

Friday, January 30, 1925.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

There has been so much discussion already about party regularity and as to who ought to take part in the choice of election of the party officers that I don't think I can add anything to it. I suppose that if our party has appealed to the country and indicated before election that it intends to pursue a certain course of action, that an honest carrying out of that promise will make it necessary that the management of the Government should be placed in the control of those who believe in the party policies that they promised to carry out. It isn't a question of excluding somebody or anything of that kind; it's merely an attempt to carry out the pledges that have been made to the people.

The only reason that anyone suggested to me for the appointment of Mr. Woodlock to the Interstate Commerce Commission was his great familiarity with railroad finances and the necessity of having one man on the Commission at this time who especially understood that part of the work of the Commission. Some other members of the Commission understand other parts of the work and are experts in that direction, but Mr. Woodlock was chosen as a man who is especially expert, by reason of his studies and abilities, in railroad finance. The Commission has a good deal of work to do at present on that subject, by reason of its having jurisdiction over the issuance of stocks and bonds of railroads. It is always a hazardous thing to say some one person is the best man in any line, but it was represented to me that Mr. Woodlock stands as high as anyone, and was represented to me as the best man on the subject of railroad finance that there was in the country.

There is a provision in the pending Rivers and Harbors bill which undertakes to provide for the completion of the projects that have now been - not only in this bill but other projects - that have heretofore been authorized - within the next five years. There are already authorized some \$200,000,000 worth of projects. This adds \$39,000,000 more, making somewhere near \$250,000,000. Now there is a base charge or an overhead charge for the cost of keeping the present projects running which I think amounts to about \$20,000,000 a year, so that I am advised by the Director of the Bureau of the Budget that to put a provision of that kind into this bill would mean a declaration of policy of expending some-

thing over \$60,000,000 a year for the next five years. Now that would take away from me, the Presidential office, the jurisdiction over the budget. I don't think that ought to be done. So I want to have that provision taken out. I don't understand that it makes any difference with the Ohio River project, which is now being carried on under the policy that would complete it in 1929. About the Mississippi and Missouri, I am not so certain whether - I don't know as they were ever completely finished.

Mr. President, is it your understanding that it will be eliminated?

I want to have it eliminated. Otherwise it undertakes to make a declaration now of how much money should be appropriated during the next five years for rivers and harbors.

Mr. President, I was asking if the Committee had advised you of their views.

I don't know about that. I have advised them of what my views are, and I think that provision ought to come out. Otherwise it takes the entire rivers and harbors projects out of the jurisdiction of the budget, which ought not to be done.

I haven't made any decision about a successor to Ambassador Houghton our Ambassador to Berlin, and I don't know just when I shall make a decision about that.

I don't think I can make any comment relative to the proposals of the French and German Governments for a security pact for the guarantee of European peace. I don't know any way that America could cooperate in that. It seems to me that it is almost entirely a European political subject in which we can't take any very helpful part.

There was nothing said, when I received the new Ambassador from France, about any negotiations relative to the payment of the French debt.

I don't know whether the Federal Government has taken any steps about the diphtheria epidemic at Nome, Alaska. I have noticed that some efforts were being made up there, and as practically all the Government efforts there would be efforts by the Federal Government, I take it that that is being done. But nothing about it has been brought to my attention.

I haven't begun any special work on my inaugural address - not in the way of getting any on paper.

I think it might be helpful for the conferees on the Muscle Shoals bill to confer with Secretaries Hughes and Hoover. It may be that they have such information that they wouldn't need to do that. I judge they might be helpful to them, because if I had that question before me I should turn to those two members of the Cabinet for assistance in its solution, - Secretary Weeks because of his familiarity with it, it has been in his Department, and Secretary Hoover because of his training as an engineer and his general knowledge of industrial development projects.

I don't think I can comment either on the continuance of the occupation of Cologne and the Ruhr by the French. There are a great many suppositions as to what may happen if that continues.

I have already indicated that I don't know of anything that our people can do about a French and German security agreement.

I don't know whether an Ambassador to Berlin will be appointed before the return to this country of Mr. Kellogg. I hardly think that would be done, for the reason that Mr. Kellogg wouldn't be over here and wouldn't be confirmed. Until that is done, Mr. Houghton couldn't be appointed Ambassador to London, and until that was done there would be no vacancy at Berlin.

I haven't had any reports from the Oil Conservation Board. Though I am not able to tell to what extent there is cooperation in the petroleum industry in the development of a conservation policy, I appointed that board with the purpose of undertaking to have a conservation of our petroleum products, or rather their sources, and wanted to extend them over as long a period as possible and see what could be done to prevent the violent fluctuations in production and the violent fluctuations in the price of petroleum products.

My consultation with Admiral Palmer yesterday was along general lines. He indicated to me some progress that he is making in the operation of the fleet and especially progress that is being made in the reduction of expenditures. Last year I think the call on the Treasury was for about \$50,000,000. For the next year he thinks he can reduce that to about \$24,000,000.

I haven't anything definite about the German commercial treaty. I have spoken to Senator Borah about that once or twice, and I know he has it under consideration to take up.

I haven't made any decision about a Secretary of Agriculture.

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I understand that Emory R. Buckner will probably be recommended to me for the appointment to succeed U. S. Attorney Hayward in the City of New York. I got that impression from a conversation I had with Attorney General Stone this morning.

Nothing has come to me relative to any executive clemency for Carlos Tresca, the editor of an Italian language newspaper. Now that doesn't mean nothing has been sent here. If anything has come it would be sent to the Dept. of Justice for their investigation and report to me, but no report has come to me from the Department of Justice relative to that.

That seems to cover the questions.