

Friday, December 9, 1927.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I have every reason to suppose that any report that Ambassador Morrow is undertaking to arrange a meeting between the President of Mexico and myself is without the slightest foundation. Such comment as I care to make at this time relative to rivers and harbors and inland waterways improvement and navigation of inland waterways is in my message. There is one comment that I might add -- that it is quite discouraging for the United States Government to undertake to help people and find that it only lands itself in a very disagreeable controversy. That has happened on some of our irrigation projects, where the Federal Government has expended a great deal of money and was under a good deal of expense in order to irrigate land and redeem it for cultivation, and sometimes the results have been that the Secretary of the Interior washing in effigy for his pains. We have gone to a great deal of trouble and a perfectly enormous expense in relation to shipping, and our being in that business is something that also lands us in a good deal of controversy. There is some controversy, I don't know what it is, about the Mississippi barge lines. I thought we had gone a considerable distance, and been quite generous in providing for it. Now, these are not reasons why the U. S. Government should not go ahead and do whatever is required to be done, but they are difficulties that it seems might be eliminated to a considerable extent, if those for whom these things are done would try and have a reasonable appreciation of the efforts that are being made in their behalf. Of course, the principle that I am trying to illucidate is the very extreme difficulty of the Federal Government engaging in the transaction of business that isn't strictly a government business. As soon as it undertakes to do that the people that are helped or harmed immediately begin a political agitation about it. It results in controversies that it would

be much better to keep out of and is one of the main reasons why the United States Government ought to keep from undertaking to transact business that the people themselves ought to transact. It can't function along that line. As soon as the Government tries to transact such business, the people with whom it is being transacted don't regard it as the Government's business. They regard it as their business. They think it ought not to be done for the benefit of the Government in a way that would be for the benefit of the Treasury or all the people, but that it ought to be done for their benefit. And that always creates a situation that it is extremely difficult to contend with and one which is practically impossible. So that it is my policy, in so far as I can, to keep the Government out of business, withdraw from that business that it is engaged in temporarily, and ^{not} to be in favor of its embarking on new enterprises.

I do not think the question of whether a man might be called a military man or not is one of very great importance in relation to the Governor Generalship of the Philippine Islands. I suppose what is meant by that is the attitude of mind of the man. Some civilians may have what I would designate as a very military type of mind. Some men who may be officers in the Army and the Navy might not have a military type of mind at all. I think this -- that the Governor Generalship of the Philippine Islands would probably be better administered, as any civil office would be, by a man who didn't have a predominantly military type of mind. That wouldn't by any means eliminate plenty of men we have in the Army and Navy, and I would not think that Governor General Wood was a man that had a predominant military type of mind.

I have appointed Judge Tilson to be a Judge in George and naturally I want him to be a Judge down there. I do not know yet what can be done in order to secure that result.

3.

I had some matter that I thought was of some importance to reveal to the press, but I don't happen to recall just what it was now. I know I had it in mind for several press conferences.

Mr. Michaels: May be it was the Governor Generalship of the Philippines, Mr. President.

President: No. Well, I have given you sufficient to write about for today. We will save that for some other time.