

January 16, 1925.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Correspondents.

I haven't appointed the three members of the commission to represent the United States at the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Lexington-Concord Battle. That came to my desk two or three days ago. I have sent for Mr. Luce, Representative Luce, of Massachusetts, who introduced the resolution, to confer with him about the appointments. I think he is coming in this afternoon.

I can't set any time about the appointment of the Ambassador to Berlin. Ambassador Houghton hasn't yet resigned. I don't know just how long it will take him to close up his affairs there. I don't think it would be quite correct to say that there is any leading candidate for the post. I have several names under consideration.

I have just signed the bill for an additional Federal Judge in Indiana. I don't know the names of any people that are under consideration there. I don't think that any names have been submitted to me, and I didn't sign the bill until this morning. I don't know of any suggestions that have yet been made of any names. Now I am not certain, but there were two or three Indiana Representatives and Senator Watson in this morning, and I don't know but they mentioned incidentally some names that have been suggested out there, but they were so much in the way of mere suggestions, rather than names, that were to be taken up for serious consideration, that I didn't give enough attention to any names, if there were any mentioned, so that I can't recall any specific names.

The report of the committee on shipping will be used for my information and guidance, and I hope it may be helpful to the Congress in any study that they might want to make of the present shipping needs. I also expect it will be helpful to the Shipping Board and the President of the Fleet Corporation in determining what action they ought to take for the promotion of our shipping interests.

There has been absolutely no further consideration given to the matter of an Arms Conference. I don't know of any obligation that our country has incurred as a result of the Paris settlement, relative to the amount of money that is coming to us, excepting the very obvious one that we would accept the amounts that are specified in the settlement. That is settled and determined, but so far as I know, no other obligation rests on us as a result of our agreement to accept that amount as our proportion.

Here is another inquiry about a successor to Ambassador Houghton - as to whether I will seek a successor to him in the diplomatic service or in private life. I think the correct answer to that will be that I will seek him in both places. Where I shall find him, of course I do not know.

I haven't had any suggestions from any one that they are intending to retire from the public service, other than those already mentioned in the public prints.

I don't know when Representative Sanders will come to this office. I talked with him about it very soon after the opening of Congress. Mr. Slomp has not made any formal resignation. He is going to stay as long as he can. I don't know just when he will think it becomes necessary for him to take up his duties with his law firm.

Secretary Hoover and I talked about the Secretaryship of Agriculture. I have here a list of names of those who have been proposed for that position. There are some good men. His name is among them, but from my conversation with him I feel sure that he thinks he can do more good for agriculture as Secretary of Commerce than he could as Secretary of Agriculture. ~~Do~~

Mr. President, do you know the number of names mentioned?

Well, I can't tell how many there are here. I should think I had here 25 or 30 pages, and they will average, oh, perhaps 6 to the page.

Mr. President, do you expect the Secretary of Commerce to remain in that position?

Oh yes. He has had several opportunities to accept other positions since he has been Secretary of Commerce, but he is so interested in that particular work that he feels confident that he can make a larger contribution to it as Secretary of Commerce than he can in any other position.

The only reason that the name of Captain Robison was not sent to the Senate at this time is the obvious one that I want to wait and see what develops in relation to the oil leases. Now, I don't want that taken as the slightest reflection on the Captain. I have saved his place for him, so that when he is promoted he will go into the place that he would have gone into had I sent his name up at this time. But there was some question made about it, so I thought that at present I would not send in his name.

I don't know that anyone is scheduled to succeed Major Haynes in the Prohibition Department. There is some legislation pending about that, and I do not think any action would be taken until the outcome of that legislation should be known.

I don't know as I can successfully discuss proposed legislation and proposed penalties, relative to the violations of the prohibitory law. It is suggested here that there is a bill pending which imposes jail sentences on dry law violators; makes them mandatory. Well, I should say offhand that that would be excessive. There are many violations of the dry law which are not very serious. There are other things that are exceedingly serious. I suppose having a flask of alcoholic liquor in one's possession is a violation of the law. Now that ~~that~~ might not be serious at all. Undertaking to make money out of the sale of liquor at this time, of course, is serious. Now whether - I am not familiar enough with the provisions of the law to say whether there ought to be any change in the law relative to making sentences mandatory or not. It was assumed that under the present law there was an opportunity for the judge to impose a jail sentence, if he thought the violation required it.

I don't know just what shape the appropriation bill is in for the District of Columbia. Here is an inquiry about a very laudable desire on the part of some of our people to establish here an arboretum. Now I share with everybody a desire to have an arboretum in the District of Columbia, but I think the present appropriation bill carries some \$600,000.00 for the purchase of additional land in the District of Columbia. There is a bill pending carrying \$14,000,000 for the building of the Memorial Bridge. So that when it comes to a question of whether the financial policy of the Government ought to provide several hundred thousand dollars more to establish an arboretum this year, I think there is considerable doubt about it. It isn't necessary to buy a lot of other land for some other purpose, when part of this \$600,000 could be applied for this purpose, when perhaps some arrangement could be made for it during the present year. If this is going to call for several hundred thousand dollars in addition to the \$600,000 already provided for, then I should think it would become a matter of some difficulty.

I have already mentioned Secretary Hoover and given you in a word what I understand is the result of our agreement about reparations. Of course our country wants to see the Dawes Plan succeed. We should make that known at all times. Of course it is understood by the people of this country and the people abroad that

we are exceedingly anxious to see that a success.

There isn't any foundation of which I am aware for the statement that is said here to appear in the afternoon press to the effect that another Arms Conference will be called this spring by me. That is entirely in the same condition it has been in the past. Of course the closing up of questions in Europe all the time makes the situation better and better, so that we appear to be going toward the condition that such a proposal might be thought to meet with some success, but while things are going well in that direction there is the proposal of the League for a conference on their account, and we shall have to wait and see what that results in before I can give the matter any further consideration in the way of making a decision about it.

I haven't had a chance to confer with Governor Towner. He will reach the city within a day or two. I imagine that he will be in to call on me very shortly, and perhaps an engagement has already been made. If so I don't recall about it. Very likely I wouldn't know until it came onto my desk for whatever day it was made.

I think that it is always necessary to call a session of the Senate to meet on inauguration day, so that it goes without saying that there will be a special session of the Senate that convenes at 12:00 o'clock on the 4th day of March immediately following the adjournment of the old Congress. Now, whether the Senate at that time or the day succeeding will want to give any consideration to the World Court, I don't know. I think that is to be taken up in the present session. Whether they will find time for such a discussion of it that they can bring it to a vote, again I am obliged to say I don't know.