

Tuesday, April 6, 1926.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

Mr. Taber, the head of the National Grange, was in this morning to say good-by to me, as he is sailing for Italy tomorrow upon a vacation, and to invite me to attend the 60th Anniversary of the founding of the National Grange. That is a celebration they are to have I think in the State of Maine next November.

I discussed very briefly with Representative Parker of New York the question of railroad legislation. They are working on that, haven't anything perfected as yet, taking it up I believe with the Interstate Commerce Commission. And also I asked him how they are getting along on coal legislation. He said they are having hearings on that and expect to be able to report a bill in the near future.

I haven't seen the bill that is reported by the House Civil Service Committee, known as the Civil Service Retirement Bill. It sets out in this question that that provides for retiring Railway Mail Clerks at the age of 60, letter-carriers and mechanics at 62, and clerks at 65, on an annuity of \$1200 maximum. It is estimated that the cost of that would be a little over \$54,000,000 a year, of which the clerks would contribute \$29,000,000, nearly \$30,000,000, and the taxpayers \$24,000,000. It seems to me that that is rather too liberal in two instances. First as to the amount of the annuity and second as to the age of retirement. I don't know whether it is contemplated to provide that people that may have been

engaged in similar occupations to Railway Mail Clerks shant pay any taxes after they are 60 years old or that others engaged in similar occupations at similar ages are to be relieved from all public burdens like the paying of taxes when they reach that age. I don't suppose it is. But that question naturally arises whether other people that are in the employ of the Government after they reach a similar age are to be taxed to pay some kind of an annuity to people that happen to have been in the employ of the Government. I recognize the good principle of a retirement age on account of the average disability - you have to strike an average somewhere, the same as we do when we fix 21 years of age at which we will permit people to vote. Now, there are some people well enough developed to vote before they reach that age, some that perhaps could benefit by further experience and training after they reach the age of 21, before they begin to vote. But you have to strike an average somewhere. It seems to me that 65 is a very low average to say that those who have been in the employ of the Government ought to retire. I sometimes speak of Massachusetts, not because I think that is better than any other place, but because it happens to be the place at which I have had most experience, and it occurs to me that in Massachusetts, and I also think in Vermont, that after a man reaches the age of 70 he doesn't any longer live under the requirement to have to pay a poll tax. That is how I happen to speak of the analogy of taxes. Of course that all goes on the theory that after persons reach an average

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age that they ought not longer to be called on to perform public service. Now, I think a bill could be drafted that I would be willing to approve, and I don't want to say or have it inferred as a result of what I have said, that I am either saying or not saying that I would approve or disapprove this bill. I will decide that on its merits when it comes before me. But I am simply raising some questions that I think ought to be considered, discussed and decided, while the bill is on its passage.