

Friday, December 18, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I haven't decided about further nominations to the Shipping Board.

Mr. Lissner's time doesn't expire until the first of January. And some conferences are going on among the Senators about a successor to Commissioner Haney.

There isn't anything very definite that I can say about the Sesqui-centennial Exposition at Philadelphia. I suppose I am booked for exhibition and that will probably be on the 4th of July. The matter of an appropriation is being considered. Mr. Hoover is in some way officially or semi-officially connected with the effort to have the exposition, and he is working out the details. I understand that he has canvassed the different departments to see what exhibit they would make and how much room it will take, and when he finds out about that why he will be able to make some recommendation about an appropriation. I think the State of Pennsylvania has appropriated \$750,000,000 and the City of Philadelphia -- how much is it that the City of Philadelphia is appropriating? Some way it lay in my mind \$3,000,000. But what we are working on is to see how much it would take to put on the exhibition that the different departments are willing to furnish. Then there is some suggestion about an Army and Navy exhibition. The Navy Yard is right next to the fair grounds, so that wouldn't be particularly difficult. There would be much more difficulty about using troops up there and having an exhibition of artillery, and things of that nature. Now what all that will cost, I don't know. I tried to find out what it will cost, what the local authorities, state and

municipal, are planning to expend and make our expenditures accordingly. The Secretary of War has had a man up there, but he said his representation to the people in charge of the exhibition was that the War Department would incur no expenditure. They might furnish some troops and artillery, and so on, but without expenditure. And I think there is some plan to have a C.M.T.C. there for boys.

Press: Does that mean that if you carried troops there the exposition would have to bear the transportation expense?

President: Well, not necessarily. But what the Secretary of War told them was that he had no authority to incur any expenditure. The matter of expenditures and the matter of exhibition is being taken up in detail by Mr. Hoover.

I have indicated that as conditions now are I would be willing to approve a bill creating another member for the Interstate Commerce Commission, another office for it, and that I would expect to make that appointment from the South. There is a suggestion for regional appointments. I doubt very much if that is expedient, but I would be glad to appoint a member from the South as I have several times indicated, and would be glad to approve a bill appointing - designating or increasing the number, so that I could appoint someone from the South. I think it has also been suggested that perhaps there should be two more members. I hardly think that would be necessary. Vacancies are occurring all the time by one way or another. Nobody expected Mr. Potter would resign. He did. There are always vacancies occurring on a board as large as that.

Press: Would the member be a democrat?

President: I don't think that would make any difference one way or the other. I should imagine that he would be a Democrat, but that is a matter of small consequence on a judicial board of that kind.

I have two or three inquiries about western waterway development. I covered that pretty well in my message. I of course didn't mention all the rivers, but I mentioned the main lines and that of course includes their tributaries. I think I probably said nothing about - the Missouri would be included in Kansas City - but I said nothing I think about the Illinois River. That would be included in the Great Lakes to the Gulf waterways, and of course the upper Mississippi would come in. The fact is that the Secretary of War is now having investigated the question of what legal authority he has to provide for a like line or a similar line of boats on the upper Mississippi, running from somewhere, St. Paul, Minneapolis or beyond, down to St. Louis, to correspond with those that run from St. Louis to the Gulf. That was an experimental project, but of course - from St. Louis to the Gulf - with the idea that if it proved profitable, which it has - I don't mean by that that it has made very much money, but it showed that it was commercially feasible, that it would then be disposed of. It has been proven I think to be commercially feasible and can be disposed of at any time, and the Secretary of War is investigating the project of having similar lines run from St. Paul down to St. Louis and beyond. Now, this is largely, as I indicated, the other day, a matter of money. The present budget carries I think at least \$10,000,000 that could be devoted to this purpose. I am quite naturally waiting to see what happens to the tax bill to see if any more

money can be made available for the present year. Now of course I stand by the budget, as I have submitted it, for the present, but I understand that we have to have a supplementary budget probably for the river and harbor work for the present year, and when that comes up then there will be an opportunity to consider the needs here. I understand that it is probable that \$10,000,000 more could be profitably spent in a year. That is \$20,000,000 a year. Now that all depends on whether the tax bill is increased, so that it entirely exhausts any probable excess of income over outgo.

Press: Would that be spent on the Mississippi system?

President: Well, on that general system. The Ohio I think is to be increased in two or three years. I think we have about 30,000 men working on that. It is completed from Pittsburgh well down toward the Mississippi.

I haven't any specific information about the amount carried in the budget for the prevention of tuberculosis. I would have to say about that and about all these things that so far as I know the amount carried in the budget seems to be wise. Now the budget is made up in this way. Departments make their recommendations. It is for the Department to show that the money it has asked for in the preliminary budget is needed. The Bureau of the Budget doesn't undertake to show that it isn't, but on the other hand all the Bureau recommends is what the Department proves is needed. That would be what was done here or with any other item. Now, that isn't the end of the budget. It goes up to the Congress and as I pointed out in my Message they have the right to increase or diminish it, and oftentimes it happens there is an arrival of new evidence after the budget goes to the Congress. I think

the disposition in the House is rather to enlarge it then reduce it on the whole, but our experience under the budget I think has shown that the appropriations on the whole are within one or two percent of what the budget has recommended. Now this may be too small, or too large. I haven't any information. If this inquiry is instigated by some one that is interested and thinks it is too small, why they have an opportunity to appear before the House Committee ~~of~~ and give their testimony about it, or before the Department of Agriculture for a supplementary budget.

I expect to appoint Mr. Woodlock. I am waiting to see what can be done about the other member.

I think there has been a Tacna-Arica appeal. It will be taken up and considered right away and disposed of as well as I can on its merits.

The invitation from the League of Nations has been received and it is being considered both here and at the State Department, and in the Senate, to see what reply we can make and to study the probable effect of it, and it will be disposed of in accordance with the principles laid down in my message.

There isn't any comment I can make on the courtmartial of Colonel Mitchell. That will come before me for decision.

I don't know enough about the workings of the school board of the District to know whether it is feasible to have them elected or not. I recall about that what was an interesting incident to myself. When I studied geography I was very certain that it said in the geography that there were certain elections held by the people of the District, and when I was candidate for Vice President I came through Washington and some of the local newspaper men here inquired of me whether

I was in favor of elections in the District, and I told them that I thought they had local elections here now. I didn't happen to be correct, but it came about by reason of what I had remembered of my geography days. It seemed very curious to some of the newspaper men who were considerably younger than I, that I must be very much mistaken about it. I don't know what could be done. I want to have the schools of the District up to the very best condition. Whether they could be improved by having an elective school board - that is the direct question - or not, I do not know. And I haven't any mature views about the matter of general suffrage in the District. I can see a great many difficulties. Of course I am pretty well committed to local self-government, and having people elect their own officers. But of course I have also had it brought to my attention, though not in any discussion of what ought to be done here in the District, the rather sorry plight of the national government of one of the countries abroad. It has no jurisdiction whatever over the local police. It is never certain whether it is going to have police protection. It is in a certain city and it is there rather as a matter of suffrage. Now, the United States Government couldn't submit to anything of that kind. It has to have absolute authority to protect itself and pretty nearly absolute authority over local police, and in order to have authority over local police it has to have pretty general authority over the government of a locality. This of course is a Federal city set apart for the carrying on of the business of the United States Government. Pennsylvania is interested in it, the States of Washington and Oregon are interested in the Government here in the District of Columbia no less than Maryland and Virginia. And those states are interested in it no less than persons that live here. So it makes a

difficult and complicated question, and unless there appear to be very serious abuses of some kind or another I should be rather inclined to let the present method of government go on. They tried local government here one time with an elective Mayor, I think, and then they went back to the present system.

I haven't done anything further about reappointing District Attorney Gordon. He is in office and of course stays there. There is no haste about it.

I expect to appoint Major Graham to succeed Colonel Sherrill. I spoke to him about it. He is glad to take the position, but as I always say I can never promise what I am going to do because something may come up about which I have no information at present.

I have signed one or two pardons that are to take effect I noticed on Christmas eve, or the 23rd of December. I hadn't in mind any specific number.