

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #853

Executive Office of the President

October 20, 1942 -- 4.10 P.M., E.W.T.

MR. GODWIN: (on his way to his seat) Working hard today. He (the President) has got his coat off.

THE PRESIDENT: Can you squeeze through that little space there?

MR. GODWIN: Since sugar rationing, sure. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: After that I should call you "sweetness." (more laughter)

MR. EARLY: That will hold you for a while.

MR. GODWIN: What?

THE PRESIDENT: Steve says that will hold you for a while.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have had a number of letters and telegrams and questions asked, in regard to bringing in some very much needed labor from Mexico to help us in some of the places where there is a great shortage of farm labor to move certain definite crops. I asked the State Department what the status was, and they -- they gave me this memorandum.

The arrangements were made under an agreement with the Mexican government, on August 4, to bring in Mexican agricultural workers. And at the present time there are being brought in under that, 3 thousand Mexican agricultural workers, nearly all in California. I think a few in Arizona.

The State Department says contingents of several hundreds of these workers have been moving across the border, under the supervision of representatives of the Farm Security Administration. That has been going on for the past 3 weeks. These Mexican workers have crossed the border with great enthusiasm, and have marked their trains with banners expressing

their eagerness to serve the Democratic cause by saving harvests vital to the war effort of the United Nations.

The State Department also says that thousands of other Mexican agricultural workers have registered with their own government as being ready to lend a hand in the production of strategic food crops for ourselves and for our allies. The effective work of those already in the harvest fields of California, readiness of many more to lend a helping hand, the generous response of the Mexican government to our call for agricultural manpower, are eloquent witness of the important role that our Mexican allies can and are taking in the war of production, upon which the inevitable success of our military program depends.

And of course ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- in the -- I take it that others will be brought in, if they are needed to save crops at the time of harvesting, in States that are nearest to the Mexican border. But if necessary in some cases, like the Montana beet fields, they are already moving in some of the Japanese labor into the Montana beet fields. And it is expected that with the shortage -- Oh, I don't know what the shortage is, I think you will have to leave it off the record, because it's just recollection on my part -- about 8 hundred or a thousand more people will probably make the safety of that gathering of the beets assured.

I was told something I did not know before, and that was that if you once get the beets out of the ground -- it's very hard work, it isn't the kind of work that women or high school children can do -- if you once get the beets out of the ground and pile them at once, it doesn't make any difference if they freeze after that. But you have got to get them out

of the ground before the ground freezes. And now that will be accomplished before the ground freezes.

Q Mr. President, will some of the Mexicans replace the Japanese in the truck gardens in California?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know.

Q Where did the Japanese come from who are being shipped to Montana, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Concentration camps.

Q Mr. President, what sort of arrangements are you working out on paying them?

Do they get regular wages or not?

THE PRESIDENT: I think they do. I don't know what -- I don't know if it's regular wages, but they get paid. What the scale is, I don't know.

Q The Japs don't pay our boys over there.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Mr. President, is there any estimate of the amount of Mexican labor that would be available?

THE PRESIDENT: We have got 3 thousand under way now, and I suppose several thousand more. And of course, probably -- you have got the winter months coming on, and when there aren't any harvests they go back home, and return in the spring when they are needed.

I don't think I have got anything else.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything of your talk (today) with Mr.

(Paul V.) McNutt?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, we are just going into the situation. We are expecting a report from this employer -- I don't know what they call it -- management work group. They have been giving it intensified study now for two or three weeks, and that report ought to be in early next week.

Q Do you plan to sign the tax bill today or tomorrow, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got it yet.

Q You will sign it as soon as you get it, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I may read it first. (laughter)

Q The excise rates will go into effect November 1st, I understand?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q The excise rates will go into effect November 1st. It has to be signed today or tomorrow.

THE PRESIDENT: I think in order to put them into effect November 1st, instead of December 1st, the bill will have to be signed before tomorrow midnight. And actually -- well, I haven't seen the bill. I have had Budget and Treasury all at work studying it, and explaining it in -- in the English language, as distinguished from parliamentary language, and I hope to get something that any one of us can understand, and then take action on it before tomorrow midnight.

MR. J. WRIGHT: Mr. President, going back to the manpower thing, there has been some discussion of blanket exemptions of dairy farmers, and people on stock farms, and so forth. Is there anything you could tell us about the general manpower picture now, as it applies to this situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Only -- only this, Jim. I would say that -- Oh, let's take, what? -- a simple formula. Suppose there are a hundred people -- men and women combined. There are probably at least 50 places -- different kinds of occupations, including being soldiers, including being farm workers, including turning out airplanes. There are about 50 different categories that we have got to consider -- satisfy -- out of those hundred people. Now any legislation which attempts to say what proportion must under law be carried out is unsound, for two reasons. Things vary in different parts of the country. They even vary in two cities that are 50 miles apart. They

vary in needs between one month and another month. And if we once start to go into the details of the use of manpower by legislative amendments, instead of one amendment, you might get 50 amendments. And if you got 50 amendments covering all the different -- the different occupations that they went into, either the thing would be -- would be contradictory -- contradict itself, or would be -- even if it didn't contradict itself, might apply in October, but not apply in November. And that's -- that's why I don't think that the -- the limiting amendments by groups, occupations, trades, war necessities, or anything else, is perhaps the sound way of approaching it. You can have some over-all objectives. That's all right.

Q I didn't think so much of specific legislation as I wondered if, in your talk with Mr. McNutt, this thing had been canvassed to the point that you knew what you were going to do about the farmers?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, except that we have got to take care of it, that's all. I couldn't give you the details.

Q Mr. President, speaking of that, is there any -- have you in your discussions -- have you seen any way of handling this thing short of a general over-all authority granted to you by Congress, for doing -- for putting them where they should be in this situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think we had better wait until we get the report of this board. It's such a tremendous -- it's a matter of tremendous complexity in different parts of the country that I wouldn't like to talk about it until I -- I get the factual report, and the recommendations of the people who have given it certainly more study than anybody else.

And all that McNutt said was that they had reported to him they were getting on extremely well, and hoped to bring in a unanimous report

on which all of the different elements represented were in agreement. Of course if that could be done, that would be good.

Q Mr. President, are you familiar at all with the Tolson Committee's report on manpower, which was made during the day?

THE PRESIDENT: I heard it had been made up. I haven't seen it.

MR. GODWIN: What did you call that, a manpower -- that group of McNutt's, did you say manpower? You had some phrase there that --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. I think it's called the management --

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) I will get the name.

Q Labor Management Committee.

THE PRESIDENT: Labor Management Committee.

MR. GODWIN: I would like to be really elemental about it, Mr. President, as everybody has his own problem, and probably everyone who goes into it will find a farmer who says that he had three farmhands helping him milk the cows, and trundle the milk down the end of the lane, and that two of them left for the factory for three times the wages. Now the old man and the farmhand can't milk the cows. They are dying to get it hauled down there. The sum total of that is the prediction of a milk shortage. And the sum total is the prediction of other shortages all through the country.

THE PRESIDENT: That's what we are trying to avoid.

MR. GODWIN: What?

THE PRESIDENT: That's what we are trying to avoid.

MR. GODWIN: Is that the thing we are leading up to?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it goes a great deal farther than that -- infinitely farther.

Well now, for example, one of the problems that we have probably got to face -- mind you, that all ties in with Government finance --

the purchasing power -- I was out for a drive the other day, and went through a small town not far from the National Capital. And we got held up in traffic two or three times, and -- and I was looking in the store windows. My Lord, three quarters of the store windows were filled with luxury goods, just plain luxury goods that we could do without, all of us. And one reason is that about -- Oh, a year and a -- year and a half ago, maybe, people began stocking up their inventories, all over. Now we have got to face the question on manpower as to whether we are going to allow the production of luxury goods any more. That's a very nice question.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Now, here is just another little angle. In this country cash -- dollar bills, five-dollar bills, nickels, dimes, quarters, fifty-cent pieces -- (there are normally) about 9 billion of them. And today there are about 14 billion, using very rough figures. In other words, an awful lot more cash floating around. Well, I remember I went into the Navy Department in 1913, and every two weeks I got my salary in cash, and I put it in my pocket. I don't know where it went. (laughter) It just went. I had money in my pocket. I couldn't keep an account with myself. And after about six months of this, certain complaints came from back home about paying the grocery bill.

Q (interjecting) I guess you didn't have a newspaper expense account then, Mr. President. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No, but I have made one out several times. (more laughter)

And so I began taking my salary by check and putting it in the bank, and taking perhaps 5 dollars cash for the week and putting it in my pocket -- trying to anyway. (laughter)

Q (aside) Until tomorrow. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Now people that have got this extra 5 billion dollars in the country in their pockets, they are going to spend an awful lot of that automatically -- it's just human nature -- for unnecessary things -- luxuries.

Now if they spend it for luxuries, there is going to be a demand for luxuries on the part of the storekeeper, because he can sell them. And making luxuries uses up manpower. So that ties in with the manpower problem. Perhaps an effort should be made to be a little more drastic in preventing the manufacture of luxuries. If you don't see luxuries in the store window it means the store hasn't got any, and you don't buy it because you don't see it, or if you ask for it, they haven't got it.

It's a -- it's one of those perfectly elemental things which enters into all kinds of problems. For instance, buying war bonds. If a fellow takes his salary in cash, the way I did, he is much more likely not to buy war bonds. I don't think that -- I don't think that you can take one aspect of the thing -- I wouldn't know how to write this thing -- I don't think you can take just one aspect of the thing, about the problem of the milk farmers getting his milk down to the end of the lane ---

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) That (phrase) answers pretty well.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- without considering all the other things.

MR. GODWIN: That is true.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q But you don't forget the farmers?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, no. Then, of course, you come to another thing. I know one place in this country where a farmer could very easily get two or three high school boys to come down there and carry the milk down the

end of the lane. Also, I know other places in the country, out in the Middle West where the distances are great, where we can't get any high school boys to help them. Every county is different from every other county.

MR. GODWIN: That's right.

Mr. President, is there anything you can tell us about a plan to furlough men from the Army to go back into industries where they are needed?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I would say again the rule of common sense. I saw people on this trip, as reported by the Press Associations ---

Q (interposing) Inadequately, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Inadequately, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: What about that? (much laughter)

MR. DOUGLAS CORNELL (A.P.): (aside) That's a matter of opinion.

MR. MERRIMAN SMITH (U.P.): (aside) Inadequate opinion.

THE PRESIDENT: I saw boys -- I won't say boys, but men 35 to 40 years old in two of these camps. Well, My Lord, they would have been much better off in a munitions factory. I don't -- I think they were too old to march 25 miles a day with heavy equipment. And I imagine that in the Army some of the people who have been inducted already, especially if they can be definitely used in a definite place, some trade they know to be useful in war production, that they will be furloughed back to that kind of work, instead of staying -- trying to stay in a combat division in uniform.

Q Will they continue to draft men of the older group, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Of course there are some fellows, *mirabile dictu* (wonderful to relate), who are still physically fit at the age

of 40 that might be drafted. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Mirabile dictu.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Mr. President, in connection with that, would you care to comment on the fact that the House of Representatives passed the Selective Service Extension Act within 5 days after you made the public statement on the subject?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) I think it's fine. That's easy.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, John Blandford (National Housing Administrator) has started in motion some policies, I think under your directions, which might lead us to the taking over under some form or another of some of these large houses -- with two or three people in them -- of 20 rooms. That leads back to your old "parasites," remember?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: He has actually started ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

MR. GODWIN: He -- were you aware of that? Were you aware of that?

THE PRESIDENT: I read something about it.

MR. GODWIN: He has started that, and I wondered if you were behind it, or knew anything about it, or could you say anything more about it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Except that this -- on this same drive yesterday, I did go up a certain rather well known avenue in Washington, D. C., -- (laughter) --

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- and I saw house after house that didn't have any curtains in the windows -- evidently wasn't being lived in. Perhaps the "parasites" had left. You see what I mean?

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) He has got something there.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And the question is this: A lot of them have been turned into rooming houses, and they are serving useful purposes as such. But I think there are a lot of houses in Washington that are just plain empty. Now, why shouldn't they be used?

MR. GODWIN: His idea leads up to taking those big houses and making them into rooming houses, or apartment houses, on a pretty good business basis. I wondered if you knew anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't, but I think it's a pious idea, as long as it doesn't cause too much hardship.

Q Mr. President, in 1936 you endorsed Senator (George W.) Norris (Independent of Nebraska) for re-election. He is running again this year in a 3-way race. I wonder if you would care to say anything about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I am sort of caught unprepared on that one, but I tell you what I wish you would do. I have got a recollection that in 1936 I went to a great big, I think it was an organization Democratic Meeting in a -- one of the biggest halls I have ever seen, Aksarben Hall (Coliseum), Omaha, Nebraska.

Q Mr. (Tom) Reynolds' (Chicago Sun) home town, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

Q Mr. Reynolds.

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Oh.

And I made a speech at that time, and it's in -- somewhere in my public papers.

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) In my files.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And I would be afraid to quote from it, because it's a long time since I saw it. But the fact remains that at that time,

in that speech, I did get a Democratic organization meeting up on its feet cheering for George Norris. And Steve (Early), if you dig that out and have it copied, that part of it -- I don't know what there were -- five or six paragraphs -- let the boys have it. It's public property. It isn't copyrighted. I don't know -- I don't know that I would change one word of what I said at that time. I would say from recollection -- you had better let me see the speech first.

MR. EARLY: You might change it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. F. PASLEY: Mr. President, on Senator Josh Lee's rider to the Selective Service Act on the 18 and 19 year-old age group, a lot of people think that it's probably an entering wedge for perhaps a second 18th Amendment in World War Two by the drys. Would you care to comment?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it. What does it do?

MR. GODWIN: (interposing) It provides ---

MR. F. PASLEY: (interposing) It would bar beer in Army camps and Navy posts, and would establish out-of-bounds areas on hard liquor.

THE PRESIDENT: Hard liquor too?

MR. F. PASLEY: Yes, sir. (much laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I think -- I think I had better see it before I --- (more laughter interrupting).

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Pretty good.

Q See what, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What? (more laughter)

See Mr. Pasley. (again more laughter)

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

(Notebook X-PC - page 127 - JR)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #854
Executive Office of the President
October 23, 1942 -- 11.00 A.M., E.W.T.

(Mrs. Ernest Hemingway, and Mr. Alexander Woollcott,
were guests at this Press Conference)

Q Good morning.

THE PRESIDENT: Good morning.

Q (to Mr. Early) Did he (Mr. Woollcott) come for dinner?

MR. EARLY: What?

Q Did he come for dinner?

MR. EARLY: I think he is Mrs. Roosevelt's guest.

Q Did he come for dinner?

MR. EARLY He is staying for dinner -- several of them. (laughter)

Q I hope he doesn't break his leg. (more laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have anything this morning. That is why I am late. Steve (Early) has been trying to find something. The only other other thing, which is off the record, is that yesterday I was given a very wonderful present for the Hyde Park Library, by Mr. (Augustus E.) Giegengack, the Public Printer. It's a complete file of one of the most famous newspapers that was ever published, called Stars And Stripes -- Paris -- in the old days. And it was one of the -- as I said, it is one of the greatest newspapers of the century. And Mr. Giegengack was one of the editors. Stephen Early was one of the editors.

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) (laughing) Oh!

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And Mr. Alexander Woollcott, who is on

the sofa, was another one.

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) He was.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. EARLY: He was.

THE PRESIDENT: Sure. (laughter)

Well, there are some things in this paper that probably shouldn't be reprinted, but for people who are old enough to remember the days of the old war, there is some quite interesting material in it. I see Mr. (Fred) Shipman, the Librarian at Hyde Park, is with us today, and it will be a great acquisition for the Library up there. There are very few complete copies.

That's not news, but just an item.

I have a meeting at 11.30, which somebody will probably ask about -- War and Navy Secretaries, Admiral Leahy, General Marshall, Admiral King, Mr. Land -- Admiral (Emory S.) Land, Admiral (Howard L.) Vickery, Donald Nelson, Lewis Douglas, Harry Hopkins -- just to talk over the -- the general situation. As you know, we have these meetings about -- similar meetings about once a week.

One of the things we are going to talk about is in regard to the general materiel production problem -- we talked about it yesterday in Cabinet -- and following out a little bit what I was talking about the other day, a further limitation on the production of non-essentials and luxury or semi-luxury goods, in order to get more steel, in order to get more of everything which would go into essentials -- the real essential military thing.

And there is this one -- one item -- I don't know whether this should be called background or not -- that I think that we should all remember: War changes plans. A year ago the experience of other nations in the previous two years had led to recommendations for the -- for certain necessary munitions. And even in another year those necessities change because of further experience. And it's always an impossible thing to lay down a program, let us say now, for the exact number of things -- various items that will be produced in the year 1944. We may have to make changes.

Well, just the simplest example -- I think I have used it before -- is the -- is the tank program. A year ago we had a very large scheduled production of light tanks -- M-3's. And some of you who were on the trip went to a factory in Detroit that had been turning out a large number of light tanks. Well, the experiences of tank warfare, especially in the Libyan area since last January, led us to change over to an entirely different type of tank, the M-4.

And then came another question, as to whether our original estimate of tanks was not a bit too high, from the point of view of transportation to battle areas. And we are not turning out as many units of tanks today as the program of nearly a year ago called for. On the other hand, we are turning out very much the same weight in tanks -- the same number of pounds of steel -- in a smaller program, as there were pounds of steel in the larger program, because the size of the tank has increased.

And that is why these meetings -- like the one this morning --

are being held from time to time, to modify the details of programs in the light of new experiences. And secondly, to determine from time to time whether we are doing our utmost in the total of production, not just the munitions, but all kinds of other things, so that there isn't any specific thing that will be taken up today. There will probably be 50 things taken up today.

Q Mr. President, in your Message to Congress you asked for 45 thousand tanks in the calendar year 1942. Can you tell us what the new figure is?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you that. Oh, I suppose it would be considered a military secret. It's a small -- I would put it this way, it's just what I said before, it's a smaller number of tanks, but probably the same amount of steel going into them.

Q Mr. President, would that same ratio, between numbers and weight, apply to airplanes?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

Q Fewer airplanes, but ---

THE PRESIDENT (interposing) Fewer actual planes but the --- the same weight of aluminum and steel and other things as in the larger number of units.

Q Is that translated into harder hitting power?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes. More gun-power ---

Q (interposing) Can you tell us, sir ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing)--- longer range.

Q Can you tell us, sir, anything about your conversation with Mr. Andrew Jackson Higgins, sir, of Louisiana?

THE PRESIDENT: Who?

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) Higgins.

Q I mean he was here earlier in the week.

THE PRESIDENT: No. Well, I can tell you this, that they have directives in the Maritime Commission, and the W.P.B. (War Production Board), to find something for Mr. Higgins's plant to turn out. In other words, in that particular case it's one of the results of my trip. I found that there was a -- an idle plant. Well, if you have got an idle plant that can make things, the next step is to find the best thing that we can put into the plant.

Q Mr. President ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, a minor point. You referred to light tanks. Both the M-3's and M-4's are classified as mediums.

THE PRESIDENT: I guess you're right. I think you're right about it. The M-4 is a lot bigger than the M-3.

Q Mr. President, could you tell anything about the change-over of fighter planes to these newer type high-altitude fighters?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, that's changing all the time.

Q Is that change-over responsible for the fact that there was a drop in fighter plane production in the late summer?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q No?

THE PRESIDENT: No. There isn't very much change-over.

Then, of course there is another thing which you always have to bear in mind. Well, we will call it -- we will call it "X", so as not to get too close home. An "X" plane is sent to a certain area which has been using the "Y" before. And they

love the "X" plane. They think it's a great deal better than the "Y". At the same time we send the "X" plane to another area of the world, and they say, "Oh, No, No. We much prefer the "Y" type of plane."

Well, they all have to be made to realize that one type doesn't work as the best type all over the world -- different conditions, different slants, different kinds of training. Not just ourselves, but all the other United Nations that are flying planes. Some of them like this type, and some prefer the other type. So we can't be didactic about it and say that type "X" is the best type. Somebody else may prefer the "Y".

Q Mr. President, there are some of the facilities in some of the airplane plants that have been operating at less than full time, of course, because of material shortages. I am wondering whether this re-arrangement is going to provide for a greater emphasis on materials into those airplanes as against other items?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think it's entirely a question of materials. It's a question of some of the -- I don't want to create invidious comparisons, but it is true that one or two of our plants are essentially assembly plants. And it's also true that the -- some of the manufacturing plants, which were the makers of parts which were supposed to get these parts down to the assembly plants, are behind. I don't think there is any use in saying which -- which plant or plants are behind. Some of you probably know. There was one plant which I visited -- an assembly plant -- that we expected would be receiving enough parts to be in absolute

full production by this time, which when it gets into full production will probably employ between 40 and 45 thousand people. By Jove, we get there and find they have only got 8 thousand people, because the parts are not coming in from the other places. However, that -- that to me is a matter only of a very few weeks before they will be in full assembly production.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, while we were ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Go ahead, May.

MISS MAY CRAIG: While we were waiting to come in, we were talking about the principle of reprisal shackling of prisoners. Would you discuss that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think you had better get the State Department to discuss it, because while I know all the highlights about it, they know all the details.

Q (interposing) Mr. President, have you had ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Of course, I suppose -- I suppose the easiest way of putting it is that theoretically the Geneva Convention is the rule under which the United Nations have been operating.

MR. J. WRIGHT: Mr. President, can you give us some examples of these luxury goods you are talking about -- that you had your eye on?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I don't know. Go down F Street ---

MR. J. WRIGHT: (interposing) How? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Go down F Street, Jim. Look in the store windows. Do some window-shopping today. You will see what I

mean. Things that you and I could get on without. I saw in one of these stores the other day -- I saw a baby carriage. Now you and I can do without a baby carriage. (loud laughter)

MR. J. WRIGHT: Maybe we couldn't get along without them, Mr. President.
(more laughter)

MISS MAY CRAIG: I think that depends. (again more laughter)

Q Mr. President, have you had any further word on when you will get the report of the Labor Management Committee on manpower?

THE PRESIDENT: Early next week, I was told yesterday. They didn't say the exact day.

Q Mr. President, to return to the Geneva Covenant, is there anything you could add to what you just told us, beyond that one sentence?

THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't trust myself to do it, because I don't know the details of what has been happening in the last few days.

MISS MAY CRAIG: We didn't mean details, we meant principle.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MISS MAY CRAIG: We didn't mean details, we meant principle.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have -- the only thing I can tell you -- there may be a lot more since then -- is that when the prisoners that were captured by the British in the Dieppe raid were brought ashore, I understand it that some of them had their hands tied during the time that they came out of the boats -- the time between then and the time they went into the concentration camp. Now that, of course, was not a violation of the Geneva Convention, it was merely security in transportation. And that that was followed by a wholesale, apparently a wholesale shackling -- or whatever the word is -- of British and Canadian prisoners, which were not being transported -- who were not

being transported, but were actually there under guard. Now that was a violation of the Geneva Convention. Now what has happened since then, I don't know.

Q Mr. President, that raises the question of whether, in view of what the Japs have been saying on the radio they are doing to certain men alleged to have been left behind from the Doolittle (bombing) raid (on Tokyo), are we going to continue to stick to the Geneva Convention?

THE PRESIDENT: Certainly. They -- they don't conform to the Geneva Convention, if they do what they say.

Q Well, what I mean is, there will be no reprisals on our part?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you had better talk to the State Department. Now I'm getting in too deep.

Q Mr. President, could you clear up the mystery of what kind of "organizers" (Rear Admiral) Emory Land was talking about?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't read anything. He was here yesterday. I didn't talk to him about it. We were talking about other things. And, Pete, I don't know. I honestly don't know.

Q (interjecting) (jokingly) Don't call me Pete. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I saw in the newspapers that he said he had been misquoted, and that's all I know.

Q Mr. President, could you tell us anything about your conversation with Mr. Myron Taylor last week?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It was very satisfactory. (laughter)

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
 Press Conference #855
 Executive Office of the President
 October 27, 1942 -- 4.15 P.M., E.W.T.

Q How do, sir.

VOICE IN THE BACKGROUND: Right along. Right along, gentlemen. Hurry up.

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody with a whip out there?

Q Sounded like it.

VOICE IN THE BACKGROUND: Right along. Right along, please.

Q Saturday night in the movies.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (laughter)

MR. FRED PASLEY: (in the background) Hi, Mr. President.

VOICES: Sh - sh - sh.

MR. EARLY: He (Fred Pasley) did a question on prohibition.

Q Bring it up.

MR. EARLY: What?

Q Bring it up. (laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think about the only thing I have is a letter that was sent on September 26 to Admiral (Emory S.) Land, and Mr. (Donald) Nelson, and Army and the Navy, the Defense Plant Corporation, Federal Housing Agency, in regard to trying to keep down the cost of war production in relationship to the use of power.

I say, (reading): "In arranging for the electric power supply for war plants or establishments, the cheapest sources of power consistent with war requirements should be used."

In other words, it will save the Government a lot of money.

(continuing reading): "Public and private power supplying agencies

150-2-0-57
 213-2-0-57

[Administration?]

should be advised as far in advance as possible of the prospective location and requirements of plants or establishments on or near their systems, in order that they may assist in solving the power supply problem involved, at the lowest possible cost. In many instances it should be possible to lessen power costs, if provision is made for power to be supplied to the consuming agencies directly from the power generating agency. If the lines of the lowest cost power supplying agency do not connect immediately with the war plants, there is no reason why connecting lines of other companies or agencies should not be utilized, for a reasonable transmission charge. I am asking the Federal Power Commission to cooperate by using its emergency powers, when necessary, to make available transmission and other appropriate services for the effectuation of the policy."

(handing the papers to Mr. Early) Steve will have ---

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- a copy of that for you as you go out.

I don't think I have got anything else.

Q Mr. President, did you listen to your radio from ten-thirty to eleven last night?

THE PRESIDENT: I did. Several people dining -- we listened to it. (Wendell Willkie's speech to the nation on his 32 thousand-mile trip)

Q Anything you could say about the speech, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I suppose the easiest thing to say is -- I don't know whether it should be off the record or for background -- to paraphrase an old cigarette advertisement: there isn't a controversy in a carload of speeches.

Q Mr. President, did you feel that Mr. Willkie supported all of your ob-

jectives?

THE PRESIDENT: I just said I didn't think that there was a controversy in a carload.

Q Is that off the record, please?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you can put it on the record, if you want. That's all right.

Q Does that mean that you agree with him on ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I told you there wasn't a controversy in a carload.

Q (continuing) --- most of those points?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I will sing it, if you want. (laughter)

Q That would be fine.

Q Go right ahead, sir. (more laughter)

Q Mr. President, Mr. Willkie suggested in his speech that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Is this just another form of the same question?

Q I think not, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

Q (continuing) But in the countries which he visited, some of them had given a local and a limited significance to the Charter signed by you and Mr. (Winston) Churchill because of its name, the Atlantic Charter. I wonder if you could explain ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I think that's in a perfectly proper form to answer, because it's a matter of record. If you look back in the record, you will find that -- Oh, I think twice last spring -- and Mr. Hull on one or two occasions, have already made it perfectly clear that we believed that the Atlantic Charter applied to all humanity. I think that's a matter of record.

Q Mr. President, is it understood generally, do you think, that the term "Atlantic Charter" refers to the fact that it was drafted while you were on the Atlantic Ocean?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. Just the locus of the moment.

Q Mr. President, could we put quotation marks around "the Atlantic Charter applies to all humanity"?

THE PRESIDENT: If you will add to it, "as the Secretary of State and I have said several times before." Then you can put quotes around it.

MR. EARLY: Quote the whole?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. In other words, I don't want it to appear that that is a piece of news from me today, because it isn't. It's old stuff.

Q Mr. President, can you explain why the New York Times, through Hanson Baldwin, has been able to give us the most complete account of the battle of Guadalcanal in August?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think you had better go and find out. I don't know. I have heard quite a lot of kick about it, and I haven't followed it through. I don't know any more than you do.

Q I am not kicking against the New York Times.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q (continuing) I am kicking against the Navy and the O.W.I.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. You had better find out, because I haven't had time to look into it.

Q Mr. President, can you add anything to what the Secretary of the Navy said this morning about the battle of the Solomons?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think so. I think -- well, for instance, the headline of the (Washington Evening) Star -- in the Star is, I think, accurate. I don't know that I would use the adjective "decisive" battle, because -- but the rest of it is all right. "Battle Rages in Solomons."

(laughter) Like asking the question which were the decisive battles of the world -- nobody knows. There is a battle raging in the Solomons. And the outcome is not clear, as Secretary Knox says.

Q Thank you, sir.

Q (interposing) Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I think that's all right.

Q (continuing) --- I don't know whether the Censor will let this by, but are you going up to Hyde Park to vote, and are you speaking before the election?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I will speak before the election, and I don't know whether the Censorship will let it by, as to whether I am going to vote by letter or go there.

Q If it's by mail they will, Mr. President. (laughter)

Q Mr. President, have you any comment on the progress of Anglo-American cooperation in the Caribbean?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, that -- that talk I had this morning with Mr. (Charles W.) Taussig, and a man named -- (looking at his appointment list) -- Sir George Gater -- G-A-T-E-R -- who is on the -- one of the British commissions. Mr. Taussig is on our commissions.

And we have been discussing, as you know, for about a -- I think over a year -- I started it -- the economic and ~~social~~ future for the people of the West India Islands, which are owned by a good many different nations. A good many of them are British -- we have a number -- the French have some, the Dutch have some, Venezuela has some, Colombia has some. And there may be some other scattered islands that I haven't thought of.

And I felt for a great many years, knowing the territory pretty well, that something ought to be done for their economic and social

future. They have been a liability to the nations to whose sovereignty they belong. And my thoughts have been running along certain lines which ought to be carried out for all of the islands.

I am not talking about Puerto Rico now, because that is a separate problem, like Haiti, San Domingo and Cuba, all of which have very large populations. But outside of those three main islands -- Haiti and San Domingo being on the same island -- outside of that, most of the islands are small, and exceedingly poor.

I think there are certain things which are worth going ahead with the present and past studies, such as, for example, the extension of the franchise, and the putting in of compulsory education, as a starter. And then try to make the islands as a whole self-sustaining. That means a certain investment, but probably a profit in the long run. I don't mean necessarily a financial profit on the investment. I think you will get your investment back, which is all that a government could hope to do.

Just, for example, in simple illustrations, some islands can grow cattle. Others can't. And yet you can't get cattle -- meat -- sheep, chickens, and so forth, from one island to another because there is no refrigeration. In most of these islands it is almost impossible, as some of us know, to get any decent meat, because you can't keep it, because there is no refrigeration. And about the only meat you eat has been killed within a few hours from the time it goes on the dinner table. Other islands are eating things which are not grown on the island. Some islands, for example, buy most of their foodstuffs from long distances, which means that their own money goes to other places, which is not good economy. There are some islands where the production of cattle, for example, is under way, with distinct possibilities for the future. They

buy their shoes in the United States, or in England, or a little while ago in Czechoslovakia, when they could probably make most of their own shoes themselves out of their own hides. A great many items of that kind which have been studied.

And we are working toward an economy and a social system that will be a very marked improvement, and cause those islands to take care of themselves, instead of being looked after from the outside, and help in the general world picture of a better economy.

Now these commissions that have been at work -- some of them have been finished -- the studies are continuing. And I hope that some method will be worked out so that all of the islands, excluding the three big ones, can be brought into an economic and social team for the benefit of all of them.

Now that is about as far as we have got at the present time, but it's one of the very interesting studies which I think we initiated over here, and about two years ago. And it's working toward a definite result.

Q Mr. President, would this economic and social teamwork require a certain amount of political unity?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. Certainly not. More self-government in each island.

Q Mr. President, does the plan cover the French islands?

THE PRESIDENT: We hope so. It's a little bit difficult to go ahead with that at the present time, but there is no reason why it shouldn't.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment, sir, on the one-year training amendment in the 18 and 19 year-old bill? Speaker Rayburn today said that the bill could not be taken up formally by the House until November 9.

THE PRESIDENT: Just because there isn't any House here. Isn't that the reason?

Q I think it's really because of the -- of the one-year training amendment

which prevented them from going right through.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there is a real -- the underlying cause is that there is a disagreement, apparently, between the two Houses, and that one House has no quorum here, and won't have a quorum here. They have all been gone for a week.

Q I was thinking of it, sir, more in regard to the fact that both the Army and Navy urge the very speedy passage of this legislation.

THE PRESIDENT: That what? I didn't get it.

Q That both the Army and Navy ask speedy passage of the bill. I was wondering what the delay would do?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope it will go through as soon as it possibly can.

Q Mr. President, have you anything to say on a food administrator?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Under study.

Q Mr. President, there were reports published this week that you and the State Department had interceded with Donald Nelson to remove a man named Thomas R. Armstrong, who was chief of the Foreign Requirements Liaison Division of the War Production Board. Have you heard anything of that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think you had better ask either State Department or Nelson.

Q Mr. President, have you any new word on the Labor Management report on manpower which you said you expected to have early this week?

THE PRESIDENT: (to Mr. Early) Have you heard anything this week?

MR. EARLY: No, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, there is a report that you have decided on the Supreme Court appointment -- a successor to Mr. Byrnes.

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Mr. President, do you -- can you tell us when you expect to have another meeting such as you had last Friday with Mr. (Frank) Knox (Secretary of the Navy) and Chiefs of Staff?

THE PRESIDENT: I have those all the time. Half the time ---

Q (interposing) Is that a formal thing?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Look, what happens is this. They come in either your way, or if it is more convenient through this room, or they might come to the White House. I have them morning, noon and night with different -- with different memberships, each one depending a good deal on the individual question to be taken up. And of course a good deal of that is done by my Chief of Staff down in the Joint Board -- Joint Staff, or the Combined Staff, and that is just a continuing process. It isn't any news when you happen to see them come in. They are doing it always.

Q Mr. President, there is a lot of talk about a directive centralizing control over oil. Is there anything you could tell us about that?

THE PRESIDENT: The petroleum administration thing?

Q Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is -- that is under study. I haven't got -- I really haven't got any news on it, except it's under study.

Q Can you tell us anything about a directive to make greater use of indirect control over manpower? Is that under study too, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes.

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

(Notebook X-PC - page 163 - JR)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #856
Executive Office of the President
October 30, 1942 -- 11.00 A.M., E.W.T.

THE PRESIDENT: Where's Mac? (Marvin H. McIntyre)

MR. WAYNE COY: Mac?

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't I just see Mac?

MR. EARLY: He was in Grace's office (Grace Tully) a moment ago, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: See if you can get him out, Steve.

MR. EARLY: I will get him.

THE PRESIDENT (to Mr. W. H. McReynolds): Tell me if this is right. (handing him a mimeographed sheet) Is that last paragraph true? I think it is, isn't it?

MR. McREYNOLDS: I don't know. I haven't told everybody in the departments ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) How about the Navy Yard?

MR. McREYNOLDS: I don't know. I think they should be told.

THE PRESIDENT: I think they always do.

MR. EARLY: They will be.

MR. McREYNOLDS: I told them to carry out the usual practice.

THE PRESIDENT: That isn't strictly and literally true. I think it's that last paragraph. (Then after conferring with Mr. McIntyre as well as Mr. McReynolds on the subject) Fine. All right.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think I have only got one thing. I wish you people would help in carrying it out. It's rather short.

(reading) "I hope very much that the press and the radio will tell ---"

--- Steve (Early) will have copies of this for you afterwards ---

(continuing reading): "I hope very much that the press and the

radio will tell all citizens of the United States that the President hopes they will go to the polls next Tuesday and vote. We are engaged in an all-out war to keep democracy alive. Democracy survives through the courage, fortitude and wisdom of many generations of fighting Americans. And that includes using not only bullets but also ballots.

"I ask that employers all over the country will so arrange the work-day that they and their employees can go to the polls, and that there will be no deductions in pay for reasonable time necessarily taken to vote.

"I have directed that those responsible for the operation of government workshops, shipyards, navy yards, arsenals, ordnance depots, as well as the executive departments and agencies, should give all employees an opportunity to vote, without any loss in wages for time away from work."

And then one other thing, which I did not write down, that I think is worth saying, and that is that when a voter who is working on war work goes to the polls and finds a very long line of people waiting to vote, that the line should be courteous enough to put him up at the front so that he won't waste any time.

Q Mr. President, how are you going to vote in the -- your own Congressional District? You have always spoken of that?

THE PRESIDENT: I am going to vote either by absentee ballot or in person ---
(laughter) -- if you must know.

Q How are you going to vote? What is your particular candidate?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Oh, I never discuss my secret ballot. I never have.

Q Would it be a fair inference that you are not going to vote for Hamilton Fish?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think that would be. (laughter)

Q (in the background) Can we quote that, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) That's not new. I think I have said so before.

Q Mr. President, on two occasions, the most recent one this morning, British sources have carried stories on American troops in Liberia. This morning there was a story that our troops were there, that negotiations with the Liberian government had been completed, and that there are white and negro units stationed there. Now, so far, the American government has said nothing about our troops there, and I wondered if there was anything you could give us, such as an official confirmation that they are there?

THE PRESIDENT: I -- I wouldn't dare do it without consultation with the military authorities. In other words, that is a story that relates to troop movements. And I should think that we should first find out whether the military people -- what their view of publicity about an operational move is, before the President says anything. And I haven't -- I haven't asked them what their view is. It's an operational movement of troops -- if so -- if it exists. Be very careful to take the whole of the sentence and not half the sentence. And if there is such a thing it's a military move, and therefore it is -- a decision or a statement about this should rest with the military authorities. I think that is quite obvious.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us what Pat Hurley (our Minister to New Zealand) is doing now?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I can say this: that he is on his way back to New Zealand. (laughter)

Q Will it take him some time to get back?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that he is on his way back to New Zealand.

Q Mr. President, would you care to comment on the published reports that

Mr. Ed Flynn (Chairman, National Democratic Committee) may become Ambassador to Mexico after the elections?

THE PRESIDENT: I never heard of it. Didn't know there was such a report.

Q Mr. President, can you give us any news on the Solomons this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: On the what?

Q On the Solomons, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I don't think there's anything -- anything that wouldn't help the enemy by disclosure.

Q Mr. President, do you have any comment on the Senate proposal for an investigation of Puerto Rico?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about it. What was that? (no answer from the questioner) What was it about Puerto Rico?

Q The proposal by Senator (Dennis) Chavez (of New Mexico) for Senators to go to Puerto Rico and make a survey of conditions?

THE PRESIDENT: I hadn't heard anything about it. Never heard of it.

Q Mr. President, there were reports published this morning that (Lieutenant) General (Dwight D.) Eisenhower is being called home for some consultation. Is that correct, so far as you know?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, there again, you see, you put me in an awful hole -- an awful hole. The -- these movements of commanding officers, of course, anywhere -- anywhere in the world ---

MR. EARLY: (interposing) The newspapers also said that the War Department said they knew nothing about those reports.

THE PRESIDENT: As I was just saying -- well, aside from that, I don't think it's an awful helpful thing to print things about movements of American officers. I really honestly don't.

Q Mr. President, I have been asked to ask you whether the White House has requested an investigation into the Ohio old age pension division?

The State Auditor, Mr. Ferguson, made that statement yesterday, that the White House had ordered such an investigation.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you can say that the White House never heard of it.

(laughter) Not the kind of a thing, obviously -- I don't know what they mean by the White House. The White House wouldn't originate a thing like that.

Q Mr. President, is there anything you can do about clarifying this Higgins plane deal? Apparently it is still in the oral stage -- it isn't on paper -- but he is expecting to get an order for 12 hundred (cargo) planes.

THE PRESIDENT: I think I can only repeat what I said the other day. You know after we got back from that trip, I did say to W.P.B. (War Production Board), and talked with the Army and the Navy and the Maritime Commission, that I understood there was a 10 million plant --- a 10 million-dollar plant down there that wasn't -- wasn't working, and to go ahead and find something that could be built in that 10 million-dollar plant. Now what the status is at the present time, I don't know.

Q Were you aware, sir, that the Maritime Commission has been dismantling that plant, and has apparently been speeding up the dismantling procedure?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is not quite the way I would put it. The Maritime Commission, as I understand it, did own quite a lot of very heavy plate and shape -- ship plate and shape machines -- machine tools down there that did not belong to the plant, that belonged to the Maritime Commission. And when the order for the freighters was canceled last -- whatever the date was, they took some of those tools and put them where they would be immediately available. And I don't think they are tools.

that are used in making air transports.

Q Mr. President, it has been generally reported that you have decided that a move to have a National Service Act is not necessary now? Is that true?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It is not true -- (including) all the headlines that carried it that way. It is still in the study-stage. That is the only thing, literally and truthfully, that you can say. We don't know yet.

Q Sometime ago, sir, you said that you anticipated receiving a report from the Labor Management Policy Committee early this week.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that it's very nearly ready, I heard yesterday afternoon. And it's very nearly ready. I might get it even this afternoon or tomorrow.

Q There have been reports that there is dissension between the Committee itself and Mr. (Paul V.) McNutt (War Manpower Commission). Have you heard any such report?

THE PRESIDENT: Haven't heard a peep about it. Don't know. No idea.

Q When do you think, sir, that we might anticipate some positive action from the White House toward a National Service Act, or some such type of legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. In other words, nothing has been abandoned, nothing has been decided on.

Q Mr. (Philip) Murray (C.I.O. president) and Mr. (William) Green (A.F.L. president) yesterday were under the impression that nothing would develop, or at least as long as that would be necessary to make further explorations, especially of the supply of women for Government labor war industries.

THE PRESIDENT: Again I wouldn't be -- put it quite that way. We did talk about the -- the general reservoir -- (loud laughter, as Wendell Willkie used this word a great deal in his speech last Monday night,

the 26th) -- to use Mr. Willkie's words -- (more laughter) -- different kind -- the general reservoir -- (again more laughter) -- of available labor in this country, male and female.

And the general line of talk yesterday was devoted to one phase of that reservoir. We felt that on -- on men's labor, considering the fact that we have close to 6 million people in uniform -- Army and Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard -- and that so many men have gone to work in factories, that the men's end of it does not leave us very many men for the -- to fill up the needs, during the coming year, of 4 or 5 million additional workers.

Mind you, there isn't any at this moment. There are mighty few places in this country which are shut down because of lack of labor. Don't forget that. In other words, we are looking ahead for needs during 1943.

Now on the other hand, in our discussions yesterday, it was pretty well agreed that the largest untapped portion of available labor is among the women. And you who were with me on the trip saw pretty good evidence of the fact that women are increasingly being used for all kinds of war work, or to take the places of men who have gone into war work.

And we did discuss, not -- make this clear in the first instance -- not the drafting of women into these places where we need workers -- no compulsory draft -- but we did discuss trying to find out, through a registration of women, where they are. Now that is something that there is very little known about. In other words, ask women, or make -- make the actual registration compulsory, such as it was in the case of the men, all women between 18 and 65 to register.

Now that does not mean that they would be called to go here, there

and the other place by compulsion, but we don't know today where that available supply of women exists, what they are specially fitted for, and what they want to do. And we believed -- I (have) believed for a long time that there are hundreds of thousands of women in this country who would like to help more greatly than they are doing now, and who don't know how to do it. They don't know where they are wanted. They don't know what opportunities outside of their own home are open to them. We don't know how many of them would be willing to work within 15 or 20 miles of their own home. We don't know how many of them would be willing to go further away to work. And the most practical way, we feel, is some method of registration where we would get the information. We don't know how many there are who want to work.

And that was one of the chief topics we discussed yesterday.

Q Mr. President, would you need legislation for such a registration ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes, yes.

Q (continuing) --- to make it compulsory?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q That would entail a pretty severe time lag before you actually would get the legislation and could put the registration into effect? Would it probably be ready the end of this year?

THE PRESIDENT: End of this year, Yes.

Q (interposing) And then this registration ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) But, as I said before, there are -- there is-- there are very few instances in this country anywhere, where things are closed down for lack of workers. We are all right at the present moment. I am not saying that it will be all right without doing something in a few months. That is a very different thing. But at the present moment we are all right.

Q The registration then implies that there will be no Administration request for a general Service Act, at least until then?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I wouldn't make any implication. That is just one phase of the thing, that's all.

Q (interposing) Mr. President, ---

Q (interposing) Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) The other is a different subject. Let's stick to the one subject.

Q Mr. President, have you decided ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

Q (continuing) --- on the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No.

Q (continuing) --- on the ---

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. (laughter)

Q (continuing) --- registration ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. I was merely telling you what we talked about.

Q Mr. President, you made the same proposal at least 6 or 8 months ago, and then you got a report, I think from Secretary Perkins or McNutt, or someone. You said that it was not necessary, at that time. You recall that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. War and Navy also said so. Also W.P.B., at that time.

Q At that time. Is it coming up again?

THE PRESIDENT: That's right.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, why don't you get some other word than "manpower," when you mean women? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: I will give you that job for next Tuesday. Come in and give me the word.

MISS MAY CRAIG: You always have to explain.

THE PRESIDENT: I agree with you heartily. Bring it in. (more laughter)

MISS MAY CRAIG: I will tell you now.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MISS MAY CRAIG: I can tell you now.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MISS MAY CRAIG: Call them either "workers," or "labor forces," or "labor power"; and that means both. When you want to specify -- specify.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. That's possible.

MISS MAY CRAIG: I have devoted some thought to that.

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you very much. (much laughter)

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #857
Executive Office of the President
November 6, 1942 -- 10.50 A.M., E.W.T.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve (Early) says his shelves are bare.

I think the only thing I have got is that I have been working yesterday and this morning with Mr. Oliver Lyttelton, the British Minister of Production -- who I think will be here probably two or three weeks -- in going over jointly the British and American production program for 1943. We make periodical checkups on the revision of production -- joint production programs, and this is preliminary to the -- I suppose the estimates over there and the estimates here, for the -- the year 1943 -- calendar year -- in regard to all kinds of munitions and supplies for all of the United Nations. So that by the time we get through with these conferences we will -- we will have a pretty good picture of the needs for next year. And of course, as I have said before, the experience in the war -- the conduct of the war requires a constant revision of plans. There are all kinds of munitions.

And outside of that I think the only thing I can say is that all of us -- all of the United Nations have been very much heartened by what looks to be a victory of major importance in the Egyptian-Libyan area. There isn't much news from there that hasn't been given out in the -- in the communiques, but things seem to be going extremely well.

Outside of that, I don't think there is a thing.

Q Mr. President, does Mr. Lyttelton speak for all the other United Nations?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Does Mr. Lyttelton speak for all the other United Nations in these production

and allocation discussions?

THE PRESIDENT: Does he speak for all the other nations? What do you mean?

Q You spoke of this being for all of the United Nations.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the production program is for all the United Nations.

He doesn't speak for all the United Nations. They speak for themselves.

But we are the principal producing agencies.

Q Mr. President, how are their wishes ascertained in this --

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q How are the wishes of the other United Nations ascertained in these periodic revisions for strategical purposes?

THE PRESIDENT: Constant daily contacts -- every one of them.

Q With the Ambassadors here, or with the supply missions here?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it depends on the individual country. There are various ways. You can be quite sure that we get the requests.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, you spoke of (Lieut.) General (Bernard Law) Montgomery's victory over there (in Egypt). And it occurs to me that if you take the Eighth Army -- the British Eighth Army as a level of perfection -- achievement in training -- I think the American people might be enlightened if we knew whether we had any Army forces in training that could equal that?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose the easiest way of putting it is this: We don't know. Nobody knows, until we have had troops in action on a major scale. You can't tell how a thoroughly trained division or army will succeed until you have had them in action.

Q Mr. President, do you know to what extent the Montgomery army was equipped from the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, except I would say to a minor degree. In other

words, a great deal less than half. I couldn't give you the exact percentage.

Q Would that be true in tanks?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q Would that be true in tanks?

THE PRESIDENT: It would be true in -- in tanks, to a certain extent. It might be true in motorized equipment, to a certain extent, but the -- the overwhelming part of their equipment is British equipment.

Q (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Of course, Britain has some of our planes and some of our tanks, but we mustn't get the idea that they were equipped with American equipment. It makes a nice headline, but unfortunately it isn't true.

Q Mr. President, do you consider any of our activities on Guadalcanal (in the Solomons) of major scale?

THE PRESIDENT: I -- No, I wouldn't, because -- because the whole thing down there is on -- on a limited scale, both on the Japanese side and our side, because of the same old thing, the problem of transporting men and equipment to that very limited area.

Q Mr. President, will those actions just continue -- be continued then, and where there are continued engagements will they be continued on a limited scale indefinitely, or would it eventually grow to major scale?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I think that is sort of a hypothetical question. It's awfully hard to answer. Can't tell.

Q Mr. President, is the importance of it necessarily to be gauged by the extent of it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. No. The importance might be much greater than the extent.

On the other hand, it might not be. You remember, I think it was the other day (October 27), the headline -- headline in the (Washington Evening) Star using the word "decisive." Now that's an awfully sloppy term to use. It might be, and it might not.

As I -- I think you had better put this off the record. If you look at a map of the South Pacific, you will see that the Japanese have advanced island by island all the way south from the northern end of the Mandated Islands. We attempted to -- at a time last -- beginning of August -- to prevent that island by island advance from going any further south. So far we have succeeded. If we keep on succeeding, it's fine -- in preventing any further southward advance; because if we keep on succeeding, we will have the possibility of starting a northward advance on our part.

That will take a long, long time, because as I think I have told you before, it takes months to get a ship with men or munitions from the United States down there and back again. On the other hand, the Japanese line is also long. It takes weeks for them to get a ship from Japan down there and back again.

Now, on the other hand, in case -- in words of one syllable, and don't misconstrue them -- in case the Japanese were to isolate Guadalcanal -- we hope they won't -- and take it, it would mean that they had advanced one more island. That is not a decisive victory, because it merely means that the scene of action has been transferred to the next group of islands, their line thereby becoming a little bit longer, and ours remaining constant -- it wouldn't be any longer. Therefore, it's -- it's an action of importance, but not decisive. You can't tell.

Q I was thinking it might prove decisive if one side or the other lost one

particular airplane carrier at a particular time?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily, from the ---

Q (interjecting) It might.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- from the reading -- from the reading of the past six or eight months. One ship isn't controlling, if they lost -- they lost the island because of an aircraft carrier. That wouldn't be decisive. It might change the scene of action a little bit further south.

Q (interposing) Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In other words, I really honestly -- this is still off the record -- I honestly think that we all ought to be a bit careful and tend toward understatement rather than overstatement on all operations of that kind.

On the other hand, the -- I think the Egyptian fighting of the last two weeks could be called of major importance. I don't know that I would call even that decisive, in the light of past history.

Remember then, this is the third time -- this is all off the record -- the third time that something has happened there. The first time was when they smashed up the Italians, and they went on through and got pretty well past Tobruk. And then the Germans went in to help the Italians, and they pushed the British back as far as Tobruk. And then came the second British push, and it went clear through to Bengasi right across the whole hump of Libya. And having taken Bengasi, well we all thought it was a -- not only a major victory but a decisive victory. Well, it was a major victory, but they ran too fast. They got way beyond their line of supplies. And suddenly (German Field Marshal Erwin) Rommel struck them again and drove them back to Tobruk. That is why it wasn't decisive.

Then the -- the third thing that happened was that they started an offensive, roughly from the Tobruk line south, and they didn't get very far. And suddenly, without any warning, Rommel caught them off base and drove them clear back to the El Alamein line. And a lot of people -- probably the Germans and the Italians -- said, "This is the decisive victory." Well, it was a major victory, but it wasn't decisive, because the British held at the El Alamein line.

Now this is really the fourth time they have moved out of the line, and apparently they have inflicted very heavy losses on Rommel's army. And we hope this time it will be not only a major victory but a decisive one, through the destruction of the enemy's forces. And the next -- we hope in the next week we will get as good news about the German-Italian retreat as we have been getting in the last two or three days.

MR. GODWIN: Do you care, sir, to say anything about that amendment which is pending between House and Senate on compulsory one year's training for teen-age boys?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, because nobody has come back yet. I am going to see them -- I think it is either Monday morning or Tuesday morning; but nobody -- nobody has come back.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, how do you account for Tuesday's election results?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I think, Pete, all I can say on it is this, that I had a very pleasant surprise. I -- Tuesday morning I went up to Hyde Park to vote, and when I got there I was perfectly delighted to find that the polling place was open. (loud laughter) I'll -- I leave the explanation of that remark to the press. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Do you think they expected to be closed?

THE PRESIDENT: Evidently you don't read certain papers. (again more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: I am asking you, sir.

Q Mr. President, did you make your usual pre-election forecast and seal it up?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I didn't. I knew very little about this election.

Q Mr. President, do you think the results would have been the same if you had taken part in the campaign?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q Mr. President, will it make any difference in your attitude toward Congress?

I mean, you have got a very close majority there, and ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Why should it?

Q Well, I mean the ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I assume -- I assume that the Congress of the United States is in favor of winning this war, just like the President is.

Q No. I mean in the past your conferences have been with the Democratic leaders. Will the Republican leaders be ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, No. Oh, No. My conferences in the past have been with the Republican leaders too.

Q Not publicized.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q They were unpublicized.

THE PRESIDENT: Maybe. (laughter) That proves nothing.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us, as yet, about your plans for Armistice Day, whether you plan to make a speech?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I am going to make a speech, if I can; if I get time to write it. It will be very short. Probably not more than -- what? -- 5 minutes, something like that.

Q Mr. President, the -- we understand that the manpower report was transmitted

to you. Have you completed your review and study of that report?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't read it, ---

Q (interjecting) You have?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- but you will have to leave that off the record.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Have or have not?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I am going to read it ---

MR. EARLY: (interposing) There is some misunderstanding. Have you read it?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I haven't read it. Only don't put it on the record. I have got it in my basket. Look at the basket! (stacked high with papers) I will probably get at it this afternoon or tomorrow morning.

Q How soon might we anticipate some action?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any idea. I wouldn't even guess at it. And this has got to be off the record, because it's just -- just for -- for information or background -- use it as background.

On this whole manpower thing, anybody that studies it and thinks they can, after studying it for a week -- thinks that they can come to an intelligent conclusion, they ought to be in St. Elizabeth's. You can't do it. You can't spend a day, or a week, in studying it and form a definite, detailed plan. And that is why it has taken quite a lot of time.

But with that goes this other fact, that -- that this whole manpower thing, with the exception of one or two portions of farm labor, is not at this time an emergency matter. As an example, in farming, all of the -- practically all of the crops are in, with the exception of one or two very small areas. And the -- the problem of farm labor will be -- is therefore not an emergency matter, except in dairying. There will be one or two other minor things. Dairying is difficult, because dairying goes on right through the winter, as well as the crop season. Everybody knows

that.

And outside of that we are not having any emergency problem affecting manpower in, for example, our factories, transportation, and similar things. We are going to have it, because as I said the other day, we have probably got to put into industry this coming year 4 to -- 4 or 5 million people. But as I also said the other day, I don't know of any factory that is shut down because of lack of labor today. But you have got to add the word "today." In other words, something has got to be done, but it isn't a matter of immediate emergency in the conduct of the war. It's going to be -- it's going to be a serious thing unless we handle it soon. And that is why I can't give you any date. Neither am I able to formulate at this time any definite plan -- there have been various plans submitted -- because it takes -- it's an awfully difficult problem.

Q Doesn't it have some emergency feature in the Southwest and on the Pacific Coast?

THE PRESIDENT: In the Southwest they have got the problem, I think, of long leaf -- long staple cotton. But if you will -- if you will take that particular area, you will find it practically -- it's down in the Imperial Valley, and one or two places -- little places in Arizona, and compare that to the total agricultural output or labor of the entire country, it's one of those things that falls within the 1 or 2 or even 5 percent of little problems. You have got to think of it in the "large." It's a detail. They are having a problem about what to pay the Mexicans who have come in. And frankly I don't know. I think -- I think the cotton will get picked. That is the principal thing. I think it will get picked.

Q Can we have that on the record, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, you can put that on the record.

Q (interposing) Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) You know -- what was it? -- last week or the week before, we had something about Montana beets. Well, I think all those beets are going to be taken out of the ground before the ground freezes.

Q Mr. President, one other question that has been rather generally reported, that something is about to be done in centralization and consolidation of food agencies under a food director, or food administrator. Have you arrived at the point yet where ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) No.

Q (continuing) --- where you can act on that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q You have recommendations on the matter?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, lots -- lots. Nobody is starving. Undoubtedly people will have to go without various luxuries.

I see my friend the little Mayor (Fiorello LaGuardia of New York City) --(laughter) -- is -- has stirred up a hornet's nest in respect to how to prepare coffee. We will have a lot of grave issues like that during the coming year. (more laughter) What I am a little afraid of is that somebody will raise the issue that was paramount in this country a few years ago, as to whether one should "crumble" or "dunk" (the doughnut). (continued laughter) Now those are very important things in our national life. And it's part of the grand sense of humor of the American people,---

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- and it's all to the good.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, it's probably useless to ask you on this matter, but -- (much laughter) -- does the 40-hour week have anything to do with this manpower? (Senator W. Lee) O'Daniel (Democrat of Texas) has intro-

duced a bill to repeal the 40-hour week, saying that ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) We haven't got a 40-hour week. We haven't got a 40-hour week. Most of our important production of war materials is working about -- well, most of them in the very important production I think are working 48 hours.

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) And I think that the average of the important production is around -- between 46 and 47 hours a week.

MR. GODWIN: He (O'Daniels) wants to work 6 days a week 12 hours a day, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Does he? Who?

MR. GODWIN: O'Daniels.

Q (aside) Let him try it.

THE PRESIDENT: You know, really, on that working 6 days a week and 12 hours a day, there is one thing which I didn't mention about this last trip, and that was that quite a number of people in different plants told me that they have the problem -- like any big plant that employs 40 or 50 or 60 thousand people -- of a certain portion -- a certain percentage of the workers not turning up in the morning. And in two or three of these plants when those workers come in the next day, they are asked voluntarily to sign a little card, saying why they didn't turn up the previous day.

And it's interesting that where workers have been working overtime, up in some cases to 54 -- 56 hours a week, -- total -- that the excuse -- the excuses -- the reasons given for not turning up on these cards are that they were too tired.

Now we all know -- I think I have mentioned this before -- the very careful studies that have been made of production in Germany; and that after you work anybody over a certain definite period, depending a little

on the work that is done, you don't get, after the first few weeks or the first few months, you don't get any more production with a very, very long week -- with a lot of overtime -- than you do in a shorter week. Now that -- that -- people ought to recognize it. But it is a fact that has been, proved in England, over here, and in Germany.

Right along that line we have -- we have got reports last spring, from Germany, that they were very greatly increasing the weekly hours of work in certain munitions plants that they had to have the materials from -- the munitions; and that they started it, this great increase in the hours per week, sometime in the spring. And for about 2 months the total production showed a great increase. At the end of two months it started to slide down hill, until the time came in Germany when, on a greatly increased work week -- working as high as 70 or 80 hours a week -- after the people had got thoroughly tired -- exhausted -- the output was not so great as when they had been working 48 hours a week. Now those reports, obtained by the Intelligence Services have come in in such volume that they look to be true, that German production in the last few months has fallen off, in spite of the much longer work week.

MISS MAY CRAIG: Mr. President, can you tell me, or do you know whether in future food rationing you will have to declare your stock in hand, before you get your book?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any idea.

MISS MAY CRAIG: We did that on sugar and it was salutary, but it didn't last over into coffee.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

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