

Tuesday, October 20, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I have several questions here relating to an Arms Conference, rather a Limitation of Arms Conference. These are hypothetical questions and I don't want to undertake to commit the Government in any way in advance of specific questions. I think I can repeat what I said at the last conference - that it was exceedingly gratifying to have the European nations make the agreements which they made at Locarno. The Department was expecting to receive the text today - I think they are published. I have conferred with Secretary Kellogg about them and he will make, or have made, a careful analysis and study of them in the Department. At the time the Dawes plan was entered into it was thought necessary to secure the active cooperation of American citizens in order to reach an agreement, but the great outstanding fact there was that an agreement was finally made. This Locarno agreement is a step in advance of that, and aside from the details of the agreement it seems to me that the great outstanding and satisfying fact is that it is a very clear indication that public opinion in Europe has become sufficiently settled that the suspicions and hatreds that were generated by the war have been sufficiently dissipated so that the actual political representatives of the governments were able to get together and make an important agreement of this kind. I should perhaps have said when I was speaking of the Dawes agreement that one of the fundamental things about that was that it was not made by the political representatives of the governments at that time, but was made by experts that were called in that didn't have any political considerations at stake. It

seems to me the present agreement is exceedingly encouraging on account of that feature. Of course I regard it also as encouraging on account of what it has done. It has been well said that it is perhaps the most important action taken in Europe since the signing of the Armistice. Now, I had been waiting for something of that kind before taking any active steps about considering the calling of a Disarmament Conference at Washington. I think I told the newspaper conference some time ago that a very large part of the considerations that have come before a Disarmament Conference relate peculiarly and almost entirely to Europe. That would be so in relation to any land disarmament. We have reduced our land forces so that that isn't an American question, and while I would like to have an Arms Conference here because it could include both land and naval forces, yet I wouldn't want to take any step that would be construed or in effect embarrass the European nations in solving their own problems of land disarmament. I wouldn't want to make the slightest criticism of any action they were taking that pointed in that direction, or have our Government say or do anything that would in the slightest way embarrass the bringing of that proposal to a successful conclusion. Now that is about the only attitude I can express at the present time. It is possible for the European nations to hold a Disarmament Conference that to my mind would be exceedingly useful, and which might make agreements that would be of great benefit not only to the European nations but to all the world. If they can do that I hope very much that they will. If the question of naval limitations is to be considered, then I suppose it would be



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necessary to include America, and it was for that special reason that I thought there would be greater hope of reaching a successful conclusion if an Arms Conference was held in this country. But I can't answer those questions in advance of whether we are going to have a conference here, whether we would attend a conference abroad, until specific proposals have been made. When they are made, why then we will see whether it is best to accept them. Nor can I say whether we should want to call a conference here until there has been a preliminary sounding out of nations it would be proposed to invite, in order to find out whether such a proposal was agreeable to them. I might restate too the well known and what I hope is becoming the historic attitude of our Government, of desiring to do everything that we can, without jeopardizing our own interests, to help the European situation. We have realized all along that it would be useless to have any thought over there that there must be a constant reliance on us. I think I have stated in some of my addresses that we couldn't help people very much until they showed a disposition to help themselves. I think that disposition is becoming more and more apparent abroad every day, and it is a rising of a condition that is exceedingly gratifying to those that want to help and those that want to see the European situation progressively developed.

I haven't any information about any proposed action by the War Department in relation to Colonel Mitchell, and any information that is to be given out about that would come from them.

I haven't made any statement or taken any action relative to a further

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extension of leave to General Butler. I think you are all familiar with the letter that I sent to the Mayor about a year ago and its contents. I don't feel called on to make any statement about it or take any further action until the Mayor has acted.

These inquiries seem to be pretty much all in relation to the situation abroad which I have discussed, and the leave of General Butler which I think I have covered. If you want to have any more information about that why consult my letter which was made public about a year ago.