

NEWSPAPER CONFERENCE -- Tuesday, March 17, 1925.

I haven't reached any final decision about the Attorney General. I have several inquiries here. Senator Curtis and Senator Robinson are coming down as a committee to wait on the President - I suppose to inquire whether there is any more business to submit to the Senate, and if not, what arrangements can be made for adjournment. I want to talk with them about this situation. I do not think, from my talks with Mr. Warren, I am convinced that he does not desire to take a recess appointment. He would take one if I insisted on it, but that is not his desire.

At this point there was quite noticeable commotion and the President said:

Well, now, if the members of the conference do not care to stay and hear what I have to say, I do not know whether I want to continue the conference. That is hardly courteous to the President, to come in and immediately when I make a statement, rush out.

A member of the conference stated to the President that he did not think any discourtesy was intended, and the President continued:

I think it is due to me when I make a statement that they (the members of the conference) wait to see what the statement is before they rush out. I am not imputing anything. I am conscious of the great courtesy of the members of the conference to me always. So I say no final decision has been made. I want to confer with the two Senators who are coming down and see what plans can be worked out. I do not think Mr. Warren wants to take a recess appointment. Perhaps he would take one if I -- I do not know just how to phrase it -- insisted that he perform this additional public service. He has already responded very generously to our request. I do not know what to do about trying to get another appointee. I hesitate a good deal to subject any one I might appoint to any such ordeal as confronted Mr. Warren. I

do not know whether I can get other men who are willing to put themselves to such a hazard or not. I think perhaps I can, but, nevertheless, if they are willing to do it I hesitate to subject them to anything of this kind. So I will have to talk with the two Senators and see what I can find out about the situation.

QUERY: When are they coming?

THE PRESIDENT: They just sent down word - left word yesterday - that they would want to confer with me this morning immediately on the convening of the Senate. They will be down very soon.

THE PRESIDENT (Continuing): I haven't seen anything about calling a world currency conference except an item in the newspapers, and I do not know enough about that subject to make any intelligent discussion of it. Senator Oddie thought the remarks about the plan, whatever it was, attributed to him in the newspapers had not emanated from him. That is not the question. The question is whether the plan was good, but I haven't taken up that at all and haven't any present plan about it. It is very natural that I would like to do anything I could that would be of benefit in the way of stabilizing the world's currency or anything of that kind, but I do not know of any action that is thought of at the present time.

A member of the conference stated that the newspaper articles were based on Senator Oddie's letter to the Gold and Silver Inquiry Commission which investigated the international currency situation.

THE PRESIDENT (Continuing): Well, that may be so. I know he has been very much interested in that kind of work, and I have here (picking up the book) this volume of "European Currency and Finance" that has been prepared by the Commission of Gold and Silver Inquiry, of which Senator Oddie is the Chairman. I suppose what he meant was that he had not intended to make any newspaper statement about it. I did not understand that he thought that his position had been misinterpreted.

I have already spoken about the situation in relation to Mr. Warren.

I do not think the Government has done anything relative to the St. Paul Railroad. I do not know that it has been presented other than the effort that was made for legislation. You will recall a bill was presented to Congress asking that authority be given to the Treasury to reduce the rate of interest, and the bill did not pass. I think it was not reported out of committee. A great effort was made to do that. So while this road owes the United States Government some forty or fifty million dollars on obligations bearing six per cent interest -- which are secured, and I think the security is fairly good -- the Government is very much interested in assisting this enterprise or any other enterprise it can. We did not get any legislation that would enable us to reduce the rate of interest. So I do not know of any other application that has been made to the Government for the purpose of relieving this road. I do not know of any possibility of any relief from the debt that the railroad owes to the Government. I do not know that this question is made in that light. I suppose relief is meant in the reduction of the interest or something of that nature. An attempt was made to get authority to grant relief from six percent down to four and a half per cent. That was not successful.

I am working on the report of the Tariff Commission on the rates on linseed oil. It is very difficult to get information on the part of the Commission that will give them an exact standard on which to make a report. Quite naturally the linseed oil people abroad are not anxious to have our rates high, and such information as is secured from that source is very likely to be that that would point to the lowering of the rates, and any information that might exist abroad that might tend to keep the rates where they are, or raise them, would not be secured. I think they secured information from only one or two producers abroad. That is just an example of some of the difficulties in arriving at a final decision on my part. The whole report is full of difficulties of that kind. The Tariff Commission made the best efforts it could make. I think they furnished me with a report on which I can base a decision.

Nothing further has been done about the sugar tariff.

I do not think any reports are coming to me from the Civil Service Commission about personnel. I do not recall any. I do not know of any considerable reductions that are likely to be made in the Government working force. I did speak the other day at a conference of a reduction that would naturally be made in that force that is carrying on the work of administering the bonus - because that is a temporary piece of work - and the effort that was made by the different departments to employ those who are losing their positions there rather than to seek those who are trying to come in from the outside.

I haven't had any reply from Mr. Carter as to any charges that have been made against him. I do not know that I had sent him any communication that called for a reply. It may be that some letter has come here to the office and in the usual course of business been referred to him -- perhaps by my notation on it or in the usual course in the outside office -- but I do not recall anything of that kind. I do recall that some paper came over suggesting that the law had not been carefully complied with in making some discharges in the Public Printing Office and that communication I sent to the Department of Justice. I imagine that they will be able to give me a report on that very soon.

I do not think I will be able to appoint a District Judge for the Western District of Michigan before the Senate adjourns because they do not yet seem to be agreed up there on those sources of information that would naturally be my avenue of approach as to what nomination ought to be made. When there is a vacancy in a place for Judge or something of that kind a lot of suggestions come in which on investigation usually finally taper down some, and that process has not gone on very much in the matter of the Michigan Judgeship. So I do not believe that I am going to get sufficient information before the adjournment of the Senate as to what ought to be done up there in order to make any decision.

I do not think there is anything further that I can say about any possible conference for a limitation of armament. That is a matter that is quite unformulated. While I have mentioned it casually to the Secretary of State, yet he has been so busy, during these first few days of his holding that office, about the routine and trying to get some foreign appointments ready, that we haven't had an opportunity to take that up.

I think that covers the inquiries of today.

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