments to the farmers, for certain agreements on their part to maintain their soil in such a way that it would not run off into the ocean, terracing and so forth and so on, and they were paid a certain amount for that. That was one form of benefit. Then there came along another form of benefit that was another cash amount, all of which beyond the soil conservation and the other benefits were intended to help bridge this gap between the existing price to the farmer and this ideal price of parity.

Well, that was the objective then, and we made rather definite progress towards it, as for example, at the present time, let us take the price of cotton. The parity is still, -- oh, somewhere around 15 to $15\frac{1}{2}$ c, and the cotton farmer is getting about $2\frac{3}{4}$ c in the way of benefits toward that price, in cash. Now that is an amazing thing, which means roughly that if you add those payments on loans of the Federal Government to the market price, that he would get -- oh, call the market price ten or ten and a quarter cents -- let us take any figure, of course

it varies from time to time -- but in that general neighborhood, suppose he gets ten and a quarter cents for his cotton, and you add payments from the Government of 2-1/4¢, what does he get? He gets 13¢ cash to the farmer. Now that is pretty good.

Oh, no, it's not parity, but it's better than he ever got before, since nineteen hundred -- I don't know -- oh, -- twenty-four, something like that. It's working on the way up toward parity.

Now in any bill which carries a loan of 85%, you have got to figure whether that 85% takes into consideration these benefits that the Government is paying out anyway, because if you don't take them into consideration, the actual price to the farmer might go way above parity. Now, of course, there are some farmers that are getting more than -- more than parity today; like the cattle growers, they are way above parity, and there are three or four other different kinds of crops that are way above parity, but the important thing is always to figure those cash benefits into the actual price received by the farmer (the President emphasized these words by tapping his fingers on the desk), and the question is on this bill Have those cash benefits been taken into consideration on it?

Now that is the simplest way of putting it. I haven't acted on the bill yet, because it hasn't come to me, but that will be one of the prime considerations when I take it up.

Q Are you ready to answer that question yourself at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No, not yet, because I haven't got all my figures.

Q There are still reports, new reports, going about that the Government will go into the steel business. Have you any comment, please?

THE PRESIDENT: Where?

Q Birmingham, Alabama, for example.

THE PRESIDENT: Never heard of it.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #742,
Executive Offices of the President,
May 20, 1941, 10.45 a.m., E.S.T. (instead of 4.00 p.m.)

(Two guests were at this Press Conference: Dr. and Mrs. Lewis A. Hopkins, brother of Harry Hopkins)

THE PRESIDENT: All kinds of things today.

(Pause here while waiting for newspapermen to file into room, during which Mr. Early and Miss May Craig engaged in conversation)

THE PRESIDENT: You haven't got this yet (indicating mimeographed release).
It hasn't been handed out.

MR. GODWIN: No.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have a lot of things here. Steve (Mr. Early) has outside the copies of the Executive Order that was signed this morning creating the Office of Civilian Defense. The Executive Order explains itself and sets up this Office as part of the Office of Emergency Management, in the Executive Office of the President. Mayor La Guardia will head it. He will be the Director.

In paragraph two it lists the objectives of this Office, -- a, b, c, d, -- e, f, g, h. The Director sets up the internal organization. There are two principal subdivisions of the Office -- I am summarizing for you. The first is a Board for Civilian Protection to be composed of the Director as Chairman, and a representative from War, Navy, Justice, Federal Security, and in addition representatives of certain organizations -- the Council of State Governments, the American Municipal Association and the United States Conference of Mayors. This Board will advise and assist in the formulation of civilian de-

fense programs and measures, appropriate to the varying needs in each part of the nation, designed to afford adequate protection of life and property in the event of emergency. Members serve without compensation; so does the Director.

Secondly, there is in this Office of Civilian Defense a Volunteer Participation Committee of not more than twenty members, with the Director as Chairman. This Committee will serve in an advisory -- as an advisory planning board in considering proposals and developing programs designed to sustain national morale, and to provide opportunities for constructive civilian participation in the defense effort. Those members also serve without compensation. The general -- the Mayor will be down tomorrow and take office and start things, get the machinery together and put it in operation.

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Does he remain as Mayor?

THE PRESIDENT: What, what?

Q Does he remain as Mayor?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Mr. President, the supposition is that this Directorship will be almost a Cabinet rank, is that true?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I should say that the lead was the defense need, not any small question as to rank. It is rather small compared with the defense need.

MR. GODWIN: Would you like to give us a little picture of what this might do?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think this -- I think this covers it fairly well.

(indicating the mimeographed copy of the Order before him) I think these --

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) Maybe it's in it.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) -- It covers it pretty well. Well, the first is that it serves as a center for the coordination of certain civilian defense activities that involve relationships between the Federal Government and the State and the local governments, keeping contact with those State and local governments and their defense agencies, and facilitate relationships between such units of government and the agencies of the Federal Government in respect to defense problems. Well, in other words, out of the 48 States -- I don't remember how many -- but about 42, I think, already have State councils of defense, and this Office of Civilian Defense will work in large part through them, probably on a decentralized regional basis, with regional centers. We are considering, for example, the establishment of nine regional offices to take care of this decentralization in accordance with the nine Corps Areas. It seems to be a logical way of putting it together.

The next is to keep informed on problems that arise from the impact of the industrial and military defense effort on local communities, to take necessary steps to secure cooperation of appropriate Federal departments and agencies in dealing with these problems.

Third, assist State and local governments in the establishment of State and local defense councils, or other agencies designed to coordinate civilian defense activities. Well, that means that in, for instance, the States that have not yet set up councils of national defense, or those States which have set them up but where they are principally still on paper without active functioning, they -- this -- er --

Office will help them to function on a generally similar plan, based on the needs of the State or the region.

Er -- fourth, with the assistance of the Board for Civilian Protection, study and plan measures designed to afford adequate protection of life and property. That -- that involves the tying in of the -- all these new State Guards, which are not National Guards, on defense of public properties, bridges and culverts, plants, and so forth and so on; the organization of fire departments, the planning for the protection of -- physical protection of key points against bombing and things of that kind, using the existing local machinery, -- includes recruiting and training of auxiliaries.

At the same time, on that clause in the Order, I am sending word to the War Department on the Selective Draft that I want them to cooperate with the Director, and in letting him have the names of a great many people who for one reason or another would like to help but who have been put so far down on the Selective list that the chances are they won't be called. In other words, people back in the home towns who have got a wife and a lot of children who are dependent on them for support, but who could devote a certain amount of time to this kind of home defense -- civilian defense work. Those people will be given the opportunity to come in on this. It is a volunteer proposition.

Er -- the next -- the Volunteer Participation Committee considers these proposals, suggests plans, to promote activities designed to sustain the national morale, provides opportunities for constructive civilian participation in the defense program; review and approve all civilian defense programs of Federal departments involving the use of volunteer services to assure unity and balance in the application of such programs.

I might suggest there, to you ladies, that there are a great many women's organizations that want to do something to help. This is the coordinating body so that they will perform -- they will give useful activities instead of scattering them where they might not be so useful. More than a clearing house. That's about all.

MR. RAYMOND P. BRANDT: (St. Louis Post-Dispatch) Mr. President, how does this differ from the somewhat similar organizations set up in the World War?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

MR. BRANDT: They had councils, State councils of defense and local organizations.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I don't know, Pete. I never came in touch with that.

Q There was.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, what disposition is made of the functions of Frank Bane's office (Division of State and Local Cooperation, O.E.M., Frank Bane, Director) under this order?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know.

Q That is the Division of State and Local Cooperation which has been set up down there.

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you because I don't know.

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Does this involve any Federal financing, in other words, if they need some training programs?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes.

Q In different places would the Federal Government help finance that, or would the local government?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the local government would probably finance that.

Q Not Federal?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You will need some appropriation for --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes.

Q (continuing) -- payment of personnel.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh my, yes.

Q Will there be a request to Congress for such appropriation?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose temporarily it will come out of my emergency fund.

I didn't ask the Director of the Budget about that. (turning) (Director of the Budget Harold Smith was not there) I imagine so, and then after that it will come out of a Congressional appropriation, probably reimbursing my fund. I hope so. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, have you received a letter from O.P.M. on the feasibility of a West Coast steel plant?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I have had four or five different letters. I think they have all been passed on to various agencies for further study.

Q No conclusion?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Then, number two -- if you are all through with that -- we have offered the Irish government to sell or charter two ships to take -- under the Irish flag -- food supplies for the civilian population of Ireland. I asked Mr. Davis -- I think he has already done it -- to see the Irish Minister and say that we are ready and willing to authorize an expenditure of about \$500,000 from the relief fund for the purchase of food for the civilian populations in Ireland. This food would go over on the ship -- or ships -- if the offer is accepted.

Q Is there anything about defense materials for them?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, what relief fund are you speaking of?

THE PRESIDENT: That fifty-million-dollar fund.

MR. GODWIN: Oh.

Q Mr. President, are there any conditions attached to this offer?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except the condition of need.

Q Any designation of ships, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Is this to be handled and distributed by the American Red Cross?

THE PRESIDENT: Red Cross? Yes, yes, yes.

Q The ships would be manned by Irish crews?

THE PRESIDENT: Irish crews? Oh, yes.

Q Is there any designation of what ships you have in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, is that a preliminary to anything else?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Is that a preliminary to anything else?

THE PRESIDENT: Preliminary?

Q Preliminary to anything else?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, we get the impression from Mr. Aiken (Frank Aiken, Defense Minister of the Irish Free State) that Ireland wants to pay for anything they get over here. Will they pay for that food?

THE PRESIDENT: The ships, of course, will carry a great deal more than five hundred thousand dollars worth of food.

Then, the third, which has been hanging fire for some time, you

might just as well -- you have nothing else to do except to write --
I will give you this one too. (he laughs)

For some time, in fact for just about a year, we have been checking up on this Thanksgiving Day date. (loud laughter) And as you know, at the time the change was made, it was done at the earnest solicitation of all the retail -- the great majority of retail -- er-- selling people, department stores, small stores, chain stores and everything else in most of the country, they claiming that the -- that their sales would go up very much, and it was much needed at that time -- if Thanksgiving and Christmas did not come so close together. So it was done as an experiment, and the experiment did not work. (laughter)

The Commerce Department has been obtaining data now for some time, on whether the retail sales would increase, and so did the Conference of Mayors in the different cities, and I have an enormous file here, (indicating) which shows in general that the large majority of the retail stores now reluctantly -- most of them say that it hasn't made much difference one way or the other in their sales, and the Conference of Mayors are about divided across the middle as to whether it has made much difference or hasn't. Some say it has and some say it hasn't, by what might be called a majority survey of the retailing agencies.

It is too late this year, in view of the fact that we have made rather definite commitments to our calendar makers and the retail stores themselves as to the date this year. So this year it will be the second Thursday before the first of December, and next year it will return to the last Thursday of November, as theretofore.

VOICE: (not loudly) Hurray!

Q Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Mr. President --

Q (interposing) Can you tell us something about Mr. Lubin's appointment?

THE PRESIDENT: There isn't any.

Q What is he going to do?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, he is -- he is helping on some special work. He is helping Harry Hopkins, and helping me.

Q There is some thought that he might be in charge --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I read it in the papers.

Q (continuing) -- of economic warfare.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a poor guess. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, the Congress passed a little bill which places the Philippines under export control. Is there any significance that you can put on this?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us what these Irish ships will carry besides food?

THE PRESIDENT: Food. More food.

Q Oh, I see, in addition to the five hundred thousand dollars the Red Cross gets.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us when you plan to make a report to Congress on the Lend-Lease program?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't plan.

Q Doesn't it -- aren't you required to every ninety days, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I guess I am. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: I think you are. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Will somebody please check on that; and get me up a report to Congress, Steve. (Mr. Early)

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, have you anything that you care to say about

the moot subject of convoys, and the --

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have any news on it at all.

MR. GODWIN: There is -- there is a great deal of news about it somewhere around -- printed stuff -- which is exciting the public.

THE PRESIDENT: That's not news.

MR. GODWIN: Well, we give you a golden opportunity right now.

THE PRESIDENT: It's printed stuff; it's not news. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, does this arrangement with the Irish mean that the discussions concerning their desire for defense materials are at an end?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of. I didn't know there were any.

Q Aiken (Frank Aiken, Defense Minister, Irish Free State) told us that they are very eager to get defense materials over here as well.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, all I can tell you on that, on the question of defense materials -- I should think it would be quite obvious -- I will have to tell you, though, off the record -- you can use it for background. As you know, we are turning out defense materials, and the demand for them is at the present time at least twice or three times the supply, and the general rule is that because of the shortage of supply, we are sending all we can -- out of those short supplies before we get into full production -- to those nations which are actively waging war in behalf of the maintenance of Democracy, and there isn't anything left over. I suppose that's the easiest way of putting it.

Q Thank you.

Q Mr. President --

MR. RAYMOND P. BRANDT (interposing): Mr. President, what is the status of this price-ceiling legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, Pete; haven't heard a word about it for two weeks.

Q Mr. President, several Cabinet members have been emphasizing the necessity of seeing to it that our war supplies actually get across the water. Now, Senator Barkley says that the supplies are getting there. Is there any discrepancy that you see in those two positions?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think he said that.

Q You mean you don't think Barkley said that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Maybe not. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, after your conference yesterday with the so-called Big Four, several of them made direct indication that there had been some discussion of the possibility of a special message to Congress from the White House.

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing in that. We talk about that every week.

Q It was merely an exploration of the possibility, rather than any decision to send a message.

THE PRESIDENT: We talk about a special message nearly every week. Sometimes they materialize and sometimes they don't. There is no -- no decision.

Q Nothing in the near future?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Your Congressman (Hamilton Fish, Republican, of New York) says you will declare a full emergency within this week.

THE PRESIDENT: Who told him?

Q I don't know. (the President laughs)

Q Mr. President, is Dakar still in the realm of amateur strategy?

THE PRESIDENT: Is what?

Q Is Dakar --

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) (to the President) Dakar, Dakar.

Q (continuing) -- still in the realm of amateur strategy?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I am rather looking for some people to put that in the same ironical -- or perhaps sarcastic -- category. There's a place called Ding Dong (Dong Dang, on the northeast border in French Indo-China) which was used in editorials all over the country, that we were going in opposition to -- that we were going to send an American expeditionary force to Ding Dong.

Q Ding Dong?

THE PRESIDENT: Dang, or Ding -- Dong.

VOICE: Dong Dang.

THE PRESIDENT: I had better look it up on the map. I guess most other people did.

Q Have you looked up Dakar?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

EXECUTIVE ORDER

ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF CIVILIAN DEFENSE
IN THE OFFICE FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
OF THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes, and in order to define further the functions and duties of the Office for Emergency Management of the Executive Office of the President in respect to the national emergency as declared by the President on September 8, 1939, to assure effective coordination of Federal relations with State and local governments engaged in defense activities, to provide for necessary cooperation with State and local governments in respect to measures for adequate protection of the civilian population in emergency periods, to facilitate constructive civilian participation in the defense program, and to sustain national morale, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. There is established within the Office for Emergency Management of the Executive Office of the President the Office of Civilian Defense, at the head of which shall be a Director appointed by the President. The Director shall discharge and perform his responsibilities and duties under the direction and supervision of the President. The Director shall receive no salary or other remuneration for his services, but shall be entitled to actual and necessary transportation, subsistence, and other expenses incidental to the performance of his duties.

2. Subject to such policies, directions, and regulations as the President may from time to time prescribe, and with such advice and assistance as may be necessary from the other departments and agencies of the Federal Government, and utilizing the operating services and facilities of such departments and agencies as far as possible, the Director shall perform and discharge the following described duties and responsibilities:

- a. Serve as the center for the coordination of Federal civilian defense activities which involve relationships between the Federal Government and State and local governments, territories, insular possessions, and the District of Columbia (as hereinafter used in this Order the term "State and local" shall include territories, insular possessions, and the District of Columbia); establish and maintain contact with State and local governments and their defense agencies; and facilitate relationships between such units of government and the agencies of the Federal Government in respect to defense problems.
- b. Keep informed of problems which arise from the impact of the industrial and military defense effort upon local communities, and take necessary steps to secure the cooperation of appropriate Federal departments and agencies in dealing with such problems and in meeting the emergency needs of such communities.

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- c. Assist State and local governments in the establishment of State and local defense councils or other agencies designed to coordinate civilian defense activities.
 - d. With the assistance of the Board for Civilian Protection, described in paragraph 4 of this Order, study and plan measures designed to afford adequate protection of life and property in the event of emergency; and sponsor and carry out such civil defense programs, including the recruitment and training of civilian auxiliaries, and disseminate to appropriate officials of the Federal Government and State and local governments such information concerning civil defense measures as may be necessary to meet emergency needs.
 - e. With the assistance of the Volunteer Participation Committee, described in paragraph 5 of this Order, consider proposals, suggest plans, and promote activities designed to sustain the national morale and to provide opportunities for constructive civilian participation in the defense program; review and approve all civilian defense programs of Federal departments and agencies involving the use of volunteer services in order to assure unity and balance in the application of such programs; and assist State and local defense councils or other agencies in the organization of volunteer service units and in the development of their activities.
 - f. Maintain a clearing house of information on State and local defense activities in cooperation with appropriate Federal departments and agencies.
 - g. Review existing or proposed measures relating to or affecting State and local defense activities, and recommend such additional measures as may be necessary or desirable to assure adequate civilian defense.
 - h. Perform such other duties relating to participation in the defense program by State and local agencies as the President may from time to time prescribe.
3. The Director may provide for the internal organization and management of the Office of Civilian Defense. He shall obtain the President's approval for the establishment of the principal subdivisions of the Office and the appointment of the heads thereof.
4. There shall be in the Office of Civilian Defense a Board for Civilian Protection (hereinafter referred to as the Board) to be composed of the Director as Chairman and a representative of each of the following departments and agencies of the Federal Government to be designated by the heads thereof: Department of War, Department of the Navy, Department of Justice, Federal Security Agency, and such others as the President may from time to time determine. In addition, each of the following organizations shall be invited to designate a representative to serve as a member of the Board:
- a. The Council of State Governments
 - b. The American Municipal Association
 - c. The United States Conference of Mayors

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The Board shall advise and assist in the formulation of civil defense programs and measures, appropriate to the varying needs of each part of the Nation, designed to afford adequate protection of life and property in the event of emergency. The members of this Board shall serve as such without compensation, but shall be entitled to actual and necessary transportation, subsistence, and other expenses incidental to the performance of their duties.

5. There shall be in the Office of Civilian Defense a Volunteer Participation Committee (hereinafter referred to as the Committee) consisting of the Director as Chairman and not more than twenty members, representative of the various regions and interests of the Nation, to be appointed by the President. The Committee shall serve as an advisory and planning body in considering proposals and developing programs designed to sustain national morale and to provide opportunities for constructive civilian participation in the defense effort. The members of the Committee shall serve as such without compensation, but shall be entitled to actual and necessary transportation, subsistence, and other expenses incidental to the performance of their duties.

6. The Director is authorized, with the approval of the President, to appoint such additional advisory committees and subcommittees, with respect to State and local cooperation, national morale, civil defense planning, civilian participation, and related defense activities, as he may find necessary or desirable to assist him in the performance of his duties. Such advisory committees may include representatives from Federal departments and agencies, State and local governments, private organizations, and the public at large. The members of advisory committees shall serve as such without compensation, but shall be entitled to actual and necessary transportation, subsistence, and other expenses incidental to the performance of their duties.

7. Within the limitation of such funds as may be appropriated to the Office of Civilian Defense, or as may be allocated to it by the President through the Bureau of the Budget, the Director may employ necessary personnel and make provision for the necessary supplies, facilities, and services. However, the Office of Civilian Defense shall use such statistical, informational, fiscal, personnel, and other general business services and facilities as may be made available to it through the Office for Emergency Management or other agencies of the Government.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

THE WHITE HOUSE,

May 20, 1941.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #743,
Executive Office of the President,
May 23, 1941 -- 4.10 P.M., E.S.T.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve, (Mr. Early) have you got anything for me?

MR. EARLY: No, sir; we are dry -- blank.

THE PRESIDENT: Right, Charlie.

THE PRESIDENT: (turning to gentlemen seated in chairs behind him)

Rail birds! (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I hear a lot of gals are coming in. Who is the man
to accompany the ladies?

Q Charlie is an escort, you know.

MR. GODWIN: That's a convoy. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: A convoy! (he laughs)

Q Are you a Destroyer? (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: No, no; I'm a little antiquated.

Q He is in the capital ship class. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Are you implying that he (Mr. Godwin) looks like a
blimp? (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: No.

MISS CRAIG: Nobody would ever sink me without a trace.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MISS CRAIG: Nobody would ever sink me without a trace.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

Where's Steve? (Mr. Early) (To Mr. Early in a low voice):

What date was that report due to Congress -- tenth of June -- I
think so.

MR. EARLY: Ninety days. It's being prepared for you.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, tenth or eleventh.

MR. GODWIN: It's going to be good and short today.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Did he say "All in"?

Steve (Mr. Early) says he hasn't got anything except a report that he checked up on that Lend-lease responsibility of his and that he thinks the date is somewhere around the tenth or eleventh of June, on which a report is due to go to Congress, and it will be made, on or before that date.

Q Mr. President, from reading the newspapers one gathers the impression that some consideration is being given to possible change in the Neutrality Act.

THE PRESIDENT: I only know what I read in the newspapers.

Q Do you believe them, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Do you believe what you read in the newspapers?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends a little bit on the writer. (laughter)

Q Well, there are two Cabinet officers who have said they consider it a blunder and would like to have it ---

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't think they have. One of them said that he had been misquoted.

MR. GODWIN: He was very heavily misquoted then. (laughter)

Q What did the other one say?

THE PRESIDENT: What? I didn't ask the other one. He would have said the same thing.

Q Mr. President, may we ask you directly, sir, do you feel that the Neutrality Act might interfere with delivering the goods to

Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: I have absolutely no news on it at all, except what I read in the papers.

Q Mr. President, about four months ago you were handed, according to a rumor, a report on defense highways, and according to rumor it was referred to Mr. Elliott in the National Resources Planning Commission -- Board. Also, according to rumor, it is supposed to be somewhere between downtown and the Capitol, but it has not arrived at the Capitol or downtown. Can you say what is being done about that matter?

THE PRESIDENT: No, as far as I am concerned I don't know where it is either.

Q Well, do you ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Except that I suppose -- my impression -- you had better check on this -- I may be entirely wrong -- is that a certain amount of estimates were approved, or are about to be approved.

Q The remaining seven million?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you, but it is somewhat less than people thought.

Q Well, is there something likely to happen soon in the way ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, yes; but these would be primarily the necessary excess roads to new plants, or new camps, and even those plants would be very greatly cut. Instead of building two or three roads to a plant, or a camp, we would cut it to about one road.

Q Do you have the over-all idea?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't remember the figures at all. It is a little less than was recommended.

Q Was it four and a half or five hundred million?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing like that. Nothing like that.

Q Do you happen to know, sir, if an approved road between Baltimore and Washington is included?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the faintest idea.

Q Mr. President, is there ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I shouldn't think that that was a great essential. Why should it be?

Q Is there certain data that has to be withheld in your report to Congress, because of military secrets, or can you make a full report?

THE PRESIDENT: Details to be withheld, yes, not the totals -- not the sums involved.

Q For instance, bombers, you could give the exact number of bombers?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Probably give the totals on plants, not bombers.

Q Mr. President, would you care to say whether you think the French situation has improved as a result of the recent statement of Vichy spokesmen?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't care to say.

Q Is it possible to give a preview of your June ten report?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The June ten report, of course, would be up the tenth of June. I don't know what would come up, because it takes some time to collect all the figures.

Q I mean anything ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) No, I don't know. The actual report, I

suppose, would take in all the allocations up to -- Oh, what? -- say the 20th of May, somewhere along there --that is about the latest date that we could collect the materials -- the figures.

Q Mr. President, would you care to say what you are going to do on the 85% Parity bill?

THE PRESIDENT: It hasn't come to me yet. They say that -- Rudolph (Rudolph Forster) I think has got it, but it hasn't got over -- way across from Rudolph to me. It may be in this afternoon.

Q Mr. President, this is not national defense, but have you acted on that Supreme Court judge in Puerto Rico yet? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, and Secretary Ickes lunched with me and he didn't mention it. (more laughter)

Q What about the Supreme Court of the United States? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Same thing -- he didn't mention it. (loud laughter)

Q Is he one of your consultants?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure.

Q Mr. President, have you had any report about this threatened strike of the North American Aviation plant?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q It was supposed to be certified last night to the Mediation Board, but nobody that I can reach in the Mediation Board ever heard about it.

THE PRESIDENT: I hadn't heard about it.

Q Mr. President, Mr. Knudsen said this morning, when he left the conference with you, that plans for the proposed new set of steel plants on the west coast would not be accepted, that some other means of expanding steel capacity would be used. Could you give us

some background on that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there isn't any, except the thing is being held in abeyance at the present time until we get a little better picture of future needs. Nothing has been turned down or accepted.

Q You say nothing has been turned down?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing has been turned down, and nothing has been accepted.

Q Does that mean you are awaiting the new Dunn report?

THE PRESIDENT: That is one of the elements, but only one of the elements. We are also awaiting new 'need' reports.

Q Mr. President, now that you have a new agreement with Canada on the Niagara Falls power about to be sent up to the Capitol, can you talk about it today?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. Right there in the basket. (pointing)

Q Do you mind if I look at it? (laughter)

Q Mr. President, we are monopolizing things over here, I am afraid.

Would you go back to the time when you spoke about the desire of extending west coast industry -- for the steel industry. Do you recall a year or two ago you said you were considering that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, still very, very keen about it, and a great deal has been accomplished, especially, of course, on aluminum and on magnesium, and there have been extensions made, already authorized, only they are existing steel plants, not west coast new plants, but extensions of new plants. When we come to new plants it is in abeyance.

Q Thank you, sir.

Q How much of an extension of existing plants is under way?

THE PRESIDENT: Which one?

Q The existing steel plants.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us what proportion of the Lend-lease appropriation has been issued?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. I haven't got my figures.

Q Sir, could you tell us how the general European situation looks to you at present?

THE PRESIDENT: No. (he laughs)

Q Mr. President, there are a lot of rumors going around about peace moves. Have you heard of anything?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q Mr. President, Secretary Knox in a speech this afternoon said that unless there is a sudden change, this generation is going to be called upon for sacrifices as great as any previous American generation has made. Could you go into any detail as to what the nature of those sacrifices might be?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you might have to go into the Army and Navy.
(laughter)

Q Just one at a time.

Q Mr. President, have you received any reports from London about the Hess affair that you could tell us about?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the apparent unanimity of the people in approving the Selective Service laws?

THE PRESIDENT: Apparent what?

Q Unanimity; with 93% of the people who thought it was a good idea.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it is very satisfactory to have such a high percentage. (he laughs)

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: (as newspapermen file out of room) I hope you will have a peaceful week end.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #744,
Executive Office of the President,
May 23, 1941 -- 4.30 P.M., E.S.T.

(This Press Conference was held especially for editors of business magazines and papers. All present were introduced individually by Paul Wooton, Secretary, White House Correspondents' Association, and shook hands with the President.)

THE PRESIDENT: For the presidency of the United States Chamber of Commerce, or the National Association of Manufacturers! Now there he is, right here -- (indicating Paul Wooton) (warm applause)

MR. WOOTON: Mr. President, I think after eight years you should not be in my favor. I have attended seven hundred of your Press Conferences.

THE PRESIDENT: Do you want to ask questions about foreign affairs, like the front row?

MR. WOOTON: No, I keep out of that.

Mr. President, I thought that since you have this group here, and behind these men are several hundred thousands of readers, that you might like to say just the sort of editorial they could write, or what kind of an article they might run, that would be most helpful in forwarding the defense program. They are all anxious to do something constructive, and they go to the key men in industry in the papers, and if you have any thought at all that would be helpful along that line, I know they would appreciate it.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I tell you, on the -- on the writing of the editorial end, the public as a whole -- the business public -- I think you can't overstress the seriousness of the present situation. I think it does need stressing, because we all know that this world situation, if it goes the wrong way -- the axis powers win -- it is going to hit business far more than any one thing that has ever hit them. It will hit them far worse than a mere ending of all of these emergency orders, because it will mean that you will get 'put in a vice', not by our own volition, or the volition of all the Democratic nations that have an economy that is somewhat similar to ours. We will get 'put in a vice', a 'strait jacket', by the axis powers; and I don't think that this seriousness of that situation can be underestimated. I think it ought to be played up all the time. And furthermore, that if we are going to meet the situation as it develops, and as it is becoming increasingly serious, that we have got to quit all this silly business of "business as usual." The nations that are actually at war certainly are not conducting "business as usual", and the more we help to defeat the control of the world by dictatorships, the less "business as usual" we are going to have.

It means giving up, of course, on the part of the American public, and therefore of the manufacturers of the country -- the businessmen of the country -- a great many things which were all very nice and pleasant in our normal lives, and substitute for them the things that are necessary to carry on this aid to the Democracies that we are giving at the present time.

Well, it is going to hit a lot of people, sure, but you can't eat your cake and have it too. That is the one, the one message to give to the American people: "You can't eat your cake and have it too." (emphasizing) If you do one thing you have got to go all out for it. If you are going to do the other thing -- lie down and take it on the chin -- it will be putting us in a strait jacket that we won't get out of for one hundred years. I think that should be told quite frankly to the public.

Er -- after all, the country can get on without a great many things that it uses normally. Is it worthwhile to give up certain things in order to carry through an effort to survive, or isn't it? I am -- for instance -- of course, we know in the country -- we know that there is a very great lack of understanding at the present time of the seriousness of the world situation as it affects us. You take, for example, -- for instance -- the -- a great deal of this perfectly well-intended publicity has been stupid. I begged them when they started the so-called Aid to Britain movement -- I said, "You know there are an awful lot of people in this country that don't personally 'give a continental' about Aid to Britain, but on the other hand, if you tell the whole sentence you get people to understand."

What is the whole sentence? "America First Through Aid to Britain." Now that's a very different thing that tells the truth. You are not working for America first because England today is holding the line and is doing practically all the fighting. Now the real sentence is, "Let us keep American going by giving aid to Britain while we are arming ourselves," and that is the thought

to get across. And I think you can all help tremendously to make people realize the seriousness of the situation, and eliminate a lot of the perfectly silly prejudices that exist today because of wrong slogans -- literally, the wrong slogans.

I suppose, for example, that if there is any person in the United States who happens to be the leader of the America First movement, it is the unfortunate fellow who happens to have the responsibility -- who happens to be President of the United States. He is the leader of the America First movement. Now these other fellows jumped, and nobody's printed the fact that they have grabbed off something that does not belong to them. There's a whole lot in that. I am just talking ordinary, old-fashioned common sense.

Of course, -- well, of course, one of the things we don't talk about an awful lot -- we come into the question of profits, rates of profit, rates of taxation, and so forth and so on. Well, you have got a simple answer on that. We are all pretty well agreed that these are times not to make large profits, and we have to go back in working things like that out. We have a curious situation. I notice one or two -- the best friends that I have in the world -- are very large stockholders, and I will give you the illustration -- the Coca Cola Company. There are some of the original people that went in, and they went in what to them was an awful lot of capital -- ten thousand dollars -- and today on that original investment of ten thousand dollars -- figure out the percentage on that investment that they are getting in the way of dividends. And yet, under the present tax laws -- mind you, that

happens to be, of course, one shining example under the present tax law -- Coca Cola -- you take the average they would get during the previous five years. They don't pay any excess taxes on -- what? -- a thousand percent of profit, yet that is an awfully big profit on an original amount of capital that you put in.

On the other hand, you take some other organization like -- oh, what? -- United States Steel. Er -- taking it over a period of ten years the yield to the individual who bought United States Steel common is not high, while they are hit today because the average of their earnings this year is way ahead over the average -- above the average of the last five years. They are paying enormous excess profits, but it -- and it is hitting the fellow who made the investment in United States Steel. He is lucky if on the average of the past ten years he has made four or five percent on his money. Those are things that we have got, I think -- there is another subject for an editorial -- which are perfectly legitimate and nobody takes note, but it would be funny to have some of your humorists -- you all have them on your papers -- (laughter)

Q In a business press?

THE PRESIDENT: You have all got humorists.

Q Even in our business press.

Q Unconscious humorists.

THE PRESIDENT: Write a piece on the people who have appeared before Bob Doughton's Committee, (Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives) the chewing tobacco people, (laughter) and -- oh, what? -- the cosmetics people, and so forth and so on, who are weeping bitter tears, and getting the whole Committee weeping with

them. The most amazing thing that has ever happened. Now, it is perfectly all right for them to have their little speech, and pull the tears out of the Committee's eyes, but in the last analysis it is a subject for humorists' treatment, isn't it?

MR. WOOTON: It certainly is. We had a session with Jere Cooper (on the sub-Committee of Internal Revenue of the Ways and Means Committee) this morning and he touched on that same thing.

THE PRESIDENT: There is a whole lot in it. Everybody's for free speech. It is fine for them to go up there. Let's smile occasionally!

MR. WOOTON: That's right; that's right.

THE PRESIDENT: Well I think -- I think that, taking it by and large, that a lot of the -- the business papers -- business as a whole is going along awfully well in this whole thing, and we are having very, very few complaints.

I was talking the other day to one of those people who had been during -- in the old days -- er -- largely responsible for the great effort of 1917 and 1918, and there were three of the fairly top people who were running the production -- the war production of the country, which began, mind you, not until the day we got into the war in 1917. There had been a certain amount done in the way of orders from the -- from the British and the French before we got into the war, but the great volume of orders came after we got into the war with no preparation for it. To these three people I asked the straight question: "How does the speed of our present production effort, on a relative basis, compare with the speed -- and we have been going now for a year --

compare with the speed from the 6th of April, 1917, to the 6th of April, 1918?" And all three of them -- although they are not, in this particular year, responsible for this thing, and they were then -- all three of them said, "You are way ahead of what had been done in the first year of the World War." I said, "How far?" And they said -- I think about -- they agreed about three months ahead in the first twelve months of effort. Well, now, that is quite a record to have that admitted by three fellows who were responsible for the 1917 war. (meaning war effort)

MR. WOOTON: It certainly is.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is a pretty good -- a pretty good compliment to pay to American business. I really do.

MR. WOOTON: And that is the text of these editorials that industry by and large is doing --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes.

MR. WOOTON: -- a breath-taking job.

THE PRESIDENT: That's right. Of course, there are an awful lot of things that -- oh, what will I say? -- interpretative writers -- some people call them -- columnists some people call them. (laughter) They are not fair to business, not fair to government, either one. I will give you a very good example.

Somebody came out the other day -- it makes no difference who it is -- it is perfectly terrible -- er -- we are way behind on tanks, way behind, where we ought to be on the production of tanks. And look at this thing! Tanks are needed. They are needed by the British in Egypt, in England, all over the place. We need them also, and yet we are way, way behind. We have only

just begun turning out a few tanks. Of course, it did not tell the real story, the real story on tanks -- mind you -- that is the trouble -- most of these fellows are right -- they just get told one little thing and they don't know all the background. It is not their fault. They put the thing down on paper without checking.

Now, on tanks, what happened? Last year, about last summer, from about the end of May on up to July, when they were working out the priorities, that is to say, the classification that these orders would go into, we needed to make four main divisions of production. One was airplanes, of course, and another was guns -- anti-tank guns and all other kinds of guns. A third was ammunition -- I would say powder and shot and shell. And the fourth was tanks. And we couldn't give an A-1 priority to all four groups because it would have slowed up the whole program group if we had given equal priority to all four groups.

So the military people were called in, and the British were called in, and we said to them, from the production point of view, one at least of these groups has got to be put in the second -- the second category. Now, we fellows were laymen -- businessmen -- and the Army and the Navy and the British said, "Well, about the last thing we need today is tanks." (he laughs) They didn't see the need at that time for tanks. Now, that is the best possible opinion that we could get, so out of those four groups we put the tank group into the second priority category -- deliberately -- on military advice -- which we have to go on. Now, of course, everybody is cussing out the tank manufacturers, and

cussing out the Government for being behind.

Well, that is just an illustration of how you have to know all of the surrounding facts before you can write intelligently on some particular thing that you hear. I think it is probably a good illustration.

MR. WOOTON: It certainly is. Well, Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) As you know, if there is anything you want to know about -- if it isn't highly confidential -- we have to keep things -- some things, as I said in the Press Conference today -- when I make the report on the Lend-lease Bill on the allocations of money, I will -- I will use fairly large sized categories, but I cannot break it down. For -- for example, in American production of airplanes for the -- for the British, I will probably give the total number of dollars that have been allocated to airplanes, but I won't be able, for military reasons, to break it down, say X number of bombers and X number of training planes, and X number of pursuit ships. I mean, I shall not be able -- I think it wise -- to give the total of planes. I can give the total number of dollars.

MR. WOOTON: That's right. Well, Mr. President, I think --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) It's good to see you all.

MR. WOOTON: I think it's mighty fine of you to see us, and in behalf of these editors, I thank you very, very much.

THE PRESIDENT: If there's anything we can do to help, let us know.

MR. WOOTON: Thank you, Mr. President.