

December 19, 1924.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Correspondents.

I don't know as I can make any statement relative to the designation of a new Ambassador to the United States by the Japanese Government. Mr. Matsudaira is a man of distinction, one whom we are very glad to receive here. The Secretary of State made what I thought was a very appropriate reference to his appointment.

I don't know when the first meeting of the members of my Cabinet that I have asked to look into the production of petroleum and make studies and recommendations for the conservation and continued production will be held. I can't give much idea as to their method of procedure. I set out in the letter that I sent to each one of them the matters that I had in mind, which explains better than I can in any other way the ideas that I had in relation to it. I haven't had any particular representations about it. I thought it was becoming apparent in a general way that while we have had in the past year a large production, perhaps we might say an overproduction, on account of the coming in of those great fields in southern California, yet our consumption is very large and is increasing, the uses of gasoline are constantly being extended and it is necessary for our commercial welfare and our national defense to provide ourselves with a sufficient supply. If we get a diminution in production, we shall have an increase in prices of gasoline that will be distressing, on account of the very general spread in its use. It has come to be a part of the daily life of a great many of our inhabitants and goes into all kinds of uses, the generation of power both for automobiling and farm use, uses on shipboard and in manufacturing, so that I thought it would be well to take an account of our stock and see that such measures are devised as are necessary to prevent our running low on the supply.

Mr. President, have you ever made public that letter?

Yes, it was given out here this morning.

Today?

Yes. I have directed some copies to be made and I think they were given out this morning.

I haven't given any special directions to the Department of Justice relative to some reports that have been printed about the looting of American schooners off the American seaboard. I rather think that I should want to investigate before I came to the hasty conclusion that it is any more than usual.

That is continually going on in water fronts and is in part taken care of by the Coast Guard and in part by the local police forces. If anything of that kind arises it is reported to the proper authorities on shore and they take whatever measures they can to prevent its repetition and to apprehend and punish those that have been guilty of it. I have no doubt that if anything of that kind has arisen out of the ordinary it would have been reported.

I haven't concerned myself especially with any charges in relation to the Postal Pay bill, other than to suggest to the Department of Justice that they investigate, and the Post Office Department also, and both of those agencies are at work to see if there has been any violation of the law and to try and punish it if there has been, or if there has been any violation of what ought to be the orderly procedure of those who ought to be engaged in the performance of their duties, to try to bring that matter to a close. It would be rather unusual for a Clerk of a Committee to undertake to represent to people on the outside in relation to legislation that might be pending before that Committee. I don't know whether it is a criminal offense or not. It is certainly a practice that ought not to be engaged in, and if it has been engaged in why proper action ought to be taken to stop it and prevent it in the future.

I can't say any more about the elevation of the guns on our battleships. It comes up apparently at each conference. It seems as though everybody knows all there is to know about it. I had understood that there was some note received some time ago from the British Government in relation to it. Just the nature of the note, I don't know. You can probably find out at the State Department.

Secretary Work is going to continue in the Cabinet, so far as I know, after the 4th of March.

Governor Sproul called this morning with the President of the Union League Club, Mr. Passmore, of Philadelphia, to ask me if I could come up and speak before the Club, sometime. I wasn't able to make any positive engagement about it, though I would like to speak before that Club, and I may be able to do that sometime in the Spring.

I haven't received any report from the special board that is investigating the relative merits of battleships, airplanes and submarines.

I have been invited to come to the City of Quincy, in Mass., to attend

the 300th anniversary of the founding of that town. I haven't been able to give them much encouragement about going.

I have also been invited to attend at Lexington and Concord, Mass., the 150th anniversary of the battle of Lexington and Concord. That comes on the 19th of April. I haven't any positive commitments about that. It is a very attractive invitation. I should like very much to accept it.

No one has been chosen to succeed District Attorney Harris, of Mass.

I expect we shall observe Christmas at the White House about as usual. My boy John is coming home from college. I think he will be home on Sunday morning. I expect the observance of the holidays will be about the same as usual. The only difference, which will be apparent to all of you, is that three of us will be present rather than four, as in the past. I expect Mr. and Mrs. Stearns will be at the White House at that time, and on Christmas eve I am expecting that the Choir of the First Congregational Church will sing at the north portico of the White House the same as they did last year.

That seems to cover the questions.