

November 16, 1923.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

* * *

It would be exceedingly desirable if we could put our American firms not only on a par, but so far as we can give them whatever advantages are possible over foreign firms engaged in trade in the same territory. It would be impossible for me to say whether this could be done in a way that would be fair to our taxpayers at home, unless I could first see the plan by which it is proposed to be provided. Very likely then I should have to consult experts to get a correct opinion on it, so that all I can say is I would be very much in favor of that principle if it can be carried out in a way that would be fair to our taxpayers at home.

An inquiry also about my answer to a recent question which was interpreted as favoring a monarchist regime for Germany. I suppose it is well known that the long expressed policy of the American Government, especially as set out in the Monroe Doctrine, is that of favoring everywhere a republican form of Government. That doesn't mean that we can always interfere, even when we should want to interfere, nor does it mean that the Government as a government can always express the opinion that would probably be entertained by each member of the Government, and known to be entertained by all the people of the United States. That question arose from an inquiry about a report of the return of the Emperor of Germany into that country. I suppose one of the things for which we went to war was to drive him out of power and prevent hereafter what the Emperor at that time was doing. That was supposed to have been effectively prevented by the Versailles Treaty, and those who are the parties to that treaty have the authority, of course, and ought to have the authority, to enforce its provisions, and in that they would have the sympathy always of the United States, I am sure.

An inquiry also about speeding up the house cleaning of the anthracite industry. No special suggestion about that has come to me. Our Government is acting on it, and has been doing what it could for some time through the Federal Trade Commission. I have had reports from them often. I think their reports have been published, and there is at the present time an action pending which has been

brought, I believe, in their name to effect, if possible, a housecleaning in that industry, insofar as it can be effected under present law. I haven't any suggestion to be made as to what any state should do about it, and the law enforcing officers of all the states I am sure can be trusted to do whatever the law requires them to do.

As to whether letters and reports received at the White House point to favorable public reception of the Mellon Taxation problem. So far as I have had a chance to read present reports and editorial comment, it seems to be almost uniformly favorable. There is some criticism, of course, but the great bulk of it appears to express a very favorable reception to the suggestions for a reduction of taxation.

+ An inquiry also about extending clemency to the remaining political prisoners. I don't exactly like the term political prisoners, because I hope we do not have any such thing in this country, but I use that term because you know what it means, I know what it means, and the public knows. I am having an investigation made, and when I get the results of the investigation I am going to act upon it. I think I may be able to get a report on it within a short time. I am not exactly certain just when it will be.

Whether any definite arrangement was made for a legislative program at the conference today with Senator Lodge. No. No definite arrangement was made about a legislative program. I only saw the Senator for a very few moments. He arrived last night or early this morning, and came in to see me. I hadn't seen him since very early in August. We didn't have an opportunity to discuss any legislative program, and the whole matter was left that he would try and see me at an early date and confer with me on questions in which we might be mutually interested.

+ An inquiry also about a constitutional amendment making property as well as persons and lives of citizens subject to conscription for the defense of the nation and that necessary legislation be enacted by Congress to that effect. I thought that that principle laid down by President Harding in one of his messages covered this very completely and answered a question of this kind very satisfactorily. I should say about that, that in time of war authority to take every resource of the nation, in persons and property, at reasonable pre-war rates of compensation without any profiteering would be a fair policy of operation and a fair principle. Now that is very dif-

ficult of practical application. When war arises necessarily it is followed by a tremendous force behind it to stimulate production and stimulate all kinds of activity, and the method that has been used for that purpose has been to increase prices. If you want to get more work done, more production, you pay a larger price. Wages rise, and prices of all kinds of commodities rise. So that whether that exact principle would be one that could ever practically be put into operation, I think is a question. But in theory I think it is perfectly correct, and if it could be done it would make the question of national defense one ~~of~~ much easier than it is at the present time.

An inquiry regarding a successor to Ambassador Child. The Ambassador has not retired. He has come over here on a visit, and is to return. He has indicated to me that he wishes to retire some time in the immediate future, the time for which has not been set. After the time is definitely fixed, I think there will be plenty of occasion to pick out his successor. Nothing has been done about that up to the present time.

An inquiry about the visit of Mr. Hays, that is, Will H. Hays. He is coming in to bring his brother and a Mr. Scott of Indiana, and a Mr. Stratton that he wanted to introduce to me. And further inquiry as to the suggestions in many quarters that he assume the chairmanship of the Republican National Committee. I don't know of any plan of that kind. My own opinion is that there is not the slightest foundation for supposing that anything of that kind could be carried out. Mr. Hays performed a great public service both here and in the cabinet, and ^{was} a great help and force in his leadership in the last campaign. I think at present he is in the enjoyment of, partially at least, a suitable reward for his services. It would be almost unfair to him to try to commandeer him. I do not imagine that he is seeking to relinquish his present place to take up any of his former duties.

An inquiry about the Philadelphia mail tube situation. It is my understanding that General Lord has not been able to recommend that. I doubt very much if he will find that the evidence warrants him making such a recommendation, agreeable as it would be to him and to me to rescue the property that has been used for that purpose, and put it back again as a profitable concern. He hasn't been able to convince himself, nor have I been able to convince myself that such action would either increase the service enough to warrant the expense that would be incurred.

I think that covers everything.