

Paul Smith's, N.Y.,
Tuesday, August 17, 1926.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

Here is an inquiry relative to the status of the correspondence with Mexico relative to their land laws. About all I can say about that which can be understood without entering into a long explanation about rather technical matters would be that Mexico has made large concessions to the demands of the United States on these questions, but that there are still a number of questions that have not been definitely determined. I am informed by the Secretary of State that so far as he recalls he has had only one specific complaint - he has knowledge of only one complaint - that has been made in relation to the taking of church property in Mexico, I mean specific complaint that this property has been taken and not a general complaint about the taking of church property that was lodged with our Ambassador there and our Ambassador made representations to the Government relative to it and was informed that it would be adjusted. It is very hard to say whether American citizens have suffered indignities in Mexico. That is rather a broad term. Some of them have been expelled from Mexico. The Mexico Constitution has that 33rd Article, which gives the Mexican Government authority to expel anyone. That is known in Mexico as 33ing people. It gives the Government absolute authority to expel any one they may desire to expel. That is sometimes resorted to. Whenever it appears to be used without any action on the part of the person against whom it is used that would justify it, it has been the practice of our Ambassador there to intercede, sometimes

successfully and sometimes unsuccessfully.

I have noticed a number of speculations in the press recently relative to actions and proposed actions on my part, which were without any foundation. Members of the press here at Paul Smith's have a conference with me twice a week in which they have opportunity to make any inquiries, and there really isn't any excuse for sending out unfounded statements as to actions that it is assumed I am going to take, because it is always possible to check them up in conference. Now, here is one in relation to a \$100,000,000 banking pool for loan purposes on farm property. I have no knowledge of anything of that kind. There was a man here last week representing some fruit cooperatives that said his concern needed financing to the extent of half a million or a million dollars, and I told him about the Finance Corporation that had been organized for the purpose of helping out in North Dakota two or three years ago and the one that was organized for the purpose of helping out in Iowa last Fall, and suggested to him that he look into that and see if his concern couldn't be financed by the same method. But that was a very small thing. He said that under the terms of the Fess bill he would have been able to get such relief as he wished, and that under the general law if provision was made granting the same terms to his industry that was now extended to the cattle industry he would be able to secure relief.

Here is another store that I have no information about and never heard of until I read it in the press. That is the story to the effect that I had issued some order or taken some action in relation to what might be done to

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to industrial alcohol to make it unusable for beverage purposes. I don't know of any provision in the law that gives me the slightest authority to take any action. I don't know what authority the prohibition enforcement agencies and those who have charge of the regulation of the manufacture and sale of industrial alcohol may have. If any one wanted to write a story about that, I would suggest that they look up the statutes, see what the law is, and finding out what it is they could make a pretty good estimate of what might possibly be done. I find that in the administration of my own office it is of great help if I can keep in mind that I am administering an office under the terms of the law and the Constitution, and I get along very well if when each question arises I find out what the law and the Constitution requires me to do and do that. I haven't the slightest information about what the law does authorize the authorities to do in relation to the manufacture and sale of industrial alcohol. Of course I have a general notion of it the same as every one has, but I haven't any idea of the details of it or what authority they have to make it unpalatable or to put things in it to make it unfit for beverage purposes. Nobody has ever spoken to me about it and I never heard of it until I saw a story about it in the press.

Here is a question that wants to know to what extent is the latitude of the Executive authority in relation to this particular instance. I don't know. That would be a question that might well be studied by the one that asked the question, to get the statute and look it up. I am always glad to do those errands for the press and I am very glad to give information if I happen to have it.

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I don't imagine that the Executive authority has any latitude or that there is any statute about it. I do presume that the authorities who have charge of the industrial manufacture and distribution of alcohol are given some authority which is conferred on them. It isn't conferred on the President.

I have been over with Mr. Kellogg some of the details of the office and the questions that have arisen since I left Washington. I thought I could take it up a little more intimately by conversation than I could by reports from him. He has touched on some of them in the address which he is to make tomorrow that has been given to the press and would be much better described there than I could describe them, so I will let that address speak for itself when it is published. From what I am saying here, I don't want it indicated that I am giving a prior release of it. It is to be released in accordance with the statement on it.

I haven't any information - this should go with the other things that I said about farm matters - as to a conference that is to be held in New York. I don't know who is starting such a conference and I don't know the purpose of it. I assume that it is a general discussion of farm problems. I saw either in the press or else some one told me that some one had started a plan for a conference and I asked Mr. Barrett. I had a long conversation with him and he didn't say anything about it and I asked him if he heard of it - I must have seen an item in the press relative to this conference - and when we were riding out to the Camp I asked him about it, whether he had heard anything. He said "Very little," that he had had an invitation to go but didn't know who was managing it

or who had initiated it or just what its purpose was, but that he had had an invitation to come and bring some members of the Farm Union. That is the only information I have in connection with that item.

I have already indicated that I have never given General Andrews any direction about industrial alcohol, and never heard about it. I sort of wonder whether the General has heard anything about it. Possibly he has.

Mr. Rosenwald is the directing force in a very large mail order house, a man of large business experience that comes into contact with large sections of the country. I wanted to talk with him about the general business and economic condition in that part of the country with which he comes in contact to see whether he had any suggestions of anything that could be done to make business better.

There isn't anything further that can be said about a Mexican policy other than what I said the other day. Wherever the rights of American citizens as to their persons or property are infringed, why, our Government will do what it can to see that they are duly respected. But of course it hasn't any authority under diplomatic usage or international law or treaty rights to interfere in the purely domestic matters of Mexico.

Here is an item that crops up from time to time. It has been rather neglected for the past few months. That is the resignation of a Cabinet member. This is said to be a dispatch from the New York World from Washington that Secretary Kellogg had informed me of his desire to retire to private life. I don't know of any foundation for it. He says he is well and is able to work hard and sleep well. He is a very valuable member of the Cabinet and of course

with his experience and increasing knowledge of the Department becomes more valuable every day. I should regret very much to have him resign and feel very certain that he hasn't any such thing in contemplation.

I know that the Post Office Department has made a very good record in aviation. I think I spoke of that at a former conference. For some periods the starting off of planes and their reaching their destination on time was almost perfect. The amount of mileage that they have covered is large and the number of accidents has been almost negligible. It is a demonstration of the efficiency of American flyers, American made aircraft, and of Government operation in this field. But the Post Office goes into that of course in part to secure a rapid transmission of mails, but perhaps in larger part for aviation experience, as one method of national defense and commercial development. When we originally constructed our railroads they were helped very much by the local and National governments, and to develop a new field of transportation like aviation it was desirable and rather necessary that the Government should pioneer somewhat in it. Now, that didn't mean that the Government was going permanently into the railroad business. The work of the Post Office Department doesn't mean that the Government is going permanently into aviation. That is, that isn't the present policy and desire. And I think it may be stated as the policy of the Government that as fast as we can secure contracts with reliable concerns for the transmission of mail in such a way that we know the country will have the benefit of practically the same experience that it has under the Government, and the benefit of all of that greater initiative and enterprise that comes from private effort, that we shall

make contracts of that kind with private concerns to take up the transmission of the mails. I wish I had more of the details of the accomplishments of the Post Office Department. That could of course be secured from the Post Office Department, but I haven't them here at hand.