

Friday, December 4, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I haven't examined with enough care the proposal of Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr. for a Secretary of Aviation, so that I can comment on it very intelligently. I received a telegram from him yesterday, I think, or the day before, making a suggestion of that kind which I thought I would consider when I had time to look at it in connection with the report that has been made by the Air Board. I thought from a hasty examination of it that it went considerably beyond what the Air Board had proposed and my first inclination is to accept the proposals that have been made by the Air Board, that is the strengthening of the Departments of War and Navy and Commerce by the appointment of Assistant Secretaries, and perhaps strengthening the General Staff of the Army and the Operations I think it is and Navigation Bureaus of the Navy by additional airmen.

I haven't any information about the use of funds in Texas in relation to the building of roads, about which there is a controversy down there, other than that which I have gleaned from a hasty glance at the headlines. I don't know whether it has any connection or not with the expenditure of Federal funds. I didn't suppose it had, it may have - I didn't know that it did.

There is nothing new that I can give you in relation to the developments in Tacna-Arica. There are difficulties there in arranging for the holding of a plebiscite, but as I have indicated before it is a matter of such importance to the welfare of Peru and Chile, and the general welfare of South American countries, that

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I assume the difficulties will be solved and the plebescite held in accordance with my finding as Arbitrator.

I haven't any information about the proposal that has been made by the Disarmament Council of the League of Nations to invite the United States to become a member of a Special Commission that is to be created to prepare for an International Conference for reduction of Armaments, other than that which is contained in the question here, which indicates that that is an A. P. dispatch. I wouldn't want to make any definite commitment of course until such a proposal as that reaches us. It will then be examined and given careful consideration. Of course our country has been perhaps foremost in trying to advance the policy for a reduction, I suppose this means a limitation of armaments, and that policy we want to advance in the future.

I think there is some statute in relation to the power of the President to send representatives abroad to partake of the function of Special Commissions, and there is also some provision that was made at the time of the adoption of our treaty with Germany in relation to our cooperation or taking part in the activities of the League. Those two considerations would have to be given due weight in order to determine what powers the President may have. It may be that there is a statutory provision against accepting an invitation of this kind, or taking part in the functions of a Commission such as this is proposed to be. That is why I say it is difficult to comment on it until the actual text reaches here, so that it may be examined in detail. I do want to make it plain though,

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that our country has great sympathy with any effort that is to be made in this direction and hopes that it may be successful.