

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #887  
Executive Office of the President  
March 26, 1943 -- 11.05 A.M., E.W.T.

THE PRESIDENT: A lovely day. (perfect Spring weather outside)

Q. A good day to be out on the back lawn.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. A good day to be out on the back lawn.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. We ought to be out there. I think it's a good idea. I think we have had one or two conferences out there, haven't we?

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got only two things here. One is the -- a Proclamation, on setting apart May first as Child Health Day; and the other -- Steve (Early) has a copy -- and the other is that I have signed the Food Administrator (Executive) Order, and Steve will have that for you when you go out.

I don't think there's anything else.

Q. Does that food Order, Mr. President, does that provide that Chester (C.) Davis will have any subordination to the Secretary of Agriculture (Claude Wickard), or will he report directly to you?

THE PRESIDENT: He is in the Department of Agriculture. He reports -- he talks -- he is in constant touch with the Secretary, and final decision, of course, comes to me -- will be to me, obviously, because this is based on experience. And it's a full-time job for anybody, as I think you can well imagine.

The Secretary of Agriculture still has everything that he had before the -- before the last Order, and merely transfers production and distribution to Mr. Davis.

And, of course, Mr. Davis is not only in touch with the Department of Agriculture, but he is in touch with quite a number of very important Departments, such as -- well, the War Department, the (War) Manpower Commission, the O.P.A. (Office of Price Administration), and the W.P.B. (War Production Board). And this puts the whole -- whole subject of increasing production and distribution into his hands.

Q. Will he have anything to do with farm prices?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. He has farm prices too. But, of course, primarily with the objective of retail prices for what you and I pay for food.

Q. Will that part of it be channeled through the Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. I say, will that part dealing with prices be channeled through the Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. That would be -- he would report to me on that, because of these other Departments; that is, O.P.A., and Senator (James F.) Byrnes (Economic Stabilization Director), Manpower, and so forth and so on.

Q. Mr. President, you say farm prices. Does that mean food prices all the way through?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course with the cooperation of O.P.A.

Q. Mr. President, in other words, Davis will have a

sort of an autonomous agency within the Department of Agriculture?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. (interposing) He can act ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) A very large part of his work, of course, will be with the Department of Agriculture.

Q. He can act without the approval of the Secretary?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Can he act without his approval?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think the issue will arise.

Q. Mr. President, you said that Mr. Wickard would have what he had before you signed your last Order. He had a good deal of production ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes, but in the peace-time sense. It's a very different thing these days.

Q. For example, I was thinking of the Triple A, the Soil Conservation Service, and ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That -- I have got a list of things ---

Q. (interjecting) That's all set out in the Order?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- that the Secretary of Agriculture still has, as usual: the Farm Credit Administration, which includes the Federal Land Banks; Intermediate Credit Banks; Production Credit Corporation; Cooperative Banks; Crop Loan Agencies; also Rural Electrification Administration; Forest Service; the Farm Loan Corporation; the Agricultural Research Administration, including the Bureau of Agricultural Chemistry and Engineering, Bureau of Animal Industry, Bureau of Dairy Industry,

Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, Bureau of Plant Industry, and the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation.

And he will continue to be a member of the various Boards that he is on now.

Q. Does he have Commodity Credit?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Does he have Commodity Credit?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, he still has the same thing that he had before on that.

Q. Mr. President, will Mr. Davis also be a member of these Boards, like W.P.B.?

THE PRESIDENT: Where necessary, ---

Q. (interjecting) Where necessary?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I don't know.

Q. Mr. President, will Mr. Davis be added to or replace Wickard on the Economic Stabilization Board?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't the faintest idea. If necessary, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, where will ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- he will also serve on it.

Q. Where will Farm Security (Administration) be?

THE PRESIDENT: Same place it is now. For instance, the Combined Food Board is going to be a very, very important factor during the coming year, and the reason -- one reason is that as we move into the growing, liberated areas around the world, and they are enlarged, re-adjustments of food allocations are going

to be necessary. Food requirements in different areas will have to be carefully weighed in the light of need, and of military and political strategy. And probably Davis will work in with them too, as well as the Secretary of Agriculture.

Q. That is, Farm Security will be under Davis?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, ---

Q. (interjecting) It will not?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- it will not.

Q. Mr. President, is April 27 the date for the United Nations' food conference?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't heard from the State Department. I don't know. You had better ask them, because they ---

Q. (interposing) Some Gross ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- they talked about some date around then. Now whether they have had the answers or not, I couldn't tell you.

Q. There's some Gross (farm) organization that distributed a release that you have announced that that is the date, and that it will be held in Des Moines.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) They must have a very successful Des Moines Chamber of Commerce. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, I wanted to ask one more question about the farm. I notice that they say the Farm Credit is to remain to Wickard. Could you explain how the farm production loans will be handled under this setup?

THE PRESIDENT: I guess they will be handled together

-- jointly. In other words, what you are trying to do is to put this -- put down a blueprint that is so exact that you can't -- the blueprint would take the place of cooperation. You can't do that in this life, to try to run a government -- it's impossible.

Q. The Regional Credit -- Agricultural Credit Corporation will be under Davis?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I read you a long list in here -- Intermediate Credit Banks; Cooperative Banks; Crop Loan Agencies -- they all remain where they are, Farm Credit Administration included. They remain where they are.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President, Mayor (Edward J.) Jeffries of Detroit, and Senator (Homer) Ferguson were in to see you a day or so ago. Can you tell us anything about the plans to increase production in the Willow Run plant of the Ford Motor Company? Did you discuss that with those gentlemen?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. They came in primarily (to give me) (?) a check on the National Infantile Paralysis Foundation, and then I started a subject on the problem of how to increase and improve the Willow Run plant production. We have got a board out there -- it isn't one, it's a whole bunch of them -- the city people, and the local people out in Willow Run, and Mr. Ford.

Q. You say they have a board? Is that the new board, or is that a hold-over from ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I couldn't tell you -- don't know. I know that a conference is going on out there on it at the present time.

Q. Is there -- do you have any comment to make at all about Willow Run? Have you any suggestions to make?

THE PRESIDENT: I think there has got to be some new housing out there. Most of the workers there have to go a whole hour (before they can get to the plant). And apparently the Ford organization, in the first instance, on the -- when the plant was built, between them and the Army people -- production people -- they didn't -- they didn't figure out that particular thing. And now it is pretty hard to get people to go an hour to work, and work eight hours, and then come back for an hour before they get home.

Q. (interjecting) Particularly when there are so many jobs around.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Then transportation, of course, is involved.

They were both of them -- I asked them to go around and see two people, one was John Blandford on the Housing end, and the other was (Joseph B.) Eastman on the transportation end.

Q. Are those Ford bombers now moving into combat, Mr. President, or are they to be used for other things?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you that. You mean in the Willow Run plant?

Q. The bombers that are coming off now?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, I suppose they are going into combat. When we get bombers, we don't send them abroad -- I don't think it makes much difference which plant they happen to be turned out from.

Q. No. I didn't mean that.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) No.

Q. (continuing) I wondered whether those bombers had to be modified much after they came off the line, or whether they could be modified there? They say in Detroit that the setup on production was so rigid in that plant that the -- those bombers were not moving into combat. I thought perhaps ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No. You know what happens if you -- it's a generalized rather than a technical point, but anybody can understand it. Every few weeks that go by -- any kind of plane -- because of experience in combat, they find some new thing. Now, if you turn that over to the production plant, to make this change in the production plant itself, they all figure out -- the experts -- that it will slow things down more than if you accept the plane and then send it to what they call a "mod" center -- a modification center -- where these slight changes are made, thereby saving time over the other method of up-setting your production line.

And the average length of time for these planes of all kinds that are sent to modification centers is about 30 days; and almost all the planes from all plants go through this 30-day process of necessary modifications. The thing was started in July, (1942), and seems to save time. And all of them rather like the idea of the modification centers, in the place of changing production once a month. I suppose these small plants go into modification centers. I think there are 30 modification centers at the present time.

Q. Mr. President, on this food Order -- this new food Order, generally speaking, does it give Mr. Davis any wider powers than were given to Mr. Wickard on the original Order?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I should say not.

Q. Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I had one other thing that I forgot to mention.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) The -- I have been a good deal concerned -- we all have -- over the question of farm machinery. When we got into the war, and our effort to turn out all kinds of weapons of war, the W.P.B. encouraged the large manufacturers of farm machinery to convert their plants to the production of war machinery.

W.P.B. admits that they made a mistake in their estimate at that time. They thought it would be sufficient to concentrate the manufacture of farm machinery in smaller plants, and thereby help small business. Well, they find now that the trouble with the farm machinery has been not so much the quantity of it as the faulty distribution throughout the country, due to the fact that these small manufacturers had no distributing organization; only the larger manufacturers had local dealers all over the nation. Well, that is being corrected at the present time by W.P.B.

And the industry as a whole has been allotted more steel, in an amount that they believe would be enough for farm machinery, if they get the proper distribution, using the machinery distributors of the big companies to distribute the product of the big

companies, and also the product of the little companies.

Q. (interposing) Does that mean ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In other words, the ban on manufacture by large producers has been removed.

Q. (interposing) This year?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I think it ought to help very much. It ought to help very much.

Q. Is that this year?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. This year, or will it be ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, Yes -- this year.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, there has been some talk that the Administration might support legislation to repeal the Oriental exclusion laws, particularly those against the Chinese. Have you any comment on that situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, the thing was taken up by various Members of the Congress, and others, with the State Department and the Attorney General's office; and we were told what, of course, is absolutely correct, that any change is a Congressional matter. And of course the Departments, if they are summoned before a Congressional committee on a hearing on legislation, they can go down there and testify.

MR. P. BRANDT: Yes. I had heard you couldn't get it over, unless it had Administration support -- Executive support.

THE PRESIDENT: Where did you hear that? (laughter)  
Pete, you're dreaming.

MR. P. BRANDT: Not on that. (more laughter)

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

(the newspapermen started to leave)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, look! Before you go running, I have got one more thing for you -- (laughter, and re-assembling of the newspapermen) -- I forgot it -- Steve is making motions at me -- something I don't think has been published before, and that is that under the Tydings Amendment, 550 thousand farm workers have already been deferred from military service. And General Hershey estimates that by the end of this year, 3 million more between the ages of 18 and 37 will be deferred, or a total of 3 and a half million farm workers deferred. And of this 3 million that are going to be deferred the rest of the year, 400 thousand are single, and 2 thousand are married men with wives, or with wives and children.

Q. Is that 2 thousand, or 2 million?

THE PRESIDENT: What? A total of 550 thousand already deferred, 3 million more to be deferred this year, and of that 3 million, 400 thousand are single people, and 2 million are married men with wives, or wives and children.

Q. 2 million, 6?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. 2 million, 600 thousand? We have got a missing 600 thousand.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh! A small matter! (laughter)

Q. What do you think of those figures?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. What do you think of those figures?

THE PRESIDENT: Why, I think they are -- they should be

rather interesting to the country. (laughter)

Q. And the Congress, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. To the country and the Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: And the Congress, sure, ---

Q. (interjecting) And the Governor of Colorado?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- because the Congress represents the country.

Q. Any possibility that it will have an influence on all legislation ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Oh, now you are getting into the legislative field. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, have you been furnished with any estimates of how many have been deferred under the blanket deferment of all farm workers, or approximately all farm workers?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't quite understand it. (meaning the question)

Q. I was trying to avoid mentioning the Bankhead bill -- (laughter) -- but under the Tydings Amendment you already have the 3 million, 500 thousand.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Now look. Let me talk to you off the record about this, in the way of explanation.

So much depends on the attitude of the local Draft Board.

Well, for instance, Senator (John H.) Bankhead, you know, is -- he came to see me about a month ago -- this is all

off the record -- and he said there was a place down there in Alabama, a village in the middle of a farming country, and the Draft Board called up 60 men, one of their -- what? -- monthly procedures. And of the 60 men, 40 of them were farm boys. And the Board said to them, "You are all deferred, every one of you." The boys almost mobbed the Board, and 36 of them said, "Hell, I have got to get into this show. I want to fight. I don't want to stay on the farm." Well, the Board was soft, and they didn't -- but they should have done -- they didn't say to them, "No. You go back to the farm. We won't induct you." There were only 4 out of the 40, according to John Bankhead, that were willing to be deferred for farm work. The other 36 said, "I am going to fight." Well, the Board was, as I say, it was soft-hearted.

And another thing. These Boards are awfully conscientious, and when the Government says to a Board, "Here's your quota," they try their best to fill that quota.

Well now, that is one of the psychological problems before the local Boards. And they ought to, of course, defer farm labor, and not induct a fellow just because he wants to leave the farm and get into the fighting. It's a very difficult thing.

Well, of course now, we have tightened up on them, and we have told them that they have got to defer these farm boys, as they are considered essential to work on the farm -- in the individual case. Of course, that is not true in the case of every farm boy.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Mr. President -- I beg your pardon,

sir. Had you finished?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. (continuing) This figure of 3 million to be deferred this year, that is men who are now working on farms?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. That does not apply to furloughs?

THE PRESIDENT: No. That's a separate subject.

Q. (interposing) This prevents ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I haven't got the actual figures with me at the present time, but I think I said the other day that of the boys who are actually in the Army now, we can get, in the case of dairying -- expert dairymen -- we can get quite a large number -- I don't know, what? -- 15 thousand to 20 thousand of them.

But then you have to come to this next thing. I had a case of four or five boys that they wanted to take out of a combat regiment that was within a week or two of leaving for the other side. Well, if you start that process and start to bust your combat -- this is a division -- you start to bust them up after they have done 40 or 42 weeks training, you are going to spoil your Army.

Now, in the case of other expert dairymen in a division, in the same place, which has had only three or four weeks training, it is not going to hurt that division to furlough those boys back to the farms. It all depends on the individual case. You can't have just a plain "rule of thumb." I suppose that's the best illustration I can give you. There will be, probably, a

great many thousands -- first and last -- who will be furloughed back to farm work, ---

Q. (interposing) That's on a temporary ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- well, have been already.

Q. That's on a temporary basis?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Mr. President, is it your thought, or General Hershey's thought, that that volume of deferments will tend to take care of the farm labor situation?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, it will help very much.

And then, of course, another thing -- one of the things that Mr. Davis is going to take up, as soon as he gets here, is the creation of -- what? -- I don't like the word very much -- I wish we could get another word for it -- a land army of some kind.

You know, the human equation enters into this a lot. I know three or four farm boys that feel they ought to stick on the farm -- this same idea that is down in Alabama -- they ought to stay by the home farm. But at the same time they want to be able to say to their children, "I was in this war. I was in that great world war." They want something to show for it.

And that is why it all ties in with the problem of National Service. And as I said the other day, we haven't got to it, yet, we may have to.

And we do need a reserve of some form of land army. I have had two or three cases of communities that are handling the

thing very well themselves, but that is not true of the -- probably the great majority of communities. They are getting high school boys, and even high school girls and local organizations to help out on the farms where they are most needed. They are getting women who are not so young. They are getting people who can give every morning to it but not every afternoon, and vice versa.

Now, of course, there is one thing we have to remember. On the British experience, and they have had two years more of it than -- two and a half years more of it than we have had, they have increased -- I couldn't tell you the actual figure -- their farm -- their food production from a hundred, let us say, to about 160, which is not bad -- about a 60 percent increase. And that has been largely due to the fact that they have a land army. The British farmers are just like our farmers -- most of them. They don't want to have a lot of young people -- women -- around the farm who are not much accustomed to farm work. And they had all the same kicks about a women's land army.

Well, today it is working awfully well. They are using them. They are not, perhaps, quite as efficient as the ordinary man, -- (laughter) -- they can't pitch hay up to the top of a cart. But their protests -- their original protests have disappeared in the practice of the thing.

I know farming in a good many parts of this country -- I do farming in different parts of the country, and I am perfectly sure, and I have had a good many neighbors from different places who used high school boys or girls to help them out with the

chores around the farms; and they have got accustomed to them. They like it, and they are not curtailing their production.

And incidentally, on this -- rather with that -- all sorts of speeches and scare headlines about the food this year falling off.

One of the most interesting things about all those figures that came out last Friday was the estimated number of acres to be planted for crops -- food crops in this country. And practically all of them showed an increase of 102% of last year, which is the biggest year we had ever had -- 110% -- some of them 120%; and very, very few food crops that showed a -- a decrease in the acreage that they expected to plant.

I don't think we are going to starve too, I remarked. For some of us, it wouldn't be a bad thing if we starved a bit.

Q. Are you thinking of a land army of skilled workers?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Are you thinking of a land army of skilled workers?

THE PRESIDENT: No. There aren't any skilled workers.

Q. Unskilled?

THE PRESIDENT: There aren't any skilled workers that are lying around loose. What do you mean by skilled workers?

Q. Skilled farm workers.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they are either on the farm today, or in munitions factories, or in the Army.

Q. Yes. I understand that.

THE PRESIDENT: The only thing we can do is take them out.

Q. On this land army, would you say people who would have to learn the farm business?

THE PRESIDENT: Mostly people who would have to learn how to do the chores. Did you ever work on a farm?

Q. Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: You know that chores take up a lot of time, and are an awful lot of work.

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #888  
Executive Office of the President  
March 30, 1943 -- 4.05 P.M., E.W.T.

THE PRESIDENT: (to Earl Godwin) Hello, Squire.

MR. GODWIN: How are you?

THE PRESIDENT: Haven't seen you for a long time.  
Have you been shooting quail in South Carolina? (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: I have been around. I went to Philadelphia, and other places. I am not a military secret.

THE PRESIDENT: Sometimes I think you are, ---

MR. GODWIN: (interjecting) Do you think so?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- when you make these disappearances. However, I won't put the F.B.I. on you.

MR. GODWIN: Don't do that!

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

MR. GODWIN: See that? (the Washington Evening Star for March 30 -- "House Will Kill (Ruml) Skip-Year Tax, Rayburn Says -- Martin Equally Sure It Will Pass As Balloting Nears")

THE PRESIDENT: Really!

MR. GODWIN: I don't know whether they will or not.  
(they did)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: All I have are two matters that I think will make stories for you.

One relates to the manpower thing, in one of its details: dairy workers. As you know, that is one of the -- one of the principal manpower problems in farming, because you

have to have a different technique with dairy makers -- dairy workers from the seasonal crop people, because dairying goes on all the way through the year.

And as a result of their working on it the last couple of weeks, I got a memorandum a little while ago in regard to what has been done.

(during all the following discussion on this subject, the President either read from this memorandum -- not literally -- or referred to it)

The War Department has taken the following action with reference to releasing men who are 38 years of age and over from the Army. On the first of April -- day after tomorrow -- we -- the Army will cease to discharge such individuals, but instead of that they will transfer these people, who are capable of being dairy workers through experience, to the inactive status in the Enlisted Reserve Corps, the man requesting the transfer, in order to go back either to an essential industry like dairying, accompanied by a statement from the (War) Manpower Commission -- well, that means in the individual case practically his local Draft Board -- that his release is desired. But he may be recalled to active duty on the request of the War Manpower Commission, which again is -- is ultimately his own Draft Board, the people in his own neighborhood. Those details of control and recall will be issued by the War Department and the War Manpower Commission -- (through the) Selective Service System in a few days.

Q. Mr. President, does this apply only to dairy workers?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Agriculture as a whole, but we are going after the most difficult problems in the first instance.

Q. Yes, sir.

Q. Does it apply, then, only to Agriculture?

Q. You said any essential industry.

THE PRESIDENT: And industry.

Q. And industry?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Essential industry.

Q. Is there any differentiation between the way ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q. Is there any differentiation between the way you are going to handle dairy people and the industry people?

THE PRESIDENT: No, except we need our principal drive on the dairy.

Q. Mr. President, you said the man requests this.

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

Q. (continuing) Does the individual soldier make the request, or does someone else make the request?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the way it works out, Pete, is this. Either he can make the request himself, or his -- what? -- his father ---

Q. (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- can make the request.

MR. GODWIN: He will be called back because his old

man needs him?

Q. Or employer?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, or his employer does, or his own local Draft Board.

Q. Is there anything there on how many men might be involved in this, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I think we are coming to that. This action will mean the man who is placed in the Reserve Corps must continue at work in some essential occupation approved by the Selective Service. In other words, if he goes out on some remunerative job which is not an essential service, he would probably be inducted back into the Army, which is a very logical provision.

Registrants 38 To 45: Chester (C.) Davis is asking the County War Boards, composed of farmers, that wherever there is a shortage of dairy workers they should secure from the local Selective Service Boards the names of registrants between 38 and 45 who are in occupations which are non-deferable, and who have experience as dairy workers or farm workers. They will be urged by the County Board and local Board to seek re-employment as dairy workers.

And fourth, Conscientious Objectors: and in this group there are only -- there are about -- which is a very high percentage -- about 500 experienced dairy workers who, according to General Hershey, can be furnished today to dairy farmers. An additional 18 hundred conscientious objectors with farm experience would probably make good as dairy workers, and are now

available.

Fifth, Men Physically Disabled: there are 2 million between 18 and 45 who have been placed in 4-F because of physical disability. Of these 2 million, 6 thousand 2 hundred between the ages of 18 and 37 -- this is in the younger group -- are experienced dairy workers, but are not now employed on dairy farms. Many thousands of others have had general farm experience. The local Boards will be directed to send for these dairy workers and urge them to return -- to return to their former occupation.

If they refuse, consideration will be given to asking the War Department to waive physical disabilities where such disabilities are so slight that the registrant could be assigned to limited service. That means in the Army.

Sixth, Registrants Over 45: the County War Boards will be directed to secure from Selective Service the names of registrants over 45 having dairy experience, and the War Boards will urge their return to dairy farms.

Seventh, Dairy Workers Who Have Gone Into Industry: if these steps do not adequately relieve the situation, County War Boards will furnish to local Selective Service Boards the names of experienced dairy workers who have left the farm to go into industry. They will be urged to return. It is not deemed wise that this be done at this time, because within the last ten days there has been a back-to-the-farm movement due to the Tydings Amendment.

And finally, Chester Davis is giving priority to his

organization of a land army. Mr. (Samuel) Zemurray, the president of the United Fruit Company, is undertaking to supervise the securing of agricultural workers from the Bahamas and Jamaica. These English-speaking workers will help in the East where they are needed. Mr. Davis is not yet prepared to announce his plans, but in a businesslike way we are providing for bringing in Mexican workers in the Southwest; and most important, for the organization of this land army, about which I spoke, of college students, high school students and volunteer workers who have had some farm experience, and can help harvest the crop this summer.

Q. Mr. President, is that land army to operate in anything except agriculture? For instance, in lumbering?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Oh, I don't know. I don't believe so, because lumbering -- I don't think you can put any high school people into lumbering.

Q. Sir, will the land army compose both men and women and boys and girls?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, Yes.

Q. Mr. President, could we have the text of that memorandum?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's all right, Steve?

MR. EARLY: It's all right.

THE PRESIDENT: What? Yes.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, there is one point there -- the one spot there where you were speaking about the folks that the Army might put into limited service, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- does that mean that they -- that they can be put into limited service on the farm?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

MR. GODWIN: It isn't that?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no -- general.

MR. GODWIN: Yes. And this other place, where the old man asks for his boy to come back home, does he ask through the Draft Board on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I couldn't tell you.

MR. GODWIN: That's a detail. That's his hometown contact.

Q. Mr. President, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Some of the old men will probably write to me direct. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Yes, sure.

Q. Mr. President, for the people over 38, aren't you setting up a form of National Service much more complete than you have over other groups and populations?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. Notice I said the word "urge," in some cases.

Q. I see.

Q. That's the only explanation, is it?

THE PRESIDENT: What? Except for the people who are inducted into the Army.

Q. I mean the group over 45?

THE PRESIDENT: We will relieve them, and put them

on inactive duty.

Q. Those over 45 you also say "urge"?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes -- No, no, no. The ones over 45, we can do it. They are in the Army.

Q. Those who were registrants, but not in the Army, over 45? You mentioned that -- that's in there -- you said you would urge them ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Yes. The County War Boards will be directed to secure from the Selective Service names of registrants ---

Q. (interjecting) That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- over 45 having dairy experience. The Boards will urge their return to dairy farms.

Q. That is as far as they can go?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Mr. President, in the case of the 4-F registrants, that won't be quite urging, or will it, if they won't go back to essential industry?

THE PRESIDENT: They will give them another physical examination. (laughter)

Q. Well, Mr. President, is there any thought of removing the -- the Executive bar which you established in December to the induction of people over 38 at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: That I don't know. I would have to ask. The case hasn't come up.

Q. Mr. President, will that require appropriations from Congress, to move these workers from outside the country?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know whether it would come in under the Federal funds that the Army has got or not. Maybe we would have to. And, of course, that means not only the cost of getting them here but the cost of taking them out at the end of the war -- sending them home.

Now on the other thing.

Mr. (Sir Anthony) Eden has left, and we decided that it was probably better not to give out one of those formal statements by the two of us. And he asked me to just talk to you all informally about it.

We are in entire agreement. We have had these series -- he has had these series of conferences with a lot of people -- the Secretary of State and his advisers, and the Members of the Senate and the House; and he took a little trip to see some of the camps.

We talked about everything -- might be put down as current military and political affairs, and other questions arising out of the war relating to the present and the future.

I think I can say for both of us that they disclose very close similarity of outlook on the part of the two governments, and a very fruitful meeting of the minds on all the matters that came under discussion.

We talked about the practical problems that will arise on the surrender of the enemy -- problems that will face the governments of the United States, and United Kingdom, and China, and Russia, and all of the other United Nations, primarily in safeguarding the world from future aggression.

I think I ought to make it clear that -- I think you should all make it clear that these conversations are exploratory. The object of them was not to reach final decisions, which were, of course, impossible at this stage; but to reach a large measure of general agreement on objectives. So as to take time by the forelock, and as a result of these conferences, they will be of great aid in further conferences between all of the United Nations.

I also want to make it very clear that these conferences are by no means confined to the United Kingdom and the United States. They are merely one small part of the long series of conferences between the other United Nations.

We have talked, for example, already rather intimately about these various subjects, with China, and with one or two of the South American Republics. Mr. Eden himself has been to Russia and talked in regard to many of these problems with Mr. (Josef) Stalin, Mr. (Vyacheslav) Molotov, and other members of the Russian government.

I hope and expect that we will be continuing discussions along these lines with the Russian government in the very near future, and with other members of the United Nations. And therefore, these are -- you might put it this way: that these conversations constitute one method of working toward the unity of the United Nations, which is going along extremely well.

Some people ought to take note of that.

And the other method, of course, is through the more formal gathering, such as we will have next month with the

United Nations, in regard to the subject of -- of food, to be followed a little later by a similar one in regard to relief; and possibly a little later by another exploratory conference in regard to finances; and possibly another one in regard to things out of the ground. The -- the food thing will probably include things that grow out of the ground, and the other one would refer to things that come out from under the surface -- minerals, metals, oil, and so forth.

So you see, the thing is -- is progressing in a very satisfactory way.

If some of you go back -- some of you can, like myself -- go back to 1918, the war came to a rather sudden end in November, 1918. And actually it's a fact that there had been very little work done on the post-war problems before Armistice Day. Well, during Armistice Day and the time that the nations met in Paris early in 1919, everybody was rushing around trying to dig up things.

And the simile I used to Mr. Eden the other day was that -- I was here at the time -- and the -- the tempo seemed to be that of the lady who is told at Noon that she is to accompany her husband on a month's trip on the three o'clock train that afternoon. Well, I have seen ladies trying to pack for a month's trip in three hours, and that was a little bit the situation over here, and everywhere else, in making preparations for the Versailles conference. Everybody was rushing around grabbing things out of closets and throwing them into suitcases. Some of the needed large portions of things out

of the cupboards were not needed at all.

I have forgotten how many experts we took to Versailles at that time, but everybody who had a "happy thought," or who thought he was an expert got a free ride. (laughter)

And that is why I think that this whole method that is going on now is a very valuable thing, in an exploratory way, and incidentally -- as I remarked the other day -- in the process of getting to know each other.

I would say -- I would put it -- if you want to be didactic and put it in terms of figures, I would say that so far, in all of the conferences that we have held with other members of the United Nations -- this is not just the British -- they come into it too -- but we are about 95 percent together. Well, that's -- that's an amazing statement. It happens to be true. I wish some people would put that in their pipes and smoke it. (laughter)

So it was a very good conference.

Q. Can we quote that last part directly? Why don't you let us have that part about the "amazing statement," and so forth?

THE PRESIDENT: The 95 percent?

Q. Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think so. That's all right.

Q. Also about the "amazing statement"?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. It will only stir up controversy. You wouldn't do that. (laughter)

MR. ROMAGNA: (reading): We are about 95 percent

together.

Q. No, before that.

MR. ROMAGNA: Starting from, "If you want to be didactic"?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. ROMAGNA: Starting from, "If you want to be didactic"?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) Yes.

MR. ROMAGNA: (reading): If you want to be didactic and put it in terms of figures, I would say that so far, in all of the conferences that we have held with other members of the United Nations -- this is not just the British, they come into it too ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Better say it applies to the others also.

MR. ROMAGNA: (continuing reading): -- we are about 95 percent together. Well, that is an amazing statement. (and then seeking confirmation from the President) It happens to be true.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. ROMAGNA: It happens to be true.

THE PRESIDENT: You can put that in, "It happens to be true."

Q. Could you tell us anything about the 5 percent?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Could you tell us anything about that 5 percent?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that -- every -- every additional conversation eliminates a little bit more of the 5 percent.

Q. Mr. President, when you say it applies to the others as well, that includes Russia, does it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. And China?

THE PRESIDENT: And China.

Q. Mr. President, you spoke of plans to have conversations with Russia in the near future. Is there anything more specific we can have on that? This summer, do you plan ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No -- not today.

(laughter)

Q. Is hope still "springing eternal" about Mr. Stalin?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Do you expect a surprise visit ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) What?

Q. Do you expect to be surprised by somebody arriving?

THE PRESIDENT: You never can tell.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, there's a war being fought on both sides of us. You spoke of post-war plans and these conversations. It might be perfectly childish to ask it, but in my mind it seemed -- this seems to mean the cessation of the war in Europe on this particular thing?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: No. Am I wrong about that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. It's absolutely all over. It's all the -- all the hemispheres, and continents, and seas.

Q. If they don't end at the same time?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. If the combat doesn't end at the same time in those hemispheres?

THE PRESIDENT: Keep right on until we clean up the other ones.

Q. That doesn't affect what we are talking about now?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, No. Also very satisfactory agreement that if one of our enemies were to blow up ---

Q. (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- before the other one, we would begin immediately on certain immediate post-war problems with the fellow that had blown up ---

Q. (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- Yes -- and then concentrate our military and naval forces against the fellow who hadn't blown up.

Q. You said that Germany blew up quickly last time. You are not drawing any parallel there, are you?

THE PRESIDENT: Did you go to school in Germany ever?

Q. No.

Q. Mr. President, does -- do these talks you have had look toward the signatures on any agreements smaller than that of the United Nations as a whole?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't like to reduce things to signed documents. A general plan will cover everything pretty well. Get away from the formalities. Let's get on with the work. You know, you can do a lot by gentlemen's agreements, and we have got -- what is it? -- 31 people who are gentlemen in this particular kind of show.

Q. "Pact" is a bad word to use, isn't it?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Yes. It's a headline word -- doesn't mean a damn thing. (laughter)

Q. Can we quote you on that? (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) No!

I can't think of anything else I have got today.

Q. Mr. President, do you have a report that Prime Minister (Peter) Fraser of New Zealand has invited you and Mrs. Roosevelt down there? Have you received that?

THE PRESIDENT: I would love to go. I am sure both of us would love to go.

Q. Have you received the invitation yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I think I have got it sometime before.

Q. Right in that corner of the world, there's a report that Senator (James M.) Mead (Democrat of New York) is going to Australia to do some personal work for you, at the same time the Truman Committee goes down.

THE PRESIDENT: Haven't heard of that.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us anything about your talk with Chester Davis and the four farm leaders?

THE PRESIDENT: It was along that same -- same line,

principally the question of manpower.

Q. Did they raise with you, sir, the question of whether Mr. Davis should have the complete say on farm prices?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. They did not?

THE PRESIDENT: No. They weren't dumb enough.

Q. Mr. President, ---

Q. (interposing) Did Mr. Davis's attitude toward price stability come up?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #889  
Executive Office of the President  
April 6, 1943 -- 4.10 P.M., E.W.T.

Q. How are you, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm fine.

Q. That's good.

THE PRESIDENT: How is the behavior of everybody? Is it all right?

Q. Relative.

THE PRESIDENT: Relative? On a Tuesday and not a Monday? My God, that's bad. (laughter)

Q. They carry over nowadays.

THE PRESIDENT: I see.

Q. Is that all for us today? (a large pile of papers in front of the President)

THE PRESIDENT: No. That's today's dispatches which I haven't read yet. (and then to Mr. Early) What else have you got, Steve?

MR. EARLY: Just the Press.

THE PRESIDENT: That all? I guess I'll pull up my sleeves a little. (laughter) (the President was not wearing his jacket)

MR. GODWIN: Summer!

THE PRESIDENT: I hate a coat and a vest.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve says he hasn't got a blessed thing today. I can't think of anything.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) Any news about the Bank-head bill vote?

Q. They are going to refer it back to committee.

THE PRESIDENT: They can't over-ride the veto?

Q. Apparently no vote.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. No vote on it today, sir.

Q. No.

MR. GODWIN: I think they can over-ride it.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. GODWIN: I think they can but they are not going to. I beg -- the other way.

Q. (interjecting) They can't.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) Send it back to the "garage."

THE PRESIDENT: I see. Well, that's one way of not having to commit yourself. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, do you know anything about the background of an order that General (George C.) Marshall is supposed to have issued, to the effect that no member of the military forces on active duty can seek or accept an elective office -- public office -- unless it happens to be one that he occupied when he went on active duty?

THE PRESIDENT: Never heard of it. Who is that directed against? (laughter)

Q. I would like to know.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know.

Q. Mr. President, there is some dispatch coming in from London this afternoon, relative to a mission which the United States is sending to Russia. Can you tell us something about it? Is it the sort of matter that ties in with what you were talking about last week?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I haven't heard of a single person going over there.

Q. Mr. President, would you care to make any comment on the statement issued by the Fighting French in London yesterday?

THE PRESIDENT: Didn't see that. What did they say?

Q. General (Dwight D.) Eisenhower had sent a request to General (Charles) De Gaulle ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I saw it in the papers. I haven't heard a thing about it. It may be in these dispatches on the desk that I haven't read yet.

Q. Mr. President, is there anything that can be said at this time about the prospects of an offensive in Europe this year?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I wouldn't -- I wouldn't if I could, you know that. I couldn't possibly.

Q. Mr. President, have you decided yet whether you are going to sign the debt limitation bill which is before you?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I can give you any news on it yet. I don't -- what's the last date?

MR. EARLY: The tenth.

Q. 10th.

MR. EARLY: 10th.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

MR. EARLY: 10th.

THE PRESIDENT: 10th. I don't think I can give you anything today on that.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us -- (much laughter) -- whether you have any plans to nominate Mayor (Fiorello) LaGuardia for a commission in the Army?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't.

Q. You haven't anything?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: Sir, I didn't understand that answer. Was it, you do not ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I haven't got any plans.

Q. In other words, Mr. President, the stories are sheer "wool-gathering," about ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I wouldn't put it quite that way. He wants to get into active service somewhere, but I don't think that anything has been decided one way or the other. We all know he wants to get into the Army, but when and in what capacity I don't think anything has been done about it.

Q. Mr. President, are you planning to appoint a governor of Sicily soon? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you know I don't cross bridges until I come to them.

Q. That's a long bridge.

Q. Mr. President, are you activating this tax plan in any way up on the Hill?

THE PRESIDENT: No. I understood that Bob Doughton had gone home. I have heard nothing since that action in the House.

Q. That doesn't solve our problem. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: No. I think the question before the Ways and Means Committee is the taking up of those two very important things. One is the -- the Trade Agreements bill for the extension of the trade agreements, and the other one is the ---

Q. (interjecting) Coal.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- the Bituminous Coal Committee bill, which is to be the extension of the Coal Commission, which I think expires on the 30th of April, along there. And I think that the Ways and Means Committee is going to start hearings on one or both of those on the -- on the 12th of April. They told me that this morning.

Q. Well, Mr. President, is it still your feeling that there should be some sort of pay-as-you-go tax legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, don't let -- you know we've had an awful time over that. (laughter) Don't start another one of those. (more laughter)

Q. Sorry!

Q. Mr. President, do you see -- are you for an early application of the withholding tax?

THE PRESIDENT: Just the same question put differently.

Q. That doesn't include pay-as-you-go.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. That doesn't necessarily include pay-as-you-go.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, it's all -- it's all wrapped up in the same handkerchief.

Q. Mr. President, is there any connection between Secretary (of the Treasury Henry) Morgenthau's plan about gold, and the expiration of your gold powers on June 30th?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't even know that they expired.

Q. They do.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, of course, at the end of this exploratory period we will have to get all kinds of legislation. But in the exploratory period we don't ask for legislation. I don't know what they will do about the -- this particular thing on the 30th of June.

Of course, I think on some of those things which are, so to speak, in the -- in the right-hand drawer of the desk -- put there for future need -- that the Congress in the past has done on several occasions, they have extended powers for a relatively short period, which is always one way of handling it, so that the thing remains active, but which can die at the end of a short time, if the Congress wants to have the thing die.

Q. It's more or less necessary to have some -- something available for negotiations, is it not?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, Pete (Brandt). I really don't know enough about it.

Q. That is -- always has been.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but I imagine that on negotiations affecting the gold reserve behind the currency of the world, we ought to get Congressional action anyway, when the plan is decided on.

MR. GODWIN: Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. (interposing) Could that cave in Kentucky be internationalized?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Could that cave in Kentucky be internationalized?

(the President laughed)

MR. GODWIN: (aside) Okay, we'll withdraw that.

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

CONFIDENTIAL  
Press Conference #890  
Executive Office of the President  
April 9, 1943 -- 10.55 AM, EWT

(James F. Byrnes, Economic Stabilization Director  
was present at this Press Conference)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I have got only one thing this morning,  
and that is that Mr. Chester (C.) Davis has officially named the  
group of volunteers who will help with getting the crops in: the  
U. S. Crop Corps.

Well, we have used -- I have used myself the words  
"land army," in the absence of any other, but I don't think we  
want to confuse people by having a name other than the -- differ-  
ent from the official name. And I am going to ask you to -- all  
to make it clear about this thing that is being organized: the  
U. S. Crop Corps.

And that goes along with quite a lot of work that has  
been done already in setting it up and encouraging it through  
private agencies, advertising agencies, and so forth. During the  
last few weeks it has been going out all over the country under  
the name of the U. S. Crop Corps. So I hope everybody will con-  
form.

Q. Mr. President, is there any idea how big that group  
will be?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't know. I imagine several  
million.

Q. Mr. President, in your -- regarding your Executive Order last night, could you tell us, sir, how materially would you increase the powers of Economic Stabilization Director Byrnes?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let's ask Mr. Byrnes. How much more power would you get, Jimmie?

DIRECTOR BYRNES: I do not know of any material increase in power, except the authority in Section 5, where there is greater authority to determine questions that will arise in the Office of Price Administration, and the War Labor Board, as to border cases, hardship cases, where those cases in -- under that Section would be presented to me for consideration, instead of to the President personally. Otherwise, the -- the power to issue directives is no greater than the general powers contained in (Executive Order) #9250, to establish national policies and issue the directives to enforce -- to enforce those policies.

Q. Does that mean that the principal importance of it is as a mandate?

THE PRESIDENT: No. A statement of a policy. I wouldn't put it the other way.

There is one thing, if you want to follow it up a bit. The other day, in the agricultural group meeting that I had, one of the people present put it rather well. He said this whole question of the cost of living is like a stool, not with two legs, which is difficult to balance, or three legs -- it's a four-legged stool.

(One leg is) the control of holding the line on wages.

(A second leg is) holding the line on the cost of food.

And the third is the development of the rationing system so that it can be applied with what might be called a -- a leeway. In some cases you would have to take in particular articles, changing the price of the articles from time to time, depending on the scarcity or the plenty, and in the same way applying the cost of the food policy regionally, or by areas, or by localities.

We would try to avoid, for example, the situation which we all know happened here, and a few other places, where there were screaming headlines one week that there isn't any meat, and about a week or ten days later screaming headlines there's so much meat and it's all spoiling. That happened right here in the District.

And I think we ought to all avoid -- everybody ought to avoid the -- the overplaying of scarcity or of overplenty, because it isn't a good thing for public morale. The total differential between a scarcity and an overplenty is a very small thing, but if the public either ceases to buy or tries -- everybody -- to buy at the same time, you necessarily have trouble.

And the fourth leg of the stool is equally important with the other three, and that is the problem of preventing too much purchasing power in the form of cash. That means the development of taxation and savings -- those two elements.

I always think of the fellow who came to see me about two weeks ago -- I think I mentioned it -- an old friend of

mine, not far from Washington, but not in Washington. He came in to complain about the cost of living. And I have known him a great many years. He is a very highly skilled mechanic, getting mighty good wages, and very thankful for it, but he was complaining about what his wife said to him every night when he got home.

And the previous night his wife had said, "This is terrible." And holding up in front of her a little bunch of asparagus, she said, "What do you think? A dollar and a half for this little bunch of asparagus!" It was about the middle of March.

Well, said this man to me, "It's terrible. A bunch of asparagus a dollar and a half!"

I said, "Look. I am just going to ask you a question -- maybe I'm right, maybe I'm wrong. Did your wife ever buy a bunch of asparagus in March before?"

He said, "Why, what do you mean?"

I said, "You know where it came from? It came from Florida. Did you ever eat Florida asparagus in March before?"

He said, "You know, I never thought of that. I will have to talk to my wife about it."

And I said -- just -- just a shot in the dark, "Do you remember in the last couple of months, have you eaten any fresh strawberries?"

He said, "Yes, come to think about it. About the end of February we had an awfully nice box of fresh strawberries."

I said, "Did you ever do that before?"

He said, "No, I guess not."

"Well, you know where they came from? Probably raised under glass, or something like that, down in the south of Florida."

There is a great deal of that in the country, and it comes from the fact that so many people have a great deal more money in their pay envelopes on Saturday night than they ever had before, that they want to go into the luxury business of eating.

And therefore, taxation and savings are the answer, one of the legs -- of the four legs of the stool.

And that is -- that is -- that really is essentially the whole picture that we are working on with Director Byrnes, to try to prevent the ups and the downs and get on a more even level, using all four of these legs to keep the stool from falling over. And this new (Executive) Order is just a step in that direction. It doesn't take up the question of taxes or compulsory savings. That is a thing that, of course, is being worked on in the -- in the Congress at the present time.

Q. Mr. President, in regard to taxes, in your Budget Message you asked for 16 billion dollars, as I remember it. Is that still the Administration goal, or has it ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That is the Administration hope.

Q. Hope. Yes, sir.

MR. F. PASLEY: Mr. President, this is off the record, this question. My editor wishes to know what method was used in selecting the six newspaper correspondents who will

accompany you on your forthcoming trip? He was advised of the trip in a note sent from the Office of Censorship.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, in the first place, it's a question of whether I go; (in the) second place of where I go. And as you know, if I should suggest Grant Land, for example, I would probably take less people than if I went somewhere else. Grant Land is across the Strait from the northern end of Greenland. I have to take all those factors into consideration. What we are trying to do is perfectly obvious, if and when I should go, and that is to take as many people as I can. I think that really answers it.

MR. F. PASLEY: (interjecting) Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) I don't see any other way of doing it -- take as many people as I can.

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) In some cases, as you know -- for instance, the last trip to North Africa -- I couldn't take anybody.

Q. Mr. President, ---

MR. EARLY: (interposing) All of which, Mr. President, might be off the record?

THE PRESIDENT: That is all off the record, of course.

Q. Mr. President, there appears to be controversy in the Senate as to what portion of which committee is going to tour the war fronts; -- (laughter) -- and they say that -- some of them say it's on your desk for determination, and on (General George C.) Marshall's desk for determination?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. What happened was -- for example, one -- Oh, about two months ago I think it was, the Truman Committee asked if they could send -- you see, they cover almost everything -- Army, Navy, and all the other things -- supplies of all kinds -- whether they could send a small committee of, I think it was four to North Africa.

Well, I took it up immediately with General Marshall, and General Marshall wrote a letter, which I promptly sent to the members of the Committee, in which he said he would like to take as many as he could in the way of committees to the other side, but that we had to realize that every civilian that goes over there means just that less tonnage in people, and baggage -- the capacity of the plane, or planes -- it's robbing the armed forces, and robbing the supplies over there. And therefore he expressed the hope that without in any way saying he couldn't -- he couldn't take members of the Congress or the Senate, that they would be limited just as far as possible.

Well, that's -- that's all there is. It now falls within the jurisdiction of the -- of the Senate.

DIRECTOR BYRNES: Isn't that another argument to two fronts?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

DIRECTOR BYRNES: Isn't that -- isn't that another argument to two fronts?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. (laughter)

Q. Mr. President, have you decided yet what you are going to do about the Debt Extension bill?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q. (adding) Debt Limit bill?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) You are 24 hours too early.

Q. Well, Mr. President, do I understand the Truman Committee is the only Committee that you have been asked permission for ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That's the only one that came -- that letter to me about ten days ago I sent over to General Marshall. I haven't heard of any other.

Q. Mr. President, on the question of controlling food prices under this new Order, is it contemplated that prices will be placed on commodities, as they have been on meat, for instance -- specific retail sales prices for them?

THE PRESIDENT: Probably.

Q. That would extend then, sir, to things in a department store?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, they are not -- they are not all edibles.

Q. Well, cost of living?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Cost of living?

THE PRESIDENT: Cost of living items.

Q. Clothing?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Like clothing?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, I wouldn't say clothing,

because at the present time there is no need of clothing.

Q. What do you mean by that, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't mean ----- (loud laughter)

No need of putting a ceiling on clothing at the present time.

(continued laughter)

Q. Do you have in mind then, sir, specific control of commodities outside of edibles?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, there might be. Can't tell.

DIRECTOR BYRNES: Mr. President, I might add that the O.P.A. (Office of Price Administration) is now working out a plan, which I imagine they would be able to present about tomorrow. They have certain ideas as to how it should affect the commodities, and following the meat plan in great part, so that the purchaser going into a store can see the price, so that the price can be advertised in the newspapers, and the housewives of the nation can help police it.

Q. Will there be a ceiling price on fresh vegetables?

DIRECTOR BYRNES: That is for the determination of the Administrator, the language of the President's Order stating "all commodities affecting the cost of living." On some vegetables we have; some we have not. That is for the determination of the Food Administrator. If they affect the cost of living in his determination, it will be done.

Q. Will that involve grade-labeling of canned goods?

DIRECTOR BYRNES: I could not say, because that too would be for the determination of the Administrator, as to whether or not it would affect the price of the article when sold to the

consumer, and thus affect the cost of living. It is -- everything back of the retail -- of the commodity offered for sale at retail must be determined by him in the light of that language.

Q. Will there be ceilings on farm prices?

DIRECTOR BYRNES: Under the regulations, the power to place what they call the "power to control wages" was transferred to the Department of Agriculture. Agricultural labor was defined as labor receiving less than 24 hundred dollars, at that time, which was -- no action was taken because of the farm situation and the necessity of getting employees to the farms. It is now going to be reviewed, in order to determine whether the situation has changed, so as to cause a change in the plan and place a ceiling, and if so what ceiling should be placed. I have requested Director Davis, having in mind ---

Q. (interposing) My question had to do with the prices of farm commodities.

DIRECTOR BYRNES: I thought you said Farm labor?

Q. Farm prices.

DIRECTOR BYRNES: Oh, No. On farm -- according to what is meant by my answer to the first question, that on all commodities affecting the cost of living there may be some minor vegetable that the Administrator would determine did not affect the cost of living, and he would not place a ceiling on it. Unless he does reach that determination, a ceiling will be placed on it.

Q. Mr. Justice, does that mean placing the ceilings

at retail or at the farm?

JUSTICE BYRNES: At retail. Affecting the cost of living at retail, unless back of the retail level there is a commodity the price of which must be fixed, because the law requires that a fair margin shall be allowed. It may be necessary to fix the price therefor of some commodity which is not sold at retail but at wholesale.

Q. Would it be necessary to fix livestock prices?

DIRECTOR BYRNES: I gave you the answer to that question. If the Administrator determines that it was necessary, then it would be fixed.

Q. To what extent do you anticipate being able to roll back prices?

DIRECTOR BYRNES: The Price Administrator hopes that in a number of cases it can be done. I have no personal information as to the extent to which it could be done.

Q. Are workers more or less frozen into their jobs in essential industries?

DIRECTOR BYRNES: Well, the only effect of the Manpower Commission is to make clear -- Manpower Commission Section is to make clear that the Chairman of the Commission has the power now to do what he has done before -- he was attempting to do to some degree. His powers exercised under Executive Order, under this directive -- or rather it isn't a directive -- under this authorization he has greater power, because this Order and this authorization are based upon the Act of October 2, (1942), and therefore the sanctions of that Act would follow the language of this

Section. That is really the important part of this Order.

Q. Thank you very much.

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

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