April 4, 1924.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Men.

I don't know as I can say there were any particular topics under discussion when the Senators were at breakfast this morning. I expressed to them a desire that they do what they could to expedite legislation. I received a report from Senator Smoot that they expected to be able to report the tax bill tomorrow or Monday. I think he said there was a suggestion that there be no session of the Senate tomorrow, in order to give the Finance Committee the entire day to consider the tax measure. The discussion didn't take up any particular bills or any particular topics. I wanted to find out what the prospect was of pushing legislation ahead, which everybody indicated they wanted to do and on which they thought the prospect was good. I don't know when I shall call in any more Senators or Representatives to break bread with me. I am liable to call them in any time. I am likewise liable not to call them in at all. I like to keep in touch, of course, with the members of the House and Senate. They are very busy men and unless I call them in in considerable numbers at one time, I don't have a chance to keep up that contact that I would like to keep. I can only see three or four or five men here in this office an hour, if they come in one at a time, usually for a period of about fifteen minutes, during only about three hours that I can devote to anything of that kind in the morning; so that unless I call them in in blocks, I don't have a chance to keep that intimate contact that otherwise I would like to have. Sometimes during the past season I have been able to do that Saturday afternoons on the Mayflower, but I have not been out on that for some time. Perhaps we can start up some trips on that in the near future.

There was no particular topics discussed with Governor Stokes or Governor Preuss. Governor Stokes some time ago indicated that he was coming to town and would like to call on me, and I suggested that he lunch with me. Governor Preuss dropped in on me this morning when he was in town with two or three of his constituents, and called on me to introduce his constituents, and I asked Governor Preuss to come to lunch. The gathering was rather casual, and the conversation was casual.
2.

Here is perhaps an interesting inquiry, because of its suggestiveness. It wants to know how I am going to conduct the coming campaign. There is an inference in it I judge that perhaps you will be able to interpret. I haven't myself made any plan about that. I don't think I happened to think of it; even this inquiry doesn't suggest any particular plan to me. The inquiry is whether there will be a speaking tour, or whether it will be a front porch campaign. I haven't the slightest idea about that - made no plan about it. I will do whatever appears to be necessary when the event is upon me.

I didn't discuss with Governor Preuss the political situation in the northwest, except perhaps it may have been referred to in the most casual way.

Here is an inquiry about the Brown reorganization committee and the suggestion that it is considering a proposed consolidation of the Shipping Board into the Department of Commerce, under an Assistant Secretary of Marine. I don't know whether that is a fact or not. I said to the Shipping Board at the time that Admiral Palmer became President of the Fleet Corporation that I thought there was a wide field for them to cover outside of the carrying on the business of running the fleet, and that I was not going to propose or present any suggestion for taking away from them their jurisdiction or their abolition. I think at that time there were some bills either pending or proposed to abolish the Shipping Board, and I made it plain to them at that time that I was not supporting those bills, and rather favored the continuation of the Board in order that we might see whether under the present plan, which I thought and Senator Jones thought was a more complete putting into effect of the present law, we could work out a reasonable plan for carrying on the merchant marine. It may be that the Committee is proposing something of that kind. I think the rumor came to me that they were considering something of that kind, but just what it is I don't know.

Here is another interesting inquiry as to whether I favor the proposed tax of 10½ on radio receiving sets costing $15.00 or more. Now I think I can lay down the broad principle that I am not in favor of imposing any new kinds of taxes. I don't want to do that. I want the business of the country so conducted that the imposition of new taxes would be unnecessary.
That means of course that we should keep within the present source of our income and expenditures and be as careful as we can about adding any new expenditures, in order that we may have a reduction of taxes on those sources on which they are now laid, wherever we can, and not the imposition of new taxes. That is the general principle that I want to follow. Now sometimes there are exceptions to rules, and it may be that the studies of those who are responsible for raising sufficient revenue to meet the needs of the Government feel that there might be an adjustment of the burden in a way that would look like the imposition of a new tax, but which rather is a taking of the tax off here by means of shifting the burden to something else that is not now under taxation. If this would come within a proposal of that kind, well then it ought to be considered. But I should have to know more about the circumstances to give an opinion as to whether I think it is warranted. If that is what this proposal means, why then there might be some justification for it. I am opposed to the general policy of the imposition of new taxes at this time.

I don't know about the Dial bill that provides for the use of property in the hands of the Alien Property Custodian. I am in favor of doing anything that can be done for the promotion of trade with Germany, or trade with any other foreign country. I don't understand however that there is at the present time any lack of credit facilities, or that there is any lack of money in the banks or in the hands of private individuals, to finance any kind of trade that is proposed with Germany or any foreign country. My idea about the Alien Property is that it ought to be held intact, in order that if it should become necessary it would be available to be applied to the claims of the American nationals and the American Government for damages that accrued to them and to it. If that be not necessary then it ought to be held intact, in order that it may be returned to its owners, the German nationals, and I think that I have indicated that I judge it is doubtful whether there is any warrant for undertaking to use this property for the financing of foreign trade, because that is what it means. If there are other finances that can be used, then I see no reason for using this. I do think it ought to be kept intact for those two purposes. I am exceedingly anxious to stimulate trade with Germany or any other foreign country, exceedingly anxious to see it sufficiently financed; but I am likewise anxious to keep this property intact for application to our claims, if necessary, and if not necessary, in order that it may be returned to its former owners.