

December 7, 1923.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

I haven't any official notice about the action of the South Dakota Proposal Convention, and I haven't had any report about any trouble in Mexico. This question that I have before me suggests that there was a revolt in Mexico yesterday which led to the seizure of Vera Cruz and the Mexican Navy in several of the states. That is the first information I happened to see about it. I haven't any information whether it is correct or not.

No decision has been made about the release of General Butler. I received a telegram today from Mayor Moore, and it seemed to indicate that in his opinion there wasn't any such serious condition of lawlessness existing in Philadelphia as has been indicated in the prepared statement that was read to me yesterday. But that is a question for the decision of the Mayor-elect and the present Mayor, about which I do not need to comment.

+ An inquiry as to whether I was gratified with the reaction to my message. I was very much gratified, of course. A great many telegrams have been coming in with very kind comment. Also on the part of the newspapers. It is in a good many instances flattering. Perhaps you had prepared them.

Mr. President, what type of people do you hear from on this?

+ Well, very general and promiscuous. Different people. All kinds of people seem to be sending in telegrams.

Did you get any reaction on the World Court proposal?

Yes. It corresponds pretty generally with that in the newspapers.

An inquiry about the visit of the German Ambassador, and as to whether an international loan was discussed. No. Except in a most informal way. We spoke of the fact that there is a proposal for a loan to Germany for the purpose of financing exports of food from the United States.

Mr. President, would you care to discuss any opinion on Senator Lenroot's proposal to appropriate \$20,000,000 of Treasury funds for German relief?

I haven't seen that proposal. I very much prefer that it be a matter of business, and I don't know that I have before me at the present time such information that would lead me to a conviction that it was necessary to proceed in the way of charity. There is some question as to the constitutionality of a proposal of that kind, which probably would be waived if it developed that there was in existence a

great want and suffering on the part of humanity anywhere.

An inquiry about securing a treaty with Canada for the purpose of the construction of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence waterway. That was taken up some little time ago with Canada, about a year ago, and nothing developed. Inquiries are now being made as I indicated in my message yesterday to see whether we can secure a treaty of that kind.

I have forgotten whether I had said no decision had been made about sending Brigadier General Butler to Philadelphia.

I have several inquiries about my message. I don't think I ought to write any editorials on it. You can do that very well and interpret it probably just as well as I could - perhaps better.

I have here also an inquiry about the proposed consolidation plan. I mean by that the reorganization of the different Departments. I have to say about that what I said in my message yesterday - that such a proposal is now before the special committee and it is for them to consider it. Generally, the President and the Cabinet are in accord with the proposed plan.

Mr. President, does your recommendations to Congress include keeping the Engineering Departments intact in the War Department?

There is a proposal there I think to put the engineering activities all in one Department. This plan was laid out in accordance with what was known as bringing together all the major purposes and putting them all under one directive head. That was the reason that it was suggested that the War and Navy Departments be consolidated as a matter of national defense. I don't believe anybody would think for a moment of undertaking to take from the War Department the necessary engineering forces with which the War Department is doing a great deal of what would be known as Civil Engineering, in constructing rivers and harbors, waterworks, and looking after protection from floods from rivers, and so on. I think there is a proposal that contemplates putting those building operations into the Department of the Interior. Very likely if that were done it would be necessary to lend, so to speak, the engineering skill of the Army for that work. I haven't given that enough consideration to know whether it would be feasible in all its aspects or not, but I assume that after it has been proposed it has been carefully considered and found to be expedient in accordance with the plan of the major purposes.

Mr. President, do you happen to know whether the joint committee will hold hearings of the different Departments?

Yes.

An inquiry as to whether there will be any bills to give effect to the recommendations in my message.

Yes, there will be bills. I haven't arranged for the introduction of special bills, using my message rather to influence the carrying out of principles that are the underlying thought of bills that are already pending or that are to be introduced.

I have an inquiry about the Craig case. On that I have made my statement and it is closed.

I think that covers -

Mr. President, May I ask if you have read the report of the Secretary of Agriculture of the wheat situation that was submitted today?

I can't tell whether I have or not.

Anything at the Cabinet meeting?

There was almost nothing in the Cabinet.

Mr. President, returning to the reaction of your message, what subject in your judgement was referred to most?

+ I think the great interest is in tax reduction more than anything else. That is what has been dwelt on most in the messages that have come in.