

September 4, 1923.

Remarks by the President to newspaper men.

* There doesn't seem to be a very long list of questions this morning. I judge that the reason for that is the interest that we are all feeling in the great calamity which has overtaken several of the cities of Japan, and that we are giving our time and attention almost exclusively to that.

An inquiry about Governor Hyde, who said he discussed prohibition enforcement, and whether any recommendations were made either by you or by him. No specific recommendations were made. ~~with~~ He told me something of the conditions in his State, and his desire to have the cooperation of the Federal Government, and of his desire to give the cooperation of his State Government.

A suggestion that Commissioner Haynes has returned. I have just learned of that this morning, and I am planning to see him this afternoon, go over the question of enforcement, learning what I can of the conditions from him and undertaking to find out what can be done in the way of proper enforcement of the law.

An inquiry as to when cabinet meetings will be resumed. They will be resumed next Friday. As I think I explained one or two meetings ago, I found that when I came into office, that several of the cabinet members had commitments, some of them to go away. Some of them even in Europe. Secretary Denby wanted to return to Michigan to finish his vacation. Secretary Weeks to New Hampshire. Secretary Hughes, as you know, had scarcely been out of the city this summer. He had some engagements to fill before the American Bar Association at Minneapolis and the Canadian Bar Association at Montreal. He is now filling those engagements, as you know. The Cabinet will be all back here this week and the regular meetings will be resumed the first Friday of September.

Whether the Federal Fuel Distributer has been notified to go ahead with plans for distribution of soft coal. No additional instructions have been given him. His instructions were general. He undertook to proceed with the plan, well, nearly a month ago, calling a conference of Governors and representatives of Governors, laying out a plan for distribution of fuel. The United States, of course, attaches to that through the Interstate Commerce Commission. It has been suggested that Mr. Wadleigh has a term of office that expires on the 22nd. He is attached indirectly either through the Commerce Department, ~~Dept~~ Secretary

of Commerce, or to the Interstate Commerce Commission, and whatever it may be necessary for him to do after the 22nd of September, he will do either through one or the other of those Departments.

† And I think I have answered the question that is made about the power of the Federal Government. It is to treat the distribution of coal as a matter of interstate commerce. As I have said before, I am very grateful to Governor Pinchot for undertaking to cooperate and lend the power of Pennsylvania to the power of the United States. I want to support him in every way and give him every possible cooperation. And that is being done, and we are still maintaining the hope that he may be able to reach some kind of an adjustment. In the meantime, I do not want to say anything that might in the slightest degree embarrass him. So it is difficult to say anything further than that I am doing everything I can to support him.

Since I came into office about a month ago we have signed a treaty of convention with Turkey. An order has been issued putting into effect the provision of the Treaty of Disarmament, the scrapping of those war vessels of the United States that are no longer to be kept in commission under the terms of the Treaty. We have been working on the coal situation, and I think I am justified in saying that every possible precaution has been taken there and every effort has been made, both by the Government here and by enlisting the help of the Governor of Pennsylvania, to solve that question. And in addition to that we have at last reached an understanding with Mexico. Those are three or four things that have been accomplished during this month that are of considerable importance.

I have a suggestion here that, on account of the very great calamity that has overtaken Japan, the United States might consider turning over to them the Philippine Islands. That, of course, is somewhat a novel suggestion. I don't know how serious the suggestion is, but I do know that the United States Government and the people of the United States ought to give every possible assistance and every possible relief to the people of Japan.† And I think you can perform a public service, demonstrate the friendship that Americans feel for Japan, by stressing the need of an immediate response to the appeal that is going to be made through the Red Cross for funds to carry on the work of relief in the stricken area. It is apparently one of the greatest calamities that nature ever inflicted on mankind anywhere in the world. Greater loss of life, and apparently, greater destruction of property than any other experience that mankind has had anywhere in history.

So that you can't make any too strong the determination of our Government to put all its resources that we reasonably and properly can into the relief. I have called on the Navy Department, I have called on the War Department, called on the Shipping Board. Of course, I have been in conference with the Red Cross, and I have issued my proclamation. The Red Cross will make its appeal today for immediate subscription of \$5,000,000. Ships will go there, food and supplies through the action of the War Department will be sent there. We shall do everything we can do in the way of relief. I don't know about the Philippines. They haven't proven a source of income to our Government. I don't know whether they would prove to be a source of help to the Japanese Government. I am interested in bringing that to the attention of you because it shows an inclination to take up the work and shows that America is glad to^{do} everything possible for the help of the Japanese people.