

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #796

Executive Office of the President

January 2, 1942 -- 11.00 A.M.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: The Attorney General and I got up a statement that is intended to correct the misapprehension of a great many people in the country in regard to the employment of aliens. I think you will regard it necessary that this be spread as widely as possible throughout the country, because there are a great many injustices that are being committed at the present time. I might as well read it to you. Steve can give it to you afterwards.

(reading): "I am deeply concerned over the increasing number of reports of employers discharging workers who happen to be aliens or even foreign-born citizens. This is a very serious matter. It is one thing to safeguard American industry, and particularly defense industry, against sabotage; but it is very much another to throw out of work honest and loyal people who, except for the accident of birth, are sincerely patriotic.

"Such a policy is as stupid as it is unjust, and on both counts it plays into the hands of the enemies of American democracy. By discharging loyal, efficient workers simply because they were born abroad or because they have 'foreign-sounding' names or by refusing to employ such men and women, employers are engendering the very distrust and disunity on which our enemies are counting to defeat us.

"Remember the Nazi technique: 'Pit race against race, religion against religion, prejudice against prejudice. Divide and conquer!'

"We must not let that happen here. We must not forget what we are defending: liberty, decency, justice. We cannot afford the economic waste of services of all loyal and patriotic citizens and non-citizens in defending our land and our liberties.

"I urge all private employers to adopt a sane policy regarding aliens and foreign-born citizens, and to remember that the sons of the 'foreigners' they discharged may be among those who fought and are fighting so valiantly at Pearl Harbor or in the Philippines.

"There is no law providing against employment of aliens except in special defense work of a secret nature, and even in such work the employer may hire an alien with the permission of the Army or Navy, depending on the contract."

I think it is pretty important to get that out, because there are a great many people in this country that are discharging people because they have a foreign name.

And this is -- what I am going to say is off the record. It is literally true there would be no Notre Dame football team ----.

(laughter) You see the point? (more laughter)

I don't think I have got anything else.

Q You seem to be ---

THE PRESIDENT: (adding) There is going to be an announcement from the White House this afternoon sometime -- in time for the late editions of the afternoon papers, so stick around.

Q You seem to be having an alien out here in the backyard with Fala this morning, Mr. President? (referring to James Roosevelt's dachshund)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) The scottie.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) He was born in this country. It's all right.  
(laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, the motor car and truck situation which arose last night suddenly ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- creates a problem in employment. Does it?  
Have you that in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: A temporary problem in employment.

MR. GODWIN: Can you make any ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) No. I spoke about that the other day, you know.

MR. GODWIN: I know it.

THE PRESIDENT: People will be laid off. Incidentally, the -- I have had quite a number of reports from the leaders in labor organizations in automobile plants, and they are just about 100% in their understanding of the matter, and say that they entirely approve of retooling, and that their people -- their members -- are willing to be out of work for a little while, if it will aid in the general defense program; it being of course understood that hardship will be taken care of in the meantime, and that they will return to their jobs just as soon as the new tooling comes in.

Q Mr. President, will you have your Budget conference this year?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh yes. I think so.

Q (interposing) Would the date be set for that?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) What do we call it, the Seminar?

Q The Seminar, Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I can't tell you the date. I think it will be either on Tuesday or ---

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) May I ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- Wednesday.

MR. GODWIN: Pardon me. May I continue that question? I had an idea that that -- that this crackdown might cause a six months complete ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh no.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- out of work, so that many people think that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh no. I would say -- at a guess -- an average of two months.

Q Mr. President, it is reported from London and from Australia that you are about to sign some kind of a pact here, regarding the Pacific,



similar to the agreement you entered into with Churchill in the Atlantic?

THE PRESIDENT: What kind of a pact?

Q A pact extending the principles of the Atlantic Charter to the Pacific, and bringing in the nations of the Pacific which are fighting with us.

THE PRESIDENT: The Atlantic Charter didn't refer only to the Atlantic. It referred to the whole world. It happened to be made on the Atlantic Ocean. That is why it was called the Atlantic Charter.

Q Is there some plan, Mr. President, to bring in the nations of the Pacific into that?

THE PRESIDENT: Not on that end at all.

Q Mr. President, the Australian Prime Minister specifically announces this morning that he cabled consent of his government to Mr. Churchill here for a Pacific agreement which Australian reports said have been evolved out of your conferences here.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Nothing relating only to the Pacific.

Q It is reported this morning that Admiral King is going to head a joint British-American Fleet.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I saw that ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I won't even -- I won't even mention the names of the papers that carried that report. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, there is also a report from Canberra that General Wavell will be named, or has been named, Commander of the Allied --- Allied forces in the Pacific. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) How about that?

THE PRESIDENT: "Allied" isn't a bad name at all. It isn't a bad term at

all. It gives me thoughts. (more laughter)

Q Mr. President, you might end a lot of speculation by releasing this announcement earlier than this afternoon. (loud laughter) It would help the afternoon papers, too. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I hope that we will be able to get it out in time for the last editions.

Q Mr. President, has any new thought been given to moving airplane plants back from the Pacific coast?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh yes. Yes.

Q Is that going to be done in the near future?

THE PRESIDENT: It is being studied.

MR. GODWIN: This Joe Stalin story is up again, that you ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I saw that.

MR. GODWIN: Have you anything to say about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Never heard of it until I read about it.

MR. GODWIN: Came from Stockholm, today, I think.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. Probably was Stockholm.

Q Mr. President, would the removal of airplane plants to the interior also apply to the plants that are located on the Atlantic Seaboard ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Might.

Q (continuing) --- engine plants?

THE PRESIDENT: Might. And of course, we people in this country, we have to realize that we have to learn a great deal from experience. It is not just taking the entire plant and moving it from one place to another. The process is a very different one. Oh, let me take -- what will I call it? -- an average for a big plant -- it might mean that certain divisions of the plant could be moved back at a moment's notice

into a good many different locations, and have possibly the original plant, the assembly plant -- and perhaps another place for an assembly plant. It means the splitting up of the work so that no -- no one raid would destroy the entire operation. One raid might destroy a portion of the operation. It is a sub-division question of distribution.

Q Well, it might also amount to duplication of some facilities?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, does this apply only to airplane plants?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh no.

MISS MAY CRAIG: All kinds?

THE PRESIDENT: Lots of others. Even Portland, Maine.

Q Mr. President, are you going to read your Annual Message as usual this year?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose so.

Q Will that be Monday or Tuesday?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't thought. I have it to take up this afternoon.

Q Have you had any reports on what progress, if any, has been made in putting in the three shifts, seven days a week?

THE PRESIDENT: The what?

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) Three shifts.

Q Three shift -- seven day week?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't. I am asking for it. I will probably get it over the week end.

Q Isn't that the quickest way that we could expand production at the present time?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know that you can say that as an over-all, general

answer. In some cases Yes; in other cases No. Of course, some plants have been running two shifts, some have been running three shifts. Just for example, in one type of plant it is better to run it to two shifts than three, you get more actual production; and other plants it is better to run three shifts. It depends on the individual plant. And we are increasing just as fast as we can the total number of men employed, which is probably the best way of figuring out the general proposition, and then determining which is the best method of using -- in that hiring of new men -- either the two-shift method, or even 2-1/2 shifts or three shifts.

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN (New York Times): Mr. President, could you clear up a point for us? Yesterday "America" was sung in church ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. F. KLUCKHOHN: Yesterday, I say, "America" was sung in church. And you were sitting next to Mr. Churchill. Did he sing the American or British words?  
(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Honestly, Kluck! That doesn't sound like The New York Times at all. (more laughter)

MR. J. MINIFIE (New York Herald Tribune): Does it not, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. J. MINIFIE: Does it not, sir? (loud and prolonged laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Kluck, you have been well answered by the Tribune. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: What about this thing?

MR. D. CORNELL: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

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