

Tuesday, November 22, 1927.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I doubt very much if it would be possible to secure the passage of a bill similar to that which was proposed by President Harding for a direct subsidy to shipping. I think there are some indirect things that it may be able to do that would assist in maintaining our merchant marine. I am having those things explored. They would be generally on the side of the relationship of the merchant marine to the question of national defense, the use of the ships for that purpose and regarding the crews as an auxiliary to the Navy.

I haven't seen any detailed report as to the action of the Ways and Means Committee on the question of tax reduction. I didn't have a chance even to read it, just to glance at the reports in the morning press. \$250,000,000 is more than recommended by the Treasury. Therefore, my opinion about that would be that it is a larger reduction than ought to be made at this time. But of course the question of taxes and tax reduction is one especially for the House of Representatives worked out by their Ways and Means Committee, and something may have developed at the hearings that would warrant in their opinion as large a reduction as that. It seems to me too much. I don't know the details of how it is to be applied, so I couldn't comment on that.

I have referred the suggestion that was made by several of the representatives of organized labor that were in yesterday in relation to the soft coal strike to the Department of Labor. That Department has been in close contact with the strike since before it began, has been helpful and instrumental in settling a certain part of it, and of course would be only too glad to do anything possible to secure the settlement of the remaining questions and localities and the differences between the mine operators and the mine workers. In general, I would

say that it appears that the soft coal business is going through a reorganization period. Some mines are closing down and probably will not be opened again, certainly not in the near future. The reason is that coal can be bought by the people that own those mines cheaper than they can mine it. That is the general difficulty in the settlement of the remaining body of the strike. The market for coal is such a price that the mines that have not made a settlement feel that they can not sell coal at the prevailing rate and meet the demands of the miners on their wage scale. That is, if they were taken back to work it would mean that the output of the mine would have to be sold at less than cost to produce the coal. Now that is the situation, and it is bringing about the present readjustment in the mining business. Of course, when an industry goes through a readjustment of that kind it is always attended with more or less hardship, and I don't know any direct answer to it at the present time. But the Department of Labor will explore the situation fully to see if there is anything that it can do to mediate it, conciliate it, and settle it.

I have stated my position relative to the Boulder Canyon Dam in several of my messages, and several addresses, better than I can state it in an offhand way. I would be glad to refer you to those for any information you may wish to have on my position. There has been scarcely any change in the situation. Some of the states have indicated quite positively that it is improbable that they will adopt the seven-state agreement. I have been hoping all the time that the states would reach an agreement under which the work could go forward. If they do not reach an agreement it complicates the situation. It doesn't necessarily prevent a solution. Of course, I would quite agree with Rep. Snell that I wouldn't want to have a dam built at Boulder Canyon without knowing in advance what was going to be done with it, how it was going to be operated, and where some return was going to be made for the investment of the money. Muscle Shoals was built during the war

when it was expected to be put into war work. When the war was over it left us with the dam and the immediate reason for its construction had passed.

I don't know whether the State Dept. has made any agreement about withdrawing our customs investigators from France. That would naturally be a matter for the consideration of the Treasury Department. I suppose what they are doing there is trying to comply with the present U. S. statutory law.

I don't know what the War Dept. is doing in the way of pontoon bridges to be used in Vermont. I think some have been furnished, and I think the Secretary of War indicated to me this morning that he had a recent call over the telephone, or something of that kind, from the Governor, and that nothing more in that respect was required at the present time. He said the only pontoon bridges we had were in Texas.

I do not approve of the circulation of a petition, such as has been reported in the morning press, requesting me to run for President in 1928. I don't see that any good could come from it. I hope it will be discontinued.

I have very little information about any details of a proposed street car merger in Washington. As I indicated at the conference the other day, I judge it would be for the convenience of the citizens of Washington, perhaps for the convenience of the operation of the business, if the street car systems here were all under one management. I hope something of that kind might be worked out.

Mr. McAdoo, who with Mrs. McAdoo took lunch with us yesterday, told me that he was in Washington engaged in trying to work out a fair system for consolidation. He did not go into the details of it. I am not familiar with the details. I would be very glad to do anything I could to cooperate in any consolidation that would be for the benefit of the Washington public and at the same time fair to the owners of the property.

I expect to attend church Thanksgiving day. I have forgotten now where Dr. Pierce said that the Thanksgiving services would be held. It is in one of the theaters, but not in the theater where the Sunday services are held.

Member of the Press: Keith's Theater.

President: Yes, that was what I was thinking. I shall go to church there Thursday. Thanksgiving turkeys are beginning to arrive at the White House that shall have our attention on Thanksgiving Day.

Mr. Clark told me this morning that it had been suggested that on Thanksgiving eve, Wednesday evening, I should read my Thanksgiving Proclamation for the purpose of having it broadcast. I am expecting to do that.

Query: From the office?

President: Probably from the White House. Probably from my study there. Some of the radio people had indicated that they would like to make a very broad distribution of that over the radio, perhaps putting 20 or more radio stations into operation for that purpose.

Query: Will John be home?

President: No. He only has, I think, one day.