

Text of Historic White House Interviews Released By Roosevelt for Public to See

By LYLE C. WILSON
 United Press Staff Correspondent
 WASHINGTON, March 21.—(U.P.)—President Roosevelt snapped at a question whether the nation would resort to printing press currency inflation.

He suggested that another question should ask whether he had stopped tickling his grand-nephew's feet.

A presidential cold was attributed to talking too much.

Face lined with worry, Mr. Roosevelt sat tense in his office chair and fired at the supreme court the charge that it had taken the country back to a "horse and buggy" interpretation of the constitution.

Again gravely serious the president said the government no longer could afford to aid tottering banks and that they would have to go through the wringer of insolvency.

The administration is like a football team, he explained.

Those are random excerpts from the text of hitherto unquoted press conference material released by the white house today to show newspaper readers how some of the most important news of government is made.

Papers Released

Edited by the white house, the 15,000 words of textual material comprises excerpts from conferences selected from more than 300 held during the first four years of the Roosevelt administration.

The material was distributed for newspaper publication in conformity with a promise made long ago by the president to white house reporters that if his press conference transcripts ever were made public they would have first rights to them. Half of the press conference notes was released to morning papers and the remainder to evening papers of today.

Outstanding in the selected conference is the famous "horse-and-buggy" utterance of May 31, 1935 when Mr. Roosevelt replied to the supreme court decision invalidating the national industrial recovery act. It is typical, too, of the informality of the Roosevelt press conference technique.

"What is the news?" Mr. Roosevelt smilingly inquired on that occasion when upwards of 300 reporters crowded into his office.

"That's what we want," one of his audience replied.

There was brief give-and-take

until Francis M. Stephenson, one of the reporters regularly assigned to the White House, said: "Do you care to comment any on the NRA?"

"Well, Steve," replied Mr. Roosevelt, "if you insist. That's an awful thing to put up to a fellow at this hour of the morning, just out of bed."

And with that introduction, Mr. Roosevelt ripped into the supreme court's decision, asserting that it had stripped the federal government of national authority in both economic and social fields, that it had deprived a closely integrated, industrial nation of the advantage of federal control over such activities as agriculture, mining, manufacturing and construction. He spoke for an hour and a half, warning the nation through its newspapers that the issue raised was one that had to be settled and that five or ten years might be required to adjust it.

"Then, the second thing, is 'off the record' information which means, of course, confidential information which is given only to those who attend the conference. I want to ask you not to repeat this 'off the record' confidential information either to your own editors or to your associates who are not here; because there is always danger x x x the other party may use it in a story. In other words, it is only for those present."

The president: "I will tell you off the record about the problem. 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, prevents the flow of money, that we are faced with the problem of off-setting 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 we 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 know it. That is deflationary. The effect of cutting very nearly a billion dollars off the government payroll including the veterans' cuts, cutting down of departments and cutting off 15 percent of employees' pay—it would probably run to perhaps not quite a billion dollars but very near that—means that much loss in the flow of money. That is deflationary. Now on the other side of the picture we have CCC giving employment to about 250,000 people in the forests on works of various kinds. That is only \$250,000,000 as an

offset. Then there is \$500,000,000 as an offset on direct relief to the states. That means we have not yet caught up with the deflation we already have caused. Therefore, of course, we are going to talk about methods to give people work or to raise commodity prices which would—

Question Not Solved

"It is not right or left—it is a question for national decision on a very important problem of government. We are the only nation in the world that has not solved that problem. We thought we were solving it, and now it has been thrown right back in our faces. We have been relegated to the horse-and-buggy definition of the interstate commerce."

But press conferences usually are in an easier, less strained vein. Here is the first few minutes of the conference on April 7, 1933: The president: (as reporters entered his office) I understand that in some mysterious and subterranean way you got the suggestion that Frank Murphy is going as governor to the Philippines. I guess you are right.

Question: Frank Murphy of Detroit?

The president: "Yes, mayor of Detroit."

Q: "When will he go?"

The president: "I don't think I have sent the nomination yet. It will go on Monday."

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

The president: "Yes, I cashed it and I am sending back my 15 percent."

Q: "What was that?"

The president: "Dollars—\$843.75. And I also am sending my dues to the national press club."

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

The president: "Up to the first of April."

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: "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."

Q: "I want to thank you for sending the beer to the press club."

The president: "It got here all right? Fine."

From there the conference went to currency matters.

Q: "Might you 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."

Mr. Roosevelt inaugurated his press conference on March 8, 1933 with an announcement that he had abolished the Harding, Coolidge and Hoover administrations rules that written questions must be submitted in advance.

"I am told that what I am going to do will become impossible," Mr. Roosevelt said, "but I'm going to try it."

And he still is going strong on that particular policy, meeting newspaper reporters in his office twice weekly with a standing invitation that they may fire questions at will. But Mr. Roosevelt imposed some rules. He said on March 8 that he would not answer "if" questions.

Newspaper reporters who attend conferences are familiar now with his instant reply, "that is iffy," to a question which is predicated on some future development. He explained in that first press conference that there would be many questions he could not answer for lack of knowledge. All quoted material would be furnished by the White House in written form. The information, unless restricted could be attributed to the president although he was not to be directly quoted.

"Then there are two other matters we will talk about," he continued. "The first is 'background information,' which means material which can be used by all of you on your own authority and responsibility, not to be attributed to the White House, because I don't want to revive the Ananias club."

Q: "The farm bill would do it."

The president: "The farm bill would do it, of course, because it will raise commodity prices. The farm mortgage bill and the home credit bill will help because they will cut down the debt obligations of the small, individual family man—the home man."

Q: "Lower rentals—"

The president: "But the question is whether all those things are really inflationary. They are helpful."

But Mr. Roosevelt could joke about inflation, too, as he proved in a later press conference that spring:

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."

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."

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



Fighting Word



By HAROLD GRAY



By HAROLD GRAY



POPEYE



Now Showing—"THAT'S WHO WEARS THE PANTS" Tomorrow—"A WOODEN KIMONO?"



By E. C. SEGAR



By E. C. SEGAR



SECRET AGENT X-9



The G-Man At the Switch



By ALEX RAYMOND



By ALEX RAYMOND



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



Taking All the Blame



By MARTIN



By MARTIN



WASH TUBBS



Shearing the Sheep



By CRANE



By CRANE



ALLEY OOP



Scram!



By V. T. HAMLIN



By V. T. HAMLIN



OUR BOARDING HOUSE - with MAJOR HOOPLE



OUT OUR WAY



By WILLIAMS



By WILLIAMS



FLAPPER FANNY By Sylvia



SIDE GLANCES

