

Paul Smith's, N.Y.,
Friday, September 3, 1926.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I don't know when Ambassador Sheffield is coming up here. As I indicated the other day, he was going to Atlantic City as I understood with Mrs. Sheffield and their son, returning some time next week. But I imagine he may be up here the latter part of next week. Not earlier than that. No time has been set. Of course I expect to return to Washington as early as the 18th and it is possible that he may wait until I go down there. As I indicated, also, the other day, he has had a difficult position in Mexico which he has discharged with great ability naturally in representing American interests. By that I mean the interests the Government properly protects in Mexico, the rights of American citizens. He has been obliged to run counter to the desires of some people and quite naturally they resent the result of that action. You see that in the usual crop of rumors that emanate from somewhere and nowhere that Mr. Sheffield is not going to return, that powerful interests are going to prevent his continuing in office, or something of that kind. There is no foundation for that whatever. The only reports I have ever had in relation to Ambassador Sheffield are those that praised his conduct. I have never had any criticism. So that if you see any reports of that kind, why I think you can set them down as the natural result of a man representing this Government who has had to insist that the rights of our citizens be respected when there were some people that thought it would be to their advantage not to respect those rights.

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I have been very much distressed at the illness of Major Brooks, who is the Steward, isn't he Mr. Clark?

Mr. Clark: Yes.

Press: What is his first name?

President: Arthur. He has been in the public service for a great many years. He was in the War Dept. and went to the White House with Mr. Taft when he went out of the War Dept. He was a Major in Command of a battalion in Washington for some years and still has that title by right of service, not by courtesy. He is one of the finest men in Washington. I had another man who I estimated just as highly when I was Governor of Massachusetts, Edward Horrigan, a member of the State Police who was stationed in the Governor's office and always went out with me the same as the secret service do here. I am very glad to be able to report that Major Brooks while still in desperate condition has responded to treatment. Dr. Melhorn says there is faint hope of his recovery.

Press: Is he in Washington now?

President: Yes. He came up here with me. I thought it might be good for him up here, but he needed some one to be with him nights. Mrs. Brooks didn't come up with him, so after staying a few weeks he went back. He has charge of the property of the White House. He is under bond to look after that in addition to his keeping the President in presentable appearance. But it is because of the fine character of the man that I cherish him so highly. I was very much distressed when I learned that he had become unconscious and probably

wouldn't regain consciousness. I am very glad to get a telegram today which says he is somewhat improved.

I don't know that there is anything I can say that hasn't already been said about the World Court. I feel quite certain that when the other nations come to examine the reservations they will see that the purport of them is merely to put this country on a parity with other countries that are members of the League and have a seat in the Council. I understand that they have already agreed to four reservations and the one that is under consideration is the 5th. As I understand the rights of members of the League who may be members of the Council, in order to have an advisory opinion it has to be by the unanimous action of the Council. That means that one nation in the Council can object to having an advisory opinion and the advisory opinion is then not called for. So I understand the the 5th reservation is merely for the purpose of putting the United States in the same position as other countries, which I think when it is understood and studied by the other countries in interest will be regarded as entirely fair. If other countries have the right individually to prevent the asking of an advisory opinion, why I see no reason why the United States shouldn't have the same right which it would have under the 5th reservation. The speedy action that has been taken on the first four reservations I should think would indicate that there would be little, if any, difficulty in the 5th reservation.

Here is a question that really answers itself. After stating that Secretary Kellogg desires countries to make some agreement to prevent competition

in armaments Secretary Wilbur has said that when our aviation program is carried out the United States will have first place in aviation. There is no conflict in policy between those statements, for the reason that we haven't been able to get any treaty relative to aircraft armaments and it is true that our country favors ~~and-it-is-true-that-our-country~~ the elimination of competition in armaments. I think I would go so far as to say in all classes and cases. There isn't any agreement though, I think, so far as this country is concerned, about aircraft. That leaves us entirely free. What Secretary Wilbur is alleged to have said here is that when our present program is carried out the United States will be in the top place in naval aviation. I think the only limitation we have on that is the limitation of aircraft carriers. We have some limitation as to their size and I think as to their number, but I am not so certain about that.

Press: Total tonnage, Mr. President.

President: Yes. So that under present conditions there is no conflict in those two statements. [What I should like to have the position of this country to be would be for doing away with competition in all kinds of armaments. We haven't been able to secure that entirely. Now, I would go a little beyond that. I am not in favor of entering into any competitive race with any country in any department of military equipment and defense, whether there is any treaty in relation to it or not. That leaves us in a position of course of going ahead and doing what we think may be fairly necessary for our national defense without any particular regard to what some other country is doing. We are not undertaking to compete with other countries in the building of submarines or of cruisers or of destroyers,

nor are we undertaking to compete with any other country in aviation. I see this question refers to naval aviation. But what I think that the report of the Aircraft Board pretty clearly demonstrated, and what I think is substantially true, is that our aviation is as far advanced and as well equipped as that of any other country. I think that has been the condition right along and is undoubtedly the condition now. That is not because we are trying to compete with any other country or build more aircraft than they do or anything of that kind. It is because in the usual and natural course of national defense we have developed our air program fairly well and are in many respects somewhat better than any other country. Some other countries may have more planes than we have. No country has any better planes than we have.

I have had here at Paul Smith's in the last three or four weeks quite a number of representatives of different industries and commercial activities of the country. If you will review what they have said in your own minds, which you can do just as well as for me to undertake to restate it, I think you will see that it demonstrates pretty well that the country is in a prosperous condition. I have had two or three representatives of the automobile industry, Mr. Liggett of the United Drug, and Mr. Rosenwald of Sears Roebuck & Co., and Mr. Young of the General Electric Co. and its allied industries. All of them testify that business as they find it over the country is in an exceedingly good condition. One or two men engaged in railroading have called; Mr. Brush who is I think now more engaged in railroad matters than any other particular line.

Every one knows that the railroads are exceedingly prosperous at this time. I noticed that Howard Elliott is in this part of the country and has dropped in to call on me. I don't think he has any business, but came in to pay his respects to the office. So that I judge from all this testimony that has come to me that the country is in a prosperous condition, and perhaps that would be worthy of a new story on the part of any of you gentlemen that have a disposition to write something of that kind out. It might be a constructive piece of work. I have had interviews with quite a cross section of the different interests. If you assemble those and recall them, I think they would make an interesting news story.