

February 27, 1925.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

I don't know as I can make any particular comment about the rejection of the Conference agricultural bill. I don't know enough about the details of these bills to discuss the detail with any intelligence. I have been going more particularly on my confidence in people that have made recommendations and not on my particular knowledge of the recommendations that have been made. Now here we have the heads of five great farm organizations and three or four experts from our agricultural institutions that are supposed to know something about farm economics. They made some recommendations about legislation. I don't think there would be anything in those recommendations that are likely to be harmful to the farmer. Now, you don't have to study the farm question but a very short time to find out that every time there is any effort made to help the farmer the people that live off the farmer or off the distribution of his products almost always come in and resist anything being done. I don't know what the reason for that is. They seem to think that if the farmer is going to be helped that means they are going to be injured. I don't agree with that view. The better off the farmer is the better off those will be that deal with him. But there does seem to be a very determined opposition on the part of those who act as distributors, not all of them, but quite a number of them, to any assistance being rendered the farmer. And they don't come in themselves and say "I am dealing in farm produce." They reach over and get the farmer to come in and oppose it himself. Now that is a reaction that always occurs, so that we are not going to get any farm legislation without opposition, and the opposition will apparently come from the farmer when of course those with experience know very well that it originates with others. Then there are those who are determined that nothing shall be done for the farmer unless they do it. I have a good deal of sympathy with them and wish they would do more than they do. I am very glad to hand over to them the work of doing something for the farmer if they will do it, but they haven't been able to accomplish very much, and therefore I was hopeful that this farm conference recommendation would receive favorable action from the Congress. I am not entirely certain that it will not result that way now. I am told that if the Senate will pass that bill there is every indication

that the House will then accept it. That is the report that comes to me. I think you know of the general effort I have been making, and I will be very glad to assume my share of the responsibility for it. I have done all I can, and now somebody else can do their's. I shall continue my efforts to help the farmer and I shall be glad to cooperate with anyone that is desirous of working in the same direction. Now what I have said here is not in the way of criticism and fault-finding. It is merely the statement of a set of facts and conditions which exist, and which should be taken into account when we are trying to do anything about farm legislation. I don't know whether there could be any substitute for the Conference measure. There could be other kinds of legislation. I doubt very much if there could be anything that could be substituted for it that would be nearly as helpful. Something else might go part way and I am always willing to go part way with anyone that doesn't want to go so far as I think it would be well to go, and not be in the position of saying, "if you don't want to go the whole distance we wont go anywhere."

I don't believe I can make any suggestions about the approval or disapproval of bills.

There isn't anything more that I can say about Russia. I don't believe it is helpful to have me constantly make some comment about Russia. My position has been pretty clearly stated in my different messages and addresses. Conditions change. We have been hopeful all the time that conditions in Russia will change.

I can't make any comment about the illness of President Ebert of Germany, other than to express my regret. If it is proper, I think I may say that he has seemed to me to be doing the very best he could in a difficult situation and undertaking candidly to try and fulfill the obligations of his country.

I don't expect to confer either today or tomorrow with Ambassador Kellogg. He dined with us last night. Very naturally we talked about things abroad, not so much in relation to affairs directly affecting the United States as in relation to the general affairs of Europe. I was very much pleased to learn from him that he takes an optimistic attitude about conditions over there, not regarding every difficulty as settled or every problem solved at the present time, but very much pleased with the great progress that has been made, and he is very hopeful that the remaining problems can be solved by the same methods and as

satisfactorily as those that have already been disposed of.

I haven't done anything about action under any present law in relation to rents here in the District, as I indicated at another conference. If legislation fails and we haven't any additional powers to those which we already have, I shall undertake to apply the present powers that are provided in the law for the remedy of any evil that may be found to exist. My reason for action here has been a little different, as you already understand, from the ordinary desire of the Executive to protect the public. That is always a reason for action. But here I had in mind not merely the protection of the public, but more particularly and primarily the protection of the employees of the U. S. Government. So many of them are rent payers in the District, and as I thought that the U. S. Government owed them a particular duty submitted that proposal to the Congress to see if the House and Senate could find a solution of it. A great deal of argument could be made that the best thing to be done would be to let the situation alone and have it taken care of by the law of supply and demand. If no legislation is passed, I hope that is correct. I was afraid it wouldn't. If you are running a manufacturing plant here and can't operate it successfully, why some other location would carry on the business and the public wouldn't suffer very much. But we can't move the business of the United States and send it anywhere, and the people that transact it have to live in this vicinity. That is one of the reasons why I planned to do whatever I might be able to do to afford them reasonable rentals, and of course having in mind those that invest in realty who are entitled to reasonable rents and a reasonable profit.

Will the President suggest to the Attorney General whether he has or find out whether he has any additional powers?

I am going to inquire about that if there is a continuation of difficulty here. Of course I shall find out from the Attorney General whether there is any legal remedy that we can apply. The Attorney General has been constantly engaged on this question. I think he has examined to see if there has been any violation of the law, but so far as I know he hadn't found any violation of the law that seemed to be clear enough and evidence sufficient to warrant any action on his part. It is possible that they might find some action that can be applied, ~~by~~ by way of injunction or something of that nature. Sometimes publicity is helpful.