

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #798  
Executive Office of the President  
January 13, 1942 -- 4.05 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: (to Earl Godwin) Haven't seen you for a long time.

MR. GODWIN: You have been .....? Well, I shouldn't say! (laughter) I've been around.

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Not a word! Not a word!

MR. GODWIN: (to Mr. Early) What's in it? What's in it? (a large, round, cardboard box on a side table)

MR. EARLY: I don't know. (investigates) A cake! For his birthday.  
(laughter) Smells like frozen cheese.

Q Is it hermetically sealed?

Q Rum flavor?

(the President saw Anne O'Hare McCormick standing in the front row, and shook hands with and said Hello to her)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have had any news for a whole week, and I don't expect to have any for another week, so that's all I have got today.

Q Can you tell us, sir, about your conference with Mr. Willkie this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Very nice talk with him.

Q You discussed the War Labor Board?

THE PRESIDENT: I had a very nice talk with him. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, through the office of your Secretary, there is some indication that you will draw up a list of umpires to work in connection with the War Labor Board, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) --- and it is reported on that list are the names of Farley, Al Smith, and Charles Evans Hughes. Is that correct, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I would put it this way -- I hope so.

Q Hope?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't seen the list. You know more about it than I do.

Q Can you say anything about price control today?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Can you say anything about price control?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean on this bill?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think you probably all got it. I had the -- asked the House conferees here this morning and pointed out to them that -- two things, in my judgment, -- two essential facts.

The first was that the overwhelming majority of farmers of the United States, in every section of the country, do not want to be accused of starting the kind of a spiral that in the long run will be expensive and costly to them, and to everybody else in the United States. They don't want to be responsible for having so called "farm leaders" upset the entire applecart of our war effort.

And the second point is, that if this O'Mahoney amendment should by some chance become law, that it would start a spiral more quickly than any other thing that has been suggested, and would saddle this nation with a much larger debt to meet -- for this generation, and for future generations -- than any other method that I can think of.

Furthermore, that it would be playing directly into the hands of the people who are not engaged in farming, but who are engaged in making things in factories, etcetera, and so would demand wage increases

because of the increased cost of living that would necessarily result from the O'Mahoney amendment. And we all know, from history, that when the cost of foodstuffs goes up, other things go up too, and the farmer himself suffers from that increased cost of living just as much as anybody else in the country. Well, that's the whole story in a nutshell.

Q Do you feel the same way about the Bankhead amendment?

THE PRESIDENT: What is that?

Q This other one that gives the Secretary of Agriculture the power to veto?

THE PRESIDENT: I told them that I thought it was thoroughly unsound, to give two Government officials -- one the right to make a decision, and the other one the right to veto it. It is completely unsound administrative procedure, and in the last analysis it throws it back on the shoulders of the President himself, because if I have two subordinates in my Administration who are vetoing each other, it ultimately comes back to me. And of course, they want -- if they want to do that, I suppose I will have to take it, but it is completely unsound.

Q Mr. President, does it actually give one of them a veto over your acts?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I can fire either one. (loud laughter)

Q Mr. President, can we quote that?

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

Q (continuing) I say, Mr. President, can we quote that item, "I can fire either one"?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Can we quote that, "I can fire either one," I think? It would do more good than anything else.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I think that's all right.

Q Speaking of vetoes, Mr. President, have you any thought that you might not sign a bill that would carry ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) We haven't got even to a remote thought of action of that kind. We don't think of things like that until a bill is passed in both Houses.

Q Mr. President, in connection with firing, Mr. -- Secretary of Agriculture Wickard demanded this division of authority apparently, without saying anything to anybody else, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: He says the press is all wrong on that. I got a letter from him, and he accuses the press of completely misunderstanding and misquoting his position. You will have to work it out.

Q What is the date of the letter, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q What is the date of the letter?

THE PRESIDENT: Today. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, I got a four-page statement from his office, and I can't tell where he stands on the thing yet.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, probably from his office, like when you get something from Steve. That doesn't mean it's from me, does it?

Q Mr. President, what did the House conferees say about your position?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think they were pretty sympathetic.

Q Mr. President, was anything said about a limit on wages in connection with the general picture?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q Does that fit into it at all?

THE PRESIDENT: If the bill went through it would, in the O'Mahoney amendment form -- it would mean a scramble for who could get the most for prices

of crops and prices of wages.

Q Would you call it then a bill to encourage inflation?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Would you call it then a bill to encourage inflation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I would say worse than that. I would say it is a bill to compel inflation.

Q Mr. President, referring to the matter of having two Government officials vetoing each other, have you any plans to change your other setup, the talk about a supply ministry and the organization of the war agencies in general?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have got any news on that today.

Q Mr. President, the Lieutenant Governor of the Netherlands Indies left San Francisco for Washington, and the British allowed -- through the censorship -- a story that there were going to be conferences -- special conferences with Netherlands representatives here, and one Netherlands officer might be named to this Pacific high command. Can you say anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh no. I don't think there is any news on that. On this question of a vast area of that kind, you know, you have all sorts of things that, quite frankly, the average person wouldn't understand. The problem, for instance -- between who? -- what? -- strategical command -- technical command -- all kinds of technical things of that kind. I don't think there is any -- I couldn't write a story on it if I tried, because I am learning all the time.

Q Mr. President, could you -- could you clarify statements that have been made about direct dealings between the United States and Australia?

THE PRESIDENT: Direct what?

Q Direct dealings between the United States and Australia?

THE PRESIDENT: Why sure. Direct dealings right along -- have been for quite a long while.

Q That was my impression, but there was some story in the paper this morning about ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Nothing new on it. We talk to the Australians every day in the week, and have been right along.

Q In that connection, Mr. President, it is reported that they are going to send some military or naval men here to supplement the present representation. Can you say anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't -- I wouldn't limit that to Australia. There are going to be people from -- military and naval men from nearly all of the United Nations who will be doing the same thing.

Q Will they come at the same time?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Will they come at the same time?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just in the normal course.

Q Will they remain here, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Most of them will remain here, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Some will, and some won't. I don't know.

Q It is also reported, Mr. President, that the Prime Minister of Australia may come here for ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I hadn't heard that.

Q Any other high political figures coming from there?

THE PRESIDENT: On what?

Q High political figures coming from there?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q Can you tell us what you talked about with the Australian Minister this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, what we have been talking about ever since the 7th of December.

Q Defense of the Southwestern Pacific?

THE PRESIDENT: The defense of the Democracies of the world.

Q Mr. President, a Boston newspaper, a few days ago, said that -- carried a story that ex-Colonel Lindbergh is going to see you -- coming down to Washington. Is there anything to that?

THE PRESIDENT: It must be a Boston newspaper. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, you talked to the two District Chairmen this morning. Is there any change in policy, as a result of that transfer of Government departments?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Of course, I think one thing -- put it this way -- let me use this as "background," for the benefit of the Washington papers, and I don't think I need even say "other papers please copy," because they are not frightfully interested -- (turning to Earl Godwin): with all due deference -- but the -- the general proposition is this.

The country has not -- especially Washington -- has not waked up to the idea that there are going to be a lot more people coming down -- a great many more -- in the next six months to a year. And even if we build all of the McCarran plan, and the Jennings Randolph plan, we would still have to eliminate some of the employees and agencies, and so forth and so on, from Washington to have enough room. I don't think people visualize the number of people that are going to come here in the next six months, so even if we build we will still have to carry

through some kind of plan to take some people out of Washington. So put it this way, which is more polite, we may both be right. (laughter)

Q Is it possible there will be some modifications in order?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think so. I don't know why. If somebody would give me an agency that was pleading to get out of town, I might consider it. But I haven't found anything yet. I have been asking after that last week and the week before, "Please give me some department or agency that wants to move." (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: It was a legal matter which Senator McCarran suggested, which may have no bearing at all. He seemed to think that possibly the Budget Bureau, and that means you too, had no authority -- no legal authority to order some of these things out. Did that come up at all?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that did not come up.

MR. GODWIN: Does that interest you at all?

THE PRESIDENT: Not a bit.

MR. GODWIN: May I ask you a question? If all these people are coming in, is there anything that you know about adequate plans for adequately housing them -- the defense housing, or some of your projects -- housing programs?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are doing lots of them, as you know.

MR. GODWIN: Somebody has that in mind for this same number of people?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh my, Yes. All you have to do is drive around.

MR. T. REYNOLDS: Mr. President, there are reports that Mr. William Batt is working as sort of unofficial, or official, head of a special committee, or council, within the O.P.M., or beyond O.P.M., to coordinate the defense effort with that of Great Britain in an economic manner. Is there anything to that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Never heard of it, Tom.

MR. GODWIN: How about it? Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

MRS. ANNE O'HARE McCORMICK: Did Churchill leave you a hat? (indicating the large, round, cardboard box on the side table)

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MRS. ANNE O'HARE McCORMICK: Did Churchill leave you a hat?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MRS. ANNE O'HARE McCORMICK: I don't know what that is.

THE PRESIDENT: It's a fruit cake.

MRS. ANNE O'HARE McCORMICK: I thought it was some kind of cake.

THE PRESIDENT: It's for Christmas.

MRS. ANNE O'HARE McCORMICK: You are looking wonderful.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm fine -- fine.

MR. IRVING BRANDT: I bet you haven't missed me for the last few months?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. IRVING BRANDT: I bet you haven't missed me for the last few months?

(the President laughed) I am working for the Chicago Sun now.

THE PRESIDENT: I know it. I know it.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #799  
Executive Office of the President  
January 20, 1942 -- 4.05 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: (in a whisper, and waving his hand) Good morning!

MR. GODWIN: Good morning!

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to blame Steve. (Mr. Early) I haven't got anything. Not a thing. Dean, have you got anything?

MR. GODWIN: No, sir. I have a letter which says, "For God's Sake, stop speaking about budgets. You are nothing but a big blow-hard." (laughter, and some hand-clapping)

Q Mr. President, would you care ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I feel that way about myself.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the proposed international highway to Alaska that Mr. Daniels spoke about in Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: I have a query out. Somebody is trying to find out. Just what the status of it is, I don't know. I don't think they are in agreement on the -- on the line.

Q Could you make any comment on your talk on the Rivers and Harbors appropriations?

THE PRESIDENT: Put it this way. I talked this morning with quite a number of them, and as one of them directly said, the country as a whole -- we have said it -- the country as a whole, even Members of Congress, even writers of newspapers, don't know the difference between an appropriation and an authorization. Same old story. And a whole lot of people have been getting the idea that this bill that is out on the floor now, for 900 million dollars, is an appropriation bill, instead

of an authorization bill. And as long as that sentiment seems to -- what shall I say? -- it's a -- it's an incorrect belief -- as long as that incorrect belief is out around the country, it may be the best thing to do is not to try to explain the thing, but instead of that to leave out all the items that are authorizations and are not immediate defense needs. Comes to the same thing in the long run practically. And merely -- we have been discussing -- this is not final -- we have been discussing the possibility of putting the bill into such form that they would only authorize those things which are immediately needed for defense. And I am working on that now, on the basis that the items that are in the bill show those items which are considered immediately necessary for defense.

Q (interposing) Could you name any ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And we are merely -- I won't speak about any individual, because I haven't got to it yet -- just started it this morning -- trying to pick out those that we consider absolutely necessary for defense, and that would include -- that would include the recommendations from the experts on that subject.

Q Mr. President, can you follow the same procedure on other authorization bills?

THE PRESIDENT: What kind?

Q Public works, and roads, and you also have authorization bills?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I would just as soon. Of course, in another way -- the other side to it is that if they pass authorization bills without any -- any appropriations, it is understood there won't be any more -- any appropriations at the end of the war. It will increase the size of my old "kitty," which I am trying to enlarge all I possibly can, with the

definite understanding that the cupboard -- the "kitty" -- is of course to be kept locked until after the war.

Q Does that mean there might be a supplemental Rivers and Harbors appropriation -- authorization?

THE PRESIDENT: As I say, it doesn't really make an awful lot of difference one way or the other, as long as it is definitely understood that none of the money is going to be spent. It is up to Congress. I shan't question one way or the other.

Q Would they have to recall that bill to Committee, or ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That I don't know. I don't know. I merely -- that is legislative procedure. I am merely doing my end.

Q Mr. President, some of the Chinese, and some others, seem to be worried about statements that have been made that Hitler is the chief enemy, in the sense that they are afraid that means too little supplies for them. Is there anything you could say?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think anybody should have any fear at all. We are doing the best we can.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, now that the submarines are blowing up the tankers, will you build pipe lines?

THE PRESIDENT: What's that? No, we might build blimps. (laughter)

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It doesn't -- the two things don't go together, May. They don't go together, necessarily.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Why not?

THE PRESIDENT: They just don't.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us what the nature of the mission is that

you have assigned to Secretary -- former Secretary of War Hurley?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think -- the Army said he had been taken in and given a mission. I think that's all that can be said.

Q Mr. President, the comment, and particularly the remarks you made a couple of weeks ago, about not expanding more plants, has caused a lot of excitement, agitation, and uneasiness on the West Coast. Can you go ahead and say anything further about the policy, particularly with regard to evacuation of the Coast?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about evacuation of the Coast.

Q Removal of existing plants?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The system that has been worked on is not removal of plants, but it is the building up of substitute places to go to in cases of necessity.

Q Does that also mean there will be no further expansion of any existing plants or industries?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily, No.

Q (interposing) Does it mean the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) No, not necessarily. There may be exceptions to the rule, where it is the only place we can do it.

Q Mr. President, would you comment, sir, on the proposal that peace negotiations be resumed between the A.F.L. and C.I.O.?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know enough about it. I only have heard what I have read.

Q Mr. President, have you -- there are reports in Rio today that you have conferred by telephone with the Argentine President?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us anything about your conversation with

General Van Mook, the Dutch ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Part of the general -- general work of planning.

Q He told us that you had given him some encouragement that a real effort was being made to move supplies and reinforcements to that area?

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes, yes.

Q (continuing) No amplification --- ?

THE PRESIDENT: That is quite correct. Oh, No. Off the record, of course, for a very simple reason, I couldn't -- I would like to be able to say to you that such and such things are moving. Immediately they become liable to attack. I can't even say that. I can't tell you when a thing is on the way. I keep -- I can't even tell you for quite a long time after a thing gets there, because they might try to get the ship on the way home. Those things really have to be kept very dark. All I can say is that very excellent progress is being made.

Q Mr. President, there are a good many people on the street, and in the Press, asking what has happened to the Navy with regard to these submarine attacks. Can you say anything about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Only that the -- the only answer would be to invite them to the room that shows the location of every Navy ship, and I couldn't do that. (laughter)

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, we were told you were making what we call "staff studies." Can you give us anything of the nature and the progress on those?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Pete, I would say they cover pretty nearly the whole ground. Again, it is terribly hard for me to talk. They involve the -- the offensive and the defensive in -- what? -- every -- every

continent and every one of the Seven Seas.

Q Well, does that include taking up the war supplies council?

THE PRESIDENT: It includes all of war supply -- moving of things from one part of the world to another part of the world, moving ships, and moving human beings. And to particularize -- Gosh -- I would like to, but I don't see how I can.

Q (interposing) Well, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) You can almost assume that if you look at a map of the world that we are doing something there. (laughter)

Q Yes. Well, could you say that an inter-Allied, or joint commission, or committee, are being set up?

THE PRESIDENT: They are all -- they are all in existence.

Q Will there be any announcement on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt that. They shift from time to time.

Q Mr. President, you were asked about the question on the Chinese statement by Dr. Sun Fo. Have you made any corrective comment to the Chinese Ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think he has made any comment. I don't think it is necessary. I think he understands the situation very well.

Q Mr. President, do you think the Army and Navy should continue acceptance of voluntary enlistments, in view of the expanded Selective Service program?

THE PRESIDENT: We are having a meeting on that -- I think it is on tomorrow or Thursday -- on that very question.

Q With whom are you meeting, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What? With the Army and Navy.

Q Mr. President, do you think there is any connection between the presence

of these German submarines off our coast, and the Rio Conference?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Didn't I mention about three weeks -- a month ago -- that they would soon be off our coast? I think so.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

Q Mr. President, do you think that is an effort by them to withdraw our warships from the Atlantic patrol?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #800  
Executive Office of the President  
January 23, 1942 -- 10.50 A.M.

Q Good morning, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: How is everybody this morning?

Q All right, thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: (to Mr. Early) What was the name of that picture, "Corsican ---" what?

MR. EARLY: "Corsican Brothers."

THE PRESIDENT: "Corsican Brothers"?

MR. EARLY: "Corsican Brothers."

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. If you fellows ever get an hour off, go and see "Corsican Brothers." I stayed awake half the night after it.

Q Lieutenant Fairbanks?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes. Gosh, it's a good show. Old-fashioned melodrama. Gee, I laughed.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

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

Q Mr. President, can you clear up these many reports that have been published regarding your conferences with various labor leaders ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I haven't got any news on it.

Q (continuing) --- as to a peace plan ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I supposed somebody would ask the question. I haven't got any news on it at all.

Q (continuing) Can you confirm whether ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I am afraid I haven't ---

Q (interposing) --- whether Green was here, or Murray ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I am afraid I haven't got any ---

Q (interposing) Is no news good news, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Is no news good news?

THE PRESIDENT: Not guessing.

Q Mr. President, have you received the report on Pearl Harbor?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. I understand it is due very shortly.

Q And will it be made available, likely?

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

Q Mr. President, the -- some of the political parties in Puerto Rico protested against Governor Tugwell. Have you received that protest?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Have I, Steve?

MR. EARLY: Not to my knowledge.

THE PRESIDENT: Not to Steve's knowledge, or mine. I am afraid it's a very barren day today. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, do you believe that the problem of Federalization of unemployment -- unemployment insurance compensation should be settled at the same time you settle the 300-million-dollar appropriation for automobile workers?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean on State participation? Well, they are related but they are distinct -- they are distinct problems. And that is a question, of course, for the Hill, whether they put them into one bill or separate them.

Q Mr. President, have you been informed of the nature of the compromise arrived at by the conferees on the Price Control bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I have no idea, except what I read in the paper this morning. I have had no word from them.

Q Would you comment on the basis of what you read in the paper this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think so.

Q Mr. President, are you hopeful of Argentina signing this agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know enough about it. You would have to ask the State Department. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, have you selected the new Ambassador to Moscow yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet, No.

Q Do you expect to shortly, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Do you expect to shortly?

THE PRESIDENT: "Hope Springs Eternal." (laughter)

Q Mr. President, is there anything on the new Ambassador to Colombia to succeed Mr. Braden?

THE PRESIDENT: I -- I would hate -- frankly, I don't know.

Q Thank you.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I have forgotten. (laughter)

Q Have you signed the Lanham Housing bill yet?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Is there any news on the concentration of the organizations into two agencies that you spoke of a month ago?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got anything. They are going to give me a report very soon.

Q Mr. President, since we saw you, you have seen the Lieutenant Governor of the Dutch East Indies. Could you tell us anything about that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. Might get into the military and naval

field then.

MR. D. CORNELL: Thank you, Mr. President. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I feel like saying, "Thank you for what?" (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you for what!

MR. EARLY: (to the President) You have seen them since you saw, and talked to the Press about, the Lieutenant Governor.

THE PRESIDENT: I what?

MR. EARLY: You talked to the Press in your last Press Conference.

THE PRESIDENT: I did. Yes, yes.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #801  
Executive Office of the President  
January 27, 1942 -- 4.05 P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: (to Mr. S. E. Thomason, publisher of the Chicago Times)

You will be pleased to know that this newspaperman sitting on the sofa, named Lowell Mellett -- we are taking over the press. We are putting somebody on everybody's desk, so it will be all right. No discrimination. Doing it with all the newspapers.

(then to Mr. Early) Have you got anything, Steve?

MR. EARLY: No, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Let them come.

MR. SIMMONS: (to the President) Do you want the cake lighted? (A.F.L. birthday cake presented at Noon to the President by the Hon. William Green)(60th Birthday Anniversary of the President -- Diamond Jubilee)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Light it up.

MR. EARLY: (to Mr. Simmons) Bill, throw open the door, too.

MISS D. FLEESON: Look at all the sugar!

THE PRESIDENT: You want a piece of cake?

MISS D. FLEESON: I'd love it.

THE PRESIDENT: Got to be a good girl before you can have a piece of that cake. (laughter)

MR. EARLY: (aside) Stay after school.

MR. GODWIN: How much sugar was in that cake, do you suppose? (laughter)  
Was it real sugar?

THE PRESIDENT: That's an "A.H." cake -- Anti-Henderson. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: (to Mr. Early) What did you say, Steve?

MR. EARLY: Stay after school. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (holding up a small medallion of stained glass) See that?  
It's out of the smashed glass in the House of Commons. Rather nice.  
House of Commons in London.

MR. GODWIN: Smashed, you say? Smashed?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Pieces picked up from the floor.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

MR. EARLY: Not after the speech? Couldn't get it that quick. Not after  
today's speech?

THE PRESIDENT: No. That's the other House of Commons.

I think -- I don't think I have anything at all. Everybody in the  
front row was looking at this very nice piece of glass to hang in the  
window. (holding it up again) That came from smashed glass -- stained  
glass in the Chamber of the House of Commons in London, at the time it  
was bombed.

Q Where did you get it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: The Ambassador (British Ambassador Lord Halifax) gave it  
to me just now.

Q Who did, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: The Ambassador.

MR. GODWIN: The Ambassador.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have got anything else.

Q What news did he give you, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: None at all. None at all.

Q Mr. President, as a result of the Roberts report, has there been any uni-  
fication of our Army and Navy commands, regionally or otherwise?

THE PRESIDENT: Not as a result of the Roberts report, but there has been  
very great progress made in unifying command. Going on now for the last

couple of months.

Q Mr. President, will there be any more reports or any more action on the Roberts report of seeming dereliction on the part of Operations and Intelligence? Will there be any study made of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have begun studying the thing, and I am waiting now to have a second -- another conference with the Secretary of War and Secretary of the Navy. That is all I can tell you at the present time.

Q You had one conference with them?

THE PRESIDENT: I talked to them over the telephone twice, and then on some other work.

Q Mr. President, Prime Minister (Eamon) De Valera (of Eire) has protested against the landing of our troops?

THE PRESIDENT: On what ground?

Q I don't know, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Neither do I.

Q I wondered if you could comment?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't know he had protested. I would like to know on what ground.

Q That he was not informed in advance.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q On the ground that he was not consulted in advance.

THE PRESIDENT: Really? (laughter)

Q On the ground Ireland is an indivisible unit.

THE PRESIDENT: Live and learn.

Q Without politics.

THE PRESIDENT: What? Yes.

I don't think I have got any news at all. It's awful. It's the second time running. Remember what happened the other day? (laughter)

We just ran out of news after the first minute. Have you got anything?

Q Have you got any views? Maybe we could have some views, if you haven't any news?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Maybe we could have some views if you haven't any news?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know ---

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) Mr. ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I have got an awful lot of views, and I am not allowed to express them except to myself, in my sleep. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, in the three boards that were set up jointly, there is no mention of economic warfare. Will there be consolidation or cooperation between Milo Perkins and (Vice President) Wallace, on economic warfare, and the British?

THE PRESIDENT: Pete, I don't know. You know something? I tell you, frankly, that is the first time that I have had the subject suggested.

Q I know they were working together.

THE PRESIDENT: It's not so bad. They are working together, I know.

Q I was wondering if there was going to be any organization on it?

THE PRESIDENT: I -- I rather doubt it. I think they will just keep on working together, and on certain things like raw materials they will be taken care of. On the raw materials, of course, all three boards -- I read a stupid piece in the paper, something about one board being more important than the other two. Of course the three of them are absolutely essential to each other. You couldn't have an allocation of munitions

board unless you had munitions, and you couldn't get munitions unless you had raw materials, and you couldn't move the allocations unless you had ships. So "dictum ad absurdum" each partner is equally important with the other.

Q Mr. President, do you think the Irish people have any reason to feel concerned ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Now wait. Listen. (laughter) I am not going to lay myself open to stories in the columns and other things like that, by expressing my opinion of the dear Irish. I am part Irish myself, so it's all right.

Q I merely thought, sir, that President De Valera's speech to the Irish people said there was something to be concerned about, and I thought perhaps you could clear that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) There isn't anything to be concerned about, except the protection of Ireland.

Q What do you think of inviting him over here?

THE PRESIDENT: I would love to have him. He is an old friend of mine.

Q Considerable has been said on the other side about the purposes of the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) About what?

Q (continuing) --- about the purpose of this movement into Ireland, by the Prime Minister, and by the British Air Minister. I was wondering if you couldn't say something about this for us?

THE PRESIDENT: For the development and carrying on of the war toward eventual victory.

Q For instance, it was said yesterday that this is a vanguard. Do you look on this as a vanguard?

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody said it was an A.E.F., but I think at the present

time that we have -- oh -- around different parts of the world -- somewhere around six, eight or ten expeditionary forces. It seems sort of silly to say it is an A.E.F.

However, that is the policy of some people, as you know, because it backs up their policy prior to December 7, so they have to go back to try and carry out the same policy by calling this an A.E.F. As I say, there are six, eight or ten A.E.F.s at the present time that are outside the United States, so you can pay your money and take your choice. You can label one of them an A.E.F. and you can label another one something -- some other fancy name.

Q Are all those A.E.F.s in locations which everyone knows?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Oh No. Oh Lord, No. You didn't think I would tell you? (laughter)

Q Have they arrived at their destination?

THE PRESIDENT: Do you think I would say that?

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, has this study of your -- which you spoke of -- has this unified command gone so far as to -- for consideration of a department of defense combining War and Navy?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh No.

MR. GODWIN: That is, you have not got -- it hasn't got to that point?

Q Mr. President, Mr. Churchill told the House of Commons today that there would be set up in London and in Washington inter-Allied Councils. Is there anything you can tell us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is developing very nicely. It is coming along very good in both places, and several other places too.

Q Mr. President, I notice you said that the unification had been going on for a couple of months. Was that on recommendations of Mr. Churchill?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It had nothing to do with it.

Q Mr. President, could you say anything about progress in getting supplies to the Far East?

THE PRESIDENT: We are making very good progress.

Q Men, as well as materiel, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q I understood that was supplies. How about men?

THE PRESIDENT: I would call it "help." That is a broad word.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything -- Mr. President, can you tell us anything about this new C.I.O. -- A.F.L. committee that was set up at your suggestion?

THE PRESIDENT: They are coming in on the -- what is it? -- 5th of February, for the first meeting?

MR. EARLY: Thursday.

THE PRESIDENT: Thursday, the 5th of February.

Q Mr. President, what is your function in connection with that committee?

Do you consult with them, or do you serve as an arbiter?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. No. You got the idea all wrong. This committee -- and one reason why I like the membership of it, it is the kind of a committee that if it was a little warmer we would -- we could sit around the table and take our coats off, and just have -- let our hair down, and talk to each other. That's all.

Q (interposing) That's been the trouble. They have been taking their coats off. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, the trouble has been in the past that they have, on these formal things. These will be just informal gatherings from time to time -- no specified times -- to talk over the general situation. Now that

is literally all, but you do want to have on a committee of that kind, people that you are -- that you call by their first names, and can have that kind of a get-together, around-the-table meeting. You want to be able to have the kind of a meeting where you won't have a stenographer present.

Q Mr. President, have you decided on the Alien Property situation? Who is going to handle it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I guess that will come along. I don't know when -- another week or two -- three weeks. No particular hurry about it, because there is no immediate emergency. It is going along pretty well the way it is. As time goes on it will become, as it did in the World War, more important and probably be set up possibly as a separate agency.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, have you anything further to say about aid of any sort to the Dutch East Indies and Australia? You made some remark about it.

THE PRESIDENT: Just the same thing. We are sending all the help we can as fast as we can to that whole area.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I don't see any reason why you people shouldn't use for that area, and try and popularize, a very short term for the Southwestern Pacific, which is very long. It's what we have been calling it now for a couple of months -- calling it the "Abda" area -- American, British, Dutch, Australian.

Q Short for "abracadabra"? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Abda area. It's a very simple word to learn, and it doesn't go up to the -- to Indo-China, or the -- or Siam, or Burma, or China itself. That's another separate area.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #802  
Executive Office of the President  
January 30, 1942 -- 11.05 A.M.

(today was the President's 60th birthday)

(Mr. Leon Henderson, Office of Price Administration, and Mr.

J. Lionberger Davis, were guests at this Press Conference)

Q How does it feel to be sixty?

(the President made no oral reply)

THE PRESIDENT: Rather late. They throw things at me at the last minute.

MR. GODWIN: Are you late? (looking at his watch)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Oh, really?

THE PRESIDENT: I apologize.

MR. GODWIN: Happy birthday, anyhow. Have you seen these automobile stamps?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I saw one. Not in my collection, but in my car.

MR. GODWIN: Do you have to have one?

THE PRESIDENT: Sure I do. I have got one car and two trucks at Hyde Park.

MR. GODWIN: Oh, that's right.

THE PRESIDENT: I had to ask the man up there to buy some.

Q How are your tires, Mr. President?

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) How are your ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q How are your tires?

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Tires.

THE PRESIDENT: On one truck they will last six months. On another truck they will last a year. I haven't bought any new ones.

Q Aren't going to either?

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

MR. GODWIN: Do you think you could get one?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: Do you think you could get a tire?

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I doubt if I could for my own personal use. I doubt it.

MR. GODWIN: I don't think you can.

THE PRESIDENT: I am sorry to be late, but I have had things thrown at me at the last minute.

Somebody raised the question about continuing to give foreign relief without naming any organization or any country. My feeling is that there are working on our side a great -- a good many nations who need things for their civilian population, let us say, need warm clothing -- haven't had wool for a long time -- and that our present efforts to get things to them should be continued without any question. Of course that is merging almost automatically with -- it might be called luxuries for our own Army and Navy boys, things that they don't get in the regular handout from the Army and Navy in the way of warm clothing -- sweaters and things like that. But we certainly ought not to cut off our help that we have given to other nations at this time. In other words, it's all part of the common war effort, and we ought not to discriminate. I suppose that -- just one word that describes the situation, and that is the word "give."

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Give.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) We have all got to "give." We have got to keep up our own domestic things like, for instance, the infantile paralysis drive, and a great many other drives -- hospital drives, charity drives

of all kinds. And we have got to -- instead of cutting off anything -- just "give" a little bit more. That includes these different organizations that are pretty well tied in together at the present time in cooperation with the Red Cross, and working through the -- I have forgotten the name of the committee -- the Joe Davies' committee.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In other words, approved organizations.

Q Mr. President, does this ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q Does that apply particularly to the relief of Occupied countries?

Q Europe, is that?

THE PRESIDENT: You can't -- you can't say Yes or No on that. Some of the -- most of the Occupied countries we can't get anything into.

Q (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) A political thing.

Q Mr. President, would that apply to Vichy?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q To Unoccupied France?

THE PRESIDENT: Where we can get things in, and where we are sure of distribution. That is another thing that I will have to give you, as -- without attribution or anything else -- I do know we have sent quite a lot of food to the children of France, on the -- on the assumption that it would be delivered through non-governmental sources like the Quakers, and the Red Cross, etcetera.

And the experience has not been a hundred percent satisfactory. Some of the food that we have sent over there, most unfortunately has been put on a train, in Marseilles. And the train started, ostensibly

bound for an Unoccupied part of France where they needed food for the children, and the train went right on going -- into Germany.

So the thing has got to be awfully carefully checked. Now we certainly at this time cannot afford to send food to an enemy country.

Q Is that an isolated instance, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Have you had more than one instance?

THE PRESIDENT: There have been a number of small instances. This was rather a large instance.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, did you have something more that you wanted to say to us?

THE PRESIDENT: I have got quite a lot of things.

I have just signed the Price Control bill. And Mr. Henderson says, in recommending that I sign it, that it makes an honest woman out of him. And when I signed it, I said to him it makes an honest woman out of me too. In other words, it's Congressional authorization for carrying out certain things which are inherent in a war situation. He gave me a little memorandum which I can talk to you on, and then this afternoon Leon (Henderson) and Steve (Early) are going to work out for you something that is a little bit longer, in the way of an analysis of what can be done, and what can't be done.

Leon says, "A. The bill is worth having. B. It is another valuable tool to use, in conjunction with other tools, for the control of inflation -- other tools such as taxation, and savings, and rationing."

The framework of the bill is good. Now this is me talking. The framework of the bill is good, because it provides for responsibility in a single Administrator, and a workable set of administrative pro-

cedures. The enforcement provisions of the bill are good. We -- the Administrator may license persons who are subject to the Act, and may if necessary secure compliance with the Act through criminal proceedings and injunctions. In addition to that, consumers themselves may bring suits for treble damages against sellers who violate the maximum price regulations. In other words the bill has got teeth in it.

Third, on the whole the rent provisions of the bill are good. If State or local authorities fail or refuse to stabilize rents, the Administrator may move in and establish a system of rent control similar to the system provided for the District of Columbia. That ought to be a definite help in stabilizing the -- what might be called the cost of living.

Fourth, there is a useful and important power given to the Administrator, who may buy and sell commodities, in order to obtain the maximum necessary production.

Fifth, the maximum price provisions of the bill, in relation to non-agricultural commodities, are good. In general -- this is a general statement. We do not make -- call them exceptions. In general, the price of commodities will be based on the levels that prevailed in the first half of October, 1941, adjusted for various factors of general applicability and effect.

In regard to the agricultural commodities, there are certain limitations which are not so good. The real danger -- there are a number of rather technical matters in the agricultural provisions -- but the real danger lies in the provision that no price shall be established below 110% of parity. The objective of course on that, of the Administration, was after, very, very many years to -- effort to bring the price of

agricultural commodities up to parity. We have been working at it for over eight years. We have not attained the goal, except in a minority of agricultural products, well, such as meat. And we had hoped that the legislation would be in such form that we should seek an average of parity.

This provision of not less than 110% of parity is a very definite violation of an objective which had been sought for eight years by the agricultural population of this country as the goal they set. And, therefore, in regard to the cost of living, the 110% of parity provision is a threat to the cost of living, especially in view of the fact that parity, as you know, is not a fixed amount. It's a relationship of agricultural cost of living to the nonagricultural -- the industrial and other cost of living. And, therefore, as the cost of living goes up the extra 10% goes up, all of which is -- provides for a tendency toward a rise in the cost of living, foodstuffs being a very important item in the average family.

And finally, the bill is certainly worth having. Perhaps it is the best we could have got at this time. We will undoubtedly have to step on the toes of a lot of people, which is again another inherent factor in wartime. We hope by vigorous administration to fill in the gaps in the legislation, and if necessary ask Congress for amendments which will become more clear with the actual operation of the -- of the bill. Having said that mouthful, I will now leave it up to Steve and Leon to work out a method for tomorrow morning.

Q Mr. President, is one of the things you are going to try to have corrected --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q Is one of the things you are going to try to have Congress correct this

big feature that you have called attention to?

THE PRESIDENT: If it is necessary. If it seems necessary -- ask for amendments, if in the operation of the bill the amendment is -- is important.

Q Mr. President, might the land (??), in determining an increase in price, tend to keep down the increase in parity -- in the increase of parity?

THE PRESIDENT: In some things, Yes; and some things, No. Too general. You can't tell.

MR. GODWIN: Well, Mr. President, isn't that power to buy and sell commodities, which seems to be limited only by the size of the crop -- isn't that a fair way of combating ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, and then of course also the Farm Credit Administration keeps right on going.

MR. GODWIN: Yes.

Q Mr. President, authorized to buy and sell at the highest price fixed in the bill, or some other bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No. The objective is to keep the thing stable, between a ceiling and a floor.

Q Then the requirement is not to purchase agricultural commodities at 110% of parity?

THE PRESIDENT: It depends entirely on the individual case.

Now let's see what else we have got.

Q (interposing) Isn't there a provision in the bill, Mr. President, that forbids buying and selling for the purpose of controlling prices? I had an idea that that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) (turning to Leon Henderson) Leon? I don't know.

MR. LEON HENDERSON: This provision relates to the agricultural commodities,

but there is no bar in this bill on the Commodity Credit Corporation's operation. There is some confusion about that, but the legislative history is very, very clear. Brown -- Senator Brown made that very clear, the day the Senate adopted the conference report.

THE PRESIDENT: I was mistaken. I said "Farm Credit." I meant "Commodity Credit."

Q Mr. President, do you know yet who will be appointed Price Administrator?  
(loud laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Ecce homo! (more laughter)

Q Mr. President, hasn't the -- wasn't the controversy -- the probable misunderstanding between Secretary Wickard and Mr. Henderson been straightened out?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there was so much to that controversy as some people thought.

MR. LEON HENDERSON: I am seeing him at a quarter to twelve.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. LEON HENDERSON: Mr. President, Mr. Wickard and I are seeing each other at a quarter to twelve.

THE PRESIDENT: Then they will talk, to see who pays for lunch. (laughter)

Q What's the weight of the gloves?

Q Mr. President, you spoke about inherent powers. Could those carry price control beyond the provisions of the bill in any respect?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't thought of any. I haven't got any in mind. Well, for example, somebody gave me a memorandum here that somebody was going to ask me a question about moving non-defense people out of Washington. And it is a question of inherent powers. And I suppose if we were to make it very uncomfortable for the -- what shall I call them? -- para-

sites in Washington, the parasites would leave. There are a good many parasites in Washington today. We all know that. (laughter) I don't know whether that is an exercise of an inherent power or not, but I am inclined to think they would get out. (more laughter)

Q Power to requisition buildings?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, that statement is based on, I think, based on testimony that Mr. Palmer made before the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes, yes.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- Buildings -- Public Buildings (Committee). He said that there were 80 -- 100 thousand people had come here, and 85 thousand more were expected this year, and that you could -- that you were evacuating about 12 thousand Government clerks, and that there was a saturation point which the utilities -- that simply could not -- the city could not stand with its present size, its streets, streetcars, and electric lights. This extra 73 thousand people would themselves bring an impasse somewhere. And this town is considerably upset about it.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I know what I would do. I would write a story with a headline -- large leadline -- in the Washington papers. The headline -- very simple -- go right in a -- a box -- right across the front page: "Are You A Parasite?" (laughter) Now a lot of people in this town are going to say, "I wonder if I am a parasite or not?" (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Well, you ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- you ought to appoint a "parasite commission." We could clean house. (laughter) We could run some of them out.

THE PRESIDENT: We went into it in the World War. Lots of people were personal

friends of mine who came down to Washington and just had a good time -- didn't do a lick of work -- men and women.

MR. GODWIN: Well, 73 thousand of them? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: What? I don't know. I never counted them, but there were an awful lot around, and they clogged up the actual work -- war work of the Government -- the fact that they were here having a good time.

MR. GODWIN: Well, seriously, Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is serious.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- what Mr. Palmer said was that we will ask people to give up their homes and their offices ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) If they are parasites.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) It will not be effective. You can't ask anybody to give up his home or his office or go somewhere else. It's not a good thing, if you will pardon me for making a speech?

THE PRESIDENT: I have got this memorandum -- I might as well read it. This is from Palmer. What Palmer said was that when the saturation point of construction of housing had been reached in the District, the -- those people now living here not essential to the war effort should be asked to move out. What Palmer had in mind was that class of people who live in Washington because they like to live here for social reasons, or because their girl -- their children are going to school here. People who live in 20-room houses on Massachusetts Avenue, for instance, occupying homes there rather than Government or business --

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Sumner Welles?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- all such interests incident to the normal functioning of the city. There is in effect now, under the war powers of the President, the right for the President to take over dwellings,

hotels, etcetera, if needed for any connection with the war, and of course, under that he would have the right to take over smaller types of accommodations. That answers the question.

MR. GODWIN: Yes. Whether you have the right or not -- in wartime only?

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

Q Who would determine ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q Who would determine whether the occupation is essential?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think I would appoint a committee from the Press.

(laughter)

MR. GODWIN: That's right.

Q Is the Press essential?

THE PRESIDENT: What? (laughter)

Q Mr. President, how about those on relief in Washington, who can't get jobs?

Will they be moved out?

THE PRESIDENT: That -- that -- that end of it is working out pretty well.

Most of them are employed, or they are people who have been here for a long, long time. Well, just for example, one of the effects of the -- this is a local story, but it applies to other places too -- you know the blind here in Washington have been provided, for the last seven or eight years, with the right and with enough capital to start a little stand in Government buildings. And they have had a very large number of blind people -- who would be on relief -- running these stands. Well, with the coming of the war and lots more people, some of those blind people who are running stands -- newspapers, magazines, small knickknacks, and even some of the stands have coffee and sandwich stands -- they are making so much money today that we put in additional stands, in order to

employ more blind people.

Well, the net result of that action is that there are -- there is a shortage of blind people in the District. (laughter) It is an amazing thing. And they are all having the opportunity to earn their own living, and therefore to go off relief. And there are practically no blind people who are physically capable of running a stand who are on relief at the present time.

It's a very nice illustration of how we are really trying to get down to the individual cases, like handicapped people.

Q Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, may we quote that suggested headline, "Are You A Parasite"?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Mr. President, have you received letters from two of the presidents of the Railroad Brotherhoods -- the Firemen and Enginemen, and the Railway Trainmen -- asking you to take over the Toledo, Peoria and Western Railroad?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and I sent it over -- I don't know who I sent it to. I think it was the Railway Labor people that it went to. (turning to Mr. Early)

MR. EARLY: Yes, I think so.

Q Any decision on an Ambassador to Moscow yet, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet. We hope soon.

Q Are you contemplating any further action on that strike situation, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: On what?

Q On that Toledo, Peoria and Western strike situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Why, I have asked for a recommendation on it.

Q Railway?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President, and a Happy Birthday!

CHORUS OF VOICES: Happy Birthday!

THE PRESIDENT: (aside to Mr. Godwin and Mr. Early) Look, I hope Sissie  
(Patterson) won't take that as personal.

MR. GODWIN: I hope she will.

THE PRESIDENT: I hope she will.

MR. GODWIN: She only lives at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue!  
(laughter)

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #803  
Executive Office of the President  
February 6, 1942 -- 10.50 A.M.

THE PRESIDENT: Well?

MR. GODWIN: How do you do, Mr. President?

Q Hi, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I "do" better.

MR. GODWIN: I am another radio man that gets fan mail at the White House,  
even addressed to me here.

THE PRESIDENT: You and Fala.

MR. GODWIN: Me and Fala! (laughter) I think I will turn it over to you.  
They all want something.

THE PRESIDENT: Sure? They haven't sent you a collar yet, or a license tag?

MR. GODWIN: No.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve tells me there is no news. I have been laid up for two  
days with a bad cold. I am all right again today. There is very little  
news that hasn't already been given out. Can you think of anything,  
Earl (Godwin)?

MR. GODWIN: I was going to ask if you had anything to say about Chairman  
Ed Flynn's recent speech that has attracted a good deal ---

VOICES: (interposing) Louder. Louder.

THE PRESIDENT: I honestly don't know. I don't know what he said.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. Michelson could inform you, maybe.

MR. MICHELSON: What's it about?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't seen Charlie (Michelson).

MR. GODWIN: Well, is that a serious answer, sir? I would like to pursue it.

THE PRESIDENT: It really is serious, because frankly I have no idea what Flynn said.

MR. GODWIN: He made a statement -- spoke something like this: that the election of a Congress hostile to the Administration would be equal to a major military disaster, or -- or words to that effect.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will tell you -- I suppose the easiest way of putting it is this: that when a country is at war we want Congressmen, regardless of party -- get that -- to back up the Government of the United States, and who have a record of backing up the Government of the United States in an emergency, regardless of party.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) That's it.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Put that down again, twice. I think that covers it all right. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: That's fine.

Q Mr. President, there has been talk that there might be a shipping czar, not so much for the ships but for cargo space. There has been some complaint on the effective use of cargo space.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I don't know. I never heard of it. We have -- we have a -- in effect a ship allocation czar.

Q That's allocation of ships, but this is cargo space. For instance, some of the stuff coming from this Pacific Southwest has been non-essential materials, and the ships are going down South for nitrates, and going down empty -- not well cargoed, and while the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I will look into it. I haven't personally had any complaints about it, but maybe something ought to be done.

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Then, of course, we have to remember that in a

war it is almost impossible to plan for every ship a schedule sufficiently far ahead to arrange for the best method of shipment, and the best articles to ship, because of the simple fact that in a war a great many ships have a schedule, and without warning, or without notice, we have to break that schedule because of some emergency. But I will look into it and see what it is.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, it might -- might aid you to know that the people who are close to the White House -- I mean these higher-ups in the shipping business, make the -- make the statement that ships on military missions hurrying to get there, will be sixty or eighty percent loaded. Possibly some of that is accounted for because they don't know how to stow things in between whatever they are carrying. That statement comes from private shipping sources. Does that help you any?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it doesn't, because again you run into the emergency question. Sometimes the stuff is not ready, on an outward-bound ship, and we have to send her out sixty or eighty percent loaded, because we can't wait.

Q Mr. President, did you confer again this week with Dr. Van Kleffens, the Dutch Foreign Minister?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I am seeing him -- (turning to Mr. Early) -- Am I seeing

MR. EARLY: (interposing) Today.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Today.

Q For lunch, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. EARLY: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: About what time is it? (looking at his appointment list)

MR. EARLY: 12.30, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: 12.30. The Minister of the Netherlands, and Lieutenant Governor Van Mook, and Dr. Van Kleffens the Foreign Minister.

Q It seems to be the impression, sir, which Mr. Van Kleffens has in turn added to, that the Pacific councils to which Mr. Churchill referred are now beginning to shape up. Could you throw any light on that?

THE PRESIDENT: Beginning to what?

MR. EARLY: Shape up.

Q Shape up.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think they are.

Q Are those councils to be military, or are they to be political and military, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I'd say -- I would put it this way, that there is the -- down in the Abda area, as you know, there is the military command under the supreme command of Wavell. Now there are certain -- that is -- I suppose it is a -- a slipshod way of putting it, but the operations could be called "tactical." I refer to the certain long range strategic questions which would be referred here, and London. Well London of course includes the -- the British Empire people -- Australia and New Zealand -- and it also includes the Dutch government in London. Now those strategic questions which would be referred -- it isn't a very good differentiation to make -- tactical and strategic -- because it isn't a clear line always. But it is the best -- it is the best terminology that I can think of at this time.

Now on the strategical things that would be referred here, or London -- long range again -- you would have to divide them into two parts. One would be the military and naval, purely, and they would go to the

joint staffs, on which there would be consultations, of course, with Australian, New Zealand, and Dutch officers. Another group of questions that would be referred would be more of a political character -- a government character -- and they would be referred to the American government, and the British government, and the Dutch government, and the Colonials' governments represented in London.

Q (interposing) Well, then ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Now, of course, there again you run up against the distinct possibility that you will have something that is partly political and partly strategic. I am thinking in very broad terms, nothing specific at all. Where they have both characteristics they probably would be referred both to the governmental agencies -- the political agencies -- and then the military and naval.

Q Would these so called councils, sir, sit in Washington, or would they sit both in Washington and London?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, they are -- they are sitting both in Washington and London.

Q They are sitting?

THE PRESIDENT: They are.

Q They are in being now?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, they have been for a month.

Q For a month?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Thank you, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: And I think -- I think there is no reason why we shouldn't point out that on the strictly -- the decision end of these things, there is very close cooperation between Washington and London.

I suppose the easiest way of putting it is this: that when a question is raised down in that area that has to be referred, there are two copies made. One copy is marked for action, and that comes to Washington. The other copy goes to London, and that is marked for recommendation to Washington. And, in the event of disagreement, it comes to the higher authorities in both places. There haven't been any disagreements to date, and probably won't be. But the "action" copy comes to Washington.

Q Is New Zealand represented in fact on these councils, or has it been for a month, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes. Consult with them all the time. Of course, they haven't had, so far, any very high-ranking officers here. And I think they are sending some men.

Q The Minister (Walter Nash) is here now?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I am receiving him, probably in the course of the next day or two.

Q In that connection, Mr. President, Mr. Nash, at his first Press Conference, spoke of an area outside of Abda which would cover ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) --- Australia and New Zealand, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) --- with a recommendation that the headquarters would be here, and who hoped also that the commander would be an American admiral. That hasn't been presented to you as yet, has it?

THE PRESIDENT: The two things have been discussed right along. You are getting down into the detail field, and that is one of the things we can't talk about and put down too specifically, but the thing is working.

Q Mr. President, do you expect any early results from the 500-million-dollar

loan to China?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. Quite aside from the -- it might be called the psychological point of view, assuring China through the loan that we are solidly behind them and are helping in every way that is physically possible in the military sense, as fast as we can -- this is a -- a -- will be a very definite relief to the whole financial problem of China itself, through stabilization of their currency, and the ability to get more things that they very greatly need for their armies.

Q Purchasing within China?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Purchasing within China, you mean?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and some things that they can get on the outside.

Q Mr. President, has Senator Reed's amendment on the Wage-Hour Law come to your attention yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you decided on a new Administrator for the Wage-Hour?

THE PRESIDENT: Very nearly. Not quite.

Q Mr. President, when you referred to Congressmen, regardless of party, you meant to include the Senators also, using the general term?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, have you accepted Nathan Straus' resignation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, this is off the record, ---

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) He bade goodbye ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I have his resignation. I haven't had time to write him a letter accepting it, but I expect to do it over the week end.

MR. GODWIN: Do you care now to mention the name of a possible successor?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, any progress ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) What I would like -- I think this probably had better be completely off the record. It is rather a nice thought.

Q (interposing) Mr. President ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) As long as you don't attribute it, you can use it. We are acquiring, have been acquiring for some time, and undoubtedly will acquire more Nazi internees, and Nazi prisoners in this country who would be of course placed -- what's a polite term? -- behind barbed wire and adequately taken care of. And, perhaps there is some merit to the thought, it would be rather a nice gesture to put Nathan Straus in charge of those Nazi internees. (loud laughter) Do you think it's a good idea?

MR. GODWIN: Was that off the record?

THE PRESIDENT: Now you can use the attribution -- background ---

MR. EARLY: (interposing) Background. I don't think that would be possible to work out.

THE PRESIDENT: What? That doesn't seem to be possible to work out?

MR. EARLY: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, all right. You can attribute it as a very "pious" thought. I suppose that's the best word.

MR. GODWIN: (aside) How about it?

Q Mr. President, do you expect to take any further action to speed up the construction of the New York City Massena power line?

THE PRESIDENT: I read something in the paper about it not being allowed to go through three miles of the Adirondack Preserve. I haven't seen any-

thing.

Q That is a smaller portion of the line, Mr. President. The line from New York City to Taylorsville has still not been cleared in Washington.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Last I heard was a couple of weeks ago, and they were clearing it. Now whether it has been done or not, I don't know.

Q Mr. President, will an Ambassador to Russia be appointed soon?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q It's in the works?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It's in the works.

Q Today, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Not till Monday.

Q Mr. President, have you given any thought to the appointment of Ambassadors to Bolivia and Paraguay?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We have given a good deal of thought to it.

MR. GODWIN: You are not ready to announce it?

THE PRESIDENT: Not ready to announce it yet.

MR. GODWIN: (aside) How about it?

Thank you, Mr. President.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.