

March 21, 1924.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

Here is a question that I can't answer. It is relative to the preferential rail rate section of the shipping act. I am not familiar with the details of that act, so that I can't discuss it intelligently or give you any idea about what the national policy ought to be, other than supposing that the national policy is set out in that act of Congress. Sometimes we find that an act of Congress is difficult to put into operation, on account of international relations that perhaps the Congress didn't consider. There is a suggestion here that there is opposition on the part of British and Japanese interests to putting that into operation. That, as I say, I don't know anything about. I haven't heard anything about it, and am not able to give you any information about it that I think would be helpful. I think if you would inquire into it at the Shipping Board or of Admiral Palmer, ^{you} would probably get some explicit information.

An inquiry about the possibility that additional members will be added to the national committee to consider the St. Lawrence waterways question, due to the fact that some eastern cities believe they are not adequately represented. That is news to me too. I didn't happen to learn of the suggestion that any eastern cities wanted representation. I think the establishment of that committee was not so much in relation to cities or localities, though I think there is a sort of general geographical representation as to different commercial interests and national activities and professional employments. Mr. Hoover gave me the main idea about the appointment of the committee. I think that we worked out the plan along that line, of having men on it that represent different activities - engineers some representatives of labor, some representatives of commerce, and so on, with a view to having different elements of the community and nation represented rather than particular cities. I didn't have any idea of the representation of particular cities. New York is represented, not because it is New York, but because we wanted some one that understood about commercial and legal activities. A man named Reed was put on from New York. He has been the head of the Merchants Association. He is quite a lawyer. And someone from Boston was put on that represents commercial interests up there, and so on.

I have here a note of inquiry about legislation. It is always rather embarrassing for me to discuss legislation that is pending, about which there is a

controversy in the Congress. As I have explained many times, I can't very well announce beforehand that I am going to veto a bill, or that I am going to sign it. I have to keep my mind open about those things until the proposal comes to me. Nobody knows what the bill may contain when it gets here, so that I have to wait and see. X I have general policies about legislation which I have announced quite a good many times, and I think you won't make much of any mistake if you look and see what public announcements I have made about my policies, and until I announce otherwise you are probably warranted in supposing that is my attitude and mind. X

Senator Smoot and Senator Curtis came in to discuss the carrying forward of the business of getting the appropriation bills along, the tax bill, and so forth, and seeing what can be done to promote the general activity of the Senate in enacting the necessary legislation that is before it. That will be the particular subject of discussion with some of the House members that are going to dine with me this evening. I want to see what plans they have for promoting the legislation that is necessary to be passed by the House, especially the appropriation bills, to see what we can do to speed up action, there in order to get an adjournment at a reasonably early date. There is the necessary public business of the Congress to be transacted irrespective of the investigations that are going on, and the appropriations of course must be passed before the Congress can adjourn or before it can consider that its work is finished this session. In that I am interested in doing anything I can to promote or speed it up. That is what I was discussing with Senator Smoot and Senator Curtis, and what I am going to discuss with the steering committee of the House. I think they are making fair progress in that direction. I understand the appropriation bills are substantially ready for report, some of them passed the House, and some of them are being discussed in the Senate. There are about two months left now between the present time and the first of June. It seems to me that within that time we ought to be able to get the appropriation bills under way and such other legislation as may be necessary. It will be necessary of course to pass something of an immigration bill, as that present law expires by limitation, I think on the 30th of June. It is generally agreed that we ought to have a limitation on immigration, so that there must either be new legislation or some provision for keeping in effect the present law. Those are some of the main things that the Congress has to determine in order to take care of the general needs of the country.

It is for the purpose of planning what we can do, and to cooperate with them, that I am conferring with the members of the House and members of the Senate.