

Tuesday, August 11, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

Most of the information that I have about the Ford people engaging in commercial aviation has come from the newspapers, though of course I know in a general way that the Ford people are now engaging in commercial aviation. I think they have a line that runs from Detroit to Chicago. There is another group with which Colonel Henderson, who has lately been an Assistant Postmaster General, would be identified. I think that is headed by Mr. Coffin, and they have many other very prominent business men. Then there is another group represented by - I think it is John Hays Hammond, Jr. It is John Hays Hammond's son, is it?

Newspaper men: Yes sir.

The President: And General Edwards I think is interested in that. I didn't know whether Mr. Satterlee was - was he a former Assistant Secretary of the Navy or War?

Newspaper men: Navy.

The President: They came here and saw me last week - Friday I think - and I told them Mr. Hoover would be here the next day, so they came and talked with him. I wasn't present at that conference and I don't know just what it amounted to. The terms of the agreement under which we took that airship provided that it was not to be used for military purposes, so that its use would be for experimental and commercial purposes. I should be guided very largely in what use could be made of it by the advice of the Navy Department and the Commerce Dept.

I think the Ford people are making airplanes and I understand the other concern is to use airplanes. The Ford people are having some lighter than air types.

This Hammond concern is making more especially the dirigible. I should be in favor of making such use of our two ships as we could to develop the lighter than air aviation. Now whether that can best be done by the Government itself or can best be done by private enterprise, or by a combination of the two, I don't know. I am not familiar with the plan of any concern. I want to help every business concern in the country that is engaged in legitimate business, as I have told the press conference some time before.

Question: Mr. President, do you mean the two ships, perhaps the Shenandoah also to be used for commercial aviation too?

The President: Did we make that ourselves?

Press: Yes.

President: Well, I don't know about that. I doubt whether the Navy Department would want to use that for anything but purely Naval purposes, though it might be that it would be available, slightly, for some commercial purpose.

Press: You are interested in seeing the expansion of commercial aviation, are you?

President: Oh yes, very much. Very much interested in that.

I haven't made any decision about District Attorney Gordon, other than that which I announced the other day that it is my present expectation to reappoint him. That is the District Attorney of the District of Columbia. Though there may information come which would lead me to change my mind. I always intend to keep

myself perfectly free and without any positive commitments about appointments until I sign the warrant or the nomination.

I don't think there is any new development in the appointments of the Circuit Court of Virginia, North Carolina and West Virginia. I talked with the Attorney General about that. They are looking now after the various suggestions that have come.

I haven't made any decision about a Civil Service Commissioner.

I wouldn't say at the present time that I was in favor of a bond issue for the purpose of erecting Government buildings in Washington or elsewhere. My desire is to reduce the amount of outstanding indebtedness, rather than to increase it, though there may be some plan evolved that would have as a part of it a bond issue that might seem to be feasible. But the mere naked issue of bonds for the purpose of Government building, I wouldn't be in favor of. If it becomes a part of some other plan, it might come in in a way that I would think was desirable. I want to cut down the expenses of the Government. Now it may be that by borrowing some money and building a building somewhere we can save enough in rent so that it is a desirable financial operation.

Press: Are there any Government buildings now that are bonded that way?

President: I don't think so, though I don't know whether it has ever been the policy to borrow any money for the purpose of erecting buildings. I don't think it has been. But I am not familiar enough with the details of the financial history of the United States to tell whether that has been done.

Press: They are paying about \$25,000,000 or \$30,000,000 in rents about

the country, so it is said by some of the men that have been up here.

President: If we ~~could~~ rent a building for \$100,000 and find that we could build one and issue bonds that wouldn't cost us but \$50,000, why we could take the \$50,000 and use it to pay off the principal of the bonds and at the end of the operation we would have the building and not increase our present taxes. Now it is possible that some plan of that kind might be expedient.

I hadn't given any thought to the question of whether in the appointment of a Civil Service Commissioner I would get some one that had any experience, or whether I would take some one from the business profession or life of the country that might seem to fill the place in a general way. That is more easy to do where you are putting members on to a Board and there are other members of the Board who have all the traditions and training of the administration of that particular department, than it is where you are putting some one into a position to be the sole administrator of it.

I haven't any idea at all about what can be done in relation to postal rates. I suppose that is what this Commission is working on and I am waiting for their reports.

I haven't anything definite about going to Washington. I shall hold myself ready to respond to whatever requirements arise. Of course I should like to stay up here as long as I can, on account of the better temperature, but as I have been up here 6 weeks or so I should expect I could go back any time.

Representative White of Maine didn't say anything to me as I recall it about the Alaskan Fisheries. He merely spoke of general conditions in Alaska

as he found them, which he thought were encouraging.

The Press: He told us as he was leaving that whatever he had mentioned to you he preferred be given out by you.

President: I don't know what he could have referred to. I think I asked him about the Governor up there and he said he didn't happen to come in contact with him. I asked him about the other officials which he thought were doing a very good work, the Judge, District Attorney and other officials in Alaska.

I haven't done any more about an Ambassador.

I didn't get any new information other than that which General Lord apparently gave to the press. I think he gave the figures of the tentative budget.

I expect to go up to Plymouth the latter part of this week and I don't suppose I could stay more than three or four days.

Press: Return here, Mr. President?

President: Yes.

Press: Have you decided which day?

President: No. It wouldn't be any earlier than Thursday and not later than Saturday.

Press: Go by motor or train?

President: I am not sure about that. There is a train that goes up there at 1:00 o'clock I think, which is a very good train. My present disposition would be to have a car hitched on that for the accommodation of my party.

But I think the railroads don't really like to have that published.

Press: What we would like to know is not the news so much - if we could get it for our own value more than anything else.

President: We will let you know. We may go up by motor - will see how the day is. If it is a nice day a motor run up there isn't bad. If it is a wet day I should prefer to go by train.

No. I expect the Postmaster General will be up here some time this week. He went away on a vacation before I left Washington, so I haven't seen him for some time. I don't know of any special thing he is going to take up with me.

That seems to cover the requirements of the day.