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Press Conference Memos.

Room fills up rapidly and Hughes comes in. My first impression is of a shorter man than he was 12 years ago when I knew him on the Insurance investigation, shorter, rounder shouldered and very gray. He is flabby in face. I don't like his color, - but it's amazing how he has humanized. He has the nicest, friendliest, frankest twinkle around his eyes, something I never would have supposed from my earlier acquaintance that he would have acquired. I quite understand from this first impression why the newspaper men like him so much. He is thoroughly good natured with them, in spite of the fact that they made him trouble from the reports that they gave out last night that we were going to do something fierce to China because

Drop of ink
much of it
Sept 12

Nov. 7, 1921.

she had repudiated her loan. "I am sorry that that went out, boys", he said, "I tried to make it plain. Now I can't tell you any more about it ~~at far~~ at present, but here are a few facts, not for publication. What we did represent to China was the bad effect the repudiation of that loan would have on China's credit in America, coming at this moment." He thinks what happened was that the Minister of Finance resigned the day or night before the loan came due. That there was nobody there to take care of the loan. Of course he thought the new Minister of Finance probably would do it. - All of which is very interesting, but the poor newspaper man, what is he going to get out of this?

(Make point here on the impression that Hughes note in regard to Haba's death made on me. I would like to know if he wrote it. It had a warmth of sympathy in it which sounded like his.)

Amusing to hear the questions that were asked. One Jap wanted to know about Yap and is told that it is unsettled: another about how many open conferences it will be and is told that is is unsettled. Another about the program for limitation and is told that they are making excellent progress. That expression "excellent progress" makes Hughes smile, but he uses it and the way he uses it, with such a sense of disappointment that it must be to these men seeking information softens the irritation that the correspondent naturally feels.

Being a spectator myself and getting my news through these men. I enjoy the little play, and my sympathy goes to both sides. Mr. Hughes escapes with relief and the men go out resigned and grumpy.

Walking away with Sullivan we discuss the health of the Cabinet. I tell him what Steed said - that Hughes made a critical mistake in not taking a good long vacation this summer - stuck here in Washington in this awful climate. No British Statesmen would dare do it. Feel that he was in danger of betraying his country. Sullivan says that he has just been talking with a member of the Cabinet on this very point. Urged him to take a vacation. Thinks Hoover is in best condition of all, though he was in bad shape in Spring. Says that it is reported that Lodge is on the verge of a collapse. That Root takes care of himself. It's a critical point in this business, for as Steed says the wear and tare of a conference like this is terrific and it's something of which Hughes himself has had no experience.
