

February 13, 1925.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

I am expecting to release the report of the special board on the air problem (the Naval Board) the first thing next week. I found that it raised several supplementary questions that I wanted to get answered and the desire to have the answers to those questions go out with the report itself has caused the delay.

I haven't had any special talk about the rent control bill. Senator Ball spoke to me about it and thought that they could secure some legislation. He said the committee is working to perfect legislation that would be a remedy for the situation.

I think I have sent to the Congress a recommendation for an appropriation for \$50,000, through the Budget, for the repair of the roof on the White House. I don't know whether that is to be used on the roof itself. I think it is more especially to be used for making it safe from fires, enclosing wires, and so on - there are a great many pipes and wires running up in the space between the roof and the upper floor-and perhaps for strengthening the roof or something of that kind. The long time that the roof has been on has resulted in some settling of the timbers. I want to see that it is put in shape where it wont break down anywhere.

I haven't any idea whether the Department of Justice plans any further prosecution on account of the Veterans Bureau cases. It would be rather unusual if I knew about it. If they were planning any further prosecutions, I imagine they think they ought not to give it to the press until they had moved or taken some action in the courts.

I think I have signed the bill limiting the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court over the Department of Justice. That came over from the Department of Justice before lunch, I think, and I signed it just before I went to lunch. It had the recommendation of the Attorney General saying that while there were some things in the bill that he would have had different, he thought on the whole the bill was an improvement over the present situation. I recall that bill going over the desk and reading the report of the Attorney General in looking over the bill. That was either just before or just after lunch. If there had been any delay it had been due to the time it had taken to make a careful and thorough

study of it in the Department of Justice.

I don't know of anything I can say more about the return of alien property than what I said the other day. I spoke then more about the practical difficulties. Of course, when it comes to a question as to what our rights are, I suppose they are absolutely in our own hands. We have a right to return it if we wish. But the effect it might have on other nations that are interested in securing money from Germany to meet their claims, I think would be what I have indicated. I think it is entirely a domestic subject, limited of course only by the treaty that we made with Germany. Insofar as that may limit it, it is a little outside of a domestic question, but no other nation other than Germany and the United States has any legal right about it, as I understand it. I think that is set out perhaps in the last paragraph of the Paris agreement, which specifically says that it doesn't change any rights of the different signatories.

I don't know of any understandings that were reached at the Paris Conference, other than those incorporated in the published text of the agreement. Any understanding that might have been reached between the European powers I would know nothing about, and I don't know of any in relation to ourselves.

Mr. President can I revert to the German property settlement? You told us Tuesday that ~~if~~ you hadn't read the text of Senator Borah's bill. Have you read it since?

No, I haven't read it. I have talked with Senator Borah and he and I seem to be in entire accord in relation to it. He would like to see the property returned, but he doesn't feel that it is a matter that can be taken up now, and I have the same view about it. We would like to keep intact that great principle of not having private property seized during a war. We undertook to assert that principle, of course, in the treaty that was made with Germany, by the provision that the German Government was to repay the German nationals for their property that we had seized. Now conditions change. There may be some way that can be figured out by which we can return the property. Perhaps Mr. Borah can figure out some method that will seem acceptable. Perhaps I can. We haven't been able to do so at the present time, and I don't think any suitable provisions (I notice suitable provisions here is in quotation marks, referring I suppose to language

that is in the Knox-Porter resolution and which is incorporated in the Germany treaty), I don't think any suitable provisions have yet been arrived at under which we can return the German property.

I can't make any comment about deferring consideration on the nomination of Charles B. Warren until after the 4th of March. I have sent up the nomination. I want him to be confirmed. The Senate will have to be the judge of when the best time comes for consideration of the nomination. They have to get the appropriation bills through, and some other legislation. This is a matter that will be decided by the Senate alone, and they may think that for that reason they shouldn't spend any great amount of time discussing it before the 4th of March because they can decide it after the 4th and it isn't necessary to legislate before the 4th of March. What I want to make plain is that it is entirely in the hands of the Senate for such action as they may think is most feasible, taking everything into consideration, the shortness of the time, necessity for legislation, possibility of some debate, and everything of that nature.

I don't know of anything in the agreement reached in Paris that is in any way embarrassing to the administration, and I don't know of any basis for the report that Ambassador Kellogg was thinking of not taking the position of Secretary of State. I think his experience in the last year and a half in Europe gives him a knowledge of affairs over there that will be especially helpful in the present administration of the office of Secretary.

I have already spoken about the report of the Navy General Board.

I don't think I have decided upon any specific appointment for the new Chief Justice in the Philippines, to succeed the late Chief Justice. I do feel that we should continue the policy there of appointing a native Filipino. I think that several recommendations have been made and nearly all of them would seem to be satisfactory. Very likely I can make a choice there after consultation with the Secretary of War and the Department of Justice within a short time.

I haven't been advised of the recommendations to be made in the forthcoming report of the House Committee which inquired into conditions in veterans' hospitals. That wouldn't naturally come to me. The recommendations would be made - well there is a certain element that might come - the recommendations would usually

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be made relative to legislation and there might be recommendations relative to administration, and when they come to me I should try and have them put into effect. That is a matter that would more likely have been discussed with the head of the Veterans' Bureau, General Hines, than with me.

That covers the inquiries of the day.