

Paul Smith's, N.Y.,
Tuesday, August 31, 1926

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

Mr. Brush didn't happen to mention to me anything about foreign registry of American ships, that is American ships that might be sold and put under foreign registry. I think the policy of our Government is not to permit that. It may be more of a matter of sentiment than it is of practical value, but so far as I know there is no contemplation of making any change in the policy and so far as I am at present advised I shouldn't be in favor of making a change. That is a matter that I haven't any definite information about. I am only giving an offhand opinion. It might be modified after making a study of it. I think it is very desirable to keep all the ships we can flying the American flag and I would say that the inconvenience and the cost that might arise from that necessity America could well afford to pay.

I didn't see Mr. Brush's article or interview or whatever it may have been relative to foreign debts. It is sometimes easier for a person that is in private life and no longer charged with the responsibilities of the administration of the administration of public affairs to make a larger expenditure of the taxpayers' money than it is for those who have to be responsible for the collection of the money or the payment of it out of the pockets of the taxpayer. I have a good deal of respect for Mr. Baker's judgment and a high regard for his patriotism, but the matter of settlement of cancellation of our debts has been discussed a great many times. Our Government has taken an attitude on that which I do not think will be changed. All of the great powers, with one exception, have made a

a final adjustment and I think it is apparent that there is every expectation that France will adjust its debt settlement in accordance with the negotiations that have been made by its duly accredited Ambassador. So, as far as I am informed, I know of no reason for making any change in our policy. It has been pointed out time and time again that this money has to be paid by our taxpayers unless it is paid by the taxpayers of the country or the countries which borrowed the money. Mr. Baker I know is a perfectly sincere man and I don't want too much made of my suggestion that it is easier to make up your mind when you are not charged with public responsibility than it is when you are responsible for making the decision that settles the question.

I don't know about the attitude of Senators Gooding and Trammell about the World Court. I think perhaps we had better wait until after election to see what the final attitude of those in public office may be. There again I am not expecting any change. I should regard that as a question that the Senate has settled and can't see any likelihood that it would reverse itself.

I have only seen press reports referring to the action of the Philippine legislature on a proposed plebiscite on the question of independence. I am advised that the legislature has passed a bill of that kind which General Wood vetoed and that the legislature has passed it over his veto and that it will therefore come to me. All that I would want to say about it would be that I shall take it up when it comes and give it careful consideration, and I can't indicate now what action I shall take on it.

Press: Do you have an unlimited time to take up the matter?

I think it is six months. Now when that time begins to run, I am not certain. Whether it is six months after the final action of the legislature or six months after it reaches me or what, I do not know.

Mr. Hays is visiting me. He came up especially to talk about the plan that has already been broached of having the Government undertake the preservation of moving picture films that represent historical events. We are about to erect an archives building and we are discussing the question of providing storage in that building for films of that nature. Of course it would occur to you right off that it would provide for such films as those that were taken at the signing of the peace treaty, the making of the armistice, the return of General Pershing, the inauguration of Presidents, and generally the commemoration of historical events. As Mr. Hays expressed it to me, what a wonderful thing it would be if we had a moving picture now of President Lincoln delivering his Gettysburg address. These films go back to the time of Roosevelt. I have seen ~~new~~ ^{moving} pictures of his inauguration and of course they come up all through the succeeding time. Mr. Hays has the details of the suggestions that he wants to make and I have asked him if he couldn't grant the members of the press association here an interview so that they might get from him a little more of a detailed statement on it than I could give.

Press: Several years ago when Mr. Hays first brought that question up it was suggested that they be stored temporarily in the White House. Was anything done?

President: No. We only have a few films there and I think that all we have are some that refer to myself and my family.

There will be going out to the press under Paul Smith's headlines quite naturally a good deal of political gossip of one kind or another. Of course I am willing to assume responsibility for such suggestions as emanate from me at my conferences with the press on Tuesdays and Fridays. The other gossip that may go out from here I don't care to assume responsibility for and you members of the conference will have to fight that out amongst yourselves. You will probably find out by careful interrogation of each other what the foundation for the stories may be and whether you desire to carry on the story, enlarge on it, or whether it appears that the foundation is so slight that the story is so unimportant that it doesn't need further comment.

Press: Do you intend to go to Tupper Lake tomorrow?

President: Mr. Clark, am I going tomorrow?

Mr. Clark: No definite date has been set. I thought you might go some time this week, but no date has been set.

President: I have spoken to Mr. Clark about arranging for me to go over there some day, and the American Legion Convalescent Camp and the Veterans Bureau Hospital. I think we can take them all in on one journey, some day this week. I suppose the newspaper men would like to go along. Have you any suggestion about a date that would be convenient for you?

Press: Any date that you might mention, as long as we ~~made~~ might know a day ahead.