December 12, 1924.

Remarks by the President to the Newspaper Correspondents.

I have just happened to notice that I have here a communication from the Secretary of the Interior relative to reclamation. I thought there was also something in it relative to conservation, and he has sent over some copies that will be given out to you when you pass out.

Here is a suggestion as to what London newspapers are saying about the debts that are due to the United States. The British funded their debt, which I suppose is some warrant for their newspapers commenting on the debts that are due to us from other nations. I don't know whether there is anything I could say about it, or whether I ought to let the London papers be answered by the American newspapers. I am inclined to think that that is probably the better course.

I do not expect to call any conference. If they will read our statutes they will save themselves from supposing that I had any authority to call a conference.

Mr. President, on the question of the debt, there have been suggestions in at least one of the London papers that the British Government was about to dispatch a note to us on that subject. Are you aware of any such communication?

No, I don't think any such communication will ever reach us. I have stated my attitude in relation to the debts a great many times. Sometimes it seems to be misunderstood. I have made it as plain as I can, and so far as I know there hasn't been any change in my attitude. It is not one of desiring to oppress any one, but it is one of opposing cancellation of debts and of desiring that each of the countries that is indebted to us should proceed to fund their debts and pay them. That is the attitude that has been stated by our Government and is embodied in the statutes of the Congress. So long as it is on the statute books I suppose it stands as the American policy.

I haven't made any more plans about the inauguration.

I don't know of any developments in the local rent emergency.

Nothing further has been done about the District of Columbia judgeships.

I haven't changed my opinion about the present Rivers and Harbors bill which authorized $53,000,000 of new projects. I am of the opinion that that is more
than I want to authorize at the present time, and if the bill is going to go
through I should think that the less pressing projects that are in the bill
ought to be eliminated.

You may expect a decision on the sugar report almost any time.

There isn't any prospect of my calling a disarmament conference to
meet this year. I imagine that means next year. This year, of course, ends the
first of January, and about next year, I can't tell. We shall have to see what
developments there are in relation to the proposals that are now pending in
Europe. I had hoped that we might have a conference some time during the coming
year. That was my expectation before the European developments in relation to
a conference there, and we shall have to see what happens.

Different Senators came in this morning on different subjects. I
spoke with some of them about the postal pay bill; some of them consulted me
about other things; some of them about post offices. There wasn't anything of
a specially important or public nature.

I shouldn't favor the submission of the question of any claims we have
to German reparations money to the World Court. I think our position on that
is perfectly plain and clear and well established by the various treaties.
I don't think there is anything in it that needs adjudication by a judicial
tribunal, nor do I see the slightest indication that there could be any
differences of opinion that can't be adjusted by negotiation. So far as I can see
it is perfectly evident that the principle that we have adopted on our part
will be recognized by the other governments that are interested. I think it
has already been recognized by Italy and France and Belgium. I don't know
whether there has been any formal recognition of it by the British, but I am
rather inclined to think there has been something of that nature.

That seems to cover the questions of the day.