Tuesday, May 18, 1925.

Report of the Newspaper Conference.

It is my understanding that Senator Smoot who is the Senate Chairman of the Committee having in charge the hearings on the French debt settlement, and who is also a member of the Commission, and Representative Green, Chairman of the House Committee having in charge the hearings on the settlement, and Representative Burton and Representative Crisp, who are the other two Congressional members of the Foreign Debt Settlement Commission, are going to have a conference to discuss what method they would pursue about Congressional action. What they have determined on I don't know. I judge they are starting some hearings in the House; whether they are going to have some right away in the Senate, I am not certain. And I don't know what their plan is about reporting out the recommendations of the Committee of the House and the Senate for presenting it for the action of the House and the Senate. I think there is a general feeling that at least before final action of both houses of Congress they expect action on the part of the French toward ratification. But as I say, I don't know what plan they are going to adopt in relation to their action.

I haven't any information about disturbances in Poland, other than what I have seen in the press. If any communications have come to the State Department, they have not been of a nature that it was thought necessary to bring them to my attention.

I sent Mr. Mellon yesterday to inquire about some proposal that is pending in the Senate Committee on Finances about the Greek Debt Settlement. The Greeks owe us some money and I think they claim that we had agreed to
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advance them some money, which hasn't been advanced. I knew there had been some
hearings in relation to that before the Senate Committee, and I was asking Mr.
Mellon what was developing. He said they had had the hearings, that nothing had
developed, and that they were going to consult with the State Department, which
of course was a proper attitude to assume in relation to a foreign matter of
that kind. Mr. Mellon went before the Committee because the Committee sent for
him and asked him about the debt in relation to the Treasury, as to what had
been paid and so on.

I don't know whether it is going to be possible to secure any coal
legislation at this session. As I have stated before, I have to depend quite
largely on the advice of those who are responsible for the conduct of the business
of the House and Senate as to what matters they will take up.

Representative Williams of Texas and Ragon of Arkansas were talking
with me about the bill that is pending in relation to the Auditor of the
Philippines. They thought something could be worked out that would be helpful
in that situation. There has been a decision of the Philippine Court which
gravely affects the authority of the Auditor of the Philippines, so that it
has been thought desirable to have some legislation that would clear up that
authority, not for the purpose of making any change whatsoever in the relation-
ship between the Philippines and this Country, or of making any change in the
law from what everybody had supposed the law was, but simply a bill to declare
what the law is until this decision of the Philippine Court which is pending
on appeal in the Supreme Court of the United States. Of course it is quite
desirable that there should be a careful audit of the expenses of the Philippine Government, just the same as we require a careful auditing here by our Comptroller General of all the expenses of this Government.

Here is a suggestion that probably doesn't mean quite what it says, that the Senate Military Committee has amended the Army aviation expansion bill to leave increases in personnel of the Army Air Service each year to the judgment of the Budget Bureau. I doubt if that is the case. If it means that it is to be left to the judgment of the President, perhaps that is an accurate statement, or if it means it is to be left to the judgment of the person that makes up the budget, why that would be leaving it to the judgment of the President. I suppose that what the Military Committee has in mind is not to try to make an out and out increase in the expenditures which it might be found that when I come to make up the budget I was not able to find money with which to meet such expenditures. I have doubted the wisdom of increasing the personnel of the Army or Navy. I think I have stated at previous conferences that if it was necessary to have more men in aviation, why I think they should be taken from some of the other arms of the service because I feel that we have at the present time a substantial number to meet all the requirements that we are likely to have. It is possible that we might need a few more officers in the Air Service. That would be in the discretion of the President, because he would not appoint officers unless he thought them necessary, though of course if the President signs a bill it is virtually mandatory on him. The President is expected to carry out the provisions of the bill. But the Com-
mittee is working out this aviation problem. I think they are making very good progress on it and will undoubtedly present a very creditable bill. I think the principle of leaving the bill in such a way that there is no requirement about increasing the personnel of the Army, unless when I make up the budget I find that we have funds with which to meet such an increase, is a very excellent principle.

I didn't discuss with Senator Cummins any question of the adjournment of the Congress. He came in to talk with me about some of the Alaska appointments. There are two factions in Alaska, so that if an appointment is made out to one faction the other faction always opposes the confirmation. I am quite confident that the appointments I have made up there are as good as can be made, if I am to appoint people that live in Alaska. These are judicial appointments, two judges I think and one District Attorney and one Marshal. Now, it is never possible to get perfect men to hold office, because there aren't any such. Sometimes they are better and sometimes they are worse. But so far as I can learn by diligent inquiry the appointments that have been made are as good as can be made, if I am to use people that live in Alaska. The other appointments have been reported on favorably by the Committee on Judiciary. Now, if these appointments can not be confirmed, the only other recourse that I shall have would be to go outside of Alaska and appoint some people that would go up there from the states. That might be a temporary relief, but I should expect that after they had been up there for three months they
would be subject to the same attack that is being made at the present time on appointments. We spend quite a good deal of money in Alaska and it is one of the chief sources of income to those who live up there to be in the Government employ. I think one in eleven white people that live there are employed by the Government and of course that makes a considerable motive on the part of the other ten to try and show that the person who is in ought to be displaced, so that one of the other ten could have the place and the revenue that is now accruing to the person that holds the office. Those are some of the difficulties that I have in the administration of affairs in Alaska, though I think affairs are going on up there in fairly good shape. But there are the two factions and this contention between them.

I have already spoken about the French debt.

I have been desiring very much, as the conference knows, to have a reorganization of the Shipping Board. Under the present law the great majority of the personnel of the Shipping Board feel that they are entirely independent of the Executive Department and are responsible only to Congress. I don't think that is a good policy for a Board which is administrative and executive in its duties, but the Board came to the conclusion that that was the position that they occupied under the law and sent me up a document, I believe that they called it a "declaration of their independence", so that I am not sufficiently in touch with the Board at the present time to have any judgment on which I want to base any action as to the wisdom of the course that the Board is taking. I am glad to cooperate with the Board any time that I can and give them
any assistance, but they have wanted very much to proceed independent of the executive, and so I asked Congress to clarify the situation and put them under a responsible executive head. That, Congress hasn't been able to do up to the present time and the matter is drifting along. If Congress doesn't take any action on it, I shall appoint some one to succeed Mr. Haney, and I want to make that appointment so it can be confirmed during the present session of the Senate.

Press: Do you mind telling us when the Shipping Board document which they described as a "declaration of independence" was sent to you?

President: I can't give just the date. I should judge that it was about the time they discharged Admiral Palmer. I think all their documents that they sent up were published at the time.

I haven't any plan about leaving Washington at any specific date. Of course the White House is very comfortable and for us to stay in, even when the weather is warm, but I like to get away during the summer because I think it is better for a person to get a change of scene and change of atmosphere. Then I would like to get up into a little higher altitude, this is practically sea level here, and spend some time away from Washington. I may not go until after I have been to Philadelphia. If things should develop so that I could get away before that time, why I may go earlier than that. I haven't any plan about it at the present.

I haven't enough information about the bill that is pending in the Congress to repeal the national origin clause of the present immigration law
so that I could pass any judgment on it. I should be very much disposed, so far as I know now, to take the opinion of the Department of Labor in relation to the results that would be secured from the passage of such a law and to the desirability of its passage.