

NEWSPAPER CONFERENCE --

Friday, March 13, 1925.

I have here several questions today about the possibility of another arms conference for the limitation of naval armament. I do not know that there is anything new I can say about that. The only change that there is in the conditions -- and I appreciate that it is an important change, and may have perhaps a very deciding and favorable result so far as we are concerned in the desire of having an arms conference -- is the news item relative to the conference that had been proposed in Europe. I judge that that has been abandoned. I am not entirely certain about that. If it has been, it would leave the way open for further consideration here. Of course, there are a great many things that enter into a question of that kind. Mr. Kellogg and I have been very busy on routine matters of his Department, and I have not had a chance to discuss with him anything of this nature. We cannot sit down here in peace and decide whether something of that kind would be feasible. The method of procedure would be to send out to the different nations to see whether they would look with favor on an invitation to attend such a conference. If it was found that they would, we could then proceed. If it was found that some of them would not want to come, that might make a conference impossible; or it might be possible to leave out some and go forward with the others. But I haven't anything - as I often use the phrase - definitely in mind about it other than what I have already stated in my public addresses and statements.

I want to see a further limitation of naval armament. I would delight to see something relative to a limitation of land armament, but we have made our reduction of land armament



and we haven't anything we could offer in that respect. Several of the European nations have made their reduction, so that they have nothing to offer. And I would not want to put the United States and other nations in a position of attempting to coerce any of the nations that might have considerable land armaments into a reduction against their will, as such action would not be helpful - it would not be productive of that harmony and peaceful intercourse that we want to maintain with all other armed countries. But if it appears that the European proposal has been definitely abandoned, why then I am going to take up with Secretary Kellogg seriously the question of whether the time has come when we can take some steps.

By the way, I notice some suggestion in some paper that I had stated that some approaches had been made. I was not conscious of making any statement other than that the United States had not approached any one. I think some of the British people talked to Secretary Kellogg quite informally, not in the nature of an approach, and discussed the general situation with him shortly before he came here, and it was so stated on the floor of Parliament, but it wasn't anything in the way of formal proposals, and it did not emanate from us.

QUERY: No approaches were made by this Government?

THE PRESIDENT: What took place was exactly what was stated on the floor of Parliament - that one of the British Ministers had talked with Secretary Kellogg about it.

QUERY: No approaches were made on the part of Great Britain?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It would be rather unfortunate if some other European nations thought we had approached Great Britain and had neglected to approach them. Of course,



we would not do anything of that kind. Any approaches that we would make would be made simultaneously to all of those countries that might possibly be interested.

QUERY: Is it possible that suggestions from the United States might come very soon?

THE PRESIDENT: I cannot give you anything more definite than what I have said. If it appears that this European proposal has been definitely abandoned, then I am going to take the matter up with Mr. Kellogg and give it serious consideration.

QUERY: Have you given any thought as to when such a conference could be held and where?

THE PRESIDENT: I would prefer to hold it in Washington. That is a mere preference on my part. It might develop that some other place might be more desirable. I think this is a desirable atmosphere for holding such a conference.

QUERY: Have you had any time in mind?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

THE PRESIDENT (Continuing): Here is another interesting question -- I touched on this general subject slightly in my Inaugural Speech -- asking whether I will not discuss the possibility of early withdrawal of the American occupation of Haiti. Of course, we want to withdraw. We had made some plans to withdraw. We have there a few marines - sent there for the purpose of maintaining peace and order and protecting American interests, and, incidentally, perhaps more than incidental, for protecting also the Haitians. But the Government of Haiti sent a very strong request that we continue the occupation, and that we have done.

I am reminded in relation to that of the great satis-



faction I have in the Isle of Pines Treaty being ratified. That has been pending for nearly twenty-one years, and I am sure that the ratification of it would have a very decidedly good effect all over Latin America. It seems to me that it demonstrates pretty conclusively that our country wants to do right by all other countries; that it has no disposition to grab anything because it has the power to do it, but it rather shows the disposition to deal equitably, fairly, justly and honorably in general with the rights of the smaller countries, and, especially, to deal fairly with Cuba, in which we are interested, and over which we attempt to exercise a beneficent influence.

I haven't decided on a successor to Ambassador Houghton. If I could decide upon one and get the nomination confirmed at the present session I should like it very much, but it is a matter that requires a good deal of investigation of each candidate. I have not yet been able to settle finally on any one.

I have an inquiry here about Mr. Warren and his appointment as Attorney General. I chose him, as I have told you, after careful investigation and my own knowledge of him, and after an investigation made by the Department of Justice into that case that was tried in the Courts relative to the American Sugar Company and the beet sugar companies in Michigan; and it did not appear to us that there was anything there that constituted any blemish on his record. I thought that he was a man of high character, eminence at the bar, and great ability, and would make a fine Attorney General. He has given a great deal of time to public service and has been willing to accept this position at a good deal of personal sacrifice.



The sacrifice he has already made would be represented by a very large sum. I thought that he had failed of confirmation by such a narrow margin, and the vote was taken at a time when it was not possible adequately to present to the Senate his qualifications. I think the judgment to take the vote at that time was correct. Those of you who know about the Senate know that a condition will develop where you can take a vote and then if some one gets up and says two words it may be two weeks before another vote may be taken. But a great deal could have been said about Mr. Warren as to his standing and as to the high opinion that the people of Michigan hold in relation to him, and it would have to be put on record, and so, on account of this sacrifice that he has made and he having been willing to accept the office because I sought him out and solicited him, I thought I ought to give him the benefit of another nomination, and so I have done that. Now, I do not know what the attitude of the Senate will be. They will have to determine that.

I have here an ingenious suggestion that shows perhaps the difficulty of living up to what the standards of some of the Senators seem to be in relation to appointees to public office. This suggestion is that I should ask the Senate to send me a list of a dozen men - ideal men. Now, I cannot find such men, but some Senators evidently think that there are some whom I ought to present for the office: —

Irreproachable private character; proper legal standard; requisite executive ability; never in any way connected with any large corporate interest; never publicly discussed in a detrimental way.

Now, of course I have to appoint human beings to office. I want them to be honest and conscientious and desirous of performing public service, but I cannot find any men who quite come up to that standard and I doubt if there are any in existence. If I have to be held up to a standard as high as



that, I shall not be able to make any appointments.

QUERY: Is the person who submitted those qualifications suggesting any names?

THE PRESIDENT: No. He says I ought to ask the Senate for a dozen men who could meet those requirements.

QUERY: Is he humorous?

THE PRESIDENT: No. It is a suggestion, so that I may put the Senate "in a hole", as they say. I suppose that is the meaning of it. Of course, that I do not care to engage in.

QUERY: Do you care to express any opinion as to whether Mr. Warren ought to have a chance of self-defense?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that his qualifications ought to be presented to the Senate and go into the record, and that is one of the reasons why I have re-submitted his name. Telegrams have come in from people in Michigan, and I think that because of his character and eminence, it would be proper to have those go in the record.

THE PRESIDENT (Continuing): I haven't thought much, if anything, about a recess appointment. I hope very much that the necessity for that will not arise. I cannot make any statement because I haven't reached any determination. I simply try to discharge my duties as President of the United States in a way that would seem to be best for the people. I haven't a private opinion about it. I presume there are a good many other good men who could be appointed, though I haven't been able to think of any one that I could appoint who seemed to possess the qualifications as well as Mr. Warren does. There may be a good many others, and undoubtedly there are. I do



not know whether he would consent to a recess appointment. It is doubtful. I haven't considered that.

I think the Senate ought to realize that I have to have about me those in whom I have confidence; and unless they find a real blemish on a man, I do not think they ought to make partisan politics out of appointments to the Cabinet. I do not object to their criticising anything I do or any nomination I may make - that is to be expected - but I do not think it ought to be made a partisan question as to whether the nomination should be rejected. Otherwise, I would be in a position where I would not be able to function -- I would not be able to fill up my Cabinet. I realize the responsibility that the Senate has. I want to discharge my responsibility with such candor as I can, and I think probably the Senate will do the same.

I expect to appoint a Muscle Shoals Commission in accordance with the resolution or order (whichever it may have been) which was sent down here from the House.

I haven't any definite plans about trips away from Washington not already disclosed.

I did express the hope to Senator Borah this morning that the Senate would act on the Lausanne Treaty before adjourning. He also hoped that it might and is going to make an investigation to see if that can be done. It may appear that it is not wise to press the Treaty at this time. It is very important to our Missionary interests. I am told that every Missionary in Turkey is in favor of the Treaty, and it is also important on account of our commercial interests; and, in connection with our diplomatic interests, it would definitely fix our relations with Turkey by means of the ratification of this Treaty.



QUERY: Have you any information as to when the Senate may adjourn?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't.

THE PRESIDENT (Continuing): I have one question here whether some cases might come up relative to the sugar interests arising out of the Federal Trade Commission's reports. I do not think any case can come up there that would involve Mr. Warren or his former interests in any way. I understood that the company in which he had been interested had informed the Federal Trade Commission that they were perfectly willing that any order that the Commission might want to make should be made, and that there was nothing in which they had any interest.

I haven't decided yet about what I can do about filling the vacancy on the Interstate Commerce Commission.

I haven't had any report from the Department of Justice about any frauds in the distribution of Federal patronage in South Carolina and Georgia. I have seen that there were items in the papers about an investigation, which would not ordinarily come to me.

I am planning to carry out the order - I guess it was an Act of Congress - relative to the International Trades Exposition, to be held in New Orleans in September, and papers are being prepared in the State Department, I am told by Senator Ransdell, for my execution or signature relative to that. There is one which provides that I am to authorize some one to go about the United States, and I think there are others for inviting foreign countries.

I have never heard anything about the complaints in Boston as to the shipment of liquors into that territory from



Maryland and Pennsylvania. There may be some things like that but they have not come to my attention.

Here is an inquiry about the vacancy on the International Joint Commission having to do with the boundary between the United States and Canada, and an inquiry about the action which that Commission might take relative to the pollution of waters. It was my impression that the Commission did not act in cases of that kind. It is a Commission on the boundary rather than on waterways, and I think some one mentioned that to me not longer ago than yesterday when I made some inquiry. I do not think it is necessary for any treaty to be made for the International Commission to take any necessary steps relative to the stoppage of pollution, but about that I haven't any definite information. I do not know that they have any power. I think that we have ratified, or are about to ratify a boundary treaty between this country and Canada in a day or two. There are two eminent men on that Commission, both of them former Senators, - former Senator Clarke and former Senator DuBois, - who are able to take care of any interest that may arise under it; and while I expect to appoint a third member I haven't yet decided who ought to be appointed.

-----