

March 4, 1924.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

Here is a somewhat standard inquiry about the Mexican Mixed Claims Commission. So far as I know the treaty has not come through, though it may have reached the State Department. I haven't any information about it, and if it has reached there it hasn't been published or promulgated, or whatever may be necessary. So that I haven't done anything further about the matter of the appointment of the members of the Commission.

I have three or four inquiries about the tax bill. X My position in relation to the tax bill is the same as it was when I gave my message to the Congress and the same as it has been in the several public statements that I have made since that time. I want a reduction in taxation and a scientifically drawn plan of taxation. I think the administration bill meets those requirements. X Now the House has passed a bill and the bill, of course, goes to the Senate. There will be hearings there before the Committee, and I am in hopes that the Committee will be able to report out for the favorable consideration of the Senate the original administration bill. Now I don't know that there may be some things in it that ought to be changed. It would be very unlikely that such would not be the case, or to put it into the affirmative instead of twice in the negative, it would be very probable that such would be the case. A discussion of a measure of that kind always brings out points that it would appear ought to be strengthened in order to make the bill more acceptable. But I am for the bill so far as I know as it was originally drafted, with those possible slight changes, and I am very much in hopes that the Senate can produce something of that kind which it will pass, and which the House will ultimately agree to. Now there isn't any use of my undertaking to speculate about what I might do with some hypothetical bill that might reach me. You know and I know, and everybody knows, that I don't know what I will do with it. I shall have to take that matter up when it reaches me. To be specific, you want to know whether I would veto it. I don't know. You want to know whether I would sign it. I don't know about that. I shall work for the administration bill, and when the tax bill finally reaches me, I want to dispose of it in accordance with what I think is for the benefit of the country. My great desire is to secure taxation that will be for the benefit of our country. That doesn't mean to tax any particular



class, this class or that class, but to raise sufficient revenue with which to meet our public expenditures in accordance with the best economic plan that the experiences of the country can devise. I think I have made that as plain as I know how. I am in favor of the original bill, and when that bill comes here I shall still expect to be in favor of it. I don't know what I might do with some hypothetical measure that may come to me. Nobody can tell now what kind of a bill will come to the President. I think it is always inappropriate for the President to run out and publish that he will veto this measure, or that measure, or the other measure, and that it is better to wait until the measure comes and take appropriate action at that time, approving it if it will be to the benefit of the country, and disapproving it if it isn't to the benefit of the country. X I am speaking now generally, and not of the tax bill.

I haven't yet been able to make up my mind about a successor to Mr. Denby. I sometimes sit here at my desk and wish that I had the information at my command that is represented by you men. If I had all that information of the country and the men in it, as you do in your combined experiences, I could reach out and pick out a man for any place that the Government might need one to serve in, and that brings me to the suggestion that if any of you think of the right kind of a man for the Secretaryship of the Navy, and I am perfectly serious about this, though it might seem offhand as a little unusual, I should be very grateful to you if you will drop me a line or give the name to Mr. Slemp. I am searching the industrial world and the commercial world to see if I can find a seasoned executive that can take up the work of the administration of the Navy Department. It is difficult to find a man who meets all the requirements, and I don't expect to find such a man, but I do think I can find one that meets the majority of the requirements, and that is about all we can hope for. As soon as I find a man of that kind, I shall, after appropriate inquiries, submit his name to the Senate. We want a man of course of ability and character, and if I can find a great merchant, or if I can find <sup>the</sup> a head of a great industrial or manufacturing establishment that would meet the requirements that I have in mind, I shall submit his name. There are some engineering problems involved now on account of the oil leases, but they are not predominant; they are somewhat accidental and other talent could be called in to give advice on those. However, it may be that if I could get hold of the right kind of an engineer that it would be helpful under these circumstances.



I have an inquiry here about the McNary-Haugen bill. I am in entire sympathy with the objects of this bill, which is to benefit the wheat raisers. That is a problem on which I have been constantly engaged ever since I landed in Washington last August. It is very pressing, and an important problem. I referred to it in my message to the Congress, and I referred to that problem in my address in New York. I don't know that I can say anything further than what was presented in those two addresses. I have never been able to make up my mind entirely about the benefits that this bill would secure to the farmers, and for that reason I have had it under investigation by experts. If it will be beneficial to the farmers, I think the country ought to adopt it, even though it might cost something out of the public treasury, though it is claimed that that would not be the case under the provisions of the bill. On the other hand, it is claimed it would simply be a delusion and not of any real benefit. But we have to know that before we undertake to put it into operation. It is a very intricate measure in its provisions. About all I can say about it is that my mind is open about it, as I have told people constantly. I understand that is exactly the position of the Secretary of Agriculture. He and I have discussed the measure and have never been quite certain about it. There are men in his Department that are very certain that this would be a very beneficial bill. If my investigation leads me to that conclusion, I shall favor it. If on the other hand ~~xxxxxx~~ my advices should lead to a different conclusion, and they seem to be conflicting at present, I should <sup>not</sup> want to favor it. That is the present state of my mind in relation to it.

I have only had a telegram and a short note from the Attorney General since he left Washington. He sent me a telegram on his arrival in Chicago, saying that he was writing to me and sent me a note telling of his work up there and his expectation that the grand jury would report an indictment, which the grand jury did, and that he was on his way from there to his wife, who is ill in Miami. Those are the only communications I have had from him. I think that covers the situation this morning.