

Friday, December 23, 1927.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I don't know whether it will be possible to find another Radio Commissioner before Congress reconvenes. I doubt if the appointment can be made before that time. In fact, I don't know just what the powers of the President are about an appointment while there is a recess of this kind, whether it leaves the President with authority to appoint as he would have authority if Congress has taken a summer recess, or whether it simply leaves him as he would be if he undertook to make an appointment during the night while Congress had adjourned or recessed from one day to another. I have had several men in view for this place. It takes some time to look one up, and each one of those that we have been able to determine might be otherwise available we found when the place was offered to him that for personal reasons he could not accept it. So while we have been making considerable efforts on it -- I wanted to make the appointment before Congress came in and wanted to send up all the names together -- we haven't been able to find a man that would take it that was satisfactory.

This is the season of the year when the press begins to have stories about the destitute condition of the Navy and the deplorable plight of the Army. I think I have had occasion before to comment on the fact that we never get the Army and Navy appropriation bills through without stories of that kind. I don't know just why they are put out. Perhaps it is a continuation of the days gone by when it was difficult to get appropriations as large as the War Dept. and the Navy Dept. wanted for national defense. That isn't the case now. Congress is disposed to be very liberal in providing for national defense. Of course, the budget estimates are always liberal. My budget estimates for the present year are creeping up towards \$100,000,000 more for national defense for the

War Department and the Navy Department than they were for the appropriations two or three years ago, and I think the country can rest fairly easy under the knowledge that the Bureau of Operations of the Navy and the General Staff of the Army are composed of very competent men and that if they are expending the \$700,000,000 or \$800,000,000 that are expended for national defense purposes the Army and Navy are in pretty good shape. They are never as large or as well equipped as some people would like to have them, but I think it is safe to say this that both the Army and the Navy are in better shape than they ever were before in time of peace. Some of our naval ships are getting into condition where it is necessary to have renewals and that is the reason for part of our building program. Some of our war material will have to be renewed. Perhaps it is some indication to you of the amount of war material we have on hand when you recall that the freight bill for moving part of it that is located up near Baltimore and in New Jersey is going to be over \$2,000,000. It takes quite a considerable amount of war material, which it will be necessary to move to keep those places in absolute safety, when the cost of the freight for such a move is some over \$2,000,000. And that is only a part of the ammunition that we have on hand. I referred to all these things in my message. We have need ~~it~~ from time to time to renew our ammunition. It deteriorates somewhat after it has been kept on hand for a number of years, and that is the case with some of our ammunition now.

Those of you that were with me during the summer will be interested to know of the season's greetings that I have just received from the people at Hermosa. I am much pleased to receive that. Of course, it is heartily reciprocated. I shall not see you again until after Christmas. I wish you all a very Merry Xmas.