

Report of the Newspaper Conference,
Friday, October 26, 1928.

I don't recall the details of the estimate submitted by the Federal Trade Commission, as to whether there was an item of \$250,000 to continue the public utilities inquiry. I have no doubt that whatever may appear to be necessary to carry on that inquiry will be recommended in the budget. The budget is not made up until it is ready for submission to the Congress, so that no decision has been made on that or any other item that would be in any sense final. We make some preliminary estimates along in the summer, which I made when General Lord came up to Wisconsin -- I should say preliminary allocations, and of course there was a preliminary allocation made for the expenses of the Federal Trade Commission. Whether it did or did not include that amount I can not say, but I have no doubt that such estimates will be presented to the Congress as the Commission is able to demonstrate will be necessary to carry on the inquiry. I think it is an inquiry made by direction of either both houses or one house of the Congress and that being the case it would carry a very strong implication that the budget would recommend certain appropriations that might be necessary.

The action of the Filipino legislature in passing a bill for importing tobacco and sugar into the Islands at the same duties as are applied for similar imports in the United States has never been brought to my attention, so I have no information about it. The legislation passed by the Filipino legislature does not come to me unless it is something that is passed over the veto of the Governor. If the Governor vetoes and then his veto is not sustained by the legislature, I think the matter comes to the President for his action. I should think the probability of any item of this kind coming to the President would be very remote.

I haven't seen any reference to an address made by Wickham Steed, an Englishman, so I don't know what he may have said or may not have said. I doubt very much if he quoted me relative to what this country might do or might not do in case a blockade was declared by the League of Nations, because I am quite certain that I have never made any statement relative to it and quite certain further than that that this Government has never indicated/it would do or would not do relative to any blockade that might be declared by the League.

I am expecting to go to Northampton to vote. I haven't finally determined about it, but that is my expectation at the present time.

The report of the Tariff Commission on the duty on corn has come to me and is being handled in the usual course. I don't regard it as an item of supreme importance. I think the imports of corn the last few years have averaged about 2,000,000 bu. a year. The import duty now is 15¢. The greatest change that could be made up or down would be 50% of 15¢ or 7½¢, so that considering the rather light imports and the rather limited change that can be made it is not a matter of great importance at the present time. If corn were selling high, so that a good many imports were coming in, it would be of more importance, but at the present price of corn there isn't any profit in importing it. But this will be taken up and handled in the usual course and such decision will be made as the facts seem to warrant. I will determine it in accordance with its merits.

I have had a report from Mr. Fieser, who has recently returned from Porto Rico, that is encouraging. Fine progress is being made down there in the relief work. A more careful survey has indicated that while the damages are very large, they are probably not so much in value as at first had been thought. They are still having to feed about 250,000, but it was expected that that number will now rapidly decline. Purchases of lumber and materials for rebuilding habitations of the people on the

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land are going forward and the whole situation is being organized in a very satisfactory way. Some \$5,400,000 have been received from subscriptions by the Red Cross for this relief, and while they will probably need some more money it seems to be coming in in a very satisfactory way.