

Tuesday, March 30, 1926.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

There is no intention, so far as I know, to make any appeal for gifts of Colonial furniture for the White House. Congress passed some law in relation to that a year or two ago. The details of that law I haven't clearly in mind. If you want to get any information as to just what it is proposed to do, you will get if if you read that law and then assume that it is intended to carry out its provisions. I think it provided for the appointment of a committee or commission to pass on articles of furniture that might be offered to the White House. I don't think there is any intention of attempting to refurnish the White House with Colonial furniture. Some of the rooms on the second floor would lend themselves to that, but/for the rooms on the first floor such furniture would probably not be altogether desirable. Of course, that all depends on what the particular piece of furniture is and that is why the Commission have been appointed to pass on it.

Press: Have any pieces of furniture been sent in so far?

President: I don't think so. I recall there was quite a good deal of newspaper discussion about it last summer. The source of it we didn't know and I don't know now what the source of it was. It was put out without any knowledge on the part of myself or Mrs. Coolidge. In fact, I don't think Mrs. Coolidge has anything to do with furnishing the White House anyway, except entirely unofficially, and except as an next friend of the White House and in that respect.

It has occurred to me that perhaps I don't always speak loud enough

to be heard all over the room. If any of you have any difficulty about hearing, I would regard it as a favor if you indicated by saying "louder".

I know in a general way about the bill that has been prepared in the Treasury Department, and which was presented by Representative Mills yesterday for the settlement of war claims against Germany and a return of the German property that is held by the Alien Property Custodian. It was put in on the theory that it seems to be the best that we could do in the working out of a plan. Some of the things about it we like better than we do others, and it was put in for the purpose of having a hearing on it and a general discussion to see whether out of that discussion it appears that the bill is the best that we could do and therefore ought to be adopted. It is not a bill that we stand altogether committed to, but we are hopeful that it may be improved as a result of the discussion that will arise in the committee and on the floor. But I think I might say that if after such discussion as will be had there it seems to be the best that we can do, that the Treasury Department would recommend to me that I approve it and I should expect to approve a bill of that kind.

There is nothing further developed in relation to shipping legislation and the appointment of a successor to Mr. Haney. Of course I am desirous of having shipping legislation and am waiting to see what may develop there before filling that vacancy.

I haven't any objection to the report of the Tariff Commission on the duty on sugar being made public. It is still before me for final action. If you will refer to the statement that I made in relation to it, it is exactly

what my position is in relation to it. I made quite a detailed and definite statement in relation to it, I think pointing out at the end that on account of the then present price of sugar there didn't seem to be any pressing need of a change in the duty at the present time and that price is now about what it was when I made the statement. You see, when the investigation started the price of sugar was up to 9¢ or something of that kind, and has been reduced to between 5¢ and 6¢.

The reports in relation to business conditions in the country seem to be substantially as they have been for the past months. Employment apparently is plentiful. There are some strikes. That is always the case, but so far as the Department of Labor has information those who want to work at the prevailing rate of wages are enabled to secure employment. I think there have been some increases of wages, especially in the building trades, which are an indication that there is no lack of employment in that great industry, which is a very basic industry because it affects so many other things. A great many products go into building, and when that industry is flourishing it creates a demand for all kinds of supplies and has a beneficial influence on all kinds of production. There are some places where they are not working full time. I think that is the condition in some of the textile industries and has been so for quite a good many months.

I have had a request endorsed by the Governor of the Virgin Islands in relation to the question of the right of the Colonial Council to pass on the

eligibility of its members. I have referred that request to the Attorney General and the only thing that I know of in relation to it is to try to find out what the law is and follow it. I don't know that my opinion or that of the Attorney General would be binding on any one. It would simply be an indication of what the legal advisers of the Government thought it was necessary to do in order to have an administration of law.

I don't know of any applications at the present time from foreign governments for loans here. Whenever applications of that kind are made they are taken up and each one decided on its merits.

I think I have recommended several times that prohibition agents be placed under Civil Service. I don't know/<sup>but</sup> that I have recommended that as many as three times in my annual messages and I can't give you any better idea in relation to any subject than to refer you to my message, in order that you may see what I have done about it. You may find something about it in the book which Mr. Slemp put out, with which I hope you are all provided by this time.

I had a short conference with Colonel Tilson this morning in relation to legislation. I have already expressed several times to the conference my appreciation of the very fine work that the present Congress is doing. That work is apparently continuing. What I am especially solicitous about is the financial and economic condition of the Government. I indicated at the time of the consideration of the tax bill that the matter of what taxes should be raised was especially a matter that the Congress had under its jurisdiction and also indicated, and I want to stress that now, that after the Congress had

passed a bill raising a certain amount of money, why of course it is obligatory on Congress not to encourage expenditures in excess of the money it has provided for raising by taxation. I think that is a very important consideration. I am not undertaking to shift the responsibility about that. Of course I am responsible for that as well as Congress, but I am attempting to emphasize it on all proper occasions. It is true that the Congress made a larger cut in taxes than I wanted to have made, because I knew that there would be great pressure for incurring some additional expenditures. I thought they ought to think carefully about it when they were passing the tax bill. I have no doubt they did. And having made the larger cut in taxation, I suppose they are prepared to resist the applications for increasing expenditures, especially in consideration of expenditures that call for permanent appropriations. We can make a capital expenditure for the erection of a building or something of that kind, and when that expenditure is made it is over with. But expenditures that call for increases that go on indefinitely, that is from year to year and which are increases of the annual expenditures of the Government, come in for different consideration and different treatment. It is in that direction especially that I want to avoid increases, so far as we can. Of course we have to take care of those people that are employed by the Government and those expenditures already provided for by law, but I want to avoid increases that are permanent so far as we can and it was in that direction especially that I was conferring with Colonel Tilson.

In your conference with Colonel Tilson did the proposed agricultural legislation come up, Mr. President?

President: That is something about which he had very little information. That isn't a matter that is thought to require much of anything in the way of permanent expenditure on the part of the Government and is a matter about which he did not have much information. The committee is holding hearings in relation to it and undertaking to frame a bill that will be helpful to agriculture

Press: Did Colonel Tilson say anything about the retirement bill?

President: Well, that was spoken of, and he is undertaking to see what can be done in relation to that bill. It would cause some additional expenditures in the future. I haven't seen the report that was made by the actuaries. I think the general suggestion has been that that didn't call necessarily for any additional expenditures for some years, that the expenditures that were required to be made could be taken care of by the money that is being received from the beneficiaries. I am not concerned so much about this year or next year, but it is especially the year after that I want to look out about.

Did the matter of judge's salaries come up?

President: No, that wasn't taken up. That is a matter that I think there is a general agreement on that there ought to be some additional pay and judges. It doesn't involve a great amount of money, but I think it is quite desirable as a matter of justice. The general payment of judges, I think, has been \$7500 a year and of course when the salaries of members of the Congress was \$7500 a year it was felt on the part of Congress that that was a pretty fair salary for those that were engaged in the public service. Now that their salaries have been increased to \$10,000, I presume there will be a feeling

on their part that other people who have a permanent part in the Government, like judges, are entitled to further consideration.

The matter of aviation legislation I spoke of with Mr. Tilson. I thought the bill in relation to the Navy would be taken up very soon and passed and that the Committee on Military Affairs would very soon bring out a bill providing for remedies in the Army aviation, and there is a bill pending, as you know, in relation to commercial aviation. On all of those bills, as I have indicated before, I expect to see some legislation passed.

Now, I am not undertaking to give any schedule of bills. If you want to know what I think Congress ought to do, as I said before, why go and see my message. I am not saying that there are no bills as important as these one or two I have happened to mention. I did happen to mention those spoken of by Colonel Tilson and me when he was in here. But there are a great many other bills equally important.