

Tuesday, March 13, 1928.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

I don't know whether Mrs. Coolidge will go to the Speaker's dinner tonight or not. She is up and about the house. Seems to be getting along very well. But the doctor is quite solicitous that she should be careful and not overtax her strength.

The advices that I have received about unemployment are similar to those that I think were reported in the press today from the Labor Department. The survey is not all completed yet. The Secretary of Labor thought it might be ready inside of a week.

I haven't any new ideas about conditions in the bituminous coal fields, other than those I have expressed in my messages to the Congress. The fundamental trouble, as every one knows, is that there are too many coal mines and too many coal miners. I had thought that that situation might be relieved somewhat by authority of Congress to make some regional arrangements and regional contracts, but that proposal has never had the favor of either the operators or the miners. Whether it is going to meet with more favor at this time, or not, I do not know. That would be one method of helping out the situation. If some regional agreements could be entered into by the mine operators relative to the amount of production and relative to the distribution of the product after it was mined, I think it might be quite helpful. But that is not possible now under the present interpretation of the anti-trust laws. I think that is the main thing that ought to receive very careful consideration. It is about the only thing I know of that we could do in the way of national legislation, the mining of coal having been decided to be a purely state function as differentiated from a national function. That is, it is an operation that is entirely under the control of state

laws, as distinguished from one that might be put under the control of national laws. But the marketing of coal, of course, is an interstate subject and is governed by our national laws. These regional agreements would relate more particularly to the marketing of coal after it has been produced. It sometimes happens in our industrial relations that a situation has to get quite difficult before the interested parties and the Congress are willing to apply anything that looks like drastic measures, and perhaps the present difficulty will cause the working out of new Federal legislative measures to handle the distribution of coal after it is produced.