

Friday, April 10, 1925.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

I don't know of any basis for the published stories that Secretary Weeks has resigned, nor do I know that there is any indication that he will resign. He is ill, but every report that I get in relation to his health indicates that he is making a complete recovery. Now, I don't know anything about his intentions.

Here is an interesting suggestion that there isn't very much on the horizon and would like to have me give some suggestions about news. I don't know what I can do about that. I want to help everyone I can. That inquiry about Secretary Weeks suggests to me that if you wanted to dig up a newspaper story about newspaper stories that have been published and didn't prove to be true, it makes quite a long story. Since I have been President three members of my Cabinet have resigned and one has died. I don't know how many of them the newspapers have resigned for me and how many reports have come that they were about to resign or had resigned. Perhaps some of you that have enterprise and enjoy research would like to look over that list and write a newspaper story about it, if you are short of some kind of copy.

I am glad to have any questions asked about anything. I don't want anybody to hesitate about asking questions. That is what I meant by my suggestion, I think at the last conference. I don't want to cut off newspaper discussion about anything. But it isn't helpful for me to keep talking about certain foreign relations unless there is some development that warrants some statement on my part. I didn't really want to keep rehashing practically the same thing, because it irritates foreign countries oftentimes and they wonder why the White House keeps making statements that don't appear to them to be very helpful.

The report of the Tariff Commission on potassium chlorate has come to me and I have sent it over to the Treasury to see if they have any suggestions to make on it. That is what I always do with those reports. It will probably be back here and ready for action in a very short time.

Question. Mr. President, is that a unanimous report?

Yes, that is a unanimous report.

I haven't had any advice from the Treasury as to the probable effect of the volume of March 15th income tax collections on tax revision. Mr. Mellon,

as you know, has been away for 10 days or so, and I haven't had a chance to talk with him since he got back about that matter. That is an interesting suggestion, and I shall want to take it up with him very soon.

I don't know that there is anything that I can add to what I have already said about the enforcement of the prohibitory law and the observance of it.

I haven't seen any report relative to the Chapman trial that gave any reason for any action on the part of the Federal Government. He is serving sentence - or was serving sentence - as I understand it, at Atlanta and escaped and was then taken by the Connecticut authorities and tried up there. I have assumed that the trial up there would be permitted to take its course. If he hadn't been convicted up there, of course the U. S. would have claimed him and returned him to Atlanta.

Question: Would it be necessary for the Government to issue an order or some court to issue an order abrogating the original sentence which he was to serve?

Answer: I can't tell you just what the technical requirements are. he was out of the jurisdiction of the United States authorities and was arrested by the Connecticut authorities. ~~It is a technical matter that the Government~~

Question: Mr. President, he was arrested by United States authorities.

Answer: Then whatever action was necessary has already been taken. It lay in my mind that he was arrested by the Connecticut authorities, but if he was arrested by the United States authorities and turned over, why I suppose that action is a continuing action until his sentence has been executed up there. Now, what right we have to claim him meantime, I don't know. I suppose that the action will stand and that he will be subject to the Connecticut authorities until his trial is ended and sentence ~~executed~~ executed. Of course, if it is a death sentence, why that is all there is to it. If he served a sentence, why then I suppose the natural way would be to have him retaken at the expiration of that sentence for the serving of his sentence in Atlanta. I don't know of any plan on the part of the United States Government to take any action, other than what it has taken. There might be some plan I don't know about. That is entirely in the hands of the Department of Justice, so it didn't come to my attention at all.

I don't know of any suggested survey of the independent bureaus and establishments. There is a certain survey going on all the time when suggestions come in for the budget. Outside of that I don't know of anything, and I don't know of any plan that is under way for reorganizing the Executive Departments. Mr. Madden didn't mention that this morning. He came in to say that he is about to take a trip abroad and inquired if he might bring in his grandchildren some time - he has three very promising grandchildren running from 7 to 12 or 15 - and I told him I would be delighted to see them.

There was nothing in the Cabinet meeting this morning.

I don't know of any development in relation to the Printing Office.

I have never had a chance to discuss with Representative Madden at any length a proposal that I know he has had in mind, for an annual rebate to taxpayers out of surplus funds in the Treasury. That hasn't been really necessary to consider up to the present time, because if there are surplus funds they are disposed of by taking them and paying off debts, which, in effect, is a rebate to the taxpayers. Now, whether it would be best to continue that method or whether some other method might be adopted, I am not prepared to say. I think there would be a good deal of difficulty about an annual rebate. It would require a good deal of bookkeeping and so on and so forth. I am rather inclined to think that the ~~next~~ present method is much more feasible - of taking any surplus money that you have and paying your debts with it. If there is apparently a large and likely to be a continuing surplus, why then you revise your tax laws and make a permanent rebate so that the money doesn't go into the Treasury from the taxpayer, and therefore doesn't have to be paid out. That of course is the feasible and practical way of dealing with a surplus. The other way might be adopted. I can see certain difficulties of execution that make it a somewhat ^{difficult} ~~difficult~~ proposition. But Mr. Madden is very familiar with the finances of the nation, and is a very excellent authority on them, and I shouldn't want to condemn out of hand, and don't want to be understood as condemning out of hand, any proposal that he seriously made, because I should feel pretty certain that when I came to talk with him I should find it is based on pretty sound and practical reason.

I don't know as I can comment on the resignation of Premier Herriot in a way that would be helpful. He came into power, as I recall it, on the suggestion of a little more liberal government over there and on a desire to arrange some settlement

with Germany relative to reparations. Now that was accomplished. It is a real accomplishment and I think a piece of work in which he can take a good deal of satisfaction. I judge that he has gone out of power on account of the great difficulty that has attended the French finances at the present time. I noticed the afternoon paper says that his statement is that he is not to blame about that, and that the difficulty existed before he came into power and is not the result of his action. I don't know what the effect will be on France. I imagine it will depend more or less on who comes into power over there. It is difficult for me to comment about it. Of course it is rather delicate to say much of anything about that. I guess that is about all I can say.

The correspondents started to leave the room.

I am not finished yet. There are some more questions here. That is about all I can say about Premier Herriot. I recall he was in to see me at one time.

Now, I haven't in mind the Russian and Japanese treaty, but I am very certain that it has been published in full and if any one wants to know just what there is in it and just what it provides for, and so on, of course the best way to do is to go and get the treaty and read it. There are certain interests that are not pleased with it, and there are those that put an interpretation on it that is different from what I supposed that the treaty warranted. But the way to find out just what the treaty provides for is to get the treaty out and read it, rather than rely on outside comment of those who are interested in it or those who are not interested in it.

That seems to cover the questions.