

LANSING AFFAIR BELIEVED DUE TO OLD DIFFERENCES

Disagreement Over League Covenant and Mexican Notes Commented on as Possible Causes.

Washington, Feb. 14.—(U. P.)—The Lansing affair is believed to be due to old differences between the president and his secretary of state, which first became acute in Paris.

Many believe that the question of calling cabinet meetings as not adequate to explain the Lansing dismissal, though it is agreed that the president did not know his cabinet was transacting business until a few days ago. The story runs that he was informed of the first meeting last October, and sent Admiral Grayson to inquire by what authority the cabinet could act without him, answer being then returned that the cabinet met to learn the state of the president's health and to send him encouragement. Business was taken up at later meetings with the apparent acquiescence of all cabinet members, Secretary Lansing declaring that he considered himself equally responsible with Lansing.

This has led to comment to the effect that other causes for disapproval may be found in Lansing's case, and these are not difficult to estimate.

FOUR POSSIBLE CAUSES

First, Lansing's position in Paris favoring separation of the League of Nations covenant from the treaty of peace. Second, embarrassment arising from the testimony of William C. Bullitt that Lansing informed him that if the American people once understood what was in the league covenant they would not approve. This was never denied, Lansing refusing to comment upon it.

Third, notes addressed to the Mexican government—particularly in the Jenkins case—were believed to be what the president had in mind in accusing the secretary of "forestalling his action."

Fourth, and finally, assumption of authority in calling the cabinet together.

Comment among senators and representatives ranged from vicious threats at the president by Senators Norris, Jones and Sherman, who professed to see in the affair evidence of the president's falling mentality, to noncommittal statements by the president's friends, who expressed regret at the break in relations with the secretary of state, who is personally popular and generally regarded as a capable, though not brilliant, official.

Among the Democrats, comment was restrained. Following are samples: Senator Pomeroy would say nothing, and Senator Walsh of Montana merely remarked, "I had rather think and say nothing."

Senator Gore said, "It is a most unfortunate incident and a most unfortunate circumstance."

KITCHIN NOT SURPRISED

Representative Kitchin of North Carolina "was not surprised," and stopped with that.

Representative Godwin, North Carolina, said: "I believe Lansing did the right thing under circumstances, but to demand his resignation for calling meetings of the cabinet, if that was the only reason was unjustified."

Representative Gallivan, Massachusetts, said that if the facts stated in the letters are true, all members of the cabinet should resign.

Representative Blanton, Texas, remarked: "A secretary of state must be willing to carry out all policies of the executive or he ought not to hold office."

Representative Tucker of Missouri, "I do not see how the president could reprimand one and not the others. I am very sorry. Lansing has made an exceptionally good secretary of state."

Republicans were more disposed to talk, as shown below:

REPUBLICANS CAUTIOUS

Senator Capper of Kansas: "The president has a right to discharge members of his cabinet, but to discharge Lansing on such a flimsy pretext is silly and unreasonable."

Senator Cummins said: "It is absurd to suppose that Lansing's action in calling meetings of the cabinet was an usurpation of executive authority," and Senator New of Indiana averred that "the tone of the president's letter showed that he wants 'another puppet' in the cabinet."

Senator Lodge would not discuss the matter, but Curtis of Kansas, republican senator whip, said the correspondence "reveals the true physical and mental condition of the president."

Senator Watson said: "The row in the president's family was none of his business."

UNCLE JOE TEASE

Senator Smoot said he believed the cabinet would have been derelict had it not proceeded with public business during the president's illness, and Lansing as ranking member would be especially culpable.

Representative Foss of Ohio said: "Lansing has shown fine spirit in making sacrifices for months rather than run the risk of embarrassing the country during the time of great stress."

Representative Anthony of Kansas declared Lansing should have received a letter of thanks and Republican "Treadwell" of Mississippi, declared his sympathies are "entirely with Lansing."

Regarding the incident as an illustration of the president's lack of tolerance.

Representative Longworth said: "The government has not had a responsible head for five months and this is documentary evidence."

"Uncle Joe" Cannon hesitated, and then commented: "Well, he was kicked out, wasn't he?"

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