

November 13, 1923.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

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The class doesn't seem to be so inquisitive this morning as it sometimes is. There isn't a very large crop of questions. I hope that doesn't indicate that anybody is disappointed at not getting a reply always. I think I almost always cover in some way or another very nearly every question that is propounded to me. I always want to, if I possibly can. Once in a while, of course, something is asked that for some reason or another I don't think is a matter on which I can comment at that time. Generally speaking, I want to answer all the questions that come in. I want, in that connection, to express my gratitude to you for the faithfulness and the candor with which you always report these conferences between yourselves and me.

An inquiry about the return of the Crown Prince to Germany and the imminence of the Kaiser's return. Will the President state whether it is the intention of this Government to join with the allied governments in protesting against the seeming restoration of the monarchy in Germany? So far as I know at the present time our Government would not protest against that, recognizing the policy that I spoke of the other day, of every country having the right to maintain the kind of Government it wants. I suppose the allied governments, if they protest, will protest on account of some of the provisions of the Versailles Treaty. We are not participants in that Treaty, and so haven't any duty to perform under it, or any responsibilities under it. It leaves us in a different situation than the other nations of the earth.

Whether the negotiations for a joint international inquiry into Germany's capacity to pay reparations are now definitely at an end. Just at the present time I should say that they were. Though, if you wanted a careful analysis of that, you would get it by reading first the note that was sent to us by Great Britain, inviting us, and then the response that was contained in the note that we sent to them. Now, technically under that note which we sent in reply the door is still open, and technically we have made no decision, for instance, as to whether we would go on in case the investigation was not to be the unanimous effort of the other nations in Europe interested. So that question has never come up to us for decision, and no decision therefore has been made on it. With the news report that is in the morning press, that Poincaré is preparing to have an investigation by the European allied governments, similar to the investigation that we suggested, thought to be made as I understand it under the limitations that he proposed to the investigation, I should say that a decision was pretty definitely arrived at.

I think I have answered the inquiry as to whether the British Government has invited the Government to take part in an inquiry with France's absence. There has been no definite invitation of that nature than what is in the note that was sent to us in the first place.

+ An inquiry as to whether I shall deliver my message to Congress in person. I rather expect that I shall. For a great many years that was not the practice. I believe that Washington went up and delivered his message in person, and then after his administration it seems that practice fell into disuse clear up to the time that President Wilson came into office. Then he took up the ancient practice and it was continued for the most part by President Harding. I should be inclined to do what I thought the Congress liked about it. If they like to have the message delivered in person, well then I should want to try to do that. If they indicate that they very much preferred the message should be sent up in the way that was established between Washington and Lincoln, then very likely I should concur in their preference.

An inquiry about the conference with Senator Keyes and Senator Moses. They came in on the reforestation project, especially about an appropriation being made to carry out the provisions of the law that is usually referred to as the Weeks Law, referring thereby to a statute that was passed through the activities of the present Secretary of War, John W. Weeks, when he was in the House, or perhaps in the Senate. I have already indicated the interest that I feel in reforestation, and I want to make as large an appropriation for that purpose as we can, keeping in view our policy of trying to get within ~~the~~ certain definite limitations, and also keeping in view the needs of other Departments. I want to be generous in this direction. There came a time during the war, of course, and the immediately ensuing period, when some of these things necessarily had to wait because other demands were more urgent. I hope that we are now approaching a time when we can take up some of these matters that are reproductive in their various elements, and use some public money in that direction. I think that covers the questions that have come in this morning.

Anything in the Cabinet this morning, Mr. President?

We had a very short meeting and discussed nothing of general importance. I made some inquiries about Alaska, but nothing developed there of interest to public knowledge.

Mr. President, I came in too late to hand in a written inquiry. Would you care to comment on Secretary Mellon's tax program?

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No, I don't think I will make any comment on that now. Let us wait and see what develops about it. It is a very interesting suggestion that he has made and perhaps opens the way for fulfilling the hopes of relieving the American people from some of their present tax burden.