

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President Roosevelt's message has been delivered to congress. Its main features are as follows:

The enlargement of scope of the functions of the national government required by our development as a nation involves, of course, increase of expense, and the period of prosperity through which the country is passing justifies expenditures for permanent improvements far greater than would be wise in hard times, but abundant revenues and a large surplus always invite extravagance, and constant care should be taken to guard against unnecessary increase of the ordinary expenses of government.

Capital and Labor.

The relations of capital and labor, and especially of organized capital and organized labor, to each other and to the public at large come second in importance only to the intimate questions of family life. Our peculiar form of government, with its sharp division of authority between the nation and the several states, has been on the whole far more advantageous to our development than a more strongly centralized government. But it is undoubtedly responsible for much of the difficulty of meeting with adequate legislation the new problems presented by the total change in industrial conditions on this continent during the last half century. In actual practice it has proved exceedingly difficult, and in many cases impossible, to get unanimity of wise action among the various states on these subjects. From the very nature of the case this is especially true of the laws affecting the employment of capital in huge masses.

With regard to labor, the problem is no less important, but it is simpler. As long as the states retain the primary control of the police power the circumstances must be altogether extreme which require interference by the federal authorities, whether in the way of safeguarding the rights of labor or in the way of seeing that wrong is not done by unruly persons who shield themselves behind the name of labor. If there is resistance to the federal courts, interference with the mails or interstate commerce or molestation of federal property, or if the state authorities in some crisis which they are unable to face call for help, then the federal government may interfere; but, though such interference may be caused by a condition of things arising out of trouble connected with some question of labor, the interference itself simply takes the form of restoring order without regard to the questions which have caused the breach of order. In the District of Columbia and in the territories the federal law covers the entire field of government. But the labor question is only acute in populous centers of commerce, manufactures or mining. Nevertheless both in the enactment and in the enforcement of law the federal government within its restricted sphere should set an example to the state governments, especially in a matter so vital as this affecting labor.

Labor Unions.

I believe that under modern industrial conditions it is often necessary and even where not necessary it is yet often wise that there should be organization of labor in order better to secure the rights of the individual workman. All encouragement should be given to any such organization so long as it is conducted with a due and decent regard for the rights of others. There are in this country some labor unions which have habitually and other labor unions which have often been among the most effective agents in working for good citizenship and for uplifting the condition of those whose welfare should be closest to our hearts. But when any labor union seeks improper ends or seeks to achieve proper ends by improper means all good citizens, and more especially all honorable public servants, must oppose the wrongdoing as resolutely as they would oppose the wrongdoing of any great corporation. Violence, brutality or corruption should not for one moment be tolerated.

Entire Right to Organize.

Wageworkers have an entire right to organize and by all peaceful and honorable means to endeavor to persuade their fellows to join with them in organizations. They have a legal right, which, according to circumstances, may or may not be a moral right, to refuse to work in company with men who decline to join their organizations. They have under no circumstances the right to commit violence upon those, whether capitalists or wageworkers, who refuse to support their organizations or who side with those with whom they are at odds, for mob rule is intolerable in any form. The wageworkers are peculiarly entitled to the protection and the encouragement of the law. Wherever the national government has power there should be a stringent employer's liability law, which should apply to the government itself where the government is an employer of labor.

Prevention of Railroad Accidents.

The ever increasing casualty list upon our railroads is a matter of grave public concern and urgently calls for action by the congress. The passage of

a law requiring the adoption of a block signal system has been proposed to the congress. I earnestly concur in that recommendation and would also point out to the congress the urgent need of legislation in the interest of the public

safety limiting the hours of labor for railroad employees in train service upon railroads engaged in interstate commerce and providing that only trained and experienced persons be employed in positions of responsibility connected with the operation of trains.

The safety appliance law, as amended by the act of March 2, 1903, has proved beneficial to railway employees, and in order that its provisions may be properly carried out the force of inspectors provided for by appropriation should be largely increased. This service has passed the experimental stage and should receive generous recognition by the congress.

Unionism in Government Offices.

There is no objection to employees of the government forming or belonging to unions, but the government can neither discriminate for nor discriminate against nonunion men who are in its employment or who seek to be employed under it. Moreover, it is a very grave impropriety for government employees to band themselves together for the purpose of extorting improperly high salaries from the government. Especially is this true of those within the classified service. The letter carriers, both municipal and rural, are as a whole an excellent body of public servants. They should be amply paid. But their payment must be obtained by arguing their claims fairly and honorably before the congress and not by banding together for the defeat of those congressmen who refuse to give promises which they cannot in conscience give. The administration has taken steps to prevent and punish abuses of this nature, but it will be wise for the congress to supplement this action by legislation.

Bureau of Labor.

Much can be done by the government in labor matters merely by giving publicity to certain conditions. The bureau of labor has done excellent work of this kind in many different directions. I shall shortly lay before you in a special message the full report of the investigation of the bureau of labor into the Colorado mining strike, as this is a strike in which certain very evil forces, which are more or less at work everywhere under the conditions of modern industrialism, became startlingly prominent. It is greatly to be wished that the department of commerce and labor, through the labor bureau, should compile and arrange for the congress a list of the labor laws of the various states and should be given the means to investigate and report to the congress upon the labor conditions in the manufacturing and mining regions throughout the country, both as to wages, as to hours of labor, as to the labor of women and children and as to the effect in the various labor centers of immigration from abroad. In this investigation especial attention should be paid to the conditions of child labor and child labor legislation in the several states.

Corporations.

When we come to deal with great corporations the need for the government to act directly is far greater than in the case of labor, because great corporations can become such only by engaging in interstate commerce, and interstate commerce is peculiarly the field of the general government. It is an absurdity to expect to eliminate the abuses in great corporations by state action. It is difficult to be patient with an argument that such matters should be left to the states, because more than one state pursues the policy of creating on easy terms corporations which are never operated within that state at all, but in other states whose laws they ignore. The national government alone can deal adequately with these great corporations. To try to deal with them in an intemperate, destructive or demagogic spirit would in all probability mean that nothing whatever would be accomplished, and with absolute certainty that if anything were accomplished it would be of a harmful nature. The American people need to continue to show the very qualities that they have shown—that is, moderation, good sense, the earnest desire to avoid doing any damage and yet the quiet determination to proceed, step by step, without halt and without hurry, in eliminating or at least in minimizing whatever of mischief or of evil there is to interstate commerce in the conduct of great corporations. They are acting in no spirit of hostility to wealth, either individual or corporate. They are not against the rich man any more than against the poor man. On the contrary, they are friendly alike toward rich man and toward poor man, provided only that each acts in a spirit of justice and decency toward his fellows. Great corporations are necessary, and only men of great and singular mental power can manage such corporations successfully, and such men must have great rewards. But these corporations should be managed with due regard to the interest of the public as a whole. Where this can be done under the present laws it must be done. Where these laws come short others should be enacted to supplement them.

Bureau of Corporations.

The bureau of corporations has made careful preliminary investigation of many important corporations. It will make a special report on the beef industry. The policy of the bureau is to accomplish the purposes of its creation

by co-operation, not antagonism; by making constructive legislation, not destructive prosecution, the immediate object of its inquiries; by conservative investigation of law and fact and by refusal to issue incomplete and hence necessarily inaccurate reports. Its policy being thus one of open inquiry into and not attack upon business, the bureau has been able to gain not only the confidence, but, better still, the co-operation, of men engaged in legitimate business.

The bureau offers to the congress the means of getting at the cost of production of our various great staples of commerce. Of necessity the careful investigation of special corporations will afford the commissioner knowledge of certain business facts, the publication of which might be an improper infringement of private rights. The method of making public the results of these investigations affords, under the law, a means for the protection of private rights. The congress will have all facts except such as would give to another corporation information which would injure the legitimate business of a competitor and destroy the incentive for individual superiority and thrift.

The bureau has also made exhaustive examinations into the legal condition under which corporate business is carried on in the various states, into all judicial decisions on the subject and into the various systems of corporate taxation in use. I call special attention to the report of the chief of the bureau, and I earnestly ask that the congress carefully consider the report and recommendations of the commissioner on this subject.

The business of insurance vitally affects the great mass of the people of the United States and is national and not local in its application. It involves a multitude of transactions among the people of the different states and between American companies and foreign governments. I urge that the congress carefully consider whether the power of the bureau of corporations cannot constitutionally be extended to cover interstate transactions in insurance.

Rebates.

Above all else we must strive to keep the highways of commerce open to all on equal terms, and to do this it is necessary to put a complete stop to all rebates. Whether the shipper or the railroad is to blame makes no difference. The rebate must be stopped, the abuses of the private car and private terminal track and side track systems must be stopped, and the legislation of the Fifty-eighth congress which declares it to be unlawful for any person or corporation to offer, grant, give, solicit, accept or receive any rebate, concession or discrimination in respect of the transportation of any property in interstate or foreign commerce whereby such property shall by any device whatever be transported at a less rate than that named in the tariffs published by the carrier must be enforced. While I am of the opinion that at present it would be undesirable if it were not impracticable finally to clothe the interstate commerce commission with general authority to fix railroad rates, I do believe that as a fair security to shippers the commission should be vested with the power where a given rate has been challenged and after full hearing found to be unreasonable to decide, subject to judicial review, what shall be a reasonable rate to take its place, the ruling of the commission to take effect immediately and to obtain finality until it is reversed by the court of review.

Steamship companies engaged in interstate commerce and protected in their coastwise trade should be held to a strict observance of the interstate commerce act.

[The president here discusses the city of Washington, making numerous recommendations looking to its better government. He asks that laws be passed preventing overcrowding in the tenement districts, for the abolition of blind alleys and the proper housing of the poor. He also recommends changes in the criminal code, and would have wife beaters corporally punished.]

Irrigation.

During the two and a half years that have elapsed since the passage of the reclamation act rapid progress has been made in the surveys and examinations of the opportunities for reclamation in the thirteen states and three territories of the arid west. Construction has already been begun on the largest and most important of the irrigation works, and plans are being completed for works which will utilize the funds now available.

The forest policy of the government is just now a subject of vivid public interest throughout the west and to the people of the United States in general. The forest reserves themselves are of extreme value to the present as well as to the future welfare of all the western public land states. They powerfully affect the use and disposal of the public lands. They are of special importance because they preserve the water supply and the supply of timber for domestic purposes and so promote settlement under the reclamation act. Indeed they are essential to the welfare of every one of the great interests of the west.

I have repeatedly called attention to the confusion which exists in government forest matters because the work is scattered among three independent organizations. As I have recommended, all the forest work of the government should be concentrated in the department of agriculture, where the larger part of that work is already done. The Canyon of the Colorado

should be made a national park, and the national park system should include the Yosemite and as many as possible of the groves of giant trees in California.

Pensions.

The veterans of the civil war have a claim upon the nation such as no other body of our citizens possess. The pension bureau has never in its history been managed in a more satisfactory manner than is now the case.

Consular Service.

Our consular system needs improvement. Salaries should be substituted for fees, and the proper classification, grading and transfer of consular officers should be provided. I am not prepared to say that a competitive system of examinations for appointment would work well, but by law it should be provided that consuls should be familiar, according to places for which they apply, with the French, German or Spanish language and should possess acquaintance with the resources of the United States.

It is desirable to enact a proper national quarantine law.

I call your attention to the great extravagance in printing and binding government publications and especially to the fact that altogether too many of these publications are printed.

Currency.

The attention of the congress should be especially given to the currency question and that the standing committees on the matter in the two houses charged with the duty take up the matter of our currency and see whether it is not possible to secure an agreement in the business world for bettering the system. The committees should consider the question of the retirement of the greenbacks and the problem of securing in our currency such elasticity as is consistent with safety. Every silver dollar should be made by law redeemable in gold at the option of the holder.

Merchant Marine.

I especially commend to your immediate attention the encouragement of our merchant marine by appropriate legislation.

The growing importance of the orient as a field for American exports drew from my predecessor, President McKinley, an urgent request for its special consideration by the congress.

The importance of securing proper information and data with a view to the enlargement of our trade with Asia is undiminished. Our consular representatives in China have strongly urged a place for permanent display of American products in some prominent trade center of that empire, under government control and management, as an effective means of advancing our export trade therein. I call the attention of the congress to the desirability of carrying out these suggestions.

Immigration and Naturalization.

In dealing with the questions of immigration and naturalization it is indispensable to keep certain facts ever before the minds of those who share in enacting the laws. First and foremost, let us remember that the question of being a good American has nothing whatever to do with a man's birthplace any more than it has to do with his creed. In every generation from the time this government was founded men of foreign birth have stood in the very foremost rank of good citizenship, and that not merely in one but in every field of American activity.

There is no danger of having too many immigrants of the right kind, but the citizenship of this country should not be debased. It is vital that we should keep high the standard of well being among our wageworkers, and therefore we should not admit masses of men whose standards of living and whose personal customs and habits are such that they tend to lower the level of the American wageworker, and above all we should not admit any man of an unworthy type. Similarly we should take the greatest care about naturalization. Fraudulent naturalization, the naturalization of improper persons, is a curse to our government, and it is the affair of every honest voter, wherever born, to see that no fraudulent voting is allowed, that no fraud in connection with naturalization is permitted.

Revision of Naturalization Laws.

There should be a comprehensive revision of the naturalization laws. The courts having power to naturalize should be definitely named by national authority, the testimony upon which naturalization may be conferred should be definitely prescribed, publication of impending naturalization applications should be required in advance of their hearing in court, the form and wording of all certificates issued should be uniform throughout the country, and the courts should be required to make returns to the secretary of state at stated periods of all naturalizations conferred.

Not only are the laws relating to naturalization now defective, but those relating to citizenship of the United States ought also to be made the subject of scientific inquiry with a view to probable further legislation. The power of the government to protect the integrity of the elections of its own officials is inherent and has been recognized and affirmed by repeated declarations of the supreme court. There is no enemy of free government more dangerous and none so insidious as the corruption of the electorate. I recommend the enactment of a law directed against bribery and corruption in federal elections.

Delays in Criminal Prosecutions.

No subject is better worth the at-

tention of the congress than that portion of the report of the attorney general dealing with the long delays and the great obstruction to justice experienced in the cases of Beavers, Green and Gaynor and Benson. Were these isolated and special cases I should not call your attention to them, but the difficulties encountered as regards these men who have been indicted for criminal practices are not exceptional. They are precisely similar in kind to what occurs again and again in the case of criminals who have sufficient means to enable them to take advantage of a system of procedure which has grown up in the federal courts and which amounts in effect to making the law easy of enforcement against the man who has no money and difficult of enforcement, even to the point of sometimes securing immunity, as regards the man who has money. At present the interests of the innocent man are amply safeguarded, but the interests of the government—that is, the interests of honest administration; that is, the interests of the people—are not recognized as they should be.

[The president discusses the progress of the territories of Alaska, Hawaii and Porto Rico, with recommendations for changes in the present system of government of the first named. He desires to see a delegate from Alaska in congress.]

Foreign Policy.

The steady aim of this nation, as of all enlightened nations, should be to strive to bring ever nearer the day when there shall prevail throughout the world the peace of justice, but there are kinds of peace which are highly undesirable, which are in the long run as destructive as any war. The goal to set before us as a nation, the goal which should be set before all mankind, is the attainment of the peace of justice, of the peace which comes when each nation is not merely safeguarded in its own rights, but scrupulously recognizes and performs its duty toward others. Generally peace tells for righteousness, but if there is conflict between the two then our fealty is due first to the cause of righteousness. Unrighteous wars are common and unrighteous peace is rare, but both should be shunned. The right of freedom and the responsibility for the exercise of that right cannot be divorced. One of our great poets has well and finely said that freedom is not a gift that carries long in the hands of cowards. Neither does it tarry long in the hands of those too slothful, too dishonest or too unintelligent to exercise it. The eternal vigilance which is the price of liberty must be exercised sometimes to guard against outside foes, although, of course, far more often to guard against our own selfish or thoughtless shortcomings.

It is our duty to remember that a nation has no more right to do injustice to another nation, strong or weak, than an individual has to do injustice to another individual; that the same moral law applies in one case as in the other. But we must also remember that it is as much the duty of the nation to guard its own rights and its own interests as it is the duty of the individual so to do. Until some method is devised by which there shall be a degree of international control over offending nations it would be a wicked thing for the most civilized powers, for those with most sense of international obligations and with keenest and most generous appreciation of the difference between right and wrong, to disarm. If the great civilized nations of the present day should completely disarm, the result would mean an immediate recrudescence of barbarism in one form or another. Under any circumstances a sufficient armament would have to be kept up to serve the purposes of international police and until international cohesion and the sense of international duties and rights are far more advanced than at present a nation desirous both of securing respect for itself and of doing good to others must have a force adequate for the work which it feels is allotted to it as its part of the general world duty. Therefore it follows that a self respecting, just and farseeing nation should on the one hand endeavor by every means to aid in the development of the various movements which tend to provide substitutes for war, which tend to render nations in their actions toward one another and indeed toward their own peoples more responsive to the general sentiment of humane and civilized mankind, and, on the other hand, that it should keep prepared, while scrupulously avoiding wrongdoing itself, to repel any wrong and in exceptional cases to take action which in a more advanced stage of international relations would come under the head of the exercise of the international police.

Arbitration Treaties.

We are in every way endeavoring to help on, with cordial good will, every movement which will tend to bring us into more friendly relations with the rest of mankind. In pursuance of this policy I shall shortly lay before the senate treaties of arbitration with all powers which are willing to enter into these treaties with us. It is not possible at this period of the world's development to agree to arbitrate all matters, but there are many matters of possible difference between us and other nations which can be thus arbitrated. Furthermore, at the request of the interparliamentary union, an eminent body composed of practical statesmen from all countries, I have asked the powers to join with this government in a second Hague conference, at which it is hoped that the work already so happily begun at The Hague may be

carried some steps further toward completion. This carries out the desire expressed by the first Hague conference itself.

Policy Toward Other Nations of Western Hemisphere.

It is not true that the United States feels any land hunger or entertains any projects as regards the other nations of the western hemisphere save such as are for their welfare. All that this country desires is to see the neighboring countries stable, orderly and prosperous. Any country whose people conduct themselves well can count upon our hearty friendship. If a nation shows that it knows how to act with reasonable efficiency and decency in social and political matters, if it keeps order and pays its obligations, it need fear no interference from the United States. Chronic wrongdoing or an impotence which results in a general loosening of the ties of civilized society may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilized nation, and in the western hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or impotence, to the exercise of an international police power.

Rights of American Citizens Abroad.

It is necessary for us firmly to insist upon the rights of our own citizens abroad without regard to their creed or race; without regard to whether they were born here or born abroad. It has proved very difficult to secure from Russia the right for our Jewish fellow citizens to receive passports and travel through Russian territory. It is a wrong against which we are entitled to protest to refuse him his passport without regard to his conduct and character, merely on racial and religious grounds.

The Navy.

The strong arm of the government in enforcing respect for its just rights in international matters is the navy of the United States. I most earnestly recommend that there be no halt in the work of upbuilding the American navy. We have undertaken to build the lath-ship canal. We have undertaken to secure for ourselves our just share in the trade of the orient. We have undertaken to protect our citizens from improper treatment in foreign lands. We continue steadily to insist on the application of the Monroe doctrine to the western hemisphere. Unless our attitude in these and all similar matters is to be a mere boastful sham we cannot afford to abandon our naval programme. Our voice is now potent for peace and is so potent because we are not afraid of war. But our protestations upon behalf of peace would neither receive nor deserve the slightest attention if we were impotent to make them good.

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