

Tuesday, February 23, 1926.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

Here is an inquiry about the possibility of the adjournment of Congress and what further important measures there are pending. I don't know when Congress can adjourn. I should think it could get out seasonably. Up to the present time I think the progress that has been made is better than that of any Congress with which I have had any experience. I judge from comments that have been made to me from the older members of the Congress that the expedition with which the business has been transacted may be said almost to be the record, so that that would indicate an early adjournment. The appropriation bills are going on very well. There is the tax bill to be finally passed. There are the debt settlements that will come up in the near future for consideration in the Senate. They have already passed the House. I think the farm legislation bill is pending in the Senate. That has already passed the House. That is especially to take care of some of the things that the cooperative farm organizations wanted, and there are before the House Committee and the Senate Committee some bills to provide general relief for agriculture which will probably come up for passage. Those are the principal things. There is the railroad bill. I presume there are some other things that perhaps are equally important, but don't now happen to occur to me. In addition to this there is of course the report of the Aircraft Board. I am anxious to have legislation that carries that out. I am almost equally desirous of not having legislation that goes beyond the report and recommendations of that Board. I feel quite confident that when the various committees come to study the subject

they will come to the same conclusion that the Air Board reached. You will remember that there was a great deal of confusion about our Air Service last summer. That was my state of mind. I presume that if you will hark back to it you will find it was your own state of mind. It was very well cleared up I thought by the report of the Air Board. The central thought of that was that our country was not in immediate jeopardy by reason of any lack of our Air Service or of any attack that could be made on us by any other country. Now, I want to have a good Air Service here, the same as I want to have a good Army and Navy, but I don't want to run to extremes about it. There is some pressure in the country, perhaps from people that haven't made a careful study of the subject and a careful perusal of the report of the Air Board, to build a very large air fleet. I don't think that is necessary. I am opposed to it because it would be an unnecessary expenditure of money and because the theory of it would be to go back to the theory of competitive defense. Of course if we arm ourselves with a great air fleet, the necessary reaction will be that other countries think they must do the same and then we are off again competing in armaments. There has been one development in relation to this which I think has been helpful, and that was to bring to the attention of men in the service that it is especially their business to be Army and Naval and military men and function in that direction, and not undertake to function in other directions. In our service there is the Army and Navy, the Reserve Officers Corps, the National Guard, althgether making I think about 550,000 men. Now it is quite obvious that if everybody in that service should start out to bring to bear great

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pressure on Congress for everything that they might think they wanted at any time, the result wouldn't be good, and if as the result of our actions we should make a great Air Force there is a good deal of question as to whether after we did create it the same forces wouldn't be demanding that it be used in some direction or other, and we would have established here almost before we knew it a great military nation, which nobody that I think gives the subject careful consideration would want to have done. So we have had to bring it rather sharply to the attention of men in the service that they ought to obey that injunction of the service rules which requires that they shouldn't volunteer to influence legislation - give their opinions when they are asked of course; but to form any organization of a military nature for the purpose of influencing Congress would in the end be productive of embarrassing results.

I talked yesterday with the Secretary of the Treasury and Senator Smoot about the general financial situation - where we should be with the tax bill enacted and what we ought to do about the approval of the debt settlements, concerning all of which they took a hopeful view. The tax bill as you know carries rather more of a reduction than I had thought was desirable, but the Congress is making the reduction. If they finally make a larger reduction than I had thought was desirable, of course they will bear that in mind in keeping down appropriations for increasing expenditures.

There hasn't been anything further developed in relation to the meeting of the Preparatory Commission for an Arms Conference.

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I have not accepted any speaking engagements. I have several invitations. I was presented an invitation the other day to go to Kansas City. I have an invitation to go to Charleston, S. C. An invitation came in this morning to go to Louisiana. I have had to say that while the Congress was in session I doubted very much if I could make any trip of that kind. These are merely suggestions to go to a certain place and make an address as I did at St. Paul, Omaha, Chicago or New York. There are a great many places in the country that I should like to visit, especially some places in the South, and I haven't had any chance to go to Missouri since I was President. I was in Kansas City at the meeting of the Legion in 1922. I think it was '22, might have been '21; I guess it was '21. So I haven't any plan about going away to make any address. There are two or three things here in Washington. I think there is an Editorial Association of the South American Republics that is to meet here early in April. I expect to make a short address of welcome on that occasion. The Boy Scouts are going to have some kind of a convention here. And of course there is the address that I have to make Decoration Day and the dedication of the John Ericksson monument which is to come just about Decoration Day unless the date is changed. The 4th of July I suppose I am to speak in Philadelphia. Those are the only engagements that I have in mind.