

Tuesday, September 29, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I don't recall that any report has come to me of a survey of the United States Employees Compensation Commission, and I don't know of any plan that is pending now for its absorption by the Pension Bureau or any other agency of the Government otherwise than as it might be included in the general plan that the Government is working on for consolidation of bureaus and departments, or be included in the bill for reorganization of departments that I have mentioned frequently to members of the conference. I think that is usually known as the Smoot Bill. And the same in relation to the proposals of Senator Curtis that a large number of independent agencies of the Government should be abolished or consolidated with the activities of the regular departments. I noticed that suggestion and I know that Senator Curtis had mentioned it to me, but I don't know of any plan that has yet taken such shape that I could pass judgment on it one way or the other. I like to have all the bureaus and activities of the Government come as far as they can under the supervision of some member of the Cabinet. That isn't always possible. I think that, as a principle, is desirable, though like other rules there are exceptions to it that have a great deal of merit. Undoubtedly we could administer the Government in that way at somewhat less expense, but when you say that you can make large savings I think it is well always to keep in mind that the work that these bureaus are doing is probably a desirable work and that if it is to be carried on it is going to require substantially the same amount of

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personnel as is now employed in it. Unless you are going to abolish the work entirely it is doubtful just how much could be saved. There might be something in the way of reduction of rents, overhead and so on, which perhaps in the aggregate would amount to a considerable sum. It is a problem that is worth very careful consideration, and I have never given it a great amount of thought because I had expected it would be something that would be taken up and worked out after the reorganization bill went through or some plan of that kind had been put into operation - then these details would naturally come up for consideration next.

I think I had better hold to my policy of letting the members of the Debt Commission make any public statements that they think ought to be made in relation to what they are doing. I have a general knowledge of course of the efforts that they are making, and so far as I am acquainted with them they meet with my approval.

I am not certain about going to the Chamber of Commerce at New York. That occurs some time in the middle of November I think, and it is a matter that I have under consideration. I don't recall now any other engagements to speak out of town.

There is nothing new that I know of in relation to the Shipping Board.

So far as I have information I would be of the opinion that there wasn't anything in the loss of the Shenandoah or the loss of the submarine that indicates any lack of morale on the part of the Navy. I don't know but it might point in the other direction, an effort on the part of the Navy or an inclination to take greater risks and do more development work and experimentation than is absolutely



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necessary in time of peace. I of course can't pass any final judgment about the cause of the Shenandoah or the responsibility for the sinking of the submarine until the investigations have developed all the facts. So far as I know neither one of those accidents indicates any lack of efficiency or lowering of morale on the part of the Navy. I speak now of the Navy as a whole. And I want to repeat that of course I am not undertaking to say whether any one is to blame for either of those two accidents that is connected with the Navy.

I have noticed two or three suggestions in the press about a postage stamp with a picture of ex-President Wilson. I presume I am a little prejudiced about the honors that ought to be paid to ex-Presidents, but I understand it is the intention of the Post Office Department to provide such a stamp just as soon as the occasion arises. You might be interested to know that during my administration for the first time a postage stamp has been provided with a picture of Grover Cleveland on it, so that a failure to provide one of an ex-President that happens to be of a different political party than mine is not attributable to the fact that he does happen to be of a different party, and the fact that it was some 15 years after ex-President Cleveland died before any postage stamp was made with his picture does not indicate, or perhaps it rebuts the indication, that an unusual delay is being experienced in providing a postage stamp for ex-President Wilson. I think if you will examine the records you will find it is oftentimes several years after the decease of an ex-President or the finish of his term, that a stamp with his picture is issued. Of course President Harding died in office, and there was a desire on the part of the public, which I think is perfectly legitimate, that something should

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be done right away. When the Department wanted to get out some other stamp in some haste they used that die. I am very desirous of having a stamp provided for President Wilson as soon as the opportunity arrises when it can be done.