November 25, 1924.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Correspondents.

I should be very glad to have the colored people consult their own wishes about having a ball on the 4th of March. This brings to my attention that it has been reported several times that my wife and I were going to some ball on that date. That is news to us, that we should be planning to go to a ball on the 4th of March. We haven't accepted any invitation, and I doubt very much if we should feel like attending.

Does that mean, Mr. President, that there probably will be no inaugural ball?

I don't think there will be any inaugural ball. I think there are some charities here in town that are promoting a ball for that evening. I think it was reported in the press that Mrs. Coolidge and I were going to attend. It was in relation to that that I desired to say that the report was without any foundation, so far as we know. I have heard that when William McKinley was in Congress he could tell what the other Congressmen would do before they knew themselves.

Now I am subject to that same interpretation by people, so my statements perhaps have to be made with that in view. But I haven't intended to go to any ball on the evening of the 4th of March.

Mr. President, could you give us your idea as to what the character of the ceremonies will be - what the limits of it will be - if that is proper?

Yes, it is entirely proper. The only inauguration that I ever saw was that which I attended four years ago, and I would like to have this inauguration moderate in its proportions and moderate in its expenditures. There would have to be a small appropriation to meet the requirements, provide seats and so on for people that attend the inauguration exercises, put up the stand on the east front of the Capitol where inauguration is held and the address is delivered, provide for the amplifiers and so on and so forth. I haven't those details very fully in mind, but I called in Senator Curtis last evening. He is the Chairman of the Committee on Rules that I think has usually had rather the direct charge of that on the part of the Senate and asked him to make an investigation about what might be necessary and come and talk with me later. And I am expecting to talk with Mr. Martin, who was the Secretary to Senator Knox, who four years ago
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was the Chairman and is now in the Department of Justice as Assistant to the Attorney General, I believe. No doubt he will be able to make some suggestions to me that will be helpful.

Does that mean that there will be no more elaborate parade than you had four years ago?

I haven't decided about that. I hardly think that is the case. I should like to have a little more elaborate parade than that. There is a suggestion made here about the 24th U. S. Infantry Band. If there are bands in the parade, I shall be glad to use any influence I have to have that band, which is made up of colored men, participate in it. I want the inauguration in keeping with the dignity of the office, but moderate in its dimensions and expense. I suppose people who would come to Washington at that time will come with the full knowledge that inaugurations only occur once in four years, that at that time there is generally some difficulty in securing accommodations, and that the prices of accommodations here and so on are usually somewhat high. Perhaps that ought to be borne in mind. The administration cannot help it. The Committee on Arrangements cannot help it. The people that come here will have to come with that in mind.

Now, I haven't heard anything more about General Butler up in Philadelphia. These constant inquiries are one of the reasons why it is not desirable to use men who are connected with the Regular Service for work of this kind. It constantly brings the President of the United States into the picture where, of course, he doesn't belong. I haven't any authority over the policing of the City of Philadelphia. Yet if some General in the Army or an Admiral in the Navy is granted leave to go up there, then there are certain people that assume the President has some jurisdiction over it and are constantly sending communications to me about it, which puts the Presidential office in a position that is not warranted by the facts. Now I am willing to have General Butler continue up there, if it seems to be desired, if he gets on all right and has the support of the officials and they want him up to the time when his term expires, but I want him to go up there with the full knowledge of the people of Philadelphia, both official and unofficial, and voluntary law enforcement organizations, that I can't assume any responsibility for his conduct, or any responsibility for the police of the City of Philadelphia. That is all provided for by statute law, chatters, ordinances
rules and regulations made by the municipal authorities, a matter over which I have no jurisdiction and no control, can't assume any, don't propose to assume any, and wouldn't want to assume any. If they want to use a man who is a General in the Army to do that work, they will have to take him the same as any other man. The United States Government doesn't assume any responsibility in relation to it.

I haven't given any special consideration to the question of the Merchant Marine. I have indicated what I thought ought to be the policy under the present law, and which I was assured by Senator Jones, who had a very large hand in drafting it, was the policy contemplated, of having the President of the Fleet Corporation manage that end of it and the Shipping Board manage the other end of it. That work is going on.

I haven't made any plans about the inauguration than those which I have already related.

And while I have noticed newspaper comments about a special session, I am giving more thought myself to what we can do at this session. I rather think that the consideration now of a special session is rather premature. I don't like to call a special session of the Congress, though I shouldn't hesitate to do so if I thought the situation required it. But in general, when there is a session of Congress it means a season of uncertainty so that unless there is a very compelling reason for calling a special session it better be not called, in order that the usual business of the country and usual occupations may be pursued with more certainty than they could be when Congress is in session.

I haven't made any decision about having General Dawes attend Cabinet meetings. He spoke about it one time, I believe it was when he visited me at Plymouth, rather indicating that he would prefer not to come. No decision has been made about that. I shall of course consult him about his desires.

I think I leave on the afternoon of the 3rd, that is Wednesday, for Chicago and reach there the next day and attend some Commercial Club. I think that is the name of the organization, on Thursday noon, and go to the Stock Yards in the afternoon and speak before the Stock Show men in the evening.

I can't give any exact figures about the size of the surplus in the Treasury at the end of this fiscal year. It will depend to some extent on what the Congress does now between now and the 4th of March. The indications at present are that the surplus is very small.