

February 26, 1924.

Remarks made by the President to Newspaper Correspondents.

There wasn't any discussion of the Attorney General in the Cabinet this morning, and I haven't any statement to make about it.

I am expecting to call a meeting of the Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission some time in the near future, though no time has been set for it. I have been so diverted with other things, that I haven't had an opportunity to take it up. I wanted to wait and see what the cost was going to be. My personal information was that it was likely to be about \$5,000,000, but with all the plans that are now contemplated in relation to carrying it out, the estimated costs run as high as \$22,000,000, which is quite a different proposal, and naturally makes me hesitate somewhat in making a decision about it.

Representative Langley has been in several times, and we have had some discussion about the new Government buildings for Washington. I understand that the situation is hopeful. Everyone recognizes the necessity for the buildings purely as a matter of the transaction of the public business, but more than that we could build these buildings and more than pay the interest on the money invested with the present rents that have to be paid to house the various Departments in different localities within the City.

I have discussed with several people the matter of the appointment of the District of Columbia Commissioners with different persons who have been in with suggestions, but I have never been able to take it up and make any decision on it. That is about all the information I can give you. I think quite a list of names have been presented, very good men. The present Commission is a good one. I don't know yet whether any change ought to be made in the personnel or not.

Mr. President, do you mind telling us how many candidates there are?

I can't give you the exact number off hand. I should think about six or eight.

X Here is an inquiry about the conference that was held yesterday with several Senators, some of the representatives of the northwest intermediate credit banks and the War Finance Corporation, in which I told the Senators that any bank that they know of that is in distress, and Mr. Meyer or the intermediate credit banks

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have information about, relief would be given wherever it could be given. That isn't a very definite statement is it? I think I ought to amplify that a little. What I mean by that is that relief will be given wherever the situation and condition of the bank is such that it is warranted. Of course if a bank is badly insolvent, and has no hopes of being revived and no hope of getting new money to revive it, there is nothing that can be done in the way of lending money to it, but on the other hand, if the people in the locality will take hold and give such assistance as they can, undertaking to help all they can, why new capital can be furnished, oftentimes through the War Finance Corporation or through this new \$10,000,000 association. I don't know whether they are to be incorporated, and that \$10,000,000 can be reinforced by the War Finance Corporation to two or three times the amount of their capital stock. That is the plan for relief, and the War Finance Corporation within the last three or four weeks has made loans to more than forty banks in South Dakota, and is lending money wherever it can lend it with the hope of saving the situation, and will continue to do so.

Can you tell us how much approximately the War Finance Corporation has loaned?

I can't give that to you now. I don't know the figures.

X Most of the Cabinet meeting was taken up by a report from the Secretary of Agriculture that there is a disease among the cattle in California, very contagious, somewhat like the foot and mouth disease. It is not yet spreading, but it requires the immediate attention of the national government. The authorities in California are cooperating to the best of their ability, but they haven't any specific law that enables them to be very helpful, so that pretty much everything that is done will have to be done by the Department of Agriculture. It is a matter of interest that there was prepared in advance for anything of this kind certain material, so that within an hour after the Department receives notice of it, messages and statements and directions are in the mail and on the wires. Proper pamphlets, notices and so on were already prepared in the Department and done up in bundles already to be addressed. This is the first time we have had that disease in this country since 1914, when it cost about \$4,500,000 to the national government, and about as much more to several states. It is prevalent in some of

the European countries, where they are not able to stamp it out. It is very important to stamp it out, because if it once gets going, perhaps we can never stamp it out.

Any possibility of an embargo on shipments of cattle, Mr. President?

That is what they have to do in the affected areas. That has been done before. It is one of the things that is in a way disturbing.

Mr. President, can the Federal Government issue a local embargo there in the absence of a state law?

Yes, one which is local in effect, but indicating that it would be an embargo on interstate commerce. But the local authorities are cooperating and giving every possible assistance.

X One of the troubles that is likely to occur is that it gets into the wild animals, deer and other hoof animals. It affects cattle and hogs. When it gets among them it is difficult to stamp out. That was one of the difficulties in 1914, the Secretary says.

X One of the disturbing factors at the present time to me is the large number of bills pending in Congress calling for tremendous appropriations. I think I am very well within the limit when I say that the bills up there that are seriously considered would call for an addition to the annual appropriations of the United States larger than the entire expenditures of the United States outside of the Post Office Department before the War. That means that there has to be a very determined resistance to a good many expenditures, or else our country will be entirely swamped, not only not having any reduction in taxes, but actually facing an increase in taxes. There are plenty of resources in our country to support all of us in comfort, if we are willing to go on on the present level, the present basis, and the present standards until we have produced enough to warrant an increase; but through Congressional action, the pressure of different organizations, if it happens that our taxes are greatly increased, we are going to destroy our present state of prosperity and have to face a decline until we ~~can~~ get a liquidation and can start again. I think it is exceedingly important wherever you can to sound a word of warning in that direction. The country is on the whole prosperous at the present time. There is a substantial agreement that it can go on in that condition if we will be con-

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 tent and not overrule ourselves and try each one of us to get more than the other.
 If we will just refrain from being too selfish and go on increasing our production,
 I think we can keep on in an era of prosperity.

Can you give us some idea, Mr. President, of what these appropriations are?
 There are a great many bills for increasing compensation and for pensions. Of course
 there is the bonus bill and a general increase of government expenditures in almost
 every direction.

Would the enactment of these bills practically nullify the budget?

X Well, of course, that is correct. If the executive is to have the responsi-
 bility of undertaking to lay out a financial program, that would be useless if in
 addition to that the Congress goes ahead and appropriates a large amount of money
 besides what has been recommended in the Budget. It would be a breaking down of the
 Budget system. I am not one of those that feels because a bill is introduced into
 a legislature it is therefore law. The legislature will take care of most of that.
 But they need the active support of public opinion in that direction, and as I said a
 moment ago, I don't know of any better service you can perform than to sound a word
 of public warning. Action of that kind is not well for the public welfare. It isn't
 to the benefit of ^{the} people, and the result is disastrous. That is the reason why there
 should be opposition to it.