

August 24, 1923.

Remarks by the President to Newspaper Correspondents.

One of the first questions that I see here is relative to the time when we may resume diplomatic relations with Mexico. It is impossible to state any specific date. I should estimate that the best that we could do would be the middle or latter part of September. There are certain exchanges to be made which will necessarily take some time.

Secretary Hughes came in to report that he was about to leave town to address some body in Minneapolis, I think that is the American Bar Association. You no doubt have the advance copies of his address, and later he is to speak in Montreal, on which advance copies went out, I think, today.

X The report that Chairman Hammond made to me yesterday of the coal situation was a resume of what has taken place in the efforts of the Commission up to the present time, all of which you have.

X As you know, Governor Pinchot and I have had a conference. Now there is one word that will indicate the situation and that word is "cooperation" between the Governor of Pennsylvania and the U. S. authorities. The Coal Commission will furnish him any information that he may desire and he will cooperate with us in undertaking further to negotiate, mediate and try to reach a settlement. He has a jurisdiction that is more intimate and complete over the property and the persons that are engaged in the mining of anthracite coal than that which is held by the U. S. authorities. Whatever details there are to be given out as to what he is going to do will have to be given out by him. At the present time, I think about all that he could say, or all that I could say, is that he is going to cooperate.

There are several inquiries along this line, to all of which I think I have indicated an answer.

X And an inquiry about the distribution machinery after September 22nd. Well the distribution machinery of the U.S. Government, of course, consists almost entirely of such action as can be taken by the Interstate Commerce Commission. That, of course, is a continuing body and, while technically the commission of the Fuel Administrator, Mr. Wadleigh, will

expire by limitation at the expiration of the law on ~~the~~ the 22nd of September, if there were any work that was necessary for him to do, he would continue it as the agent of the Interstate Commerce Commission. The function of the Government, under these circumstances, would be to see that coal is transported to the various states. It wouldn't be at all the function of the U. S. Government to undertake to distribute it after it reaches the state. That would be for the State administrations themselves to arrange through their own Fuel Administration, if they have one, or through such fuel administration that it might be necessary for them to set up. Of course, it wouldn't be fair for the U. S. Government to undertake to turn this problem over to the Governor of the State. Such an action would hardly be correct for the U. S. Government to take. It would be embarrassing to Governor Pinchot and I should say very ungracious on the part of any authorities here. But again we come back to the same word and that is "cooperation". Governor Pinchot has signified his desire to be helpful in every possible way. I didn't want to call him in unless he was willing to come in. He didn't want to undertake to handle the situation unless he could do it in the spirit of helpfulness and cooperation. We are proceeding in entire harmony and ~~with~~ the desire to be mutually helpful. That doesn't mean that he has assumed anything, or that the United States Government has abandoned anything.

X An inquiry about naval expenditures objected to by the Japanese Press. I wouldn't pay too much attention to an objection by a foreign newspaper. I haven't seen this and am just throwing out that hint as a general suggestion. If an objection should come to our State Department from the responsible authorities of Japan, of course, any such objection would be taken up, the matter discussed with their appropriate representatives, and an amicable conclusion would be reached. They have their papers over there that want to print things that, perhaps, may seem helpful to the interests of Japan, the same as we have papers here that, of course, print things that they consider will be helpful to the people of America. Sometimes they are on sound foundation and sometimes not. I haven't known of any objection on the part of Japanese papers or on the part of the Japanese Government. But, of course, the details of anything of that kind, you can get at the State Department. I am merely speaking on a few general observances.

An inquiry about whether Mr. Bush is to be Chairman of the Shipping Board. Well, of course, he isn't. Mr. Brush was an old time friend of mine that I knew in Boston when he was one of the officers, and I think later, the President of the Boston Elevated Railway. He dropped in yesterday morning to pay his respects and we chatted of old times and ^I ~~he~~ inquired how ^{he} ~~I~~ was getting along in his new project and, naturally, getting his opinion about some of my problems, particularly shipping, but it would be as impossible, I suppose, to get him to be Chairman of our Shipping Board as it would be as impossible to get one of our College Professors to be the head of one of our primary schools. Now I don't want any improper inference from that. I am sure that the Chairman of the Shipping Board and myself both realize that his problems are big enough, but Mr. Brush is a man engaged in a very large enterprise up in New York. I think he is drawing a salary that is commensurate with that. I meant that purely as a business reason of his own, that he wouldn't want to abandon his work up there. for the work that he could do as chairman of our Shipping Board, in order to take up with some of our problems down here.

An inquiry also about the Philippine situation and the protest of the Philippino Cabinet Officers, who resigned as the result of controversy with General Wood. There is only one position that the President could take in relation to that, and it is the position of supporting General Wood, as he is the authorized representative of the U. S. That doesn't mean that in doing that I should want to take an unsympathetic view or act in an unsympathetic way against any of the representatives of the Philippino people, or desire to do anything but what would be helpful to them, but Governor Wood is there as the accredited representative of the U. S. and, of course, must have that support which is his due. As that support necessarily should take the form of undertaking to help him adjust his differences, of course, that should be afforded to him, but, of course, it must take the form of supporting him in things in which he is right and helping him in any other difficulties.

X A nother inquiry about the aircraft limitation conference proposed by the American Legion. It hasn't been possible to give that matter any consideration. You know the general situation in Europe, the overwhelming difficulties under which they are laboring. I doubt if, at the present time,

it would be possible to say to the great European nations, you better drop some of your difficulties that you are trying to solve at home and join in a conference to see what can be done about the limitation of air craft. That is merely a practical difficulty that may be solved at any time. This matter, I think, was taken up at the last conference. It wasn't possible at that time to secure any agreement about it and it seems to me that there are practical difficulties, owing to the imminent press of questions there, that would make it even more difficult at the present time. Our own Government realizes this and, I think, is ~~satisfied~~ setting a fine example in refraining from engaging in a competitive building of aircraft. And if, at some future time, that can be taken up and some agreement reached, it will be of the utmost satisfaction to me. I think that covers substantially everything that there has been any inquiry on.

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I am still of the opinion that it is going to be possible to reach a solution of the coal problem, so that there wont be any diminution in the production of coal or any cessation of it. That feeling, perhaps, may not be warranted by any specific evidence that I have, but it is warranted by the general feeling and general atmosphere that pervades our country. It is an atmosphere of peace and harmony and a desire to adjust difficulties by agreement, rather than to resort to any form of force and coercion for the purpose of getting one party or another to take some position that they do not want to take. And with that, I have every hope and every confidence that such a solution will be reached. It was especially gratifying to have the cooperation of Governor Pinchot. As I said before, he has actions that he can take that the U. S. Government cannot take. He is there on the ground in intimate touch and intimate knowledge of all of those details and I know will be exceedingly helpful in reaching a peaceful solution.