Thank you, Colonel Shook. Mr. Knudsen, jokingly, says that Stettinius furnished the materials and he cuts it up. Mr. Knudsen has seven divisions. He gave me Miscellaneous Equipment, which I think is a terrible name, because I get everything that no one else wants! (Laughter)

As a matter of fact, I think I am the baboon of the organization.

There is not so much romance in Miscellaneous Equipment such as pharmaceutical supplies, perhaps, as there is in guns and aircraft and T.N.T. and smokeless powder. But, in my division, I feel it is one of the very important items in National Defense. We have clothing and equipment and some 3,000 or 4,000 items. We probably could have men go without socks, and we could say to the civilians: “We need your pants, mattresses and beds.” But we must keep surgical and pharmaceutical supplies coming for our men in the Army.

And I think it is extremely important, and we certainly appreciate your meeting here at this time and devoting so much of your program to our common interest.

You may read a good deal in the papers that would indicate that things are bogging down and not moving as rapidly as they should. But, that is not my experience.

In almost every classification, we have our problems. I have all kinds of things. I had two meetings the other morning; one on razor blades and the other on parachutes. So, as I say, we get a wide range of items. But, we have had meetings between the representatives of ordinary commercial use of products, the Army, the Navy, the Air Corps, and the different divisions in the Army, and we found a very splendid spirit, with a desire to coordinate specifications, wherever there was a variance that could be coordinated, in order to create more mass production for whatever needs may be confronting this country.

We found a willingness on the part of each group to concede here, and another group of the army or whatever it may be, to make other concessions.

We found the representatives of industry most interested and willing to cooperate.

I like to feel that all of us are just as much in the service of the country today as the men we are sending to the camps, and that we are all playing the same part.

Certainly, the leaders, such as yourselves, have just as great a responsibility in this matter as the men heading the Army or the Navy. We certainly must carry that same spirit all through labor in this country, which I think has just as sacred an obligation to keep the defense activities moving on as anybody else.
I do not know of any incident in all the affairs of my division which has not received the very finest cooperation on the part of industry. They have been most alert and helpful in trying to anticipate bottle-necks, and believe me, Knudsen lashes you on the back if some bottleneck comes up that you don’t know about.

One of our big jobs is to get in contact with ten or twelve branches of the Government, into which my division falls. We take these long lists and run up and down on them and say: “Are you sure you are going to have enough stoves, tents, and so forth!” And: “Are you sure you are going to have boilers and compressors for these laundries, when these boys go in on December 23rd?”

Last Tuesday, I had to advise on 21,500 gas stoves for pyramid tents in six camps, and the boys are moving in on January 3rd.

There had been some delay in the decision, as to whether to use coal stoves or gas stoves. The order was late in coming to the Department purchasing these items. We got in touch, by telephone and telegraph, with seventy-five manufacturers throughout this country, from coast to coast, and within twenty-four hours, we had sufficient representatives of the industry, in a two-day session that ran until midnight each night, to solve the problem. It seemed an impossible task at first. We called the warehouses of Sears-Roebuck, Montgomery-Ward, and other places that might have some stoves, and we did everything possible. So the final result is that by January 3rd, when the men move into these particular camps, they will all be heated with these gas stoves.

And that is the kind of cooperation we are getting all along the line.

I am sure this great organization of yours is imbued with the same spirit, and that no sacrifice will be too great to make.

We have had men who absolutely cleaned out their supply of raw materials and are going to be out of luck in furnishing their own commercial demands and ordinary customers for commercial uses, because they heeded the cry of serving the needs of the men going to camps.

And so, it has been going all along the line, with a multitude of items.

I have told you I had advisory responsibility in some 3,000 items. If you split them down into the items they should be classified into, you would have to have a Sears-Roebuck catalogue.

It is hard to stop and think of all the ramifications that are necessary to supply an Army that has increased nearly one thousand per cent almost overnight, and a Navy nearly double. It is hard to conceive all the items that enter into the procurement program.

Naturally, you would think, first, of pharmaceuticals and they are very important items. But there are also thousands and thousands of items; everything that human beings use, everything that goes into war, not only in the stationary uses of the camp, but all kinds of equipment to supply these men with when they are in movement. In many cases, you have to double and triple the items that have to be supplied per man while in camp.
And when you think of the way that American industry is responding today and patriotic zeal with which they have responded, it is a source of gratification. I have seen instances where we have been supplied with materials and equipment for the Army at a far less cost than we know those men can go out and replace stocks, in order to meet commercial demands. This is the kind of spirit, Gentlemen, that is going to keep this country free and that is going to keep us strong.

We feel it is a fine thing to have any group of an important industry meet here with us and give us the time on their program to let them know all our hearts are in this work.

I doubt if there is a man in this room who has been giving more hours to his job than Mr. Knudsen gives to this work. He is on the job every morning at seven-thirty or eight o’clock and he seldom leaves until eight o’clock at night. Frequently, he goes without his lunch. There are also frequent night meetings until two or three o’clock in the morning. And that is the kind of spirit that is going through all the men who are down here, at $1.00 a year, the same as myself, trying to help the government in the great task before it.

The more and the quicker we can imbue that spirit into every man, woman and child in America, the quicker we are going to build up defense.

We got into the job late, but the main thing, I can say to you this morning is that the wheels are moving on and forward and we are making rapid progress in this great defense program.

We are getting the cooperation of industry from coast to coast, all over this land of ours. We are getting a fine spirit of sacrifice and willingness to cooperate in every possible way. And I want you men to know that we are getting that same spirit in the Army and Navy. I have had a lot of contact with Colonel Shook of the Surgeon General’s Division, and I want to say right now that we couldn’t have a finer man at the job, a man who is more willing and more intensely interested and who is going through everything with a fine tooth comb to try to anticipate every need and be sure we will not wake up with some mishap or delay, than Colonel Shook. (Applause)

And that is the kind of men we have representing us down here in the various divisions of this Army of ours.

I think that some of us may come to Washington and get the impression that we are all working civil service hours, and a lot of these fellows are playing golf and having a rather an easy life. But just let me say this, I was in a meeting yesterday noon on some important items in my division, and I didn’t get time for lunch; the two men I was sitting with, Army Officers, both had their lunch served on the desk right in the room. Time and time again I have seen men go without lunch or dinner.

And so I want to say that I have found this same spirit of cooperation in all the representatives of the government here.

Also, we get this same spirit from a large part of labor in the country. I think this is one of the most essential things confronting us today, if we are going to have real defense. But with that spirit of cooperation of industry and government joined with the same spirit on the part of labor, then I say we are going to protect our American form of
Government, and we are going to keep some parts of this world free for an honest, wholesome life of man, woman and child.

    I thank you very much, Gentlemen.  It is a pleasure to be here.  I didn’t have time to prepare anything technical pertaining to my work and the great big part you have in the National Defense Program.  But, our hearts are with you, and I know your hearts are with us.

    Regardless of what you may read about the slowness in this defense program, I want you to know that much great progress is being made; every man is working and we are all working together on it.

    And I say that the old American Flag will always dominate the world!  (Applause)

The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) – Speech JCN067

Arguably Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950) was the single most influential individual to the development of metropolitan Kansas City.  Moreover his work, ideas, and philosophy of city planning and development had far-reaching impact nationally – so much so that the Urban Land Institute has established the J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development to recognize a person or a person representing an institution whose career demonstrates a commitment to the highest standards of responsible development.

    Nichols’ objective was to “develop whole residential neighborhoods that would attract an element of people who desired a better way of life, a nicer place to live and would be willing to work in order to keep it better.”  The Company under Nichols and his son, Miller Nichols (1911- ), undertook such ventures as rental housing, industrial parks, hotels, and shopping centers.  Perhaps the most widely recognized Nichols Company developments are the Country Club District and the Country Club Plaza Shopping Center, reportedly the first shopping area in the United States planned to serve those arriving by automobile rather than trolley car.

    The J.C. Nichols Company Records (KC106) contains both personal and business files concerning J.C. Nichols’ private and business life.  Included are personal correspondence, family related material, and speeches and articles written by him.  Business and financial files pertain to actions of the Company, including information about different developments and the securing of art objects; and printed materials produced by and about the Company.