

January 15, 1924.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

+ Here is an interesting inquiry on press reports from abroad, which indicated belief among many Europeans that American participation in the reparations inquiry is the first step toward further entrance by the United States into European affairs. My comment about that would be that it is very inaccurate. The question is very inaccurate. I don't believe the public has the impression that this inquiry would indicate. There is no entrance by the United States into European affairs, and therefore there won't be any further entrance by the United States into European affairs. It goes on to say "Can you say anything regarding the work of Messrs. Dawes, Young and Robinson, and whether the United States may participate further?" Of course General Dawes, Mr. Young and Mr. Robinson do not represent the United States in any way. They represent the Reparations Commission. They are responsible to the Reparations Commission and to them alone. The United States Government has no connection with them. Their presence does not indicate the first step on the part of the United States Government to enter European affairs, and therefore do not contemplate any further step on the part of the United States, if by United States that means the Government.

Another inquiry about the possibility of a loan to Germany by the War Finance Corporation for the purchase of food. I think I have commented on that two or three times. The last I knew there was a proposal being entertained by the Reparations Commission to permit a loan to be made to Germany, part of which I understood was to be expended in this country and part somewhere else, and part was to be taken up in this country, and part somewhere else. I never knew what decision was reached. It was necessary for them to give their approval of it, otherwise the loan would be on top of the German reparations, and payment would be very far in the future - very likely it wouldn't be much more than mere paper. So that an attempt was made to get in under that, and I don't know what decision has been made. Then after that I think there was some foreign banks that were proposing to make a loan, which looked more practicable and encouraging, and more immediately available. The last time I had any talk with Mr. Myer he spoke about that and I never heard what decision had been made. It looked quite encouraging at that time.

As I have said before, Mr. Dawes and his associates you know, and the public I think knows, went over there at the invitation of the Reparations Commission, and the other members of the board are there by the representation of their respective Governments. .

↑ Mr. President, can you say whether the Reparations Commission pays their expenses?

× I understand it does, or else they pay their own. I don't know about that. I should expect that they were paid by the Reparations Commission. Usually the party calling in an expert, I found, has to pay his expenses.

I haven't any information from Mexico that would indicate any change in the military fortunes of the opposing factions. I never had any detailed information about it, except in a general way that there was trouble going on down there. The extent of it, and so on, I never knew.

Here is an inquiry about a change in the Tariff Commission. I don't know as I can make any very helpful comment about that. The only think I can require of any member of a Government Board or Commission is that they function in accordance with the requirements of the law. As long as they do that, it is my business to be satisfied with them, and they are entitled to approbation. If they neglect that, and don't function according to statute, why then, of course, they are subject to criticism. It is very often that differences of opinion arise in Boards about things, and they sit down and talk it over, discuss it, and usually arrive at some workable solution, if each man keeps in mind his duty and makes his decision in accordance with what he thinks the situation requires. It usually works out that they arrive at a solution.

Mr. President, do you think there will be some change needed in the Constitution of the Board, having six members and having to make a decision on a subject? It seems a difficult thing to do.

It seems a very practicable suggestion, if they should happen to divide three to three, but there again it is not necessary, and probably that was the reason why they were made a three and three board, rather than a five, or 7, or 9. It is because this is a fact finding Commission, and each member would report to me what he thought the facts were, and it isn't necessary that they should agree. If they were to make a decision that affected some private interest, of course it would be rather necessary that the decision be reached. Theoretically, when a motion is made and the vote is three to three, or 10 to 10, the motion

does not prevail, but for the sake of getting a rather better decision than that it is usually customary to make Boards of an odd number, though Boards almost always agree with a fair unanimity.

There is no name under particular consideration for an Ambassador to Mexico, and no decision has been made about a successor to Victor Murdock, as a member of the Federal Trade Commission.

There has been no positive decision, so far as I know, relative to the purchase of Shipping Board and Naval Vessels by the Coast Guard for use in Coast Guard, Internal Revenue, and Customs enforcement.

An inquiry about the speech of General Dawes. I think I have already indicated that, of course, what General Dawes says doesn't indicate any policy at all of the United States Government. He speaks with his own authority and as the representative or the expert of the Commission - the Reparations Commission. He doesn't represent the United States in any way.

I don't know of any difficulty about the collections from the Mexican Government for the sale of munitions. I think they are being carried out in accordance with the agreement made at the time.

No positive decision has been reached with respect to the several judges

I have already, I think, said that no positive decision has been made about the member of the Shipping Board that is to come from the Interior, or the new Chairman.

That brings me back to the point of departure.

Anything in the Cabinet, Mr. President?

A very short session in the Cabinet, and no business taken up.