

Tuesday, October 9, 1928.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

So far as I know, Ambassador Houghton has not indicated that he would or would not tender his resignation, because he is a candidate for Senate in the State of New York.

I haven't seen what President Machado of Cuba may have said relative to the Platt Amendment. I have a great deal of confidence in the President, but I don't know as any helpful result could be secured from my undertaking to discuss that subject in the press.

I haven't any very definite information concerning the situation in linseed oil at the present time relative to the amount of duty that is imposed on imports. Some time ago, oh two or three years I should think, a report was made to me by the Tariff Commission relative to certain linseed products under which I could, if I had thought it would be good policy for the country, have made some reduction in the rate of duty. I did not think it would be helpful to the flax industry at that time and I therefore did not make any reduction. Now, whether there has been any change in the situation, in the comparative costs at home and the principal competing countries abroad, so that the Commission could find that the difference in costs are not already compensated for by the tariff, I do not know.

So far as I am advised, we have no official information relative to the action which the French Government is reported to have taken relative to an American newspaper man for publishing some articles relative to the English and French naval agreement. That may be entirely a domestic matter and as such this Government would not be warranted in interfering in it. Of course, we do undertake to protect the legal rights of our citizens when we find on representation that they have been

infringed.

I do not know of any comment that I can make on the trans-Atlantic flight of the dirigible Count Zeppelin, which is scheduled to start to day, other than that I wish it may be successful and my hope that it may be an experiment that will be helpful in the development of aviation.

I don't know exactly what General Hines proposed relative to a separate department to handle all matters connected with the war veterans, but I rather think from a conversation I had with him it probably referred to hospitalization especially. There are some reasons why hospitalization could be done more successfully, if it was all under one directing head than under the situation we now have, when part of it is under the Bureau of the Budget and part of it is under another commission. I do not think it would make very much difference with the expenses. There might be some instances when it would be possible for the Veterans Bureau to place men in hospitals that are now under another jurisdiction, but I think that is going on quite steadily at the present time. I should think it would be more a matter of convenience of administration than it would be in greatly reducing the cost of administration.

I have no information about a suggested action, which I think has been published, other than what I have seen in the press relative to the proposal of certain of our diplomats abroad holding ministerial positions that they would not submit their resignations at the end of my administration. That, of course, would be a matter for the incoming administration to decide. As I recall it, both Ambassadors and Ministers are appointed for an indefinite time, but I think the custom has been for them to submit their resignations at the end of the administration that appointed them. I don't see that that would have any practical effect one way or another. The Constitution places the conduct of foreign relations in the



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hands of the President and the Ambassador and Minister might be said to be very largely the personal representative of the President in carrying out his instructions, and if he does not resign and the President wishes to make a change he would undoubtedly have the power of removal. There is an aspect of this, though, that is interesting. It is a recurrence of the disposition that is manifest in the Government service on the part of people in the service to undertake to make their body a self-perpetuating body, so that no one can come into the service unless he has a certificate of approval from those who are associated with them in the service, and after he is once in to undertake to make some arrangement by which it would be impossible for him to be displaced. That is not in accordance with our Constitution and laws, and of course would not work at all in relation to our foreign service, where the representative is peculiarly a representative of the President. We have undertaken to build up a permanent service in our foreign representation, and if this proposal is merely a suggestion that we should continue our efforts to that end the proposal is all right. If it has the other desire, the building up of a self-perpetuating body, I don't know of any way that it could be done, and if it could be accomplished it would not work out well. The foreign representatives must necessarily represent the position and opinion of the President as it may be transmitted to them through the State Department.