

October 19, 1923.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

† Here is a very interesting suggestion that a box has been set aside at the Princeton-Navy Football Game, on Saturday, October 27th, for me and my party, and an inquiry as to whether I expect to go. I am sorry that I can't go. I should like very much to see that game. Not only because I enjoy the sport, but because I like to encourage activities of that kind on the part of the Navy and on the part of the Army. I think it is especially good training for the Naval Academy and for the West Point Academy to have sports of that kind in connection with the general training that takes place at those institutions.

† Another inquiry as to whether the Navy's interests are adequately protected in the lease of the Teapot Dome. I haven't any detailed information about that. My judgment about it would be based on the confidence that I had in President Harding and Secretary Fall. I think there is some suggestion pending in Congress for an investigation. I don't know whether it will be carried out or not, but that should reveal, if it is carried out - well, it is going on now, I believe. Yes. That, of course, will reveal the facts; so that, so far as I know, there is no action that could be taken by the President relative to it.

An inquiry as to whether the plan of the Shipping Board subcommittee for its operation had my approval prior to its adoption. I am not certain just when that plan was put into effect. I have had several conferences with Chairman Farley and whether, as a result of those conferences, he considered that I gave my approval to the specific plan, I don't know. I didn't understand that I was approving any specific plan. I don't want it to be understood by that, that I am criticizing the Shipping Board in any way. I assume it is the very best that could be done at the present time. It is difficult to adopt a temporary plan of operation, and after careful study, when Mr. Farley returns from abroad, which will be in a little less than a month, perhaps something of a permanent nature will be laid before me. That was the substance of the last conference that I had with him.

† An inquiry also about recommendations that I might make to Congress. I can't tell what recommendations I may make to Congress, and as I have indicated before, I should very much prefer to make those to Congress direct, rather than to make them the subject of various conferences here between the White House press and

myself.

An inquiry about the visit of Mr. Wakeman this morning. He was only here a very short time, I think less than five minutes. I understand that he is interested in the gathering of tariff information. That was the substance of what he was telling me - that he and some organization - what organization does he represent?

American Commerce.

Well, I am not certain.

American Protective Tariff Association, Mr. President.

Well, I judge that he was connected with some organization that was interested in a reasonable tariff, and the substance of his comments was that they were gathering tariff information.

† An inquiry also about tax revision legislation by Congress. That again is a matter on which I have arrived at no settled opinion. Of course, I shall go over that with the Treasury Department. I shall go over it with the representatives of the Senate who have charge of that in the Senate, and the representatives of that in the House, who have charge of it in the House, to see whether, as a result of what information there is in the Treasury, and the opinion as to what policy Congress ought to adopt, as a result of a conference with the Ways and Means Committee of the Senate and the corresponding Committee of the House, it would be well to adopt and recommend. I suppose it goes without saying that everybody is in favor of tax revision, if conditions are such that warrant it.

An inquiry about dispatches from Mexico City relative to a border conference between the President and General Obregon within the next sixty days. That has been suggested to me, I think by Senator Cameron, that it might be productive of a great deal of good, if General Obregon could meet me on the border, having in mind, I think, something of that kind that was done by President Taft during his administration. I haven't any plan about it, and at present it doesn't seem to me that it would be feasible, however much I would like personally to do it, and however much I agree with the general suggestion.

An inquiry also - several - about the Conference of the Governors.

Mr. President, while we are on the Mexican subject, may I ask you if it would be more feasible after the exchange of Ambassadors?

Well, it might. It is something, of course, that I should like very much to do, but doubt very much whether I could get the time that it would require.

Thank you, sir.

There isn't anything in the situation that I know of that would make any difference whether it were done now or whether it were done after Ambassadors are appointed. That is the question. It might be that at that time I should have a better opportunity.

Several inquiries about the Governors' Conference that I will answer together. It is my plan to say a few words of welcome and describe the purpose of the meeting of Executives to see what can be done for a better enforcement of the laws. You have the three subjects - immigration, the narcotic laws, and the prohibitory laws. They will be followed by the Attorney General, I don't know just in what order, who will give something of a resume of what has been done by his Department, and Judge Henning of the Department of Labor will represent the Secretary of Labor, the Secretary of Labor being, at present, on the Pacific Coast. Mr. Mellon will be there, Mr. Blair and Mr. Haynes. I understand that Mr. Haynes will speak, telling what is being done by the Treasury Department and by himself in the way of enforcement, making, all of us, such suggestions as seem pertinent to us as to what can be done, and especially about the duty that comes to us under the law to try to enforce its provisions.

Mr. President, will your remarks be prepared in advance?

Yes, they are practically ready to be given out now.

What time do you think they will be given? In time for the afternoon papers?

I don't know. What time do your papers go to press?

Well, we can get it for the 5.30 up to this time of the day.

Well, I should judge, though, if part of them were to go in the afternoon papers and part in the morning papers, it would be better, of course, to get them all into one edition, or all into the other.

Mr. President, will there be a record kept of the proceedings of the conference - the discussion?

No, this is informal. The gathering will listen to the remarks I have indicated above, and after that, I expect the Governors will have appointed somebody to represent them and present the views of the state executives. Very likely several will speak for that purpose.

I have also here an inquiry about the Conference between Senator Moses of New Hampshire and myself. I was especially desirous to go over with him, not in any great detail, but still at some length, the developments that arose as a result of the journey of the Committee on Reforestation. It seemed to me that that was a matter of a good deal of importance, and I was desirous of knowing what progress the Committee were making, and what response they found in their western trip. He tells me that he finds a great deal of public and official interest in this very important question. It is realized, not only that we are cutting down and using up ~~a~~ very large forest resources each year, but also in the matter of fire. ⁺It has been reported to me, and I am afraid it is true, that more timber is burned up each year than is cut down and used. A very serious situation. One that would be appreciated especially by men connected with newspaper work on account of the continually increasing price that there is in print paper. ⁺The difficulty of securing pulp wood. Of course, this material also goes into the building end of it. It goes into almost all of the manufacturing industries, so that it is a matter of supreme importance that we provide ourselves with sufficient reforestation to insure the growth and development of enough wood for the use of all the industries in the future.

I think that covers substantially the requests of the day.