

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #930  
Executive Office of the President  
January 18, 1944 -- 4.15 P.M., E.W.T.

(this is the first press conference held after the President's recovery from the 'flu. The Budget Seminar was held this year by Harold Smith, Director of the Budget, instead of the President)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think, first of all, I should say Happy New Year. (laughter)

I also -- I want to assure you that I am no longer contagious, and Dr. (Ross T.) McIntire hopes that none of you are contagious. (more laughter)

I have one very nice thing -- getting back -- the railroad strike is settled. All the differences have been worked out this afternoon. I have a letter from Mr. (J. J.) Pelley (President, Association of American Railroads) this afternoon I might read you, which explains it, I think.

(reading): "Supplementing my letter to you of January 14, in which I advised you of the successful result of negotiations between the Carriers' Conference Committee and the Firemen's, Conductors' and Switchmen's organizations, I beg now to advise that the Carriers' Conference Committee have reached an agreement with the fifteen Non-operating Employees' Associations -- Organizations.

"This agreement ratifies the graduated scale increases which were recommended by the Special Emergency Board and not disapproved by the Stabilization Director, and also disposes of the issue of time-and-a-half for work performed in excess of 40 hours a week.

"The agreement was submitted to Judge Vinson this morning for his consideration, and we are hopeful that he will find it consistent with the stabilization program."

I can put in right there that he has sent word to me that he is going to approve, and will do so formally sometime tomorrow.

(continuing reading): "The agreement contains provision that the allowance which has been agreed upon in lieu of overtime will become effective as of December 27, 1943, and like other provisions of the agreement is, of course, subject to Government approval.

"You addressed a letter to the Secretary of War, in which you asked him to make the overtime provisions in the case of the Conductors, Firemen and Switchmen effective as of December 27, and it is respectfully suggested that you will find it appropriate similarly to advise the Secretary as to the effective date of the supplementary increase in lieu of overtime in the case of the fifteen Non-operating organizations."

Which I will do.

(continuing reading): "Should this agreement with the Non-operating organizations receive Government approval, it will dispose of the entire wage controversy between the carriers

represented by the Eastern, Western and Southeastern Carriers' Conference Committees and their operating and non-operating organizations.

"We are deeply appreciative of the invaluable assistance which you have personally rendered to the parties."

Then I can add to that that this final agreement with the Non-ops, I think that by tomorrow we will be able to have it put into effect. It applies also to the short lines. They were not a party to this particular controversy between the carriers and the Non-ops; but of course it should be uniform, is that right?

MR. EARLY: The Shaw Board will recommend that tomorrow.

THE PRESIDENT: The Shaw Board will recommend that tomorrow morning. It also applies, because they were not a party, I think, to the Railway Express employees. So it looks as if it's all cleared up.

Q. Mr. President, does this mean the railroads will be returned immediately to them?

THE PRESIDENT: I will, in my letter to the Secretary -- this only came in in the last ten minutes -- I am writing the Secretary of War tonight to tell him that he has authority on the Executive Order to turn the railroads back.

Now, let's see.

Q. Mr. President, before you get on anything else, could you say whether the terms were that the 9 to 11 cents graduated scale had been -----?

THE PRESIDENT: They have agreed that the employees

at the top of the payroll would be paid the additional 5 cents, making them 9, which is the same amount allotted to the Ops, but in the case of the Ops it was allotted on account of time-and-a-half and expenses-away-from-home. All the Non-ops, however, will not receive the 5 cents. Instead of being 5 cents across the board which was given to the Ops, it's 5 cents down to 1 cent. It's tapered off to 1 cent for those in the lower brackets. Therefore, the men whose pay is less than the Shaw Panel gave them, making the total increase 11 cents. Those are the people who -- (pausing) -- terribly complicated.

MR. EARLY: Yes, sir. It's all mixed up.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, in a nutshell, the people down the line getting 47 cents, and -- I don't know what the next -- next schedule -- 54 cents -- they get, the 47-centers, get 11 cents, and the next lowest paid get 10 cents, and the operating people offer no objection at all because they all get -- what? -- 82 cents, so they are not affected in any way. In that case, there's no discrimination.

Q. Mr. President, the provision as to time-and-a-half for overtime is that it would go above the 9 to 11 cents?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

Q. Same.

THE PRESIDENT: 11 cents for the lowest paid people, 10 cents for the next group lowest from the bottom, and then 9 cents after that for everybody else.

Q. 9 cents for everybody over 57, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, well, whatever it is. Now you

are getting complicated. I think so. Put in the word approximately. (laughter)

I got -- I got a memorandum here -- may be a little clearer. The Non-ops and the carriers agree to settle all below 47 cents -- below 47 cents to get an 11 cents increase, instead of the 10 cents which was awarded by the Shaw Board in their first meeting. Between 47 and 57 -- you are right the first time -- they will get 10 cents instead of 9. The rest will get 9.

MR. D. CORNELL (A.P.): Mr. President -- excuse me. When you tell the Secretary of War tonight that he has the authority under the Executive Order to turn the roads back, will you recommend that he do that?

THE PRESIDENT: He has the authority, ---

MR. D. CORNELL: (interjecting) Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- and he is the man running the railroads.

MR. D. CORNELL: Well, you anticipate then that that authority will be exercised at once?

THE PRESIDENT: I am not anticipating anything these days.

MR. D. CORNELL: If you were us, would you anticipate?  
(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, Douglas, I am inclined to think, if I were in your place, I might make the guess. (more laughter)

MR. D. CORNELL: Maybe I shall.

THE PRESIDENT: Then a statement, which Steve (Early) will give you when you go out, on the Fourth War Loan Drive. It's an excellent statement, which I did not write, but don't tell anybody that. Neither did the Treasury. Steve did it. (laughter) You'll recognize his style. (more laughter)

Then I got a report from Leo Crowley on the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, some of which is of real interest. There's a lot of figures in here -- I won't give you all this now, just the last paragraph.

(reading): "Insured banks today are in the soundest position they have ever enjoyed. We cannot forecast banking developments during the post-war period that will affect the assets of the F.D.I.C. It is a pleasure to be able to report to you, however, that the Corporation is in a financial position that should enable it easily to care for whatever demands eventuate."

Then I have only got one other thing, and that is just to tell you that -- you probably know it -- I have seen in the past week Eisenhower and Halsey and Lieutenant General Kenney, who came back from the two ends of the earth for consultation, to insure the coordination of operations so that the greatest possible pressure can be brought to bear on the European and Pacific areas simultaneously, and also to insure that the distribution of our equipment and supplies is being made with that end in -- in view.

Outside of that, I don't think I have got anything.

Q. Mr. President, there was a court decision that

affects membership in a widely known press association. Would you like to comment on that?

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't see that. What was it, Supreme Court?

Q. No, sir. It was a special -- special Federal court.

THE PRESIDENT: That -- that one in New York ---

Q. (interjecting) A.P. (Associated Press)

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- sometime ago?

Q. A few days ago.

THE PRESIDENT: What was new about it? There was a first one about three or four months ago.

Q. It puts some limitation -- requires some limitation on membership. I am not just sure of the technicalities of it.

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Well, I don't think I ought to comment on that. Does the country club still exist? (much laughter)

Q. Mr. President, everybody seems to be wondering why a certain newspaper published a certain rumor from Cairo. I wondered if you had any hunch ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) I haven't got any more than what I have read in the papers. Just as much mystified as anybody else.

Q. Mr. President, on that subject, would there be anything you could tell us by way of background that would give some insight into what this incident is all about?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. I am referring to the Pravda -- the Pravda news item. I am just wondering whether you would say anything off the record?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got the faintest idea. The same -- and don't quote me on this -- this is off the record -- I am buffaloed.

Q. We all are.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Completely. I don't know, ---

Q. (interposing) Is there any ---

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- don't -- this is off the record too -- I talked with the British Ambassador, and he is just as much in the dark as I am.

Q. Sir, I wondered if there was any comment you would care to make on the Polish situation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know anything about it at all.

VOICES: Thank you, Mr. President.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Press and Radio Conference #931  
Executive Office of the President  
February 1, 1944 -- 4.01 P.M., E.W.T.

(Archibald MacLeish, the Librarian of Congress,  
was a guest at this press conference)

(also, a Miss Jean Appleton was making a char-  
coal sketch of the President while the press  
conference was in progress)

Q. Doug lost his notebook, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: Doug what?

Q. He has lost his notebook. Doug lost his notebook  
on the way in. (laughter)

(no one seeming disposed to help him out, this  
reporter handed him an extra shorthand note-  
book)

MR. D. CORNELL: Thanks.

THE PRESIDENT: There you are. Just another form of  
newspaper graft. (laughter)

Q. Well, sir, small at that.

THE PRESIDENT: Getting something more out of the  
Government. (more laughter)

Q. Expand on it.

THE PRESIDENT: That's all right. I think we

ought to send him a bill, don't you?

Q. I think so -- for about a dollar and a half.

THE PRESIDENT: Dollar and a half, I suppose.

MR. D. CORNELL: I'll give most of it back.

THE PRESIDENT: Put it on the expense account.

Q. For three and a half.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I have -- I haven't got much new information. Out on the ticker all that we know about the attack on the -- on the Marshall Islands. You have probably seen it, that a powerful naval force consisting of all types of vessels supporting the invasion has landed on the Marshall -- in the Kwajalein, commanded by Vice Admiral (R. A.) Spruance. And I think the operation is going up to this time quite well, with heavy opposition. So we are all waiting to see what happens.

In that connection, I dictated to Steve (Early) -- it has been mimeographed and you will get it when you go out -- something that I hope will clarify the air a little bit on what we are doing in the Far East as a whole.

The American objectives in India or elsewhere in continental Asia are to expel and defeat the Japanese, in the closest collaboration with British, Chinese and other Allies in that theatre.

Our task in expelling the Japanese from Burma, Malaya, Java and other territory, including all the islands, is military. We recognize that our British and Dutch brothers-in-arms are

as determined to throw the Japanese out of Malaya and the Dutch East Indies as we are determined to free the Philippines. We propose to help each other on the roads, and in the waters, and above them eastward from where we are now to these places -- No, westward from where we are now and eastward from the Burma area to these places and beyond as far as Tokyo. No matter what individual or individuals command in any given area, the purpose is the same.

There will, of course, be plenty of problems when we get there. The solution will be easier if we all employ our utmost resources of experience, goodwill and good faith. Nobody in India, or anywhere else in Asia, will misunderstand the presence there of American armed forces, if they will believe, as we do at home, that their job is to assure the defeat of Japan without which there can be no opportunity for any of us to enjoy and expand the freedoms for which we all are fighting.

Of course, in that connection, I think the country is very much startled by the atrocity stories the other day, and very rightly. The particular stories came in, I think it was about five or six months ago, and when they came in the first impulse of almost everybody was to release them immediately. But after we slept on it about overnight, we took it up with the military, both here and abroad. We took it up with the British government and the Chinese government, and humanitarian considerations at that time were given consideration. In other words, at that time we were still running the GRIPSHOLM back

and forth, and we were thinking not merely of the terrible things that had been done to American prisoners and British prisoners, we were also -- also thinking of those who survived; and we thought, then, that the publication of these atrocity stories might incite the Japanese to kill a great many other American soldiers.

And so -- so from that humanitarian point of view, in an effort to save American lives, and hoping that the Japanese would allow more prisoners to be exchanged and got out of Japan, we held it up with the reservation that just as soon as it seemed to be hopeless to get food and supplies into the hands of American prisoners we would say nothing until that time -- hopeless time came.

Well, over the past two or three weeks it became more and more clear that there was grave doubt as to whether our packages and other supplies -- medical supplies -- for our troops were actually getting in, and we came to the reluctant conclusion that they were not getting to our people; and therefore the story was published.

And I think that from now on we have got to regard it as a pretty -- that we probably can't hurt our own men by publishing these stories, and that being so the country ought to know the stories. We thought, of course, a great deal about the suffering that would be caused to the families of many of the people of this country, like the families of that little community down in New Mexico, and another one in Illinois, where almost every family had some member of the family in what had

been the old State Guard forces from that locality, that were taken into the regular Army and sent out to the Philippines before the seventh of December, 41. I think everybody in the country will have the utmost sympathy for them, and horror on what has been done to American troops in these towns, and a great many other towns in the -- in the country.

I think it gives us a pretty good slant, also, on the mentality of the Japanese. I have spoken of that before, and I think -- I think we all feel even more strongly about it today than we did then.

We are moving as fast as is humanly possible to move. It's all very well to say we ought to move faster. Well, unless you have a good deal of the knowledge of just how you would move faster, it would be better not to write that. I am always open to suggestions of how to move faster.

Q. Mr. President, at the time that our Government learned of the mistreatment and the execution of some of the flyers who accompanied General Doelittle, you issued a statement that individual Japanese responsible for this crime would be tracked down and ultimately punished and brought to justice.

THE PRESIDENT: There is no question about that, and that would apply to all the atrocities in the Philippines.

Q. Specifically will apply to this case?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, yes.

(adding) May have to put the F.B.I. on them.

(laughter)

I don't think I have got anything else, for the time

being.

Q. Mr. President, do you have any comment on the reports that Elmer Davis (head of O.W.I.) has resigned, or is going to resign, and is going to be succeeded by Byron Price?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. Of course, you all know that there has been a great -- grave difference of opinion on an administrative problem. It isn't on the objectives or the policies. There is a difference of opinion on how to administer this, that and one or two other things. And I am working on it now. I haven't got any news on it yet.

Q. Mr. President, there was a report in the paper yesterday that the Administration was about ready to give up King Victor Emanuel in Italy.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. You would have to ask the Secretary of State about that. I don't think that that story, put that way, is exactly the way I would put it. I would put it this way, that -- as firmly determined as ever before that the Italian people are going to do the deciding, as to whether they want him or anybody else. I don't think it's up to us to make that decision for them by a mere dictum. I would like to have them express themselves.

Q. Mr. President, to return to the Japanese situation for one more question, is there any reason, sir, why the full text of the latest representations forwarded by this Government to Japan should not be made public by the State Department?

THE PRESIDENT: They have made -- State Department,

I think, has made something like 89 representations to Japan.

Q. The final representation, sir, was forwarded in two notes on the 27th. A synopsis of that note was made public yesterday, but the specific content of it was not made public. Do you think that the full note might be made public at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: I would like to read it first. All I know is that a note to that effect was forwarded. You had better ask the Secretary of State. If he thinks it's all right to give out the full note, it's all right with me.

Q. Mr. President, have you any new developments on progress in the direction of the soldier vote which -- in the form which you requested?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Didn't they -- Steve told me that it was -- brought me the news clip that there has been some kind of a vote in the House, but I couldn't tell you what kind. Something about a committee.

Q. There was a vote not to have a roll call.

(laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, any more chances for any more votes on the same subject? I suppose -- I suppose we had better wait and not comment on it. Everybody knows what I feel about the roll call. I think it's part of representative government. I couldn't cast an intelligent vote -- has been more difficult in the past -- without knowing to some degree as to how my own Congressman voted.

And by the way, I have got a different Congressman

this fall. We have been redistricted in Dutchess (County).

(laughter)

Q. Are you glad?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Are you glad, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I am -- I am always neutral, you know. (more laughter)

Q. (aside) All right?

Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Press and Radio Conference #932  
Executive Office of the President  
February 4, 1944 -- 11.05 A.M., E.W.T.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: I think that we can all join in sorrow on hearing about Ray Clapper's death out there in the Marshall Islands. I think he is a real loss; I think we all feel that. It's all part of the -- part of duty.

In that connection, Steve (Early) brought me in a telegram this morning that Roy Roberts sent to him as president of the A.S.N.E. -- newspaper editors society -- and I was so much pleased with it that -- it's about the same -- same general action in the Marshall Islands, that -- (reading): "I just want you to know how appreciative American press is over the efficient manner in which the news has been handled from Marshall Islands, and the splendid cooperation given by the Navy. It sets a high mark. I have talked to several directors of A.S.N.E. and they all felt same way about it. Roy Roberts."

I think, really, on these operations, we are getting things down -- after many tries and false steps -- down to a pretty good system of working out our news-gathering in the -- in the active areas. And apparently in the Marshall thing, of course the -- the chief element of it -- necessary element is the secrecy of the operation. We got into the Marshall Islands with apparently no warning to the Japanese. Now I think that that meant we probably saved a great many lives on these different islands. The cooperation out there has been

exceedingly good. And I am glad that -- to have Steve get that telegram from Roy Roberts, because it does show clearly some appreciation of the fact that we are trying to cooperate in the gathering and dissemination of news.

I have got a statement here -- which you get afterwards -- on the signing of the mustering-out payments bill, which is a first step. It's a little difficult to -- the way I did it in the first place -- not quite accurate -- come to that in a minute.

(reading, not literally): "The passage of this bill is a step in the comprehensive program that I have recommended for the post-war period on July 28, 1943, and again October 27, 1943, and November 23, 1943, for the special protection of the members of the armed forces. Will ease the period of transition -- that's a better word -- from military to civilian life, by providing the funds immediately needed to enable our service men and women to look out for jobs -- look for jobs and resume their peacetime pursuits.

"This is an important first step in the program of demobilization. The other measures recommended in the program, however, should also be adopted.

"The Federal Government should make it financially possible, for example, for members of the armed forces to resume their interrupted studies and educate and train themselves for peacetime jobs and responsibilities. The future welfare of this nation requires that we promptly make good the educational deficit created by war.

"We must also provide our service men and women with social security credits for the period of their military service, so that they may fully enjoy the benefits of the social security laws on their return to civilian life.

"We must make our plans now to take the necessary steps to see to it that there will be good jobs awaiting our returning service men and women. But we must anticipate that there may be unemployment during the period of reconversion, and we must therefore establish now suitable machinery for the payment of reasonable unemployment allowances to those veterans who are unable to obtain jobs within a reasonable period after their discharge.

"Through the prompt enactment of this program of veterans benefits, we shall furnish those who have served their country in the armed forces with the same sense of security that they have richly earned, and which is so necessary to a high fighting morale."

I don't think we should in any way consider this a step towards demobilization, because right at the -- at the height of a war there are certain elements of demobilization that are going on long before there is any actual demobilization. The best example I know of is the fact that I think it's just about a million men and women who were in the armed services who have been returned to civil life, although we are still increasing the size of the armed services. In other words, demobilization is not the -- the word -- I don't quite know how to put it -- transition is a better word. But not

through a peace program. We can't look forward to any given -- given date on that, but there is a lot more that can be done before the war ends, as I have tried to point out.

I don't think I have got anything else.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of the present status of the soldier vote?

THE PRESIDENT: I should say it was more up to the Congress than up to me. In other words, in all probability, that is a more proximate responsibility of theirs at this time than it is of mine.

Oh, I -- I will save Steve's life, because -- Steve came in yesterday morning with blood in his eye. (laughter)

I said, "What's the trouble?"

"Oh," he said, "they woke me up three times during the night, after midnight, to ask if you had been under the knife."

That was the headline desired. (more laughter)

And I said, "Sure, I was under the knife. I am under the knife whenever I cut my fingernails." (more laughter)

But actually, I don't know why I should talk about this, it's merely -- it might be called a -- a preventive -- and that is very often necessary, to use a preventible -- I had a pain for -- I don't know, what? -- twenty years or less; and I don't know, what you call a wen on the back of my head. And it had grown a bit lately, so I went out to the Naval Hospital, and two very good surgeons, and knives, and God knows what, removed it under a local anesthetic. (I think I was in the hospital half an hour. So now she's out.

Q. Did those -- Mr. President, did those Naval "gins" permit you to smoke while they did their hacking, -- (laughter) -- to relieve ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) No, but I yelled for a cigarette right after it. (more laughter.)

Q. Mr. President, have you any observation on Mr. (Wendell) Willkie's speech urging higher taxation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I will put it this way, that I didn't have the nerve to ask for sixteen billion, I only asked for ten. (laughter) But Mr. Willkie, as in my case, we were thinking a little bit about the next generation and not just about this generation.

Q. Mr. President, have you any news on the Davis-Sherwood matter?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Nothing yet.

MR. P. BRANDT: Mr. President, have you received a report on the latest action of Russia, giving foreign affairs powers to the constituent republics?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, Pete, I read it with great interest; and possibly because of a very long experience, unlike some other people, I am making no comment whatsoever, for the very simple reason that I don't know; and that requires, probably, more courage than almost anything else in this world: to say nothing when you don't know -- to use a homily.

Q. Mr. President, could you tell us whether a director has been selected for the new War Refugee Board?

THE PRESIDENT: I am talking to Secretary Hull

about it.

Q. Hasn't been decided?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet, No.

Q. Mr. President, is there any change now in our relations with Spain or with Franco, any new development, in your opinion ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) Nothing has come to me. Better ask the State Department about it. As you know, there have been a good many headaches there, but the British and ourselves are working together on it, to see that Spain remains neutral in the -- in the true sense of the word.

Q. Is that effort working, sir?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. That is a case where I have to say I hope so.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Press and Radio Conference #933  
Executive Office of the President  
February 5, 1944 -- 11.45 A.M., E.W.T.

(this press conference was held for the  
Negro Newspaper Publishers Association --  
some fifteen members present)

(John Sengstacke of the Chicago Defender  
introduced each member to the President)

**THE PRESIDENT:** Well, I hope you get to the Senate  
and House press galleries. That will be the next step, but  
this is a White House (press) conference that I think is all  
arranged, that is working out all right.

There is one thing that I think we could mention --  
I see you are taking notes, don't publish them -- and that is  
this, that I certainly would have the colored editors Associa-  
tion -- I suppose you haven't got one -- you will get one --  
so as to come in once a year and see me on an off the record  
talk, just the same way as I see the American Newspaper --  
what is it? ---

**MR. EARLY:** (interjecting) American Society of News-  
paper Editors.

**THE PRESIDENT:** They come in once a year, and I talk  
about half an hour or an hour to them. They ask me questions,  
over at the White House, and it's all off the record; it's for  
-- for information. And I think it would be a good thing if

your Association could come in once a year, just the way they do, and talk off the record for a half-hour or an hour. It seems to work pretty well.

MR. THEODORE POSTON (O.W.I.): That would be swell.

THE PRESIDENT: And -- well, I am glad you have got something that can really -- that you can pin it on, that it is a daily newspaper without any question. (laughter) We have been waiting for a long time for it.

MR. JOHN SENGSTACKE: Mr. President, on behalf of the Negro Newspapers Association, may I thank you for your courtesy in seeing this committee from our Association. Our Association, which represents Negro newspapers with over ninety-five percent of Negro press coverage, is resolved to do everything that it can to help win the war and the peace that follows.

In this connection, we are asking Mr. Prattis to read a statement which is representative of the thinking of our Association and membership.

THE PRESIDENT: All right.

MR. P. L. PRATTIS (Pittsburgh Courier): Mr. President, we are Americans. Our allegiance to the ideals and guarantees and principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States is unlimited and unsullied.

This is our country, to share with all other Americans. We have purchased our stake, in this our native land, with our blood and toil during more than three hundred years. We have a right and a duty to share its blessings, its sacrifices and its sufferings.

This is our war. Negro Americans on every battle-front are giving their lives to defend the soil, the homes and the democratic ideals of their native land. They, and we, are fighting for the freedom of America and of all oppressed and exploited peoples.

We deplore any and all forms of disunity that threaten the winning of victory for Democracy. We extend our hands to all Americans who join in the crusade for liberty for all peoples, a better world and a better nation in which true Democracy may prevail.

The Negro's paramount objective is to help win the war and to establish a just and enduring peace, under which all men may achieve human dignity and equality of opportunity. The Negro wholeheartedly and unreservedly supports the Federal Government in prosecuting the war, and in planning post-war reconstructions toward the above ends.

That second class -- we believe that second class citizenship, now imposed in many ways upon Negroes in America, violates the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States, prevents full utilization of the material and moral resources of our country at war, and destroys all possibility of a just and enduring peace.

We maintain that it is our duty and obligation to fight for every right guaranteed by the Constitution to all people, for to refrain from doing so would impair our Democracy at home and abroad by weakening the principles on which it is founded.

We maintain that the Federal Government should begin now to use its authority and powers of persuasion to end abridgement of the Negro's citizenship, so as to bring about a more truly democratic America. Such action would support our claim that we fight for a world order in which economic equality, political self-determination, and social justice both prevail.

It is our resolve to work for the abolition of the color bar in industry, still maintained by many employers and labor unions to the detriment of our war effort.

For equal opportunity to Negroes for employment and advancement in public services.

For equality in all public educational facilities.

For unrestricted suffrage in national, state and municipal elections, including all primary elections.

For full protection by government in the enjoyment of all civil rights and liberties established by law.

For the principle that government should not impose, enforce or sanction patterns of racial segregation.

For full protection and equality of treatment and opportunity for Negroes in the armed forces of the United States, according them the respect which the uniform should command.

For extension of the system of social security, which recognizes the right of the individual to self-development, protection against the hazards of illness, unemployment and want, and promotes the orderly development of the nation's resources.

For application of the Atlantic Charter to all

colonial and other exploited peoples, not only Europeans and Asiatics, but also Africans and peoples of African descent throughout the world.

For full participation by the United States in establishing and maintaining such international machinery as may be necessary to establish a world order in which economic equality, political self-determination, and social justice will prevail.

This statement is respectfully submitted by our Association.

We desire to bring to your attention one specific matter concerning our boys in the armed services. Mr. Lewis will bring that to your attention.

THE PRESIDENT: I think it's an awfully good statement.

MR. IRA LEWIS (Pittsburgh Courier): Mr. President, may I go back, first, to your statement inviting us to come in once a year to have an off the record talk with you. I appreciate your optimism, and I would say January 22 (1945), in so far as I am concerned. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'll probably be down in Georgia then. (more laughter)

MR. IRA LEWIS: Candidly, Mr. President, we are, of course, very thankful for this audience and this opportunity to speak to you.

Mr. President, Prattis's statement started out, "We are Americans." That is the way we look at it. I don't

think there is any group of citizens in this country who love this country more ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) That's right.

MR. IRA LEWIS: (continuing) --- than the Negro people. This is the only home they know. Now, the question in their minds is as to whether they are expressing -- whether they are giving their full share of the contribution not only to the war but what is due (to come).

There is one very pressing question that is causing the colored people lots of concern. I think that we represent here perhaps five or six million readers, and that question is posed to us at all times. It is a grievous and vexing one. It has to do with the treatment of our boys in the armed services. They haven't been treated right by civilian police, and by the MPs. We know of instances where soldiers on furlough have come home and taken off their uniform, on account of intimidation.

And they think, Mr. President, that that is your responsibility. They think that you alone can correct that. I think you can put your hand right on the question, which will do more towards strengthening morale and making more for unity and making the Negro citizen believe that he is a part of this great commonwealth. Just one word from you, we all feel, would do that.

Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: I am glad you brought that up, because I have been in touch with it. It is perfectly true, there is

definite discrimination in the actual treatment of the colored engineer troops, and others. And you are up against -- you know perfectly well -- I have talked about it -- I had the Secretary of War and the Assistant -- everybody in on it. The trouble lies fundamentally in the attitude of certain white people -- officers down the line ---

MR. IRA LEWIS: (interjecting) That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- who haven't got very much more education, many of them, than the colored troops and the Seabees and the engineers, for example. And they -- well, you know -- you know the kind of person it is. We all do. We don't have to do more than think of a great many people that we know. And it has become not a question of orders -- they are repeated fairly often, I think, in all the camps of colored troops -- it's a question of the personality of the individual. And we are up against it, absolutely up against it. I always think of the fact that it probably is improving. I like to think that mere association helps things along.

I always think of -- what was it? -- two or three years ago -- not an election trip -- I was down in Chattanooga. A very interesting thing happened. I was going all around to the points of interest in Chattanooga -- I think I dedicated one of the dams -- and I drove with Governor Cooper through the streets, the southern end of Chattanooga -- through the Negro section.

And there was tremendous enthusiasm to see the President. And suddenly we came onto this broad avenue that was

running south, we came to a place where all the enthusiasm quit and stopped; and there were a good many colored people on the streets, but they just stood there, they were completely apathetic.

And I turned to Cooper. I said, "What's the matter with these people?"

He said, "You are not in Tennessee any longer, you are in Georgia." (laughter)

That is a very interesting thing.

Now in Tennessee the great majority of Negroes in Chattanooga are voting, ---

MR. IRA LEWIS: (interjecting) That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- they can take part in the life of the community. You get across this invisible line, you pop over into the State of Georgia, not one of them can vote. Now that is -- just is a plain fact. It's an interesting fact. Just, as I said, hands down -- (demonstrating) -- no enthusiasm at all; and a block further back everybody saying, "Hello, Mr. President," and so forth and so on. They are all right in Tennessee. They haven't -- people in Tennessee are just as well off as before. I don't know what they are kicking about in Georgia, which is my State, unfortunately.

And there is one thing -- there is just one thing in here -- (indicating the statement) -- the only thing I didn't agree with, and that is a thing which your Association, I think, could do something about. You talk about people in

other countries. We all know that they are very different from Americans in every way. You can't, for example -- I will give you one example -- something has got to be done about it in time.

Last year I went to a place called Gambia in Africa, at the mouth of the Gambia River. Bathurst is the capital. I think there are about three million inhabitants, of whom one hundred and fifty are white. And it's the most horrible thing I have ever seen in my life. I was there twice. The natives are five thousand years back of us. Disease is rampant, absolutely. It's a terrible place for disease.

And I looked it up, with a little study, and I got to the point of view that for every -- the British have been there for two hundred years -- for every dollar that the British have put into Gambia, they have taken out ten. It's just plain exploitation of those people. There is no education whatsoever. A few missionaries. With all due deference to the missionaries, if they wouldn't try to live in the best houses in town, they would be better off. (laughter)

And then a very interesting thing. They had no religion except the old forms of voodooism, which were tribal and came down through the centuries. The one religion that is gaining today in Gambia and contiguous colonies is Mohammedanism. Now that -- people don't know about that here. Those people, of course, they are completely incapable of self-government. You have got to give them some education first. Then you have got to better their health and their economic

position.

The reason the Mohammedans are getting on so well is that the Mohammedan priest comes down to a village, and he has a few tools in his pocket. He has no money. And he goes and lives in a hut with some family. And the next morning he gets a stool and starts his trade, and -- Oh -- he makes little silver ornaments or something like that -- some little hand trade. And pretty soon the children gather around him, and he talks to them. Pretty soon one or two grown-ups gather around him. Well, in the course of six months he has got a Mohammedan church. And he hasn't got any missionary society back home that pays him a salary. He makes his own way with his little trade. And the result is that Mohammedanism is gaining all through Africa at the present time. The Christian religion is not. He is a practical fellow. The missionary is not -- most of them. (laughter)

Now the agriculture there, it is perfectly pitiful. The one main asset is peanuts, and they -- they grow a lot of peanuts, the natives do. How do they grow them? They have been growing them now for -- I don't know, what? -- for years, and they still use a pointed stick. Nobody ever saw a plow in Gambia. The British have never done a thing about it. The only road out of Bathurst, the capital, we built out to the airport. The rest of the travel is up the Gambia River, but not back into the country at all, only right by the river.

Now, as I say, we have got to realize that a country like Gambia -- and there are a lot of them down there -- they

have -- the people there, who are in the overwhelming majority, they have no possibility of self-government for a long time. But we have got to move, the way we did in the Philippines, to teach them self-government. They have got -- that means education, it means sanitation, it means all those things. And that would be just as good for every white American to know as every colored American; but we don't know.

Now, because of your traditional, historic -- way back -- association, it would be a perfectly grand thing if your Association could send two or three people out there, as a committee, to write stories about what is needed.

I am taking up with (Prime Minister Winston) Churchill at the present time -- he doesn't see the point yet -- I think he will -- (laughter) -- the general thought that the United Nations ought to have an inspection committee of all these colonies that are way, way down the line, that are not ready to have anything to say yet because the owning country has given them no facilities.

And if we sent -- sent a committee from the United Nations, and I used the example of Gambia, to go down to Gambia, "If you Britishers don't come up to scratch -- toe the mark -- then we will let all the world know."

Well, Churchill doesn't like that idea. And his comeback was, "All right, the United Nations will send an inspection committee to your own South in America." (laughter)

He thought he had me.

I said, "Winston, that's all right with me. Go

ahead and do it. Tell the world. But -- what you people were talking about -- we call it freedom of the press, and you also call it 'pitiless publicity' -- you can right a lot of wrongs with 'pitiless publicity.'

It would be a grand thing. I wouldn't mind if we had a committee of the United Nations come here and make a report on us. Why not?

Q. (interjecting) That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) We have got some things to be ashamed of, and other things that are not as bad as they are painted. It wouldn't hurt at all -- bring it all out.

Q. That's right.

THE PRESIDENT: So, I will -- I think if your -- if your Association could do something like that, to teach us a little bit more about the world.

You take -- well, you take two countries that I was close to this last trip -- Abyssinia and Iran. Well, both -- both are absolutely pathetic, from our point of view. They are almost starving. No sanitation. There is nothing. Yet they are fine people.

The King of Ethiopia -- Emperor of Ethiopia, his son-in-law came over a little while ago.

And I said, "Where do you come from?"

"Oh," he said, "the Emperor -- direct descendant of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba." (laughter)

That's all right. Awfully proud people. And they have got lots of capacity for the future, but they haven't

got anything now, no education, no facilities -- coming along.

Same way in Iran, what we used to call Persia. They come of a very ancient -- really a very wonderful civilization. But half of one percent of the people own all the land. Ninety-nine-and-one-half percent of the people up there are out on the land. They can't own anything. They are allowed to keep one quarter of what they grow.

Well, that's worth something to Georgia. (laughter)

So it has been good to see you, and if you will arrange with Steve (Early) about the next press conference, and also a little later on we will work out about something -- this summer or this fall -- for the whole Association.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Good-bye.

CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #934  
Executive Office of the President  
February 8, 1944 -- 4.12 P.M., E.W.T.

(Mr. Early asked this reporter to tell the President the number of this press conference, which was done)

THE PRESIDENT: (to Mr. Early) We'll have a celebration when we get to a thousand.

MR. EARLY: That's right. I thought you might want a vote on whether we continue them or not.

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, you want me to bring that up? All right.

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: This is not my news, it's Steve's and Jack's. The -- I think it should be off the record too. This is press conference number 934, ---

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

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- and I am inclined to think that the Washington Post and New York Times, having raised the question, that the White House Correspondents' Association ought to take a vote whether they want any more or not. I will abide by it. Of course, I always do abide by an unrestricted vote, such as they always have in the White House Correspondents' Association. (laughter)

Q. Do we have to "stand up and be counted," Mr. President? (much laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, sir. And worse than that, it has got to be published. (more laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, ---

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

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- having been in that organization, I want to say now that they like to vote, but they only -- somebody always has to give them the refreshments before they will vote right. (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That's right, too. Well ---

MR. GODWIN: (adding) That's off the record too, of course.

THE PRESIDENT: Well -- (more laughter) -- that's the prerogative of the president of the Association -- not this President, the other president. (continued laughter)

I have been digging around trying to find things. The only thing Steve suggested was that I had signed today the Proclamation to put into effect the repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act.

(reading): ".....do hereby proclaim and make known that the annual quota for Chinese effective for the remainder of the fiscal year, and for each fiscal year thereafter, has been determined in accordance with the law to be, and shall be, 105."

Somebody will probably ask me about Finland, and I think that it has been covered by the Secretary of State in -- what was it?--the Star? ---

MR. EARLY: (interjecting) A.P.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- I have forgotten.  
A.P. is right. It's all right! (laughter)

Q. (Douglas Cornell, A.P.) Thank you, Mr. President. (more laughter)

Q. Mr. President, there are two weird stories being widely carried today. One is that there is to be no campaign, the elections are going to be put off a year ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) How?

Q. Well, I don't know. That is what I want you to tell me. (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you see, you've come to the wrong place, because -- Gosh -- all these people 'round town can't have read the Constitution. Unfortunately, I have.

Q. The second one is that there is to be a Republican and Democratic ticket ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Hmm.

Q. (continuing) --- giving you a Republican vice president who will succeed you as soon as the war is over.

THE PRESIDENT: Hmm. (laughter) That -- that story, Jim (Wright), is hoary with age.

Q. (interjecting) What?

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) It was suggested over a year ago.

Q. Mr. President, I see that there isn't as much reticence as I had suspected about asking political questions, but in view of the fact that Mr. Wallace has been touring around the country making what some people regard as

political speeches, there is quite a lot of interest in what you think about the Democratic candidacy for President?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, those people -- I think the only thing to do would be for me to go out and make a speech -- of course, all this criticism about Henry Wallace ---

Q. (interposing) Louder. Can't hear you.

THE PRESIDENT: (continuing) --- (noise) -- to read the Sermon on the Mount. Now you can take a vote on that. Is that political or not? Some people say Yes.

Q. Well, Mr. President, in that connection -- (laughter) -- would you accept a fourth term nomination?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that is one of "them" things that I will have to go back to the usual old story which is the killer of stories: there is no news on that today. (more laughter)

MAY CRAIG: Well, Mr. President, I am confused by our conversation. When did we stop ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) May, so is everybody else -- (more laughter) -- so it's all right. You are not alone on it.

MAY CRAIG: When did we stop asking political questions?

THE PRESIDENT: It never stopped. Why, I love to have them asked. I don't mind. I think the answer is perfectly all right, too.

MR. GODWIN: Would you like to know how there could be some news on that question? (laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: That would take a little course of private instruction.

Q. Mr. President, the new tax bill is now before you. Could you say anything about it at this time?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, actually and physically I don't think it is. If it has come to the White House, it went right off to the -- I suppose -- I suppose to the Director of the Budget and the Treasury, for comment. And I haven't -- I haven't seen it. I have had three or four letters on it, pro and con; but I haven't spent five minutes on the thing so far. I suppose, probably, I ought to get the comments or recommendations back in -- what is it? -- two or three days, and I will probably work on it, one way or the other, over the weekend. I really haven't made up my mind, because I don't know anything about it yet.

Q. Mr. President, do you contemplate sending a Message to Congress in relation to the tax bill?

THE PRESIDENT: In relation to what? The tax bill?

Q. In relation to the tax bill, do you contemplate

---

THE PRESIDENT: (interposing) That depends on what I do with it.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you.

Q. Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: (picking up a dagger about a foot long) Do you want to see a real one?

MR. GODWIN: Where did you get that?

THE PRESIDENT: That's the latest commando knife.

MR. GODWIN: That's one of ours?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it's the British type, but we have copied it. Isn't that lovely balance? 'It's the kind you can throw.

## CONFIDENTIAL

Press and Radio Conference #935  
Executive Office of the President  
February 11, 1944 -- 10.58 A.M., E.W.T.

THE PRESIDENT: (unable to find his glasses) No glasses to look at you. Came over without them. Don't know what I'll do.

Q. Most of us are here, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: However, I have got the handsome dean to look at, so it's all right. (laughter)

MR. GODWIN: Yes. Handsome! I haven't been able to shave today. Couldn't find any steel. Can I get a priority? (more laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Cream. Imagine everybody shaving with cream.

MR. GODWIN: That's nice.

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't got a blessed thing today. Steve has been running around all morning. Can't find anything.

Q. Maybe we can think of something.

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. Maybe we can think of something.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. I doubt it. (laughter)

MR. DONALDSON: All in.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve and I have been going through everything this morning and can't find any news at all.

The most important news in the papers is the -- is the capture of the Huon peninsula in New Guinea, the Australians moving up from the southeast and the American forces

coming down from the northeast and joining hands. Terribly tough country -- taken a long time -- but it means that that particular strip of coast in the northeastern corner of New Guinea is now clear.

I don't think I know of anything else.

MR. GODWIN: Mr. President, are you familiar with Senator (Claude) Pepper's proposal in connection with the subsidy bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

MR. GODWIN: You don't know? It's to let the Little Steel formula sag a little so that wages could go up, if subsidies are defeated. Are you familiar with that?

THE PRESIDENT: No. Never heard of it.

Q. Mr. President, there has been a good deal of interest created by the Petroleum Reserves Corporation's plan for a pipeline in Saudi Arabia. There is a report this morning that there were discussions at Teheran and Cairo on the possibility of Anglo-American-Russian agreement on marketing areas for oil.

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. That's a shot in the dark. Not true.

Q. It isn't true either, then, sir, that a British mission will be coming here to discuss that point?

THE PRESIDENT: Not that I know of.

Q. Anything you could tell us, Mr. President, about a revision of our policy toward the French National Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: (laughing) Never heard of one.

Q. It is said to be under review, I understand.

THE PRESIDENT: Don't think so.

Q. There has been no revision, Mr. President, of that policy?

THE PRESIDENT: What?

Q. There has been no revision of that policy?

THE PRESIDENT: The only thing that is being -- being discussed isn't the French National Committee. It's what to do, in case we get into France, with the government behind the lines. That's a different thing.

Q. Mr. President, is there anything you could tell us this morning about the situation in Italy, particularly regarding the (Anzio-Nettuno) beachhead?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think there is anything that you haven't all got. The -- of course, it's -- it's a very tense situation, and very heavy fighting. I think we should realize the fact that we still have, on the whole, control of the sea, except, of course, subject to bombing attacks, and also control of the air. And on both of them we are praying for good weather. That seems to be quite a factor.

MR. GODWIN: As I -- as I understand it, sir, we went in with good weather and the weather got bad on us, ---

THE PRESIDENT: (interjecting) Yes.

MR. GODWIN: (continuing) --- isn't that about the size of that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q. Mr. President, may I ask one more question on

oil? The impression was created here that you were quite interested in the arrangements for that oil pipeline. There has been some criticism from certain Congressional sources. Some of those sources were the same that raised the point -- after that certain trip by the five world-touring Senators -- that American resources were being dissipated while Middle Eastern oil resources were preserved intact. Have you any comment on the fact that these same people are now criticising the Middle Eastern oil ---

THE PRESIDENT: - (interposing) I am not going to talk about any persons, but of course you have to think a little of the time-table. When one of the gentlemen who went round the world came back, he did talk about -- a good many months ago -- I have forgotten -- what? -- four or five months ago -- about not using enough Middle Eastern oil. But, as we all know, at that time he was speaking about conditions where the oil from the Persian Gulf had to go around the Cape of Good Hope, and of course at that time we were in the process of getting more oil up through the Suez Canal.

Then, on the other question, the question of dissipation of American oil, we -- I have been talking about it for a couple of years -- we are depleting our oil reserves; we have been. Some people say there's 15 or 20 years oil left at the present rate. Some people say it's 20, 25 or 30 years. But we have a fairly good assurance from the scientists that we haven't got an unlimited supply of oil. Everybody knows that.

That cannot, unfortunately, be made a political

issue. Might be called an act of God -- just so much oil in the ground, and we are taking it out at such and such a rate.

And, of course, some of us are thinking about what will happen in this country if we haven't got any places on the outside to bring it in. That's all. That's the long and short of it. We do need supplies from the outside for this war, if it keeps on going, and for the future.

And I don't think that one can get much of a political issue on those facts.

Q. Mr. President, would you approve of lowering the age for WACs, in order to promote enlistment? To lower the wave -- age -- (laughter) -- limits for WACs to 18, say? Do you think -- would you approve of that?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I never thought about it.

Q. Well, they say that women are as mature as men at 18, and some say they are even more so; so if boys can go in, couldn't the women?

THE PRESIDENT: Now you are getting into the field of higher philosophy. (laughter)

Q. Would you?

THE PRESIDENT: I really don't know. I never thought of it at all. I don't sufficiently know what the conditions are.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.