

February 5, 1929.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

Nothing special has developed in relation to the Judgeship of the District of Columbia, with the possible exception of the elimination of one or two names that have been suggested.

I don't know just what is contained in the present bill relative to vocational education which has passed the house. There was a bill there that was considerably more ambitious than what I felt such a bill ought to be, but I understood that this bill has been much reduced in its proportions and if that is true I presume I would have no serious objection to it. We are already doing a considerable amount in that direction - I feel about all that we ought to do. But if some small addition is proposed to be made, I presume I would not oppose it.

We have been making studies from time to time both in the War Dept. and the Navy Dept. to see if something could not be done relative to the promotion problem. No very good plan has ever been presented to me. There was a plan presented that provided for buying people off, virtually hiring them to resign I think, under which some men would get as much as \$16,000 or \$18,000. That didn't seem to be practical to me. If some method can be worked out, I should be glad to see it done. But I haven't seen any plan up to the present time that seemed to be feasible.

I don't know what will be done about the cruiser bill, of course. I am not in favor of the bill in its present form. I don't want to be understood as saying positively that I will veto it. I have to sign a good many bills that I think on the whole are more favorable than unfavorable, and I can't say what will be done about appropriations. I think that some confusion has arisen in the mind of the Senate in

thinking that a proposal to take out the time limit is a proposal not to begin building. That wasn't my position at all. I am in favor of passing a bill with the time limit out and in favor of making an appropriation on such a bill. I don't say what I am in favor of doing with the time limit in, but with the time limit out I am in favor of starting construction work at once. That could have been done some time ago. The bill could have been passed any time up there in two hours, if they had been willing to take the time limit out, in my opinion.

Question: Could you say how many ships there would be in the first year's program?

President: That, I haven't decided on. I should like to begin the construction of a very substantial number, and if the time limit had been taken out the bill would have been passed, I think, long ago and appropriations would now be under way. Whether under the present method of appropriations there will ever be a bill or any appropriations, I wouldn't want to venture to prophesy.

I haven't given any attention to the resumption of football games between the Army and Navy and Marine Corps and the Coast Guard. There wouldn't be an opportunity for anything to be done about that during my administration. I have expected that sooner or later the Army and Navy would resume their games, but it is so much a matter for voluntary action on the part of the student bodies concerned that I have never felt like ordering anybody to play football or suggesting that they ought not to play, if they wanted to play in a reasonable kind of a way.

Of course, I have no judgment that is better than that of any one else as to the effect of the continued increase of expenditures by local governments on the prosperity of the country. I indicated in my last budget meeting address that I

thought it constituted a real danger. Nor could I hazard any guess as to whether the danger will be averted. It can be, but whether it will be or not, I don't know. The trouble with those things is that they go on and nobody does anything about them until they have done a great deal of injury. When it is too late to avert the injury the only thing that can be done is to make drastic reductions that will afford a future remedy. The postal receipts for the month of January showed something over 3 per cent increase over January of a year ago.

I haven't any additional information concerning the question of reparations. That, of course, will be for the interested parties to decide. Our interest is very small compared with that of other countries. Mr. Young and Mr. Morgan, of course, do not represent our Government. They are called in as experts to assist the other experts. I should prefer that some of the governments interested furnish the chairman, but that is not for our Government to say. It is for the experts from each country themselves to decide and it is for the experts to determine, of course, what questions they want to discuss. If they desire to discuss the European debts that are due to this country, I don't know of any way that we could prevent it. Our Government, would not, however, feel that any such discussion was binding on it in any way. I suppose the main question for them to decide is how much Germany can pay. I don't see that that has any relation to the amount of money that some other government may be owing us.

I had a very pleasant trip to Florida, as you know. One of those incidents occurred that sometimes occurs when the President makes an address. I think I referred in my address to nightingales. Some newspaper writer wishing to set me right about that said that there were no nightingales in Florida. I suppose there are no native

lightingales there, but my suggestion was correct, and Mr. Bok has imported a large number and they are located about the tower, so that I suppose, as I said, that their song will mingle with the music of the bells.

I had another curious incident of a newspaper setting me right, when I made an address at Williams College. At the time they brought back and reposed in the new chapel there all that was mortal of Colonel Ephraim Williams the founder of the college. He had been killed in the French and Indian War over in the edge of New York and of course in that conflict he fought under the British Flag, and the college authorities thought therefore it would be appropriate on that occasion to display a copy of the British Flag as it was when he fought under it. It hung there over the remains. In the course of my remarks I referred to the fact that he lay there under the flag under which he had fought. Some newspaper called me to account for that and said that of course I ought to know the Stars and Stripes had not been adopted at that time.