

September 14, 1923.

Remarks made by the President to the Newspaper men.

An inquiry about the call of General Pershing and Bishop Freeman. They came in and I had a very pleasant chat with them. There is to be a general gathering at the Washington Cathedral, I think they call it, on the 30th of Sept. and they came in to invite me to come out there and attend the gathering. I doubt very much if I can go, as you know what my policy is about speaking before Congress convenes. And that was the reason for their presence here.

An inquiry about whether the shipping question will be reopened in Congress. Of course, I haven't any plans at present about that. We are working for the adoption of some plan in relation to shipping. I am expecting a report from the Attorney General in the very near future. When that comes in then we shall have to see what step we can take next.

Another inquiry about the status of Prohibition Commissioner Haynes. His status hasn't changed at all, and, of course, he has my entire and hearty support. †I think that is especially the duty that I owe to those that are associated with me in the public service, to give them my support and make it as effective as possible. Now, to get off from Commissioner Haynes, we have to carry on the Government through human instruments. Everything is carried on that way, and many times we make a great many mistakes. But that doesn't relieve me of the duty of trying to support those who are working with me and assisting them, giving them my confidence, and that is what I am going to do always. I think I suggested to you / one time that that would be my policy and hope that you will keep that suggestion always in mind.

Another question as to what the Federal Government is doing to prevent profiteering in hard coal. Of course, that again is very largely a local question. It would be very difficult for the Federal Government, for instance, to reach up into New York or out into Ohio, and undertake to see how the local people there should conduct their business. That can be done better by the local authorities than it could be by the Federal authorities. Yet, we have a partial remedy, which I am attempting to apply, and that is through the Federal Trade Commission. They have authority to make an investigation and report, depending, of course, very largely upon public opinion for the carrying out of their suggestions. It has been reported and, I think, is shown by some of the publications already made by the Coal Commission, that oftentimes coal passes



through very many hands from the mine to the consumer. There is a suggestion that that is not altogether necessary and perhaps, somewhat, can be eliminated as an unnecessary - I won't say, trade practice. So that the Federal Trade Commission can do something in that direction. I have suggested that they take that matter up and the United States Coal Commission, I think, are working in the same direction.

An inquiry about the business of Mr. Thom and Mr. Holden. They came in to pay their respects. Mr. Thom I had met once or twice in Washington and Mr. Holden once or twice. The only information they brought me was to state their willingness to furnish me with any facts, data and information that I might wish at any time relative to railroad problems.

An inquiry about the discharge of twenty eight Bureau of Printing and Engraving employees. I think I remember that, and the statement here is that a report was made on it and the report hasn't been made public. So far as I know there is no further action contemplated in relation to that. It has never been brought to my attention before. I do not know of anything that any one expects to do about it.

An inquiry also as to what is going to be done, as a result of the opinion of the Attorney General that there is no executive authority to use the armed forces of the United States to enforce prohibition without authorization of Congress. I haven't at the present time, any idea that I am going to ask Congress to use the armed forces of the U.S. for that purpose. I should doubt very much if it would be wise. I can conceive a time when it might possibly be desirable to use some boats of the Navy, or something of that kind, if it is shown that there is need for it to prevent smuggling, but I should do that with a great deal of hesitation. I do not think that the carrying out of police regulations ought to be put as a burden on the Army and Navy of the United States. That ought to be done by the regular police forces of the National Government and the regular police forces of the State Governments. It is very very seldom that any State Government calls on its National Guard for any kind of police action, and it ought to be very seldom that the National Government should call on the Army or Navy for any manner of police action.

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Whether the Tariff Commission is expected to initiate investigations or only act upon different complaints. I should think they would do both. They have a broad and general view of the situation. I expect they are going to advise me from time to time as to what action they think desirable, and in that way, they would initiate and I should suppose they would act, of course, whenever any complaints were made through an investigation, determination of the facts, to ascertain petty changes in the tariff that should be made.

I think that covers in a general way the suggestions made for the day. Very glad you could come in.

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