

March 28, 1924.

Remarks by the President to Newspaper Men

I haven't made any choice yet of any one for the Federal Trade Commission.

Here is rather a long question suggesting that I develop the thought about the naval reserve conservation. I don't know as I can do that in a way that would be really helpful. The little statement that I gave out contained about what I had in mind. Of course my reason for appointing this commission was especially in order that they might develop a plan. I wanted them to consider the general question of conservation and see what might be done in that direction. And I also wanted them to formulate tentative plans, in order to be able to take immediate advantage of any court decision. They would necessarily be tentative, and their nature and operation would of course depend upon the course of litigation. I wanted to be prepared to act immediately when the courts made the decision, and I wanted to be working on the general and broad plan of the necessary conservation of oil for the use of the Navy, irrespective of present litigation and irrespective of what the result of it might be.

X Here is a question about the type of man for Attorney General. I think everybody will recognize that there are two things that are especially necessary for an Attorney General. One is that he should have a good acquaintance with the law; but I think even more important perhaps is that he should have the capacity for administration. The Attorney General has under him a number of departments, a great many subsidiaries, a great many assistants, running into a number of hundreds, and so the Department of Justice not only is equipped for the purpose of administering the law, but it is likewise a sort of business institution. It is desirable for the Attorney General to have an administrative capacity.

Mr. President, would the question of personality be permissible in that connection?

You can answer that question.

I saw some of the papers mention the names of Hughes, Borah, Kenyon and Wilbur. Are those men under consideration, Mr. President?

Those are all very excellent men, but I haven't come down to the consideration of a particular person yet.



Here is an inquiry too about the railroad and shipping men to sit on the Committee to coordinate railroads and transportation. I have on that Committee the Secretary of Commerce, Mr. Palmer, President of the Fleet Corporation, Mr. O'Connor, Chairman of the Shipping Board, and Arthur Gilbert Smith, President of the American Steamship Owners Association, which has an office at 11 Broadway, New York City, a steamship corporation of course, Daniel Willard, President of the B. & O. R. R., representing the railroad men, and the Chairman of the Interstate Commerce Commission, Mr. Hoover. There was scarcely anything considered at today's Cabinet meeting. It was very short, I think about 20 minutes, and no subjects were taken up.

I don't know as I can give you any information that would be helpful or pertinent about the bill relative to Porto Rico. The delegation from Porto Rico came in to visit me, perhaps you recall, some time ago. I made some comments then to them, which I later put on paper and transmitted, and I think gave to the press. I am not certain about that. The fundamental question there is a question of administration, and it is the difficulty of having an elective legislature and a Governor that serves by reason of appointment from here. I think it is recognized by students of Government that an arrangement of that kind, even when all parties proceed with the greatest possible tact, has in it necessarily elements that are quite likely to lead to some kind of conflict between the Governor on the one hand and the local legislature on the other. At the present time they are getting on remarkably well, but if some means could be provided by which the Governor could be elected by the people of Porto Rico, it would eliminate that difficulty. Now, I don't know just what this Porto Rico measure of self-government does provide for, but if anything ~~show~~ is to be done, something of a fundamental nature in that direction I think would be more helpful than anything else.

I have some information about Philippine independence. I gave out quite a lengthy statement not very long ago, expressing my views about Philippine independence. Our country is committed to the policy of ultimate independence, so that the practical question which remains is the method by which it is to be put into effect and the time. I think the pending proposal is that it should go into effect in 1935, if the Filipino people about that time will vote for that proposal. They have an election every three years. They will have an election in 1934, when that question could be submitted for referendum. I think that under present arrangements they have



an advantage in relation to their sugar crop of \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000, and in relation to their tobacco crop about \$5,000,000, which will undoubtedly be lost to them under the proposal of independence. That is a practical question that they will want to consider, when they decide on what action they ought to take. Of course they have outstanding in this country the Filipino bonds, providing for independence. They would necessarily have to take those into consideration and make due provision for their payment and retirement. There is a general feeling that if the Filipino people want independence that it is no material advantage to us or commercially to us to hold them under present arrangements. The people give voice to those two proposals and say therefore, "Why hold them?" To my mind that doesn't quite fulfill the requirements of our duties toward the Filipino people, or toward the world in general. ~~X~~ I don't suppose the United States <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ willing to take on the obligations of Philippping Government or become responsible for the welfare of the Filipino people at the time it was taken over, but it seemed necessary that it should be done. Otherwise they would have been cast adrift and become the support I was going to say - anyway there would have been an invitation to occupation or aggression by other countries, so that we felt we had something of a duty to perform towards them. That duty is not all performed at the present time. The U.S. practically recognizes that that is the case, so that the practical question is to find the time when they may be ready to take up their duties and obligations of self-government. Some think that can be done as early as 1935.

I have received a report today from General Lord about the bill drafted by Colonel Sherrill, providing for the Arlington Memorial Bridge. I haven't had a chance to examine it in detail, and I am going to call a meeting of the Commission at a very early date in order that I may lay the report before them.

How much money is there in that bill, Mr. President?

How much money?

Yes, sir.

Well the plans in their entirety call for about \$22,000,000. The building of the bridge I think is a matter of some \$5,000,000 or \$7,000,000. I haven't any specific information about the resignation of Mr. Miller, the Insurance Commissioner of the District of Columbia. ~~xxxx~~



I understood that the Committee had reported the name of Samuel Knight to the Senate without making any recommendation either favorable or unfavorable, simply reporting it back, and by that I understand they are asking the opinion of the Senate upon it. I expect to take that opinion and not withdraw the name. The resolution that was sent to me it is true doesn't make it necessary to have the appointment confirmed by the Senate, but I was glad to have them share that responsibility as a matter of policy. Then there is another practical reason that unless the name is confirmed by the Senate there is no means by which any compensation can be paid or any expenses met for the necessity of carrying on investigation and litigation. So that while the original resolution doesn't make it necessary for the confirmation, the other bill that came to me making the appropriation of \$100,000 for things of this kind did specifically provide that appointments under it should be confirmed by the Senate.

X My conference with Chief Justice Taft had no relation to the selection of an Attorney General.

I haven't appointed the members of the American Mixed Claims Commission yet.