

Tuesday, September 7, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I was reminded just as the members of the press came in that I have on my desk here an address that is to be made by Dr. David Friday before the American Association of Joint Stock Land Banks at Colorado Springs tomorrow night. I have looked the address over and as it has been given to the press to be released Thursday, September 3rd, of course I can't say anything about the details of it, but it seemed to me to be a very important contribution to the discussion of the present agricultural situation.

Press: Who is this Mr. Friday, Mr. President?

President: I think he is connected with the Department in Washington, though I am not certain about that.

Yes, I have heard that there wasn't any foundation in the suggestion that either of the present members of the Civil Service Commission were likely to retire. One rumor came to me that one of them was to retire and again that the other was to retire. No foundation to either one of them.

I am not very familiar with all the details of the Government employment, not sufficiently to give any particular comment about the proposal of the Federal Employees Association to have \$1500 as the minimum Government wage. It is my recollection though that when I was presiding over the Senate and the appropriation bills went through that there were very many places that were filled at much less sums than that. It seemed as though down to \$800 and there may be some for it, but I do not know of any reason at present that would justify increasing a salary from \$800 to \$1500. I think Government salaries have been fairly well increased. I

made some comment about that in one of my addresses, either to the Congress or else to the Government's business association. I can't give the figures now, but I know my studies at the time indicated that there had been a very generous increase in Government salaries.

I do not suppose that I shall appoint Major Gordon before I return to Washington. Of course I haven't any idea whether I shall return here next summer. I haven't any plans for next summer. Congress may keep us in Washington.

Press: That's campaign time, Mr. President?

President: Yes, but Congress is very uncertain. It might decide that it can campaign best in Washington. I haven't any thought about what I shall do next summer. I have enjoyed the stay here very much. It has been very cool and comfortable. The atmosphere and climate have been a very agreeable change. Of course Washington is a wonderful city to live in, take it all the year round, but I think it is a good idea to get out of it a short time each year. I found coming up here and going up to Vermont very agreeable and I think beneficial.

I haven't any new plan about the Shipping Board. I had an understanding with them that if they would go ahead and try out the plan that I proposed to them, that I wasn't going to press for legislation in relation to any changes in the status of the Board. They have always seemed to have more or less internal controversy in the Board. I should like to see that corrected if it could be. And the Board, if it could, be made harmonious. Of course my main desire about it has been stated several times in addresses and messages to the Congress - to maintain a merchant fleet in the first instance for national defense and the second instance,

for the benefit of our commerce, and I have always thought it ought to be under private ownership. Therefore, I have supported the policy of selling our merchant ships to private owners in order that they might carry on the business of shipping for the American people. Of course my other desire for efficiency in Government and economy has been one of the things I have had in mind in dealing with the Board. Some members of the Board haven't seemed to be very much in harmony with my desires in that direction.

Press: Did you say some, or one?

President: Some; though I think on the whole the Board has cooperated very well. The management of our shipping problem is very difficult, rather a losing problem, and when any one is engaged in trying to manage that they are always subject to criticism and the people which are associated together in a losing enterprise almost uniformly begin to quarrel with each other. Each one says that the other one is to blame for a lack of success. But I think that situation will settle itself.

There isn't any policy that I can announce about the coal strike, other than that I shall do what I can to have the Government assist in providing fuel for the people, and there is plenty of fuel I am told to meet all requirements if people will only pursue their ordinary course in purchases and not undertake to purchase large amounts of fuel because there is a possibility of a shortage. Such purchases would simply contribute to the present shortage, or bring about a shortage all the sooner. I think the dealers in coal have that in mind and will advise their customers that they will do the best they can to provide them with

fuel and deliver it to them from time to time as may be needed. I think my last message to the Congress stated my feeling about the action that the United States Government might take relative to the mining and transportation of coal. It is my recollection that I recommended substantially the findings of the United States Coal Commission, perhaps with one or two exceptions. I noticed an editorial article in the Public Ledger that set out what I did very carefully, published some weeks ago. I thought the President ought to have authority in case of a threat or cessation of mining to appoint a Commission that would have some power to investigate the facts, in order that they might be properly presented to the public. I think that was the main line on which I thought we ought to proceed.

Press: Do you think you will recommend this to the Congress?

President: I am still in favor of something of that nature.

I am not intending to make any addresses, either going to or coming from Omaha, and I shall make only one address, and that will be to the American Legion at their Omaha Convention. I am not quite certain what day I shall be there. I imagine on the 6th of October. I haven't in contemplation any trip to the Pacific Coast next summer. I have been invited to go out there, but I don't ~~know~~ see any prospect of my being able to accept an invitation.

I don't know when I shall go back to Washington. I shall be practically on call to go any time after the first of next week.

I think my ideas about the publication of income tax information was stated in my last message to the Congress. I recommended the repeal of the publicity clause, mainly on the theory I believe that it interfered with our col-

lection of revenue. It is likely to make the collection of revenue less, and perhaps more difficult.

I haven't any plan for any other trip away from Washington, except ~~at~~ the one to Omaha in October. I don't know that I may not take a trip anywhere else because I haven't any other invitation.

Secretary Weeks hasn't resigned and I don't think he intends to resign. He told me when he came down to see me that he was the best that he has been since last April, and I expect that he will be back in Washington and taking up the duties of the Secretary of War.

I haven't done anything further about the appointment of an Ambassador to Japan.

I do not think any new offer has been made to the Government for the lease of the Los Angeles for commercial purposes, but there may have been without coming to my attention.

I don't know whether Senator Bingham's suggestions of dirigibles are simply in relation to their value for trans-oceanic transportation. I think he made a suggestion of that kind to me, but I am not enough of an expert to know. I think his suggestion was that they didn't go very fast and therefore you wouldn't save much time on them, not going near as fast as the heavier-than-air machines, and their chief use would be for going over water where their speed would be much greater than the steamship, rather than over land where their speed was only about that maintained by railroad trains, taking it on the whole, allowing for wind, air and so on, though I think they do attain a speed of some 70 miles or more in

favorable circumstances. I haven't any plan about making a Labor Day address, and I have stated what I had to say about the coal situation and about the Shipping Board.

Press: Mr. President, may I ask what is the next step - Haney says he refuses to resign.

President: Well, I haven't anything to say about that. It may be that when he thinks it over he will see the impropriety of trying to remain on the Board and be willing to try and carry out the policies that I understand are required by the law.