

Tuesday, July 14, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

Here is an inquiry about Dr. Murray Nicholas Butler, which I suppose means Nicholas Murray Butler. I notice this suggestion is reported in some of the morning papers, that the United States ought to be better informed about what is being done by the League of Nations. Without desiring to be facetious at all, if Dr. Butler should visit the State Department he might be as much surprised to find out the information we have about the League of Nations as he was to find out the work that the League of Nations does. I agree with him fully that it is desirable that our Government should be informed about what the League is doing, and I therefore think his suggestion is based on a very sound conclusion. But I think his suggestion was that we ought to have a special representative there. I doubt if that is necessary, because I think we already have clear and definite information as to what is being done by the League.

I suppose it goes without saying that it is the desire of those connected with the United States Government, so far as I know, that there be some agreement made in the coal industry that will prevent having any strike.

I expect that the Congress will keep working on the plan for reorganizing the Government departments until some legislation is brought about. I have made several executive orders transferring departments, mostly I think to the Department of Commerce, but that doesn't go to the fundamental reason for the reorganization. I very much hope that Congress will work out some plan based on the proposals which are now before the Congress, or which will be before it in

accordance with that plan which has been presented.

I suppose the Shipping Board wouldn't approve the sale that was prepared by Admiral Palmer because they had information that led them to suppose that they could secure a higher bid. Then of course there is the question of policy, which is one especially for the Shipping Board rather than for Admiral Palmer, about what it shall be permitted in the contract of sale to do with the different parts of the ships that are to be sold, whether the machinery and so on is to be used for new work or whether it is to be entirely scrapped. I think it is rather the feeling of the Shipping Board that they don't want to sell at scrap prices boilers engines and machinery that are in the ships, which are to be used in new ships for boiler and engine purposes. The bid that was submitted by Admiral Palmer left those that were to purchase the ships in entire freedom as to what disposition is to be made of the parts.

I don't know of any joint action that has been arranged in China by the United States, Great Britain and Japan. I think any such report is based on a misunderstanding. Our country is communicating with the different countries that are signatory to the Washington Agreements. That includes Great Britain and Japan. But I am quite sure that our country hasn't made any agreement with Great Britain and Japan about China.

Question: Hasn't it felt that it would be desirable to postpone action on extra-territoriality.

The President: I don't think any agreement of any kind has been made. All that has been done is to try to secure an exchange of ideas as to what can be done for the purpose of carrying out the Washington agreements on the one side

and securing from China the protection of foreign interests on the other side. Very likely the United States, Great Britain and Japan, being particularly interested, in a sense do take the lead, though of course France and Italy, Belgium and several other Powers are interested and will of course be consulted. Now I think that is the real extent at the present time of the Chinese policy, based on those two things - carrying out the Washington Agreements on the one side and doing what we can to get China to protect foreign interests on the other side. Now that includes of course the consideration of the tariff and extra-territoriality and all other questions that were considered in the Washington Agreements.

I want to go up to Camp Devens some time. General Logan spoke to me about it. I had in mind when he spoke to me that he meant to go up to the Citizen's Military Training Camp. I expect my son will be up there at that time and I expected to go up there then. I am not certain whether I can get up to visit the 26th Division. I would like to and perhaps may be able to go.

I can't give any particular comment on the advantages of my being in New England the of the establishment of an air mail service between Boston and New York. The only information I have is that which is perfectly obvious. And before taking any settled position about it, I should want to consult the Post Office Department. Of course it is a thing that I should like to have done, but whether it ought to be done considering all the other requirements of the mail service or not, I couldn't tell.

Question: Mr. President, is the Postmaster General coming up to see you?

Answer: Not that I know of. I haven't any plan about that. I expect that substantially all the Cabinet members will be up here at one time or another.

I think I have indicated the Chinese situation.

Question: Would you care to say in connection with the Chinese situation whether there is hope for an early Customs Conference.

The President: Of course it goes without saying that we all hope for an early adjustment of our difficulties there. Now, whether conditions are such that we can have another conference or not, I can't say. I think that I am justified in saying that we are trying to promote conditions that will warrant an early conference on the tariff and on extra-territoriality.

Question: Referring to that question of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler. I don't think his suggestion was that we should send a special representative but that we should have a man at Berne who would be authorized to attend meetings. He raises the point now that the Minister at Berne isn't authorized to attend.

The President: Well, I don't know enough about the details to know whether that is necessary or not.

Question: My impression was that we were getting the information through Berne all the time.

The President: Of course it is barely possible that the report didn't give exactly what he was driving at. I thought that what he indicated was that there was very important work being done that our Government and the people over here might well be interested in and advised of. Of course if it is a matter of public interest

why I should say that that would be quite naturally attended to by the people without the intervention of our Government. I think our Government is very accurately informed as to what is taking place, though it may be that they need more assistance in getting more early and accurate information, but I don't understand that that is the case.

I haven't received any communication, so far as I recall, from Admiral Palmer or Mr. O'Connor regarding a ship sales policy, other than what I think has already been given to the press. The Board replied to my communication accepting that policy and pointing out that it had been virtually provided for in the resolution that was ~~was~~ passed by the Board about the time I suggested that they put the Emergency Fleet Corporation and the operation of the ships in the hands of one man, which was provided for by the appointment of Admiral Palmer at that time.

Question: You still want legislation on that, Mr. President?

Answer: Well, I am not certain about that. I rather think that some legislation might be helpful. My understanding with the Board was that this policy could be carried out by them without the intervention of legislation.

There isn't anything new respecting Secretary Weeks. My understanding is that he is making a good recovery and of course in time I expect to see him back at his desk in Washington.

Question: Mr. President there was a dispatch the other day that he would be out very soon.

Answer: I don't know of any foundation for that. No information has

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me to me that he was going to the Essex County Republican Convention July 26th or
7th.

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