Tuesday, January 27, 1925.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Correspondents.

I haven't any specific plan for the reduction of personnel in the clerical forces of the District of Columbia. I think in the last four years we have reduced personnel something like 100,000. Of course there is quite a large personnel now employed in the Adjutant General's Department on the work growing out of the law for the adjusted compensation or the bonus bill. As that work closes up a good many clerks there can probably be dispensed with. Some of them have been transferred to other places. And I wasn't referring last night particularly to the District of Columbia, nor was my suggestion last night one that was new. In practically every address I have made to the business organization of the Government I have suggested that the cost of personnel was one of the very largest items. A great many people came in, as you know, during the war - in the employment of the Government - and it is with a good deal of difficulty that they are discharged. It is a matter we don't like to do, but for that reason it is necessary for me constantly to call it to the attention of the heads of the departments and the managers of the business organization, so that they may make constant and careful surveys to see what is necessary in that respect.

Mr. President, has any plan of dismissals been worked out yet to carry out the scheme?

No, that is for every department to work out itself.

Have you any information from the heads of departments as to what plan would be the most feasible?

No. As I say, it is a general suggestion of what has to be met and an effort that the heads of the departments have to be constantly engaged in, otherwise the departments will be loaded up with a great many more people than is necessary for the conduct of its business. It seems to me that the Budget Bureau cut the appropriation for the White House, so that it would be expected that we might dispense with the services of one or two people there. That is the only specific instance that I have in mind. This, of course, didn't refer to the City of Washington particularly. It referred to personnel all over the United States.
2.

Mr. President, is it the intention that immediate action be taken by the Departments to list the names of certain employees who are to be taken off the roll?

Well, I want constant effort in that direction, a constant checking up by the department to see whether they have any more employees than is necessary to carry on the work of the department. Whenever they find that is the case, well, they can drop them off. As I said at the outset, I think we have dropped off about 100,000, and I don't know, it may be more than that, in the last four years.

I can't make any definite decision about attending the Associated Advertising Clubs at Houston, Texas, in May. As I told the delegation this morning that came to extend the invitation, I would like very much to go South at some time, but whether I can get away there this spring or not is entirely uncertain, and I wasn't able to give them very much encouragement about it.

There isn't anything I can say about the nomination of Attorney General Stone for the Supreme Court. The matter is in the hands of the Senate.

There is nothing definitely decided about a Secretary of Agriculture or an Ambassador to Germany.

I had the majority leaders of the Senate and House, and the Chairman of the Senate Committee and House Committee, and the ranking minority men on the Senate and House Committee, of Agriculture, and three or four - the Secretary of Agriculture - and three or four other members of the Senate and House Committees on Agriculture in this morning, in order that I might lay before them the preliminary report of the Agricultural Conference, and suggest to them that they take it up and see if they could draft bills for the purpose of immediate consideration. I shall probably send a short message transmitting it to the Congress. It has already been delivered to the press for release tomorrow morning, so that my message will perhaps go up late this afternoon, or perhaps first thing after the assembling of the Congress tomorrow, transmitting informally these recommendations to the Congress for their action. I had this preliminary conference with the members - Senator Norris by the way was unable to come, so the ranking man, Senator McNary, came - and I wanted them to get all the start possible in drafting the bills. They seemed to be favorably inclined towards im-
mediate action.

Action by this Congress, Mr. President?

I think so, yes.

The suggestions that have been made by the Congress are almost all in line with pending legislation. Some of them are exactly in line with bills already pending. Some of them are sufficiently in line with bills so that all that would be necessary would be the amending of certain bills. So, not being new and novel, I think that it would be possible to get some action from the present Congress, and those members that I talked with this morning seemed to be hopeful that that could be done.

I haven't had any suggestion about the District Attorney of New York. I don't think any suggestion has come to me before. I had noticed a press report that he might resign, but that is entirely the limit of my information in relation to that office.

I have already referred to the conference I had this morning, with some members of the Senate and House. I would have been pleased to have the entire Committees of the Senate and House present, but that would make such a large gathering that I couldn't very well accommodate them at breakfast.

I haven't had any suggestion coming to me about the appointment of Senator Sterling of South Dakota for Prohibition Commissioner. This inquiry here is the first intimation I have had of anything of that kind. I haven't had him under consideration.

I want very much to get up to Massachusetts either the 19th of April or the 17th of June to attend the 150th anniversary of the battle of Lexington and Concord and the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill. I have also had an invitation to go up to the Quincy anniversary. I think that is the 300th anniversary or something of that kind of the founding of the town. I haven't made any decision about those. I can't make any formal decision except to express the hope that I might be there at the Lexington and Concord celebration or the Bunker Hill celebration. I haven't any detailed information about what action can be taken in relation to the Chicago drainage canal.

I understood that the Secretary of War had made some statement about that, - it being in his hands - to Senator McKinley, who had applied to him. I thought the statement he made covered the situation, which was that Chicago ought
to take immediate action to comply with the law and that meantime the Department
would do everything it could to prevent any danger to the public health of the city.

I don't know that there is any comment I can make relative to a visit
that former Secretary of State Bryan made on me the other day. He and I are both
interested in doing everything possible to promote peace. I told him I was very
plad to see that he was using his efforts in that direction. There was some
mention made about some plan that contemplated action in relation to our debts that
are due to us from foreign governments. About that I can't make any statement,
other than that which I have constantly made; that the position of our Government
is embodied in the Act of Congress. I haven't any authority to make any other
suggestion than to carry out that act.

I haven't made any decision about the vacancy in the Federal bench for
the northern District of California.

I haven't had any recommendation from the Attorney General relative to
an application for a pardon by Peter McDonnell, of San Francisco. From what I
had learned of the circumstances I hadn't expected any recommendation. The recom-
mandation will come - I am not certain about that - I was going to say that no
recommendation would come here unless the recommendation was favorable. Now that
isn't the case. It may be that that recommendation has come here and that I have
acted on it. Sometimes 10 or 15 of those come over, and I don't pay so much at-
tention to the names as I do the case. I look at the papers and see what the cir-
cumstances are and in almost every case I have agreed with the recommendation that
comes from the Department of Justice. I am very sure that no suggestion favorable,
or recommendation favorable to a pardon, has come, and from what I heard of the
case I do not think that any such recommendation is likely to come. I only get
some vague ideas about cases that are pending, and of course make no final
determination about them until they are formally laid before me with the recom-
mandation of the Department of Justice.

That seems to cover the inquiries this morning.