

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #9
White House Executive Offices,
April 5, 1933 - 10.40 A.M.

Q Reports from London say that Mr. MacDonald has booked passage for arrival here on the 15th.

THE PRESIDENT: Steve Early has a statement on that for you. It will be ready for you as soon as you get out of here. I can only tell you, off the record, we have not heard a thing.

Q One report said that he was waiting for some invitation.

THE PRESIDENT: We haven't a thing. Steve will give you the story on it.

Q Mr. President, in connection with Ramsay MacDonald's visit, the London papers this morning say that Norman Davis has submitted informal debt funding agreement proposal which will --

THE PRESIDENT: Off the record, that is crazy. He is not over there on debts at all. That is off the record.

Q. Does Steve's statement cover the possibility of our extending an invitation to MacDonald to come over?

THE PRESIDENT: I think it covers the whole thing.

Q Does it include a conference?

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to wait and see it.

The only other thing I can think of is of some interest under the general economy program. I got General Hines to figure out not only what the immediate saving is from the veterans' reorganization, but also what the future savings will be. In other words, the cutting out of future Federal budgets of the construction cost which would have to be spent under the old law. Steve has got that for you too. It shows the future savings in construction and operating costs of \$1,203,000,000. The statement is full of figures.

Q That is an operating cost, you say?

THE PRESIDENT: Construction and operating cost.

Q Over what period, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: That I cannot tell you. I have not read it.

Q You say Steve has that?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q I notice Mr. Whitney is on your calling list this afternoon. What are you going to talk to him about?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. He asked for the appointment.

I suppose it is about the Stock Exchange.

Q If that is all he asks for, you are all right. (Laughter)

Q This London report also says something about extending invitations to other governments to send over experts to cover preliminary meetings before the Economic Conference. Is that covered in the statement?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is not covered in the statement.

That is a newspaper story which is based on just about 20% of fact. The facts are, of course, that we are at the present time carrying on economic conversations right here and that is all there is to it. We are continuing those economic conversations with respect to various governments. There are no formal conferences. When we get to some particular point, we ask the Ambassador from Germany to drop around or the French financial adviser to drop around to the State Department. It is being handled in a very informal and thoroughly practical way.

Q Is that why you talked to the French Ambassador?

THE PRESIDENT: He merely came in to say "good-bye".

Q Can you say anything on the nature of the trade agreement legislation which the State Department apparently has under consideration?

THE PRESIDENT: I was talking with the Secretary of State about that last night and I think you can use this as background, that we have not got to anything further than a preliminary discussion of what may be necessary to ask Congress for before they adjourn. We have not got anything down on paper at all. But, as I said in the message to Congress three days ago, I am going to ask them for something that will enable us to at least try to break down some of the tariff barriers.

Q Will that follow the Argos (?) plan?

THE PRESIDENT: What was that?

Q The Argos (?) plan proposition of the Donnelly tariff of 1897.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I never heard of it. I am too young. (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, in that connection do you intend to ask Congress also for any authority in connection with the negotiation of war debts?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not discussed that at all.

Q Mr. President, are you going to have press conferences next month?

THE PRESIDENT: Next month?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose so.

Q We will probably all be in Sing Sing if your bill goes through the Senate - the last bill to the Congress.

THE PRESIDENT: Let us talk about that for a minute off the record. The honest truth was that I had not heard a word about it until the bill was introduced. Then I called up the State Department and found out the bill apparently went further than they had intended it to themselves. I sent over and got a copy of the famous book. Of course, the only objective - this is really absolutely off the record - the only objective is to prevent in the future people who have been working on secret codes and things like that from writing books about it. What happened back there in the 20's was in my judgment an absolute disgrace to this country, of course. There is no question about it that this fellow did decipher the code of a friendly nation at the time of the Washington conferences. Whether the State Department at that time got all that information to the advantage of the United States and the disadvantage of Japan, I don't know. But it was not an ethical thing to do between two nations at peace.

It was probably a survival of the War days and of course when you are at war you try to get the enemy's code. Both Mr. Daniels and I were guilty of a lot of things like that. (Laughter) But that was during the War and, as I understand it, as soon as this thing broke in this book, the State Department said that they would never do it again. But the fact was that this book, which has already come out, was published in Japan and they had sold about 30,000 copies of it and it was used there as anti-American propaganda. Then they got word that there was another book coming out, which was disclosed from London, to the effect that the State Department had deciphered the Japanese codes, and if that comes out and is published in Japan it will probably run to 100,000 copies and will stir up more anti-American feeling.

The only object is to prevent that sort of thing from happening. I think it should be said, quite frankly, that there was no thought of having it apply to the press or to any legitimate publicity. If they can work it out up on the Hill to prevent the publication of this book, or books of a similar nature, it

will be a good thing.

Q Mr. President, the House report on that bill said it was a proper auxiliary of your emergency program. Will you explain that?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot explain it in any way at all.

(Laughter) That is a mean question. (Laughter)
I can only plead complete ignorance.

Q Is the Administration making any effort to moderate this bill up on the Hill, or is it going --

THE PRESIDENT: I think so. I talked with the Secretary of State about it last night and I think somebody will go up there today to talk about it.

Q You seem to have had quite a talk with the Secretary of State last night. Have you anything else with him?

THE PRESIDENT: We talked about the whole problem of economics last night. We had quite a conference.

Now, everything having to do with that book was off the record.

Q In regard to railroads, is there anything further to report?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I think probably Secretary Roper is

coming in this afternoon or tomorrow to talk to me about it some more.

Q Can you give us some sort of an outline with respect to the policy you have in mind in developing this new transportation regulatory machinery?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I can, yet. Secretary Roper is still working on it and I have not seen the preliminary draft. The conference the other day merely took up, verbally, two or three plans.

Q Can you say or indicate whether or not, in its broad outline, contemplates subordination of the Interstate Commerce Commission to an Executive Committee?

THE PRESIDENT: No, it does not.

Q It does not?

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, if it follows the line of a Federal Coordinator with assistants, probably he and his assistants would be tied in to the general policy of the ICC, but they would not be able to go over the heads of the ICC.

Q In the reorganization bill, it would not contemplate a grouping --

THE PRESIDENT: No, no.

As far as the rest of the week goes, I think probably the only additional message to Congress this week will be something on Muscle Shoals and the Tennessee Basin developments. When I will send that up, I don't know. Today is Wednesday and I will probably send it up on Friday. I have been working with Senator Norris and Congressman McSwain on the outline of the legislation.

Q Mr. President, can we look for anything on the lifting of the gold embargo within the United States --

THE PRESIDENT: I guess, there will be an Executive Order today, I think.

Q Today?

THE PRESIDENT: It has not come over yet.

Q On the lifting of it?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the tightening of it. (Laughter)

Q What is that, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: In other words, on the general theory that the United States Government is going to control all the gold in the country.

Q You do not mean to say that they are not going to allow international movements of gold? That would be a licensed arrangement?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Are you getting far enough along with the emergency program to begin to let the boys have jobs?

THE PRESIDENT: I have been pretty good. I sent up two or three appointments over the last two or three days.

Q I mean the ones that count - the little ones.

THE PRESIDENT: You will have to ask the Director of the Budget about that. (Laughter)

Q Have you invited Mr. Daniels to our party on Friday?
(Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Friday? (Laughter) (Turning to Honorable Josephus Daniels) That is the party to distribute the first cases of beer. (Laughter)

MR. DANIELS: I am leaving for Raleigh Thursday night. I am sorry I cannot accept the invitation. (Laughter)

Q Are you going to read us that memo there?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, in about ten minutes. (Laughter)

(The press conference adjourned at
10.50 A.M.)

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #10
White House Executive Offices,
April 7th, 1933 - 4 o'clock P.M.

THE PRESIDENT: I understand that in some mysterious and subterranean way you got a suggestion that Frank Murphy is going as Governor to the Philippines. I guess you are right.

Q Frank Murphy of Detroit?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, Mayor of Detroit.

Q When will he go?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not sent - I don't think I have sent the nomination yet. It will go up Monday.

Q Does that mean that Homer Cummings will stay as Attorney General?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q When will he go?

THE PRESIDENT: And then somebody guessed that Chip Robert is going in as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury.

That is right too.

I cannot tell you anything about diplomatic appointments because there are two or three on the way and we have not heard from the foreign countries as yet.

Q Is Germany on the way?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Have you anything to say about the people in Michigan and Wisconsin sustaining the prohibition repeal according to the Democratic platform?

THE PRESIDENT: What do you think? (Laughter)

Q Mr. President, can you give us your point of view on this thirty-hour week legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: All I can tell you on that at the present time is that I am trying to find out what the effect will be. Miss Perkins is having a special study made and so is the Secretary of Commerce, and we are going to check it over, over the week-end. Then probably either Miss Perkins or Mr. Roper will go up and talk it over with the Committee in the House. That is far as we got.

Q Does that include the proposed amendment for barring all importations that are not manufactured on the thirty-hour basis?

THE PRESIDENT: That was not adopted, was it?

Q No, sir; it failed, but it is in the Connery bill which is supposed to be substituted for the other bill.

THE PRESIDENT: We have not mentioned that at all. I suppose they will look into that phase of it.

Q Can you tell us what your plans are for these conversations you are going to have with Ramsay MacDonald and the other European statesmen?

THE PRESIDENT: Not yet.

Q After you have had a series of conferences with the different Ambassadors --

THE PRESIDENT: As a matter of fact, so far as I am concerned, they will be very informal, so much so that it will be very difficult to write about them.

Q Oh! (Laughter) We will have to write a lot then. (Laughter)

Q Are you going to sit around a table and discuss it with all of them?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Just individually?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Does that include Canadian negotiations?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not put it that way. Don't say those "negotiations". Now, this stuff is off the record. I think I had best give you some idea of the way it is being handled. As we are going along, the State Department is discussing various phases, let us say with England, then they will discuss it

among themselves and then possibly some others will discuss it with France. Thus, there won't be any gathering or anything that you can call "those negotiations".

There won't be any general conference. It will be selective in its treatment - I think that is the correct word.

Q Has any consideration been given to financing public works by a popular construction bond issue?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we have not got to that yet.

Q You have got your bill ready for reciprocal tariff, have you not?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q There is a story in that connection this afternoon in the Times that a 10% cut is on your program.

THE PRESIDENT: I heard of it.

Q There is some discussion that you have some sort of proposition by which Cuba can send in 10% of the amount of sugar at a reduced rate and the other 90% will be at the present rate. Wouldn't that be a good way to solve that problem?

THE PRESIDENT: I suppose there have been an average of fifteen plans sent in a day. That would come under the category of one of the different plans. We have not

got down to a discussion of the different plans.

Q Is Russia to be received in the economic discussions?

THE PRESIDENT: (The President gave a negative response by shaking his head)

Q Can you tell us something about the Food and Drug Acts that Mr. Tugwell was supposedly working on?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know any of the details. Rex Tugwell talked to me about two or three weeks ago when he first went on duty and said that in his judgment there ought to be a very definite tightening up and revision of the machinery to enforce the Act and also, possibly, the Act itself. He was going to study it and I have heard nothing more since then.

Q What did you accomplish with Baruch and others on the Farm Bill?

THE PRESIDENT: They have not been in yet.

Q Is Mr. Peek in line for an important job in the Farm Administration?

THE PRESIDENT: He has always helped and will continue to help.

Q Anything new on banking? Anything new on bank deposits?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Do you expect to have any more messages for Congress on particular legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q What will that include?

THE PRESIDENT: I have not run out. I was going to send the Muscle Shoals message up today but the House adjourned over so I am holding it until Monday.

Q Can you tell us the status of your railroad program?

THE PRESIDENT: I expect to have a meeting on it Monday evening at the White House.

Q Can you tell us whether that includes any provision for the Government forcing reorganization of the railroads as suggested at Salt Lake?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not, any of us, got to the point of particularizing. We are still talking on two or three different methods.

Q Who will be at the meeting on Monday, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Secretary Roper, the Secretary of the Treasury and one or two others.

Q Mr. Richberg?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so.

Q Anyone from Congress?

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Eastman, I think.

Q Any of the Congressmen?

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

Q Do you think by next week you may be able to get something in on the railroads?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. It is a difficult thing. I hope so.

Q Are you going to send something in on refinancing home mortgages?

THE PRESIDENT: We are getting on with that very well too. I hope that will go in next week.

Q How about the bituminous coal stabilization?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing further on that.

Q But there might be something done along that line?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think so. I doubt it very much.

Q Have you been able to cash that first pay check?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I cashed it and I am sending back my 15%.

Q What is that?

THE PRESIDENT: Dollars - \$843.75. And I am also sending my dues to the National Press Club.

Q That is foolish.

Q That is on your first month's pay, is it?

THE PRESIDENT: Up to the 1st of April.

If anybody wants to see something that is really a joy, here it is. This is just strictly in the family. The most correct paper in the United States is the New York Times. Here is the loveliest thing that ever happened. You see on the right-hand side a picture of a boat which is laying on its side in the mud and the story along side it says "liner stabilizer found successful." (Laughter)

I got that this morning when I wasn't feeling at all well and I have been perfectly happy ever since.

(Laughter)

Q They are evidently producing some humor in their paper now. (Laughter)

Q Has there been any progress made in the centralization of the transportation regulatory agencies?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing; I have not done anything more about it.

Q Would you like to make some comment on the effect on employment by reason of the production of beer?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing. Maybe later on this evening, I may.

Q I can right now. (Laughter)

Q How many cases have you gotten thus far?

THE PRESIDENT: I can't say anything on the record, except entirely off the record. But all reports we are getting in is that the actual employment that has resulted from the manufacture of beer is bigger than the estimate and the amount of beer manufactured during the month is running away ahead of the Treasury estimates.

Q I want to thank you for sending the beer to the Press Club.

THE PRESIDENT: It got there all right? Fine.

Q Also, can I tell them that at four o'clock tomorrow afternoon they can come down there and get it?

Q There have been reports of the Administration coming around again to inflation and I wonder if you will say something about that - I mean actual inflation of the currency.

THE PRESIDENT: No, not putting it that way. I will tell you, off the record, about the problem. After all, you ought to know it. It is an old story.

So much of the legislation we have had this spring is of a deflationary character, in the sense that it locks up money or it prevents the flow of

money, that we are faced with the problem of offsetting that in some way. I would not say "inflation of the currency", because that is not the necessary meaning. You see, upon the closing of the banks I put away somewhere around four billion dollars. It was probably locked up before, but people did not know it. Now it is locked up and people do know it. That is deflationary. The effect of cutting very nearly a billion dollars off the Government payroll - the veterans, cutting down of departments and cutting off the 15% of employees' pay - would probably run to perhaps not quite a billion dollars but very nearly that. It means that much loss in the flow of money. That is deflationary.

Now, on the other side of the picture, we have C.C.C. giving employment to about 250,000 people in the forests and on works of various kinds. That is only \$250,000,000 as an offset, and then there is \$500,000,000 as an offset on direct relief to the States. That means that we have not yet caught up with the deflation that we have already caused, and therefore, of course, we are going to talk about

methods to give more people work or to raise commodity prices, which would --

Q The Farm Bill would do it.

THE PRESIDENT: The Farm Bill would do it, of course, because it will raise commodity prices and the Farm Mortgage Bill and the Home Credit Bill will help because it will cut down the debt obligations of the small, individual family man - the home man. That is all to the good.

Q Lower rentals --

THE PRESIDENT: But the question is whether all those things are inflationary. They are helpful.

Q Might we have an expression from you that there is no disposition on the part of the Administration to inflate the currency itself? I mean to print currency in a manner other than has been done.

THE PRESIDENT: What do you mean, start the printing presses?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: Off the record, we are not going to start the printing presses. That is silly.

Q Mr. President, are you ready to define what you consider a sound currency as expressed in your inaugural message?

In your inaugural message you said you were going to stand for a sound currency.

THE PRESIDENT: I am not going to write a book on it.

Q Can you say how much the public works program will overcome the five billion dollar deflation which you have mentioned?

THE PRESIDENT: That is very hard to tell. You can figure it twenty different ways. I don't know.

Q Has any consideration been given to paying off deposits in closed banks or, rather, to facilitate the paying off of deposits?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we are talking about that now.

Q Couldn't you allow us to discuss this on our own authority, what you have stated about inflation and deflation? You said it was off the record.

THE PRESIDENT: It has been printed lots and lots of times. There is nothing new in it. We know that a great many of the measures have been deflationary and we know too that a few of the measures have been somewhat inflationary in the sense of giving people work. But we know that we have not got to the point of equalizing and that we probably must do more. I don't like the word "inflationary" because no two people agree on the

definition. It is better say that we have got to do something more to give people more work.

Q May we use that as background?

THE PRESIDENT: I think so.

Q That is, this last part?

Q Your whole discussion or just what you said last?

THE PRESIDENT: No, just what I said last. I will hold it down to that.

Q How much new money has been issued of that \$2,000,000,000?

THE PRESIDENT: Do not use what I say because it is merely my impression that it is five or six hundred million dollars.

Q Is that in actual circulation?

THE PRESIDENT: I think that is the amount which has gone out. How much has come back I do not know, but it is a very small amount.

(The press conference adjourned
at 4.15 P.M.)

CONFIDENTIAL
Press Conference #11
Executive Offices of the White House

April 12, 1933, 10.30 A.M.

Q Good morning, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I have to hurry you along a little bit today. I have got fifteen minutes before I go to make a speech. That is why I am all dressed up.

Q Tell us who might succeed Eugene Meyer?

THE PRESIDENT: Somebody asked who would be successor to Governor Meyer. Two weeks ago Eugene Meyer came around and told me that he would like to be relieved of his duties as Governor and Member of the Federal Reserve Board because he wanted to go off, back to private business, and I asked him to stay on until I could find a successor. That is all there is in the story.

Q Is the Securities Bill regulating stock exchanges ready yet?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot tell you on that. I asked the Attorney General and the Secretary of Commerce to keep in touch with the situation. I have not heard from them for about a week. I do not know what is happening.

Q Some Senator is supposed to have an Administration Bill drafted by Samuel Untermyer?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I have not seen the bill.

Q There seems to be a great deal of confusion about the Banking Bill this morning?

THE PRESIDENT: I am sorry that I have got to spoil a whole lot of perfectly good headlines. The real situation is that I have talked with Carter Glass and a good many other people on it and a discussion of any banking legislation is still in the preliminary stages. You cannot say that we are for or against any one feature of the Banking Bill, because we have not got there yet. That is the real situation. Of course, there are a great many different elements involved.

Q What I would like to ask is of interest to the local papers, Mr. President. Have you any expressions to make about Secretary Roper's plan for reorganization in the Department of Commerce, which I understand is on your desk?

THE PRESIDENT: He gave it to me after Cabinet meeting yesterday and I have not looked at it yet. There is the plan and there is the book. (Indicating)

Q Charlie, will you take a look at it? (Laughter)

Q Will you give us the Administration's attitude toward the 30-hour bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I can tell you that as background.

Miss Perkins and Secretary Roper and the Attorney General and I talked about it yesterday after the Cabinet meeting. I think we all felt that the bill must be given elasticity, without trying to tell the Congress the exact methods of elasticity. In other words, I told Miss Perkins that I thought it was better to tell the Congress that it should have a maximum number of hours of any particular number -- whether 36, 42 or 44. I have not heard from her since she appeared before the committee.

Q I think she did not appear yesterday; she is going up today.

Q Has any decision been reached about prohibiting the importation of foreign goods made in factories that do not work thirty hours?

THE PRESIDENT: We did not mention it. I have not discussed it at all. That would be one of the phases to come up.

Q It is satisfactory to you in principle, is it not, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: It is pretty broad to say that. In other words, the question is whether, on the administration of the bill, the Administration is given a pretty

wide latitude. It depends on the width of the latitude as to whether we approve it in principle or not. We do approve this in principle and I think we should. We are making two rather definite efforts. The first is to spread employment over a very large number of people as, for instance, in certain factories and certain industries where the work can be spread out over a larger number of people. The second principle is to prevent any one individual, man, woman or child, from working too many hours at a time in any twenty-four hours. Then there is a third principle involved which we have only discussed in a tentative way and that is whether the Government should try to spread work within a given industry over the whole industry and to prevent the concentration in the hands of any one or two units of the industry of all the work. Well, the simplest illustration is a story that was told me the other day. There was a certain little sweater factory in a little town -- I won't even give you the location of it -- where they normally employed only about 200 people. It was the only industry in town. The owners of the little sweater factory and the employees had always been on exceedingly good terms.

It was difficult to sell enough sweaters to keep them going because there were so many sweater factories. So, the owners and the employees got together and talked the situation over. They only had about six weeks' work in the whole past year and all the other sweater factories in the country had about the same kind of work -- about six weeks out of the year. Well, the result was the population in this little town was practically starving to death. So they got together and decided that the thing they wanted to do was to work, even though it would be at much reduced pay. So they figured out that if they could cut their wages 33 per cent they could cut the cost of making these sweaters by the same amount and in that way undersell every other sweater factory. So they agreed to do that for a six months' period.

The selling agent went down to New York and in 24 hours, on the new prices, based on a cut of 33 per cent, he sold enough sweaters to keep that factory going for 6 months, 24 hours a day, 3 shifts. Now, of course that is bad business, in all ways. In the first place, it cuts the scale

of wages and the scale of living. Of course, they get a good deal of cash into the community because they have got three shifts working. But the worst feature of it is that they undoubtedly, by taking these orders, put two other sweater factories completely out of business.

Now, that brings up the question as to whether we can work out some kind of a plan that will distribute the volume of consumption in a given industry over the whole industry. Instead of trying to concentrate production to meet that consumption into the hands of a small portion of the industry, we want to spread it out.

Miss Perkins is going to talk to them about that feature of it. There are a great many legal questions and a good many constitutional questions, and a good many questions as to whether the Federal Government should embark on that. However, I think it is fair to say that that might be called a step that looks forward. It might be called the regulation of production or, to put it better, the prevention of foolish over-production. It is a pretty important subject and I think about all we can say at the present time is that we are exploring it.

Q Mr. President, are you giving any consideration to the five-day week for Government employees?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't think that has come up at all. The only thing that did come up was that certain Government people were on a five-day week and, under the ruling of Comptroller General McCarl, we had to put them back on five and a-half days.

Q I think the Labor Department had it and they have abandoned it since Miss Perkins came in.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes; that was due to the ruling of the Comptroller General.

Q There is still a lot of talk on inflation. Do you care to say anything on the value of the dollar?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q We heard from two more experts this week. One says you are for and the other says you are against?

THE PRESIDENT: That is included under background on the banking situation and banking legislation. It is still in the preliminary stages of discussion.

Q May 1st is coming along very rapidly. Can you tell us your plans for proceeding against gold hoarders? You will proceed, won't you?

THE PRESIDENT: I talked to Mr. Woodin about it a couple of days ago and he is working on it. That is as far as I can go now. Secretary Woodin's mother was desperately ill last night and he took the midnight train, as you know. He will probably be there for two or three days.

Q Will your plans be available before May 1?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes.

Q Will you talk about it after May 1?

THE PRESIDENT: I will talk to you before May 1. What is the deadline date, the 27th?

Q The 28th.

THE PRESIDENT: We will say something about it before then.

Q Is Ramsay MacDonald going to stay at the White House?

THE PRESIDENT: You can say and use this as background, that I hate to fish or cut bait on where the distinguished visitors are going to live. Of course, with a great many of them coming in, it is obviously impossible to have them all at the White House. There may be three or four of them here at the same time and the White House is not sufficiently elastic. In view of that, I adopted what might be called a rule of thumb and that is that the Prime Ministers

would stay at the White House but that Members of Cabinets, very much to my regret, would have to stay at their own embassies.

Q Are you likely to see Herriot and MacDonald together, or will there be separate conversations?

THE PRESIDENT: Do you know the date that Herriot leaves?

Q He leaves next Monday and ought to be here by Friday.

Mr. MacDonald will still be here at that time?

THE PRESIDENT: Very likely, if he gets here before MacDonald leaves, we will all sit around the table.

Q How is your French? They don't talk much English.

THE PRESIDENT: Between us, we can make a go. It always reminds me of the time back in 1913, which the older people will remember, when Doctor Miller of Brazil, their foreign minister, came up here to return Secretary Root's call. I took Secretary Root and others down with me and Doctor Miller got on board at Hampton Roads and he spoke German, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese, and not a word of English. None of the others spoke a word of anything except English and I had to do the translating. I lost ten pounds in one evening.

Q Thank you, Mr. President.

THE PRESIDENT: I am calling off the Cabinet meeting on Friday because a great many of them want to go off

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on a weekend trip.

Do you want to call off the Press Conference?

Q No, no. (Laughter)

(The Press Conference adjourned at 10.43 A.M.)

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #12
Executive Offices of the White House,
April 14th, 1933 - 4 o'clock P.M.

(Secretary Ickes was present at this
press conference)

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Secretary, what paper do you represent?

SECRETARY ICKES: The Tageblatt.

Q Mr. President, will you look at this (handing The President a newspaper clipping). It is a very well worked out story and it has embarrassed lots of us and it seems to be rather authentic.

THE PRESIDENT: Wasn't that taken from Arthur Krock's story?

Q I don't know but it does seem to go into detail on the reorganization of the departments.

THE PRESIDENT: I will have to read it; I will learn a lot about the Government.

Q Can you give us something about the reorganization of the Government?

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

Q Have you received any recommendations?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q Is the St. Lawrence Waterway Treaty on the program for ratification?

recognition, is a prohibition against any possibility of that power being used by anybody except through public authority.

Q We are not surprised to learn that representatives of several Southern power companies appeared before the Committee of the House opposing your Tennessee Valley project.

THE PRESIDENT: I thought they were going along with it.

Q Certainly not.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us anything of the conversation with Colonel Cooper?

THE PRESIDENT: I can tell you entirely off the record.

He talked about the possibility of selling things to Russia. But that has to be off the record.

Q What is the possibility?

THE PRESIDENT: We talked about the need in Russia for all kinds of machinery and materials of various kinds.

Q Colonel Cooper - that was Colonel Hugh Cooper?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q That is all off the record?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, that has to be off the record.

Q On that same subject, did he urge recognition?

THE PRESIDENT: No, we did not talk about that. We only talked about the need of Russia for these various materials.

Q Can you sell them without recognition?

THE PRESIDENT: We have been selling some without recognition.

Q Do you favor a Federal minimum wage law?

THE PRESIDENT: Steve (Mr. Stephenson), I cannot answer that categorically like that. What they are talking about on the Hill is some sort of an amendment to the Black bill. Now, what the constitutionality is on a thing like that, frankly I haven't gone into it. They are still in the exploratory stage up there on that.

Q There has been some discussion about establishing minimum wage boards in industry, has there not?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, and of course the situation, from the point of industry, has got a good many industries to a point where 80% or 90% of the industry will go along with the payment of fair wages; but the fact that 10%, 15% or even less - 5% of the industry won't play spoils the entire idea - the possibility of it.

Q And the establishment of such boards would mean protection to fair employers as well as protection of employees?

THE PRESIDENT: That is just it. The fair employers would represent 85% or 90% of industry. You take the cotton mill owners of this country: Probably 90 or 95% will go along with some kind of fair wage proposition, but the fact that 5 or 10% of them won't sign up, makes it impossible to put the agreement through.

Q Sidney Hillman, for example, says that the fair employers in industry are being murdered by mushroom sweat shops.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Can you get at that by Federal legislation?

THE PRESIDENT: They are looking it up on the Hill - I don't know. I have not spent any time on it personally.

Q You would like to see something done along that line?

THE PRESIDENT: Very much. If something constitutional is possible I would like to see it done.

Q Can you report any definite progress on the public works program?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I haven't done a thing on it. I have not done anything on it all week.

Q Mr. President, someone on the Hill says that inflation of some sort seems to be very much on the way. I wonder if there is anything additional on that other than what you told us a week ago.

THE PRESIDENT: I could not go any further.

Q Is it your hope to prevent inflation of currency through a building program - something to increase prices?

THE PRESIDENT: I would not put it that way.

Q How would you put it?

THE PRESIDENT: I won't put it at all. (Laughter) It would take me half an hour.

Q We have got half an hour. (Laughter)

Q That is the principle of it.

THE PRESIDENT: Without stating it just that way.

Q Tell us something more about banking.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not done anything about it at all, one way or the other. Secretary Woodin is not back and we have not discussed it.

Q How about the railroads, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I hope to have something about the beginning of the week.

Q What will that be?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the guess is pretty good - it will

be some sort of a Federal coordinator.

Q What is the particular purpose of - the function of Professor Berle in connection with transportation? Does he fit into it? His opinion seemed to be in connection with transportation in the Reconstruction Board.

THE PRESIDENT: What is his opinion?

Q It was announced the other day that he was to be at the Reconstruction Corporation as head of the transportation division or something like that.

THE PRESIDENT: I did not know anything about it until I read it in the paper. I suppose it is to advise them on applications for loans.

Q As to this railroad legislation, is it to be of an emergency nature with comprehensive railroad plans to come?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Later in January? In other words, it is --

THE PRESIDENT: It is really a temporary measure which we hope will do two things: The first is to take care of the general problem of supplying money and to coordinate things between now and next January and

the second is to give us a chance to turn around and get something more definite through experience.

Q Can you tell us anything about plans to refund Government obligations? We are told --

THE PRESIDENT: I think today is the last day. The rates will not be given.

Q Can you give us any background on what you contemplate on this refunding?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not got that far. We are not going to serve notice, that is as to the Liberty 4's. They won't be called.

Q Did Mayor Curley come in to say "good-bye" before sailing?

THE PRESIDENT: No, the Mayor thought it over very carefully and there was a real demand up there in Boston. Didn't he give a statement out on it?

Q I expect so. He went out just as we came in.

THE PRESIDENT: He feels and public sentiment feels - the Boston Transcript believes he should stay there in Boston during this emergency. He feels that it is his duty to remain as Mayor up there during the emergency. There was much regret. We will have to withdraw

his name.

Q Mr. President, there is a great deal of speculation as to the positions to be filled on the Federal Reserve Board.

THE PRESIDENT: Off the record, I have not found anybody to fill either one of the three places.

Q Does that hold also with regard to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation?

THE PRESIDENT: The same thing.

Q How about the five hundred million dollar relief bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. Has it been reported out in the House?

Q They are waiting for a report from the White House.

THE PRESIDENT: The five hundred million dollar bill? I don't know why they are waiting for me. You mean the Wagner bill?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know why they are waiting for me.

Q This conference with Senator Wagner and others, would not that deal with the large public works program?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't what they are coming down for.

They are coming down this afternoon.

Q It is understood that you want it, but you think it

ought to be enlarged some.

THE PRESIDENT: I have not talked about it at all yet.

Hasn't anything to do with the five hundred million dollar bill?

Q No, the new bill.

Q There was a failure to plan any refunding on these fourth Liberties. Does that mean you want to keep the market better for absorbing a large bond issue in the future?

THE PRESIDENT: Not necessarily.

Q Have you any idea in connection with the mobilization of private industry in connection with your relief program?

THE PRESIDENT: Only what I read in the Times this morning.

Q Does that put any ideas into your head?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it is fine; it is all right. (Laughter)

Q Professor Moley probably has not reported yet. It is his plan.

Q The plan to keep Medalie rather indefinitely as District Attorney has raised hob on the Hill and they are wondering how long it is going to be. Everyone knows that he ran against Bob Wagner and has been out strong against you and they think it is stretching magnanimity a bit to keep him for so long.

THE PRESIDENT: Just see how bad we beat him. (Laughter)

Q I don't think that answer would quite satisfy them. Is there anything to be said about the length of time or is it just to clean up?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any idea. Of course, he has pending cases. The Attorney General wants to keep him on during the pendency of those cases. How long it will be, I don't know.

Q How far do you expect to go in reorganization in a large way? How much do you expect to save by reorganization in Government departments? I have to write something about that.

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I haven't any idea.

(The press conference adjourned
at 4.35 P.M.)

CONFIDENTIAL

Press Conference #13.
At the White House Proper,
April 19th, 1933 - 10.38 A.M.

(The President had a cold and the Press Conference was held in the Oval Study in the White House proper.)

THE PRESIDENT: What is the news?

Q There has been some talk again about inflation. I don't know --

THE PRESIDENT: How do you define inflation?

Q I don't know what it is. (Laughter)

THE PRESIDENT: Neither do I. I have gotten to the point where even a cigarette tastes bad.

Q That is a sign of a cold?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, it certainly is.

Has the State Department given you the social program yet?

Q Yes, it has.

THE PRESIDENT: That is the only news of any real importance that I know of. I will tell you what there is today. If I were writing a story, here is the way I

would put it: I don't know whether you can hear me at the back of the room - my voice isn't particularly strong this morning, since I have a cold. If I were going to write a story, I would write it along the lines of the decision that was actually taken last Saturday, but which really actually goes into effect today, by which we, the Government, will not allow the exporting of gold, except earmarked gold for foreign governments, of course, and balances in commercial exchange. That is for straight movement. If you want to know the reason why, I think the best exposition of it was by Walter Lippman yesterday morning.

In other words, the whole problem before us is to raise commodity prices. For the last year, the dollar has been shooting up and we decided to quit competition. The general effect probably will be an increase in commodity prices. It might well be called the next step in the general program.

Q In other words, let the dollar take care of itself?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, let the dollar take care of itself.

and seek its own natural level instead of trying artificially to support it.

Q This policy would raise prices here at home. On the agenda of the International Conference there is an item for raising prices all over the world.

THE PRESIDENT: Right.

Q Can you give us any background on how that will be done internationally? By your policy it would be done nationally, but how would it be done internationally?

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, this really is a constructive move in the sense that it puts us in the same position with nearly all the other nations of the world. We start on the same footing and because we are such a large nation, it ought to increase the necessity for all nations getting together on a more stable basis.

Q Yes?

THE PRESIDENT: It is a constructive move. It is a little bit like what happened nationally. What we had to do last March was to clear away the dead wood. We had been heading for a bank smash-up for a long time and what we did was a drastic thing, which was to clear away the dead wood and start afresh. Now, this is

along the same general line. It puts us on a par with other nations and it is hoped eventually that it will aid somewhat to raise prices all over the world. However, as to what the actual details of that will be or the methods to be pursued, we don't know yet. There have been half a dozen different suggestions made. That is one of the things we are talking about.

Q Can you explain the process by which this would tend to raise commodity prices here at home?

THE PRESIDENT: Here is a simple illustration: There are a good many commodities which are sold in terms of world trade. Well, for instance, cotton. Cotton is sold on a gold basis and, with the dollar where it has been, it works out to a certain number of cents. Therefore, if the dollar were to sell off 10%, the price of cotton in terms of dollars would go up 10%.

Q Mr. President, you said the decision was reached Saturday. Haven't there been some licenses to export gold since Saturday?

THE PRESIDENT: No, that is purely a mechanical thing. In other words, the only licenses that have actually been issued since Saturday were those which had been verbally

okayed for export before Saturday.

Q Have you any other ideas in mind on this so-called inflation or reflation as to the steps to be taken?

THE PRESIDENT: Nothing else. I think on the general subject, it is awfully difficult to particularize and I don't see how I can write an intelligent story and I don't see how you can.

It is a little bit like a football team that has a general plan of game against the other side. Now, the captain and the quarterback of that team know pretty well what the next play is going to be and they know the general strategy of the team, but they cannot tell you what the play after the next play is going to be until the next play is run off. If the play makes ten yards, the succeeding play will be different from what it would have been if they had been thrown for a loss. I think that is the easiest way to explain it.

Here is a team that has a perfectly definite objective which is to make a touchdown so far as commodity prices go. The basis of the whole thing really comes down to commodity prices. And, this is entirely off

the record, the general thought is that we have got to bring commodity prices back to a recent level but not to the 1929 level, except in certain instances. Well, you take for instance city real estate in 1929. Then it was altogether too high and you ought not to bring city real estate back to the 1929 level. That is obvious. On the other hand, farm commodity prices were comparatively low in 1929 and have been going down rather steadily for five or six years. So that it has got to be a definitely controlled inflation because the man on the street does not understand it any more than the average banker understands it. It has got to be a controlled price level.

Q Mr. President, is it still the desire of the United States to go back on the international gold standard?

THE PRESIDENT: Absolutely; one of the things we hope to do is to get the world as a whole back on some form of gold standard.

Q Can you tell us any of your plans for the opening up of closed banks?

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Woodin is going to talk with the Federal Reserve people about that today. I don't know what the

details are.

Q Is it all right for us to use that line about controlling the price level? You had been speaking off the record.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I think you can use that with the very definite thought in mind that we have got to raise the price level but, keep it from going too high.

Q You spoke of some form of international gold standard.

Does that imply the possibility of a lower gold content in the monetary units of the world?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would not put it that way. One of the things they are talking about - the economic end of the conference - is a different gold ratio - a different gold reserve to currency. You see, at the present time, the old standard was 40% and there is talk of changing that ideal 40% standard, which was the old ideal, to something else.

Q Would you describe this as another step toward a controlled or managed currency?

THE PRESIDENT: Currency? Yes, but I think you ought to couple with that the effort to get a more controlled credit, because the two go hand in hand.

Q The public works program will fit in this general campaign sooner or later, would it not?

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Q The public works program will fit in this general campaign sooner or later, would it not?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes and, by the way, entirely off the record, do not write stories about five or six billion dollars of public works. That is wild. In other words, the public works program will be as much as we can usefully use between now and next spring. There is no use attempting to go ahead with a public works program, with a project which will require all kinds of engineering in the first instance and with the actual employment unable to start for a year. What we want is the type of public works that will put people to work immediately - get them to work as soon as possible.

Q Is that off the record?

THE PRESIDENT: I think you can use that.

Q That won't be so much, then.

THE PRESIDENT: It won't be five or six billion dollars.

I have no idea, but it will not be anything like that.

Q It won't be much more than a billion?

THE PRESIDENT: We are looking over the field and seeing how many public works there are that are practical, useful, self-sustaining as far as possible and can be started quickly. There is a limit to that.

Q Where did you get your cold?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; I think I got it from talking too much.

Q Anything on railroads today?

THE PRESIDENT: Railroads? No. I talked about it yesterday with Secretary Roper and several others. I suppose I will send something up on it in a few days.

Q This week?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Is there anything on the Glass banking bill?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know; what is happening on that?

Q All your moves are being made with the idea of preventing the printing press currency?

THE PRESIDENT: All the moves?

Q Yes.

THE PRESIDENT: No, of course we are not going to have printing press currency.

Q Along with that, are you going to say anything about the campaign for changing the gold content of the dollar?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because that is a thing that has not even been discussed. Of course, that probably might come in - I would rather have it off the record because

it is so far in the dim, distant future - it might come in as a partial component part of an international program, but it is pretty far off, even in the discussion stage.

Q Could you tell us how soon we will get the reciprocal tariff bill?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I have not heard of it for two weeks.

Q Have you given any thought of going to Chicago for the World's Fair?

THE PRESIDENT: I promised to go, if I can.

Q Have you made up your mind as yet?

THE PRESIDENT: No; I intend to go unless I get held up by something else.

(The press conference adjourned
at 10.53 A.M.)

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