

PAN-AMERICAN COFFEE BUREAU SERIES

October 15, 1941

Description: ER talks about the rising cost of living and other news stories of the day.

Participants: ER, Ernest Chappell

[recording starts mid-sentence]

[Unknown speaker 1:] --more fun out of life.

[Unknown speaker 2:] Get more out of your work.

[Unknown speaker 3:] Get more out of sport.

[Ernest Chappell:] Get more out of life, with coffee!

[Unknown speaker 2:] What thrills Claudette Colbert, lovely star who appears in Paramount's comedy *Skylark*?

[Unknown speaker 3:] What helps baseball star, Joe Gordon, wallop that old horsehide?

[Ernest Chappell:] The answer is coffee, the Americas' favorite drink. Motion picture stars, famous ball players, golf players, business executives, yes, leaders in every walk of American life, are making the discovery that an extra cup of coffee at lunch, a bracing cup of coffee in the afternoon, a delightful cup of coffee with the evening meal, gives them more energy, more fun out of life. As Miss Colbert says, and we quote—

[Claudette Colbert:] Believe me, a cup of coffee is one of the thrills of American life.

[Ernest Chappell:] And Joe Gordon, hard hitting second baseman of the New York Yankees, whose circuit clout opened the present Yankee Dodgers' horsehide classic with a bang. Joe takes time off from the series to tell us, we quote—

[Joe Gordon:] I always drink a cup of coffee before game time. I find coffee gives me extra pep, helps me pull through those tough late innings.

[Ernest Chappell:] You don't need to be a motion picture star or a big league baseball player to get more out of life with coffee. Try an extra cup of coffee with your evening meal tonight, and see why more and more people every day, and every evening, call coffee one of the greatest blessings of American life. Before the close of this broadcast, we have a tip for you men from that amazing golf expert Ben Hogan. Yes, and a word for the ladies from the novelist Margaret Culkin Banning. And now, the Pan-American Coffee Bureau, representing seven of your coffee-growing good neighbor nations proudly presents to you coffee drinkers of America Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt.

[ER:] Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I told you last Sunday that there were certain words that kept recurring in our conversation these days, and one of the words which people use with a thousand different meanings is "defense." Tonight, I want to talk to you about something which I feel is of vital importance

to defense, because it touches everyone in their homes. That is the increased cost of living. I received a letter not long ago from a young woman whose husband was working in a defense industry, and whose income had gone up considerably. Bitterly, she wrote that she had no more in the way of comforts than she had before, and no chance to save because the extra money which her husband earned was all swallowed up in the increased cost of living. It is true that in industry wages lag behind the rise in prices. There is some rise in wages, however, which the white collar people or the old people living on small, fixed incomes do not have. They have saved during the years of work, but they have no way of increasing their savings or their earning power to meet the change in living costs. There are some interesting figures which were made available to me as the result of a recent survey. One of the questions asked was, "From your own personal experience, have you noticed any rise in the price of goods --clothing etc.--in the past six months?" About 89 percent of the people asked had noticed a rise in the price of food, whereas 4 percent said that they'd not noticed it, and 6 percent did not know. About 53 percent had noticed a rise in the price of clothing, 19 percent had not, and 26 percent did not know. In rents, about 27 percent said they'd noticed a rise, 34 percent had not noticed any rise, and 44 percent did not know. Very few people seem to have begun to hoard. The biggest item that people have bought in greater quantity is canned goods of all kinds, and of course, more hosiery was bought as a result, I suppose, of a fear that we would have no more silk. We have bought more refrigerators, but in other items, there has been comparatively little beyond the normal buying.

One would like to feel that people had not bought in extra quantities because they did not think it was right to do so at this time, but the answer to this question is that the largest number of people who said they did not stock up gave as their reason a lack of money to do so. It is entirely evident to any thoughtful person that the rise in price in some things is probably legitimate. The government has said that parity prices must be reached before we curtail the price of any of the agricultural products. In reading Mr. Bernard Baruch's testimony, in which he suggests a ceiling on prices and on wages, he carefully makes it possible to have a periodic revision of these prices and of wages. I think he realizes that it would be extremely bad to freeze wages in some of the low paid industries, and perhaps not allow a man to make a decent living. It would seem, therefore, that we must look for an intelligent way to meet the rise in the cost of living. I understand that in certain places, the consumer's division of the Office of Price Administration is establishing offices where information may be obtained as to the best way to buy to keep one's standard of living at as high a level as possible, and yet not to interfere with the military needs of the country. We should find out if such offices exist in our neighborhood, and if not, show enough interest so that an office will be established. It is quite evident that no single individual can have much effect upon rising costs, but it is equally evident that where a group gets together, in a village or a town or a city, they can find ways and means of making it difficult to profiteer. People should insist on having complete information as to the best buys on the market, and as to the reasons why the producer must set certain prices.

And now, to something quite different. Thursday night, I saw one of the films being prepared by Mr. John Hay Whitney's motion picture division of the Coordinating Committee of Inter-American Affairs. These films are designed to bring our country into close contact with our neighbors to the south of us, and to allow us to really visualize groups of people and conditions in this country and in the countries to the south. One film was made up from pictures taken by Mr. Julian Ryan, and I'm sure that everyone seeing it will have a better understanding of the people with whom we're trying to further a closer relationship. The other film was frankly designed to show to South America a phase in the life and education of some of our children. I'm told that people in Central and South America know far more about us than we know about them, and so they plan to make more pictures which will be shown in this country about Central and South American life, in order that we can begin to realize that we are Americans all, and that there is little difference between some of these charming South and Central American boys and girls and our own. Perhaps these films will do almost as much as the new Lend-Lease papers which I noticed Secretary Hull and the Brazilian ambassador signed the other day. This is the first

time in our history, I think, that we've made any attempt to associate ourselves in this way with our sister republics, and it should go far to allay their anxiety, which still is always more or less under the surface. They fear to wake up some morning to find we've taken advantage of them overnight.

I wonder how many people within the sound of my voice realize what it actually means to the British people when they read an article such as the one in the New York Times of October 2, stating that war costs for Great Britain are thirteen million pounds a day. What does this mean to the taxpayer? What might an expenditure like this mean if instead of being spent for a war, for c-- for destructive materials, the same money could be spent in a constructive way to meet the real needs of the masses? It always seems to me that we strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Some people in this country are horrified that we've proposed to raise our social security taxes. That is a drop in the bucket as compared to the vast expenditures which are melting away day after day in Europe. Certainly expenditures for social security will gain more for us than we can compute.

I saw too that in Washington, DC, only 53 percent of the white men and 42 percent of the Negroes registered for the draft were found to be qualified for military service, as compared with the national average of 57 percent. Washington is below the average for the country, and in spite of the fact that the Health Department has made valiant efforts, tuberculosis and social disease run high in the city. The Health Department has accomplished a great deal in the past few years, but to make greater changes requires recognition of the problem by Congress, which is the government of the District of Columbia. Congress cannot recognize the needs, however, if the people of the nation do not forcibly bring it to their attention. Two years ago, I went to the District of Columbia Home for the Aged at Blue Plains, and was shocked by the conditions there. Some of the members of the District Committee also went to visit, and they were equally shocked. Some improvements were made, yet just the other day, the capital newspapers rang with the horror of a group of legislators and commissioners who had also visited this same home. It's only by seeing these things that people are moved to do anything about them, and I think the people of the United States should feel that they never need to hesitate to point with pride to their capital city.

I enjoyed a little item which you may not have seen in the paper. It was from Red Wing, Minnesota, the Franklin D. Roosevelt went on the rocks, and the Herbert Hoover came to the rescue. In this particular case, it was a Mississippi towboat named "Franklin D. Roosevelt" which went aground and had to be pulled off by another boat, named the "Herbert Hoover."

I'm interested to find so many people exercised over whether there is an opportunity to worship God without hindrance, according to individual preference in the churches of Russia. It is true that the Soviet constitution gives this right, but it has never been put into practice generally. Their constitution gives them a number of rights which are like ours in this country, but which are often only as theories in Russia. I believe that there has never been any question in Russia of the right of people to get together to form a church and obtain a license. The only difficulty is the lack of educational opportunity for priests and ministers, and this has created a lack of leadership in the spiritual life of the people. Today, education is probably moving sufficiently far ahead in Russia so that the spiritual life of the people cannot be controlled in the way it was in the first few years of the revolution. There is no doubt that politically the Russians are given more participation in their government than at first, but that does not mean full participation. There is no great fundamental difference in the Russian form of government today and the other types of dictatorship government.

One of the things which gives me the greatest satisfaction is the appointment of Mr. Floyd Odlum to watch over small industries and employ engineers to find uses for small factories. These factories must not die out just because, for the moment, it is more economical to operate a larger business. Real economy and prosperity lies in using every building which is equipped for production, and in

adapting the machinery of that building to ou-our new needs. This takes imagination and ingenuity, and I think Mr. Odlum has both, and we may hope for very good results.

All these things which I've talked about tonight are important to you, and to me, and I hope sometime to be able to show you how much everything that happens in one part of our country affects the whole structure of the country, and how dependent on each other we really are for our future happiness.

[Ernest Chappell:] Thank you, Mrs. Roosevelt. And now, here's what the famous novelist Margaret Culkin Banning writes us about coffee. We quote—

[Margaret Culkin Banning:] Since I've been grown up, I've begun every day - at least in North and South America - with a cup or two of coffee and the morning newspaper. It starts the day in this hemisphere for me, and most other adults. And almost every evening after dinner, I relax with another cup of coffee. So, it's the framework of my day and my work. I've had it when I'm working, and when I'm playing, and it's just as good one time as another.

[Ernest Chappell:] And here's that tip for the male members of the family, from America's top money winner in the ranks of professional golf, Ben Hogan. Ben says, and we quote—

[Ben Hogan:] Take a tip from a lad who knows how to get the most out of his golf game. Drink a good cup of coffee just before starting out on a round of golf. You'll find it peps you up, helps you play better golf.

[Ernest Chappell:] A grand tip, Ben Hogan. And here's another tip for you, Mr. and Mrs. America: try a fragrant delicious cup of coffee with your evening meal tonight. See how much more pleasant it makes your evening, how much more you get out of life with coffee. Next week at this same time, the Pan-American Coffee Bureau will bring you another interesting discussion of world events by Mrs. Roosevelt. Ladies and gentlemen, do your part now. Buy defense bonds and stamps immediately. Until next week, this is Ernest Chappell bidding you good night, and don't forget that good night cup of coffee.

[Male announcer:] This is the National Broadcasting Company.

(14:16)

Transcribed from holdings at Franklin D. Roosevelt Library (FDRL)
File(s): 46-5:23

Transcription: Anna Karditzas
First edit: Melissa Melvin
Final edit: Christy Regenhardt