

Friday, October 2, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I asked Mr. Dalton of Cleveland to make a survey of the activities of the Shipping Board and the work of the Emergency Fleet Corporation, to see whether he can make any suggestions for an improvement in the service. That broadly is the whole of the duty that I picked him to perform. I took him from the Lake Region because those people that live on that shore that have to do with shipping almost always have some interests that conflict with the interests of the United States ships. Mr. Dalton is entirely neutral so far as that is concerned. He talked without any prejudices and perhaps his work for that reason would secure more of a hearing.

I don't know that there is any special comment I can make on the action of the Board in depriving Admiral Palmer of the authority that he had there for some time. I didn't agree with the wisdom of such action, but I am not an expert on those things. I based my judgment on such information and advice as has constantly come to me from those who understand about this kind of work. Senator Jones, a member of the Committee in the Senate, who is the author I believe of the present law, represented to me that the present law contemplated having a President of the Fleet Corporation to have charge of the running of the fleet, and such other practical shipping men, two committees of my Cabinet joined with one or two members of the Shipping Board I think made similar reports to me. Apart from the Cabinet there was the Secretary of the Treasury, the Secretary of War and the

Secretary of the Navy and the Secretary of Commerce. It is my recollection they were joined by Chairman O'Connor and Admiral Palmer. Then there was another committee of the Cabinet. And all of the advice, as I say I have been able to secure, was to the point that it would be very much better to have the operation of the fleet under the control of a single individual than to try to have it transacted by a board composed of seven different members.

Press: Would you mind telling us whether you consider any further action in regard to Mr. Haney?

President: Well, I don't know about that. I had expected that he would see the impropriety of remaining on the Board after I had requested his resignation. I wouldn't want to say now that I would or would not take any further action.

I have here a question about the location of a monument as a memorial to President Roosevelt. I have been interested in having a memorial erected to him. I don't know where it ought to be located. I should put a good deal of reliance upon the recommendation of the Arts Commission. This question wants to know about locating it between the Washington Monument, or south of the Washington Monument, I suppose that means between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. Now I don't know offhand what the plans are for the use of this area. The question has been studied by those who have helped to lay out the City of Washington and especially by the Arts Commission. My offhand opinion would be that it would be more proper to put this monument in some other location. But, as I say, I should be guided very largely so far as I am concerned, by what the Arts Com-

mission think. I am very pleased to say that I don't think of any other location that would be better. I think there has been some talk about placing the Roosevelt Memorial up near to the entrance of Rock Creek Park, taking into consideration the great interest that President Roosevelt had in outdoor recreation and having in mind those things that naturally occur to one in connection with the park, a place of horseback riding, the suggestion of game hunting, all those things. I have heard that discussed, but I haven't any finished judgment about it myself. It ought to be somewhere where it would come under the observation of a good many people.

I knew that Secretary Weeks was coming to Washington, either the latter part of this week or the latter part of next week. I wasn't certain of which. I don't know the purpose for which he is coming. I only learned from Secretary Davis that he is going from Lancaster, N.H. down to Boston and then is expected to come from Boston to Washington. I don't expect to be able to attend the Princeton-Navy football game at Baltimore on the 17th of October.

The matter of the French debt settlement has been already canvassed so completely that it is rather doubtful whether I can add any new light to it. As I understand it, the French Commission has said that they would need necessarily an interval for the purpose of restoring their currency, balancing their budget, and funding their domestic debt and finishing up the restoration of their damaged areas. They represented that during that time they might be able to pay \$40,000,000 a year as their capacity, so that as I understand it the

American Commission taking into consideration these representations from the French suggested that we make a temporary adjustment in accordance with those conditions. That would give the French a time to recover. This doesn't really constitute a break in the negotiations, but is merely a recess, so that the present negotiations can be taken up at any time. I think the French made a very sincere effort to make a settlement and no doubt regret, as I think all of us do, that we weren't able to secure a full and complete meeting of minds. There are one or two matters perhaps that might be cleared up. I think it has been represented in the press that there was a division in the American Committee or Commission, and perhaps that that included me. There hasn't been any division in the Commission, as I understand it, on any subject that the Commission has decided. I presume it is very likely that some members of the Commission would favor making a lower settlement and some a higher settlement than others, but every question that has come up for decision has been decided by the unanimous action of the American Commission. Then there is another rather fanciful story it seems to me to the effect that negotiations were broken off and failed to be successful on account of some indiscretion that it was alleged of some publicity agent on the part of the French Commission. I think if you will just look at the sequence of events you will see that that could not have been true. Just before 4:00 o'clock Wednesday afternoon there was a meeting between the American Subcommittee and the French Subcommittee, the American subcommittee consisting of Secretary Mellon, Senator Smoot and Mr. Crisp. It was at that time that Mr. Caillaux made his offer, and Secretary Mellon told me that he said to Mr. Caillaux that the Americans would

submit that to their full Commission but he thought it unlikely that it would be accepted, whereat the French subcommittee withdraw, the other members of the American Commission came in, and the American subcommittee made a unanimous report to the full American Commission against accepting the offer of Mr. Caillaux, and at the same time the plan was devised and drawn up and put on paper of accepting \$40,000,000 each year for a term of five years, and it was at that time agreed that they would present to me on Thursday morning at 9:00 o'clock a plan of their offer to have the American Government accept \$40,000,000 for five years. So you will see that there couldn't have been any newspaper indiscretion that had any effect at all on the Commission nor could it have had any on me. There was no disagreement on the part of the American members and no disagreement on my part with any one of them or with all of them. It was true that Secretary Mellon arrived here a few minutes before the rest of the Commission did yesterday morning, but when he arrived it was to tell me exactly what the rest of the Commission told me after they came in. They hadn't been willing to accept the French offer and proposed to make this new offer. Now, as I say, I think the French Commission made a very candid effort to try to make a settlement, and I think that policy may be said of the American Commission. I am sorry that conditions were such that they couldn't agree, but it seems to me that there is very good possibility that either during this interval of five years or at its conclusion the French economic condition may be such that a settlement may be effected at that time.