Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

I have two or three inquiries about the Geneva agreement. Now it is obvious that I can't make any comment on it at the present time. In the first place we haven't had any authoritative information relative to it. There have been some news dispatches, but nothing has reached the Department - not this morning - which gives us any authoritative report on it. And besides that it is in the nature, as I understand it, of a proposal arrived at there and which will not become effective, so far as the people who are concerned in it have to do with it, until it has been adopted and accepted by the various governments concerned. So probably there wouldn't be any chance to make any comment on it until after the various governments have acted, though it might be that when we get an authoritative report and the full text we can make some statement about it.

Of course no sum has been decided upon to allow the Navy Department for the coming year in the Budget. Very likely when a sum is decided upon it will not be known beforehand, because in making up the Budget, which is my Budget, I have to make my report to the Congress on it. I don't know whether it has been customary to publish it before it goes to them or not. I don't know that there will be anything private about it, but I wouldn't want to violate the proprieties of making my report to the Congress before I made it elsewhere. It will be sometime before the Budget is made up and printed. I presume it will be more than a month yet. I think for military purposes the last Budget give the Army and Navy combined over $550,000,000. That is exclusive of the River and Harbor bill and so on. I think there is a request this year for something like $600,000,000, perhaps something more than that. I don't know the figures exactly.

I haven't received any letter from a Mr. Mason relative to the operation by the Shipping Board of government tugs in the harbor of New York in competition with private owned tug boats, so I can't give you any information about that. If the letter came here, very likely it would be referred to the Shipping Board in order that I might get information from them on which to make a reply or ask them to make a reply. So that while I say I haven't seen the letter, that wouldn't necessarily indicate that the letter hadn't come to the office and in the usual routine we should first have referred it to the Shipping Board to get information on which to make a reply.
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I have asked the Agricultural Department in relation to the sugar situation to report to me on the extent of the best sugar raising industry in this country, as to the purpose which it serves for diversification, and the importance of it in the agricultural interest, in order that I might have more information with which to deal with the situation.

Here is an inquiry that I think perhaps is somewhat representative and rather a good example of a great many rumors and so on that you are likely to meet with from now until election day. I don't think I need to caution experienced newspaper-men like yourselves about taking them with a grain of salt and satisfying yourselves from independent sources other than political information bureaus whether they are founded on facts or not. I imagine from some things that have already developed that there is going to be a good deal put out from political bureaus that is perhaps somewhat highly colored and through error, of course, will sometimes not be founded on fact. I think you will be warranted always in making an independent investigation before you give full credability to such reports. This wants to know about the stories that have referred to the indictment of a sheriff of Logan County, West Virginia, as a political indictment because of his friendly position to the United Mine Workers. It is reported that the indictment is due to John L. Lewis of the United Mine Workers. I don't know of any recent visit to the White House of John L. Lewis. He did come in to see me, but it was months ago. I can't tell when. I should say very early in the spring, perhaps April or May. It may be earlier. He hasn't come since. I don't know anything about the indictment of the sheriff of Logan County. I didn't know he was indicted. I should doubt very much if he has been indicted because of his position either one way or the other in relation to the United Mine Workers. Now, I have gone into that at some length because I thought this was an example of reports of that nature that are likely to be made, and this report so far as I know, and that part about which I do refer, has no foundation in fact. I don't know whether the man has been indicted or not. I don't know anything about this being a political indictment. I certainly do know that Mr. Lewis hasn't visited me for many months. I never had any conversation with him about the sheriff. I haven't the slightest idea whether he is friendly or unfriendly to the United Mine Workers. I have said very much more than anything worthy of publication on account of the representative character of this rumor.
I haven't finally decided on any other speaking engagement. I think I am speaking tomorrow at the monument unveiling, and Monday I have a word to say and open the session of the Red Cross, and later in the month I think I am to speak at the United States Chamber of Commerce somewhere along the 23rd or 24th. Then I think sometime before that I am to speak at the unveiling of the monument to Bishop Astbury. Those are the only things that I think of at the present time.

I haven't taken any action on the sugar tariff. I can't until I get these reports from the Tariff Commission I have asked for and from the Dept. of Agriculture.

I haven't in mind making any appointment of a new Alien Property Custodian at the present time. Colonel Miller is still the Alien Property Custodian and has been chosen as President of some Allied War Organization, which he thinks will very likely take him abroad more or less and take up a good deal of his time here, so that he expects it may necessitate his resignation. But just for the present time he is able to carry on the work he is doing.

My discussion with Chairman Butler didn't reveal anything new in the campaign, other than what is already public property. He is still of a hopeful disposition as to the result. I haven't any further plans about participation in it. Of course I have to look after the Presidential office, which takes very much of my time and attention, and I haven't any comment to make relative to the action of Senator or Brockhart asking for the removal of General Dawes/on account of his speech which he made today. I have never received any intimation that Judge Kenyon was likely to resign. I rather judge that perhaps it is another rumor. I don't need to comment on the desirability of members of the bench refraining from political action. You may be sure that Judge Kenyon will observe that.