

December 16, 1924.

Remarks by the President at the Newspaper Conference.

Here is a question into which I am not going to enter for the purpose of making any detailed discussion, but it relates to a comparison of our Navy with that of other countries. Now, I have tried to indicate that I don't want to proceed on that theory. I don't see any hope in the future for competitive armaments. Of course the minute that you begin to say this country is building so many, and therefore we must build so many, you are right back on the old competitive theory of armaments, and I want to keep off that. I am in favor of an adequate defense for our own country. I stated my position in my first message to the Congress. If any of you care to read that, you will see what it is.

I haven't reached any further conclusion about the inauguration ceremonies, and I am going to get in touch with the Congress right away to see what they want to do about the appointment of their Committee and what provisions ought to be made.

I haven't received any report from the Attorney General relative to the filling of the vacancy of the Federal Bench at San Francisco, nor so far as I can recall about the appointment of a U. S. District Attorney for Hawaii, and I haven't received any report or an application for a pardon for a man named McDonnell, of San Francisco.

As I have said, I haven't done anything further about the inauguration, so have made no provision for the appointment of different committees or for the participation of any different organizations or any bands that are connected with the military and naval services.

I can't give an opinion that is worth anything whether the public interest would be served by a Congressional investigation of the state of the Navy. If anyone wants to see a very good statement of the present state of the Navy, if they will read the address that Senator Hale made last May in the Senate, they will get a great deal of valuable information, and so far as I know, everyone that requires information on which to act is fairly well in possession of it or can ascertain it from present and existing documents and the annual hearings before the Naval Committees of the House and Senate. Of course, every time the appropriation bill comes up there is an investigation in the first instance by

representatives of the Bureau of the Budget and I go over it in a general way. When it goes to the House a very careful investigation is made there by the House Committee on Naval Affairs. It comes up in the House for discussion and there is usually a debate there that is informing and instructive. Perhaps I would cut out that word "usually" and say "always". Then it goes to the Senate Committee and there is a further investigation. And this is an investigation by informed men. Men that serve on the House and Senate Committees on Naval Affairs, many of whom have been on it for years and made a special study of the needs and requirements of our Navy and get sufficient information so that they are able to defend their budget on the floor with a presentation of accurate facts relative to the state of the country's Navy. And then it goes to the Senate for discussion, all of which is a yearly investigation of the needs of the Navy. In addition to that, there is the General Staff, the Secretary of the Navy. They are constantly working on the problem of adequate naval defense.

We didn't take up any matters for discussion in the Cabinet today. Nobody had anything to bring before the Cabinet, so I think the session didn't last more than five minutes. Several members of the Cabinet came in to talk with me about one thing or another.

I have signed and I suppose that has gone to the Senate - the nomination of Colonel McIntosh to succeed Henry M. Dawes as Comptroller of the Currency.

I don't care to make any further statement about the elevation of guns on American battleships. I don't think that is a matter of very great importance. I shouldn't want to have it done under the implication that it was a violation of the spirit of the peace treaty, and I should want to examine it very carefully to see whether it was in harmony with my policy of economy and as to whether on account of the development of the aircraft it is wise to make further expenditures of that kind on our present battleships. Of course it is to be remembered that a number of our battleships, I think five of the 18, need no change. That brings it down to 13. There are five more who have substantially the same gun range, it may vary 200 yards to 1000, of any other battleships. That brings it down to 8. As I say, I don't think it is a matter of very grave importance.

I haven't had any report from the investigation that is being made by the Navy relative to what we should do in relation to coordinating the activities and building of the different kinds of craft - aircraft, surface craft and submarines.

There are no developments about another arms conference.

I haven't determined upon a successor to District Attorney Harris at Boston.

I think I can make some appointments to the bench this week. I think I sent up one this morning.

I can't give very much encouragement about attending the Good Roads Convention in Houston, Texas. I should like to go down there very much. That comes in April. I haven't any plan about a trip to the South or the West after the adjournment of the Congress. I have just received a letter from my father saying this morning, in response to an invitation that I sent him that I would be glad to have him come down for Christmas, that he has come down with a cold yesterday which he expects will be better tomorrow, and that he didn't think he would come down. He expects to come down March 4th.

I haven't any policy about the sale of the Hoboken, N.J. docks or about the railroads. I would like to return to private ownership any property that isn't needed for national defense. The city officials of Hoboken represent to me that the whole of this property up there, especially the docks, not the railroad but the docks, is a serious interference with their ability to collect expenses to take care of it. It is small in area. I think their present tax rate is about \$48.00 a thousand, which of course is very high.

I shall not go to New York to attend the funeral of the late Samuel Gompers.