

Remarks of the President at the Newspaper Conference, Friday  
afternoon, June 11, 1926, at the Executive Office.

I haven't given any thought as to what Mrs. Coolidge and I can do about a place to live while the White House is being repaired. The Director of Buildings and Grounds, Major Grant, says we shall have to move out; that the repairs will take from six to ten months. I confess that I regard that as a very painful operation. I have resisted as long as I could the suggestion that the roof should be repaired. Colonel Sherrill was telling me it ought to be done three years ago, and I have finally come to that conclusion. It will be necessary to work clear down to the second floor in the White House, so there would not be any opportunity for us to live on the second floor while the repairs are going on. That is due to the peculiar construction. Instead of resting the floors on the foundation, some of the floors are hung on the bridge work that goes up over to make the roof, so that when the roof is taken off there isn't anything to support the floors. They have to come down at the same time. I want to get some place as close as I can to the White House here.

QUESTION: When do you contemplate having the work started?

This year or next year?

THE PRESIDENT (continuing): I thought that perhaps after the Congress adjourns next March. That would enable us to use the White House for the usual winter social functions. Then we could move out. Congress would be away from about the first of March to the first of

December undoubtedly - that is nine months - and during that period I should think they ought to be able to make the repairs.

QUESTION: Did Major Grant think it safe to live in the White House next winter?

THE PRESIDENT (continuing): I think it is fairly safe, but it is a developing condition. The weaknesses are constantly getting greater. No one can tell just when the roof will fall in if it is left as it is, or perhaps it would not actually fall in at all, but the timbers are cracking and the weakness is very apparent. I had it examined by a Member of the House, who is in the contracting business, a couple of years ago. The results of the examination and plans of the examination in reports that were made by the Engineers of the Army were sufficiently terrifying, but I knew the tendency of military men to think that it is necessary to take down the whole White House in order to fix a chimney, so I had a man in private life, or civil life rather, make an examination, and he rather confirmed the views of the military engineers. So that I very reluctantly came to the conclusion that it was necessary to have this done.

Of course, I haven't decided on any action in relation to Commissioner Fenning. Some time ago I instructed the Department of Justice to keep watch of the developments in that case in order to be prepared to advise me what action, if any, I ought to take; also to advise me on both angles as to whether any action ought to be taken to protect the interests of the District, or any action that I

ought to take to prevent Mr. Fenning from being unjustly accused. It was with the desire to be advised on the whole situation entirely and without any intention of prejudging the case that I gave that direction to the Department of Justice. They have examined the record and have been awaiting the final conclusion on the part of the Judiciary Committee before coming to any conclusion or digesting any of the facts that they thought it might be necessary to lay before me. When I have that report then I shall decide what ought to be done.

I am still working on the appointments on the Board of Mediation. I want very much to get those appointments made this week. It is a very important body. If it were merely a matter of investigating the qualifications of five men, it would not take very long. Of course, there were a large number of names submitted, and quite naturally a good many names occurred to me. It has been necessary to make a more or less investigation of all of these, and it takes considerable time to do that, but I very much hope that I can get these appointments made this week.

As I have had opportunity heretofore to comment, it is always a matter of astonishment to me that members of the press are able to report so accurately the doings of the Government. But there is one matter that I think perhaps I might speak of with a word of caution, and that is reports of the proposal of the President to go to different places. Of course, every place wants the President to come and every celebration that is held desires his presence. We are

in receipt of invitations by wire, or by mail, or through members of the Senate and House, or through committees coming here, and it is very seldom that an invitation is presented to me that is not one of real importance. It would be very pleasing if I could accept more of them. I do what I can. I make such speeches as I am able to prepare from time to time, but, quite naturally, I have to refuse almost all the invitations that come. Now, I am always glad to have it reported in the press that the President has been invited to go anywhere where an invitation has been extended. Sometimes that is gratifying. You men know as well as I do that if there is some public entertainment, or something of that kind to be held somewhere, the report in the press that the President has been invited is a good advertisement for it. I don't object to that at all. But to say that the President is going when he is not going oftentimes makes it quite embarrassing. Now, you can always find out by simply ringing up on the telephone and asking the office. It is a matter of no trouble to do that. If you want to be accurate about it, which I know you want to be, all you have to do is to make inquiry and find out what the President has under consideration, or what he has been compelled to refuse. I speak of that in relation to the invitation that I accepted to go to Philadelphia. All that I have ever had in contemplation, and all that I supposed they had up there, was for me to come and make an address. Of course, you men who go around with me know the work of my office and know what it is necessary to do and realize that it is a considerable task to prepare

an address, and then make the necessary arrangements to go outside of town and deliver it. It seems that some one in Philadelphia apparently made an announcement that the President was coming up there to stay two days. No such announcement was ever made from my office. I never had that in contemplation. When we told the Mayor that I would come up and make an address and it was arranged, then some of the press up there took it that there had been some change in my plans. That leads me to digress. Oftentimes I see reports in the press somewhat exaggerated -- I don't object to that -- then within a few days when I am not conscious of having changed my position the report comes out that the President has changed his position, -- the first report was accurate but the President has changed his position now and something else is going to be done. Really, of course, that is a change in the position of the press rather than in my position. Well, this is rather an example of that. I want to go to Philadelphia. I think in going that I recognize the very great importance of the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. I have recognized all my life in a great many ways the almost sacred character of many of the historic localities in Philadelphia connected with that great event. And I should be very much delighted if I could go up there and spend a week - as every citizen might well do -- going through the Exposition and spending some time in the building where the Declaration of Independence was signed, look in again at the Liberty Bell, and things of that kind. But the President cannot

do that. It is with great difficulty that he goes around among crowds, as you know. So I do not see that I can do very much better than I have indicated -- to go up and make my address and return. I have accepted an invitation to go across the new bridge there in Philadelphia, but no address will be made over there. I think it is the plan that when I get at the end of the bridge I am to take part in the planting of a tree, but aside from that my present plan about going up to Philadelphia is to leave here in the morning, go up and make an address and then return in the afternoon. I would like to stay longer, but it does not seem to be very possible to do that.

-----