July 18, 1924.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

I sent a telegram yesterday, I think, to Governor Richardson of California, inquiring whether I could give him any assistance in dealing with the forest fire difficulties. I got a telegram back that the state and federal authorities were cooperating and helping each other, and I also took the matter up with the Secretary of War, the Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Interior. The Secretary of War said he had already sent a telegram to the General, I think it is Morton, in command of that section, asking whether any request had been made of him to render assistance, and the reply came back that no request had been made. I had the Secretary of War telegraph today to the General, telling him to get in touch with the Governor of California and see if there is any assistance that we can render him. My press reports would indicate that there has been a considerable fall of rain out there, which probably has been helpful in putting out the fire.

I haven't had any information about the difficulties in Brazil, other than what I have seen in the press. No information has come to me from the State Department or any other source.

There hasn't been any request for federal aid, other than that reply which came from Governor Richardson, and that was only a statement that the federal authorities were already cooperating.

I haven't any information other than what I have seen in the press of a report that the post of Reparations Agent General had been offered to Owen D. Young. I don't know whether it would be proper for me to make any comment on that in advance. I suppose it would. This appointment is made entirely by the European authorities. It isn't an appointment that has anything to do with directing the Government of the United States. It is as though they wanted an engineer, or that they wanted a high class surgeon, or a man that understands , or something of that kind, and decided that they had found the man with the right kind of equipment in America.

They asked him to come and serve, undoubtedly, in this case. No one would accept an appointment of that kind without inquiring if such action would embarrass the United States Government, or whether it would be satisfactory to them. I do not know of any reason now why Mr. Young wouldn't be entirely satisfactory to our Government, and I don't see any reason why we shouldn't.
be very much pleased if he is willing to accept such a position, if it were offered to him. I think I have seen the statement from him that no such post had been offered and didn’t know it was going to be. So I can’t make any direct statement about it. I suppose it would go without saying that he served over there in the capacity of an expert acceptably in a way that was very satisfactory to our Government, and that we would have every confidence in him to meet any kind of situation that he might undertake.

I don’t know for certain when Mr. Butler will come to Washington. The fact is that I haven’t given a great deal of attention to political matters. I understood he was coming Wednesday, but I think he found later it was necessary to stay in New York to arrange for the headquarters there.

It is my understanding that he expects to come down here the first of the week, and to come here before going to Chicago. Perhaps he will come here Monday morning.

I haven’t started any special work on my address of notification. I have gotten now just to the point where someone asked the man who had a reputation as a speaker how long it took him to prepare his speech, and he said he had been working on the speech all his life. Of course I am in that sense working on my notification address all the time, in that I am undertaking to familiarize myself with the current needs of the Government of the United States and undertaking to determine what action is necessary to solve the problems of government. I haven’t any particular plan at the present time as to my notification address, as to just what line it will take, or what reference it might have to party platforms and policies, and the general situation as I might understand it to be.

Mr. President will you take occasion to reply to the statement made by Mr. Davis, his address of acceptance?

Of course, I don’t know about that. A great many times if I let a situation alone it takes care of itself. I mean that if I let this situation alone somebody may take care of it better than I can.

I haven’t formed any general conclusion about the political situation in the different states. As I say, I haven’t given any particular
attention to it. I suppose everyone knows that I have discounted the stories that come to me, but after discounting them, usually all I can say is that the situation appears to me to be hopeful.

I haven't had any requests about forest fires from any western states. I have explained the steps that I have taken, and I have explained about the reply that came from there. I got a reply at once from the Governor of California.

I haven't received any recent reports about the results of the activities of those who had charge of the $10,000,000 syndicate for financing conditions in the Northwest. The latest that came to me indicated that their work had been helpful, and I had a conference with the man that has charge of that. I ought to know his name very well - the same name as our housekeeper.

What's her name?

He happens to be her brother-in-law.

What's her name?

I can't speak his name now, though he was here a few minutes ago.

I don't think I can give any definition of the words "reactionary" and "progressive" that would be helpful. That reminds me a little of the old definition of "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy". I think they used to say that "orthodoxy" was "my doxy" and "heterodoxy" was "your doxy". Sometimes the person is not well thought of and he is labeled as a reactionary. Sometimes if he is well thought of he is called a progressive. As a matter of fact all the political parties are progressive. I can't conceive of a party existing for any length of time that wasn't progressive, or of leadership being effective that wasn't progressive.

I haven't had any expressions from any one relative to the change of rate of duty on imported sugar, other than perhaps the most casual inquiry about it. It hasn't come up to me yet, and when it does come it will be referred to the proper commission for anything that the interested parties may wish to say about it.
I don't know enough about the progress of the London Conference to express any opinion on it. My real satisfaction is satisfactory to myself, for you and your readers. I haven't any information on it other than that I have seen in the press. I judge that that is entirely accurate, and I don't say that in any way of depreciation. Of course you know and I know that it is difficult to get foreign news in the press that you can always rely on, but I think the reports that have come relative to the London Conference have every appearance of being authoritative and especially reliable, and judging from that I think it is making satisfactory progress, though judging from the personnel of the conference and what I know of its objects and its plans, I felt quite sure that that would be the result. And also judging from the rather optimistic note that Ambassador Kellogg sounded just before the Conference met, we might expect a great deal from it. He is a cautious man, and doesn't make statements unless he has a pretty secure foundation on which to base them.

I haven't noticed anything about the Geneva reports about plans for a Disarmament Conference, and I wouldn't place it quite so much reliance on it as I would on the reports about the London Conference, and until I get some authoritative statement about that, I don't think I would be able to pay much attention to it. It might have been an indication that they were desirous of joining with us, or it might have been an indication that they were to have a conference alone. I think the report indicates a desire on the part of a great nation to do what it can to secure further disarmament. I think it is very encouraging and likely to be very helpful.