October 5, 1923.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men

+ I have an inquiry here on the subject of education relative to the statement that I made of approval of national education day, and whether I think more manual and industrial and outdoor training should be in order for all. I don't think you can make any hard and fast rule about that. It depends upon the locality and on the individual. I recall that when I was in college, one of the Professors was discussing that problem before us and speaking of the need generally of athletics in education at the present time. But he said that he knew a man that had been President of the Massachusetts State College, I think his name was Goodnough, walked from Templeton to Andover, a distance of sixty miles, and carried his trunk on his back. He said that when he got there he didn't have any feeling for a course in football. X I delivered a short address on what I thought was the needs of education at Wheaton College Commencement, which is the only college, I believe, that is within the confines of the old Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts. If you are very much interested in my views on education, you can get that address and read it.

+ An inquiry about the cancellation of debts, stating that the new President of the American Bankers Association says that he is going to start an immediate campaign for cancellation, and wanting me to state my views on the question. I gave you the views that I held at one of our very early conferences, which was opposed to the cancellation of debts. That doesn't mean that it isn't open to negotiation as to terms and conditions and so on. We made very liberal terms with Great Britain in the matter of interest, and all that which, if figured up, I presume would show, as a matter of arithmetical determination, that we would be more than cancelling the original debt, considering the reduction that we made in interest. Something of that kind, perhaps, would be considered. Some of the countries are not paying us any interest at the present time. But the matter, of course, is in the hands of the Commission that was appointed, as the result of an act of Congress, with power to negotiate, and the terms are laid down in that Act, and those are the terms on which the American Government stands until they are modified.

Any indications, Mr. President, that any other powers are ready to negotiate now?

Not that I know of. I am not in personal touch with that, because it
is in the hands of the Commission. I do not think they are doing anything about it at the present time. Not wanting to press anyone, not wanting to appear as an insistent debtor, or anything of that kind, but leaving the matter open for further negotiation.

An inquiry about the visit of Chairman Marvin of the Tariff Commission. I spoke to him about considering the question of the present tariff on wheat, and he and the Commission will look into it, as I have already stated to your conference. I don't think there is very much of any relief to be found in that direction, but it is an element worthy of consideration and should it appear that it might be beneficially used, it could be used, but I have a great deal of doubt whether anything could be accomplished by action of that kind, or whether, under the law, we should find that the facts were such that any action could be taken.

Also an inquiry about the visit of Congressman Crampton of Michigan, and whether there was any statement of his intention to introduce a bill in the next session of Congress calling for a certain contribution by the Federal Government to District needs annually. Mr. Crampton saw me only a minute. Nothing was said about his proposal to introduce a bill, and this is the first information that I had about it. I assume that that means a contribution to the expenditures of the District, and not a contribution for the purpose of erecting buildings in the District.

Mr. President, did Representative Crampton bring up the question of larger appropriations for prohibition enforcement.

No, he brought up no question at all. He came in between the appointments that others had, and merely as a matter of paying his respects to me. We didn't have time to talk any and discuss anything.

An inquiry also about the apparent failure of the hearings in Pittsburgh on anthracite rates. I don't know what the result of those hearings has been. If this suggestion is correct, that they didn't develop anything of public interest, I suppose that means that the question infers that it didn't show that any change in rates could be secured, or if secured would be helpful. I haven't any information about that.

No one appeared, but three railroads, Mr. President. No one appeared for the public.

Well, of course, the Interstate Commerce Commission represent the
public, and it is their business to look out for the public interests whether anyone appears or not, and I haven't the slightest doubt that they will do so. I don't know who presented to them the petition for a change in rates, and it is rather strange that the petitioners didn't appear. But not knowing anything about that I can't make any comment about it.

An inquiry also about the recommendations made by the Coal Commission and whether I propose to urge those recommendations on Congress as a basis for legislation. I can't very well anticipate just what I may say to the Congress in any message that I may lay before it, other than that in the most general way the Coal Commission has made a long and exhaustive study, assembling a great many facts that bear on the coal condition. I think it would be strange if, out of that, I wasn't able to find a great many things that I could recommend to Congress for their action.

An inquiry about replacing Arthur Powell Davis for David W. Davis, as head of the Reclamation service. About that, I have scarcely any information. It was brought to me early after I came here, and brought to my attention that Arthur Powell Davis had resigned, and that his place was filled by David W. Davis. I think that was done before I came into office. It is my recollection that I was reading something about that before I came to Washington.

It was done while President Harding was going West from Washington, Mr. President. Sometime in June.

Well, that was in June then probably that it was done, and as I was away I didn't ever have it brought specifically to my attention, and I don't now recall anything about the matter of an Executive Order made August 17th. Very likely I made one. Of course, it is on record whether I did or not, but many of those things go over my desk and I should have to look up the papers to refresh my recollection about it. I don't mean that many executive orders of that kind go over my desk, but a great many papers from the different departments. I think I have issued almost no executive orders relative to the Civil Service. I have had the Civil Service Commission in once or twice to ask them about proposed Executive Orders, and it may be that I had them in on this. I can't recall now, what it was that they were in on, but it seems as though they were. But I wouldn't want to be certain about that. You can get the information, undoubtedly, from the Department of the Interior.

An inquiry about the visit of Senator Harrell and Representative
Chandler of Oklahoma. I didn't see them and I didn't know they had been in. So I suppose that their visit was probably not one of very great importance.

An inquiry about the visit of the Italian Ambassador. That too, has no connection with any specific question. He has been out of the country and returned two or three days ago, and in accordance with custom came into today to pay his respects. I had met him very pleasantly last spring and last winter. As you know he has been in America a great deal, engaged in business at some time or another in the Western part of our country, so that we regard him with interest, not only on account of his position which he holds, but also because of the position he held with American industry. He told me about the bettering conditions in Italy, the returning evidences of prosperity, among the industries there, people going back to work and a decrease of the discontent that was manifest over there as a part of the discontent and as a result of the great conflict.

Also an inquiry about the conclusions that have been reached on the transportation problem. No specific conclusions have been reached on that. Several railroad presidents have been in to see me. I don't think any of them came in to consult me about transportation problems. They uniformly had some other errand. I have taken advantage of their presence here to ask them about the situation generally, but without reaching any settled conclusions.

A statement that the last Congress passed a joint resolution asking the Executive to invite the maritime nations of the world to a conference on the pollution of coastal waters, and that early this week at Atlantic City a conference adopted a resolution urging action in line with the Congressional request. That will be taken up with the State Dept. If there is a resolution of this kind, it had escaped my attention, and I have no doubt that this information is correct. The matter of pollution of coastal waters had been brought to my attention and is one that I had been very much interested to see if we could not provide a remedy. This pollution is a serious menace, both to the convenience of those that want to use the water for bathing and so on, and it is also a fire hazard. Very likely it is a menace to public health, and I know that our country would like to join with other countries in doing anything that can be done to remedy it. I am very much interested in this suggestion about a conference, and I will take that up with the Secretary of State right away.
4.

Mr. President, do you have the Great Lakes in mind in connection with that report?

Very likely that is it, though it says to invite the maritime nations of the world. I haven't had any complaint from the Great Lakes. The complaint has come from the region east of New Jersey and south of New York—especially those places that are used for seaside resorts.

Mr. President, that is a problem though that the Public Health Service is investigating from time to time.

I know it is.

An inquiry about the exchange of Ambassadors between this country and Mexico, and whether an Ambassador will be appointed before the treaties are ratified. I do not think that Ambassadors would be appointed in the ordinary course before the treaties are ratified. I think I am safe in saying that our country would very much prefer to have Mexico ratify the treaty before we appoint an Ambassador, especially as I understand that their ratifying power, which is the Senate, the same as ours, is in session, and that they can pass on it at the present time.

And an inquiry as to when the treaty will be presented to the Congress. Of course, there won't be any opportunity to present it on our side to Congress before the Congress meets in December, which is the usual time. When that time comes I shall expect that about the first day it would be submitted to the Senate for its action.

Whether any consideration has been given to the proposal of the War Finance Corporation to accept from cooperative wheat marketing associations, without recourse, the paper of foreign buyers, in connection with the financing of grain exports. Well, I don't think any consideration has been given to this question in just this form. The question, or consideration, has been given to acceptances of paper given for export of grain, but, of course, it would have to be accompanied by adequate security. Now, whether it could be accepted without recourse, which means that we could only expect to collect from the maker of the paper and not from the endorser, would be something that the War Finance Corporation would have to determine in each instance, in accordance with what was necessary to protect the money of the United States. If there were adequate security, the matter of whether it was with recourse or without recourse wouldn't
be a matter of very great concern. If it were without security, I would doubt whether the War Finance Corporation would want to accept it any way. But it would be much better to confer with Mr. Meyer about it. I know that he wants to adopt a very broad policy and assist in exportation wherever that can be done.

Whether there are any developments in the agricultural situation. I suppose it is already known that Mr. Meyer is to go up to the Northwest, taking with him Mr. Mondell, who is acquainted with the region there; also a representative from the Agricultural Department, to see what can be done up there of a helpful nature. The other angle of it is the export matter, which we have already considered.

I think that covers substantially the questions of the day.