

Friday, April 24, 1925.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

I haven't seen the proposal said to have been made by General Pershing that the Government give financial assistance to our American Merchant Marine. That is a subject that has been under consideration by the Congress a number of times and they never passed a bill of that kind. I doubt very much if they could be persuaded to pass a bill of that nature now, notwithstanding the fact that the Shipping Board costs annually ~~all~~ expenses above receipts, from \$30,000,000 to \$50,000,000, not counting depreciation. You will all recall the effort that was made during President Harding's administration to provide a law of this kind, which failed. I think the effort that had been made previously to that was made by Senator Hanna, when he was in Washington along about 1900. That failed also. The Harding Shipping Board merchant marine bill went through the House, as I recall. It was said there were sufficient votes in the Senate to pass it, but it didn't come to a vote there. It was laid aside, as I recall, until the new election changed the complexion of the Senate in such a way that it was thought it couldn't pass and wasn't afterwards taken up and pressed for passage. That is a method that is adopted by countries that have a large merchant marine.

Question. Do you favor a subsidy, Mr. President?

Answer. Well, I should want to know what the nature of the assistance was going to be and how much it was going to cost, and what would probably be its effect.

I am not in favor of presenting a bill for that purpose at the present time, but if somebody has a plan I should look at it with a great deal of interest. Of course it is to be remembered that a great many American ships are being operated, some of them at a fair return, without the aid of any direct financial assistance from the United States Government. It has always been thought that if we were to have an adequate merchant marine, one that would give adequate service to all parts of the country and provide sufficient merchant ships to aid in defense in case of a national emergency, that it would be necessary to give it some financial assistance by the United States Treasury.

I haven't any official information about the disturbances in Bulgaria or a possible crisis involving Jugo-slavia, so that all I can say about that is, that like other Americans, I regret that either of those countries is involved in any internal or external difficulties, and trust that they may be able to find a way of peaceably composing them.

From such inquiries as I made and such information that came to me, I didn't see any reason for taking any action in relation to the Shipping Board. The rumor that came to me was that part of the Board were to appear in court in a way that I thought was virtually a suit against the United States Government and a suit against the Board itself. Some communications that came to me said that that was not the case, so I don't see any reason for taking any further action .

There are no additional diplomatic appointments.

I rather hope to take a trip on the Mayflower tomorrow afternoon. I am not yet certain about it, but I may be able to get away in time.

I have already spoken of the Shipping Board.

The weather yesterday and today nodoubt prompts this inquiry about plans for a summer vacation. I still hope that I may be able to get up to New England some time during the summer for a stay of a month or so. The climate of Washington, if one stays here all through the season, is rather difficult to bear, not only because of the discomfort of it, but because of the drain it makes on your vitality. So that it would be a good plan if I could get away for three or four weeks. I should certainly go up to Vermont for a short stay, unless something intervenes, which is difficult to imagine now, and I would like to extend that stay in New England to include a month or more.

I am not certain whether the Secretary of Labor has in mind any one to take the place of Mr. Henning. I think he has, but he has not given me the name. I shall of course advise with him about it, and probably appoint whoever he thinks it would be desirable for him to have to assist him. He and Mr. Henning have been old time friends, and for that reason he has relied on Mr. Henning a great deal on account of his ability as a lawyer to assist and advise in the conduct of the Department of Labor. He will be making an effort to get another man that is Mr. Henning's equal in that respect, though of course the Secretary himself has now become so familiar with the routine ques-

tions of his department, I presume he doesn't require the legal assistance that he did when he first went in there.

Here is another inquiry about my possible visit to Charlotte, N.C. on May 20th, to attend the Mecklenberg celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence - the Mecklenberg declaration - and I do not see how it is going to be possible for me to go down there. I have appointed a committee to represent the United States Government in accordance with a resolution that went through the Congress, so the United States Government will be fairly well represented. Whether it will be possible for any members of the Cabinet to go, I am not certain. Of course there are members of the House and Senate from North Carolina itself, who will be present and participate and assist in an unofficial representation of those who are engaged in administering the Government of the United States.