MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION WITH CHANCELLOR SCHUSCHNIGG ON NOVEMBER 16, 1935.

In accord with an appointment which I requested with the Chancellor, I called on him at twelve o'clock on November 16 and remained with him until 12:45. I had not seen the Chancellor in his office since before my departure for the United States in the spring. I felt it desirable to re-establish direct contact and also specifically to discuss with him certain matters in connection with our American correspondents in Austria.

After a few unimportant generalities I told the Chancellor that I had no specific matters to discuss with him except a problem affecting our American correspondents, which I thought was of sufficient importance to bring to his attention. I said that he might be somewhat surprised that I should take up this matter with him, but that after he had heard what I had to say he would quite appreciate that it was a matter of some importance. I said that it was one of my major concerns that the actual position in Austria was understood in the United States. I need not tell him that our interest in the Austrian situation was not as direct as that of some other countries, but that in a more indirect way we were very much interested, and that the maintenance of Austrian independence and of the Austrian economic and financial situation were in our opinion very important and vital factors in the maintenance of the European situation and of peace. As there were no elections in Austria, and consequent difficulty for public opinion in democratic countries, including our own, to appreciate this situation, I had taken great pains to see that all the factors affecting the Austrian problem were fully and correctly reported in the American press. As a consequence, there was a very real understanding of the Austrian situation in the United States, and very real sympathy with her problems.

The American press, I said, like the English, was one which was in no sense controlled by the Government. There was no such thing as a government press, and no control over the press. The American press was very important in shaping public opinion, and most of the important newspapers had direct or indirect representation here. Those which did not have such representation, direct or indirect, used the services of the Associated and United Press Bureaus and of the International News Service in Vienna. I had taken pains to see that these three bureaus, as well as our press representation generally, were put on an adequate basis. We had succeeded in getting London, Paris, Berlin and Vienna as our principal points in Europe where responsible correspondents were stationed. I had particularly endeavored to get our press bureaus strengthened here and had been successful, and now our important papers and bureaus covered South-Eastern Europe from Vienna. I said that he could quite appreciate the importance and desirability of this.
I had been a good deal disturbed, I said, as the result of the verdict in the Benes case and the remarks made by the Judge, which I felt were completely unnecessary and went much too far. I asked him whether he knew the Benes case, and he replied that he did. I said that the American and British newspapermen had been very much disturbed over this case, and after the Benes trial and conviction had asked the British Minister and me to arrange for a meeting of a committee of the Anglo-American Press Association here with the Chancellor. The British Minister and I had discussed this matter, and we agreed that we should not facilitate such a meeting at this time, as Benes was not an American or an Englishman and had no direct connection with an American or English newspaper. We had agreed, therefore, that we would in no way take up the Benes case with the Austrian Government.

I said that I had studied the Benes verdict carefully and that I thought the correspondents had good reason to be annoyed and concerned. Remarks had been made during the trial which were very unfair and unjust towards the foreign correspondents, and if the verdict in the Benes trial were to be taken as the attitude of the Government towards the correspondents, it was unquestionable that a serious situation might arise, and that this was why I was going into the matter with him so fully. I also called particular attention to the article which had appeared in a Vienna newspaper, speaking of an American correspondent who had given testimony in this trial in a particularly unhappy manner, and which closed with the statement that these trouble-making foreign correspondents can no longer be given hospitality in Austria. The Chancellor asked in what paper this had appeared, and I said that it had appeared in the NEUIGKEITS-WELTBLATT, which happens to be his own particular organ. He seemed a good deal surprised at this, but made no comment.

I said to the Chancellor that I thought the position of the American correspondents, and perhaps of the English and some others, was somewhat misunderstood. They were for the most part very responsible men, who had a very high regard for their profession. They considered it as a profession, which it in fact was. They had a very distinct responsibility towards their newspapers at home. They could be neither for nor against anything. They could not be used as propagandists. They were responsible men, reporting objectively on what happened. They lost all their value to their newspapers and bureaus when they did not report fully and objectively. There was no use endeavoring to control responsible correspondents. They would not submit to it and if they did, their papers would
soon remove them. While such correspondents were
careful about what news they transmitted, exaggerat-
ed importance must not be given to their occasionally
transmitting a news flash which did not correctly
picture the situation. Most important newspapers
in the United States had particular hours at which
news must be received for a particular edition.
The correspondents, therefore, sent news flashes
as information became available. If one of the
first flashes did not correctly picture a situation,
the following ones always corrected it. The ten-
dency here, therefore, to be super-sensitive was
not justified, as the responsible press (and only
responsible press was represented here) could always
be depended upon to get the picture straight.

I said that the correspondents here had a
feeling that they were not quite treated with suf-
cient consideration. This probably came from
the fact that in the Austrian and in a part of the
European press the correspondents did not hold the
same position as they did in the United States and,
for example, in England. A responsible correspondent
was a very important person indeed and he had a high
code of honor, which to violate was to destroy his
usefulness. Here there was a tendency to treat the
foreign correspondents in the same way that the
 correspondents of the local press were treated,
and this I was inclined to think a great error,
and an explanation of the difficulty.

I said that our correspondents here complained
that they were not given sufficient facilities in
the Bundespresseamt, where they had the greatest
difficulty in getting information. A good deal of
this, I said, was probably traceable to the lack of
good relations which existed between Dr. Ludwig and
the correspondents. I did not wish to go into this
in detail, as it was a purely internal matter, but
there was no question that Dr. Ludwig did not like
the correspondents and also no question about the
correspondents not liking him. The Chancellor was
much interested in this statement, which seemed to
come as a surprise to him, and this already was an
indication to me how necessary it was to bring this
whole matter to his attention.

I said that I thought it would be very helpful
if the human element involved were more recognized
here and that it would greatly help me in my own
task with the correspondents. I saw our American
correspondents frequently. In all my experience
here and at other places I had found I could talk
to them with frankness. No correspondent in all
my experience had ever let me down. This also
seemed to surprise the Chancellor. I said that
correspondents had a very correct code and that
the more frankly one dealt with them the better
one got along with them, and that misunderstandings usually grew out of a lack of frankness. I did not wish to offer any suggestions, but it might be interesting to him to know that in Washington the President and the Secretary of State had press conferences once, twice or three times a week, at which the accredited correspondents of the American and foreign press were permitted to participate. They were permitted to ask questions, which the President or Secretary answered as they saw fit. Whenever they answered a question to which the reply could be used, they made their answer without comment. If they sometimes found it advisable in answering a question to say "for your background", this background information was not attributed to the President or to the Secretary, but was for the correspondent's information in determining how he could handle the information given. At times the President and Secretary would go further and say "In confidence" and then give information which the correspondents knew they could not use in any way. I pointed out that if any correspondent violated this unwritten law of procedure, he would, of course, be excluded from further press conferences, but that this was practically never necessary, as the code among the correspondents was so strictly adhered to that if any correspondent violated it, his own associates in the capital and his paper would deal with him effectively. The Chancellor was much interested in this procedure.

I said that there was a tendency on the part of correspondents from time to time to color the news with their own convictions. This had unfortunately shown itself here in several instances. This was a matter of concern to me, because our papers were interested not in the political convictions of the correspondents, but in the news. I gave this matter my constant attention, and I thought we now had a quite good situation in this respect here. I would not attempt, I said, to control what any correspondent said, but I would see that so far as was in my power, his own political ideas did not color his news. This was a matter, however, for the newspapers themselves to deal with, and not for the Government. Action by the Government would only result in the correspondent's being withdrawn and operating from places outside of the country, with the consequence that the news regarding a particular situation would be less accurate than before.

I pointed out to the Chancellor that the United Press was planning to send a general news letter of several thousand words daily by cable, and that this was a very good thing for Austria. The plans for this news letter had been a good deal upset by the Beneš trial and particularly by the remarks made by the judge concerning a member of the United Press staff here. The United Press did not wish to start sending out this letter from here if the
Government was going to take such an arbitrary attitude towards the correspondents. I had been able to get this situation adjusted, for I was confident that the Austrian Government did not intend to take this arbitrary attitude, and I was glad to say that this news letter was going to be sent out. I thought it particularly important that news besides purely political matters should be sent out. In this connection I pointed out to the Chancellor that I had endeavored to use the recent production by the Burgtheater of Maxwell Anderson's play "Elizabeth and Essex" to this end. I had invited important members of the Government and the cast of the play, as well as the American press to my house for supper afterwards. The result had been that thousands of words were telegraphed by the American correspondents and bureaus at considerable cost. This bringing together of the correspondents with members of the Government was a concrete expression of what I meant by recognizing the human element, which had, I felt, been too neglected here. The correspondents that evening had had the opportunity to meet the Foreign Minister and certainly did not abuse it. Such contact was bound to be helpful.

I said that I wished to make it clear that I was not proposing anything to him and not making any suggestions, directly or indirectly. I had merely wished to bring to his attention certain considerations affecting our correspondents which I thought would be interesting to him. It was a matter which concerned me very much and which I felt would be a matter of interest and concern to him. The important thing, I thought, was to keep in mind the fact that the correspondents had no desire to do anything except to report objectively, and that their task in this respect could be best fulfilled if they were given adequate facilities by the Government. The correspondents were responsible men, and if treated as such it would be in the best interests of everybody. Any attempt to control them or to use them would only result in the end in a situation undesirable for Austria.

The Chancellor throughout the whole interview showed great interest, and he at several times during the interview expressed a desire that I continue to give him such information as that outlined in this memorandum. He said that he appreciated the situation now and that he was particularly grateful that I had brought it to his attention. He said that he was more thoroughly in the picture and that he already saw things which he thought could be done with advantage. He would, he said, give the matter very careful attention.

I said that I had not discussed this matter with the Foreign Minister, but that I would be glad
to do so if he thought it desirable. He replied that he was very much in the picture, and I gathered the impression that he preferred to take up the matter himself.

As the American and British correspondents are the most important ones here, or at least the most numerous, and as the British Minister and I frequently discuss matters of this kind and had gone into the Beneš matter carefully, I gave him on the same evening a résumé of my conversation with the Chancellor. He expressed the opinion that it would serve a very useful end.