

November 27, 1923.

Remarks by the President to Newspaper Men

Governor Templeton called on me yesterday. He and I spent the Fourth of July together up in Maine and I am afraid that we devoted more time to a discussion of the pleasant experience we had together last July than we did about a serious discussion of Government affairs. He didn't make any representation, any comment, or any statement at all about so-called fake physicians. About all he had to say in the nature of public business was the encouragement that he felt in the enforcement of prohibitory laws in his State of Connecticut.

I have here an inquiry about the coal conference. I am not exactly familiar with the details of that, but of course continue my position of being ready and anxious to cooperate through any United States Government agency, or help in any way we can through any state agency to solve any of the coal problems.

I have several inquiries here about the seizure of a British Ship, the Tomako. That was taken, according to unofficial reports that have reached us, outside the three mile limit, though we have no official reports and no officially reliable information about it. It is very possible that it would come within the decision that was made in the Marshall case. A ship under that name was hovering off the coast outside the three mile limit and discharging its cargo to shore contrary to the provisions of law for the discharge of cargoes, irrespective as I understand of what it happened to be, intoxicating liquor or otherwise. So the United States Government seized the ship and the case came up in the United States Court. I think representation was made by Great Britain about it, but soon after that was accompanied by the declaration that they had found that the registry of this ship, though alleged to be British, was defective, so that they withdrew their representation and dropped their interest in the case. Now it may be that this ship was seized under similar circumstances. I don't know. There isn't at the present time any change in the treaty relations between the United States and Great Britain, and I do not think the proposed text of the treaty has yet reached us. Therefore no seizure could be made under any change. Treaty conditions are just as they always have been. Our Government never has relinquished its claim, as I understand it, of a right to seize a ship that is hovering off the coast, whether it be inside or outside the three mile limit, which is discharging its cargo in an unlawful way and in violation of our laws. Very likely the decision in this case will

turn upon that important policy which our country maintained.

Mr. President, has there been any representation from the British Embassy here about it?

I do not think so. I am not certain about that. Inquiry may have been made, but that I don't know. I think rumors have come to the effect that there are peculiar things about the registry of this ship, that has just been seized.

There was practically no business at the Cabinet session today.

I have spoken about Governor Templeton.

It is possible that my message will be available as early as tomorrow.

I understand that it is not to be delivered until Wednesday, according to the present plan. Congress very naturally desires to adjourn over one day out of respect to the memory of President Harding.

I am going to call a meeting of the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission at a very early date. As soon as I am advised that all the members of the Commission are here in Washington. The representative from Kentucky came in yesterday and was speaking about it. I forget his name.

Langley is his name, Mr. President.

Mr. President, has anybody been appointed to succeed you as President of that Commission?

No, I think not. I am not certain about that. I think the designation is the Vice President. Should it be the President of the Senate then of course President Cummins would come in at the present time. But I think the designation is Vice President, so that nobody else could be for the time being.

Has that plan ever been approved, Mr. President?

I do not think so. The location has been approved by the Commission. Perhaps some of your members will recall accompanying us on a tour of inspection the early part of spring, and at that time decided on the location, and of course plans had to be made to conform to that location and Congress not being in session since that time, there has been no opportunity to approve the plans.

An inquiry about the Craig case. Senator Copeland came in and spoke about that. He said he understood that a petition for a pardon was to be made to me, and wanted to know if I would be in a position to expedite action on it and get an early decision. I sent over for the Solicitor General and asked him to be in possession of whatever facts there might be in order that there would be no delay, should a petition come in.

An inquiry as to whether I have any plans for Thanksgiving Day. Why, of course I have. I thought I made that very plain in considerable detail in a proclamation I made some time ago. You will be perfectly safe in following the terms of the proclamation for information about what I am going to do. I think I advised the people to assemble in their usual places of worship and in their homes for a suitable observance of Thanksgiving Day, and that is the way that I hope to observe the day.

Mr. President, will your sons be here?

No. They only have one day in the school where they attend, so that they will not be able to come down.

An inquiry about Philippine independence. I haven't any clear and definite information about that. There is a bill known as the Jones Bill that it is my impression, I think I am right, promises independence to the Philippines some time in the future. I suppose my own position is the well known position that has been reiterated from time to time by the Government of the United States, of a desire to see the Philippines under self-government as soon as we felt warranted in withdrawing. I think it is generally recognized that our presence there is not so much an advantage to us as a very large bill of expense, but that it was an obligation which we had undertaken when we received the Philippine Islands from the Spanish Government and that we couldn't cast them adrift. We are anxious, by maintaining educational institutions, to show them the way toward good government, and by the example that we are able to set there of providing a sound government for the Philippine Islands, - one that ~~they~~ they will be able to maintain the freedom and independence of the people there. As soon as that can be done, we will then feel at liberty to withdraw.

Mr. President, are there any signs that that time has arrived or will arrive in the near future?

I think they are making very good progress. I haven't detailed information. I have never been in the Philippines, nor am I a particular student of them, but I get the general impression that they are making very good progress there - very encouraging progress.

An inquiry as to whether Speaker Machold of the New York assembly said anything about the Craig case. He did not. I only saw him for a moment or two. I expect to see him again, but I doubt very much if he had that errand in mind. He was in town and came in to pay his respects, and will lunch with me because he didn't have any time with me this morning.

I don't understand, by the way, that there is any difference of opinion between the State and Treasury Departments about the Schooner Tomako.

What if any distinction is set between the method the Tomako employed in discharging the cargo outside the three mile limit <sup>while</sup> ~~and~~ the ships off the New Jersey coast are never interfered with. I can't very well answer that question. It is a question of whether you can catch them discharging the cargo, I suppose. A ship has the right to stand off the coast as long as it wants to, as long as it is not caught in the violation of our laws. This one, I suppose was. For that reason it was overhauled and captured. It is very easy for a vessel to stand outside the three mile limit and for swift motor power boats to come to port in four, five or six minutes, so that it is rather hard to be able to prove an unloading and discharge of cargo. I assume that in this case it is purely an assumption, because we have no official information that they were detected in the discharge of a cargo.

A question about the agricultural situation. Have you received any new information from the Secretary of Agriculture indicating that the wheat situation is improving? I don't know that I have received any information one way or the other about that. There is no change, so far as I know.