

Friday, February 4, 1927.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I doubt if I have any information that the members of this conference are not already possessed of relative to the Harrison tax resolution in the Senate. I saw that he had made some motion in relation to taxation. I never had a chance to see what the resolution was, nor do I know anything about the Norris amendment favoring the application of surplus to debt retirement.

Press: Mr. President, for your information this afternoon the Senate adopted an amendment declaring that they favored applying the surplus to the national debt.

President: I see.

I don't know how much has been applied of our revenues during this fiscal year to the retirement of the debt. Those figures could undoubtedly be secured from the Treasury Department. I don't think any figures have come to my desk showing what that amount is.

The breakfast that the Texas people had with me and some of the Senators Wednesday morning was a social affair. Some of you may remember that when I was at Omaha in the Fall of 1925 there was a Texan there that presented me with a very fine Texas hat on the stage. The gentleman that performed that ceremony was up here with some of his friends and I took occasion to reciprocate by asking him to come in and have breakfast with me. That presentation was made I think just as I had made my speech at Omaha.

I have been invited to speak to the National Christian Endeavor Association in Cleveland. I have forgotten just when. It is sometime during the coming Spring or Summer. I haven't been able to give them very much encouragement about it. I told them I would take it under consideration.

I haven't yet made a final decision about where we shall go to live, but I think our most probable choice is the house which I believe is known as the Patterson house. It is on Dupont Circle. It is the property of a daughter of Mrs. Patterson, Mrs. Alma Schlesinger. She lives almost entirely in New York now and has this house here. It is very favorably located and it has one of the conditions that are almost necessary, it is totally detached. It hasn't any other houses backing up onto it. It stands by itself with open space all about it. I have looked at that house and several others and the interior of the house, its arrangement and so on, is such as would be very comfortable for us I am sure.

Press: How many rooms has that house?

President: I really haven't any idea. Of course the White House looks to be very large, but it hasn't so very many rooms in it. In relation to its size, I should almost guess that this house has about as many rooms as the White House. Of course they are very much smaller. Then the hallways take up so much space. Some of the rooms are not large. I should judge there were 15 or 18 rooms in the Patterson house. That is just a very rough guess.

Have you made any decision as to the exact time of your leaving the White House?



President: I think we shall go very soon after the social season is over and it will depend upon the time that the contractors begin work. Whether they would want to begin before the 4th of March or not, I don't know. ~~Whether-they-would-want-to-begin~~ We need to stay in the White House until we are finished with the social season and the receptions and dinners are out of the way.

I think I referred in my message to the possibility of a grouping together of our insular possessions and the Territory of Alaska into one central government and probably taking the insular possessions out of the War Department. It is partly by accident, I think, that the War Department has charge of these possessions, because those came into our jurisdiction as a result of the action of the Army and the Navy, and because the Army was there in possession during the first part of our occupancy it was quite natural that they began to be administered from the War Department and as the administration was so well carried on it seemed to be the natural thing to leave it there. Now, I don't anticipate that some other Department could do the work better than the War Department. Their administration of our insular affairs has been exceedingly satisfactory, but the people that live in the Philippines and the people living in Porto Rico get the idea that because the administration is through the War Department that in some way or another it has a military aspect. That is not the case, but it gives that impression. I have thought, as I stated in my message, that it might be worth while to

make a change for the purpose of removing that impression and then get our outlying possessions all into one management.

I haven't come to any final decision about the Interstate Commerce Commissioner. I have had quite a number of recommendations.

There isn't anything that I can add to what I have already said about the situation in Nicaragua. I do not have in mind just what Secretary Kellogg may have said in relation to our good offices there. But whatever has been indicated in relation to that was transmitted to Admiral Latimer and the Chiefs of the parties that are on the ground, Admiral Latimer is in contact with them. If they wish to make any move in the direction that was indicated by the Secretary of State, I should judge that the obvious method to accomplish it would be for the interested parties to communicate their desires there on the ground to Admiral Latimer. I am not making any suggestion at all about it. I don't want to be represented as in the attitude of offering any advice about it whatever, but it seems to me that is the obvious thing. If any question arises of how they are going to take advantage of the suggestion of the Secretary of State, I should think the reply would be that the way to take advantage of it is to go to Admiral Latimer and accept such offices as he is able to perform.