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GOV. WILSON'S SPEECH OF ACCEPTANCE

Governor Wilson's speech accepting the democratic nomination is original in its method of dealing with the issues of the campaign. Instead of taking up the platform plank by plank, he takes the central idea of the Denver platform—an idea repeated and emphasized in the Baltimore platform—and elaborates it, using the various questions under consideration to illustrate the application of the principle. Taking the doctrine that a government is an organization formed for the people themselves and to be perfected by them as an instrument for the accomplishment of such co-operative work as is necessary, he shows how all the evils complained of at the present time grow out of the appropriation by a few of the instrumentalities of government. His speech gives striking evidence of the force of cumulative testimony and also illustrates the power of intelligent analysis. In taking his position so strongly he pre-empted the ground that Mr. Roosevelt's new party seeks to occupy.

In the course of his argument he indorses the democratic demand for the popular election of senators, presidential primaries, and "Publicity as to everything that concerns government, from the sources of campaign funds to the intimate debate of the highest affairs of the state." Instead of using epithets and employing denunciation against those who have abused existing systems he seeks reform along rational lines and would cure those defects in governmental forms which have been discovered by experience.

The election of senators by the people will bring that body within the reach of the voters and convert it from a bulwark of predatory wealth, in which seats have been secured by corrupt means and by the aid of favor seeking corporations, into a popular body responsive to the people's will. This reform has been described in a former democratic platform as "the gateway to other reforms" and it would be difficult to overestimate the beneficial effects of this constitutional change.

The presidential primaries which the Baltimore platform indorses, and which Governor Wilson defends, will correct another long standing and grievous abuse, namely, the selection of presidential candidates in conventions where trading and swapping can defeat the wishes of the people. Ingratitude has been described as a greater sin than revenge, because the former is the repayment of good with ill while the latter is the repayment of ill with ill. We must, therefore, consider at all times the effect of the obligations incurred when so great an honor as the presidency is bestowed upon a public man, however well meaning, by those who may be

in control of the convention. It is impossible for a man so nominated and so obligated to give to the public the sort of service that the public has a right to demand. When the presidential primary is adopted in all of the states, as it is quite sure to be within the next four years, the people will be in position to confer the office of chief executive upon the man of their choice and the nominee, being obligated to the people and to the people alone, will rise to the requirements of his high position.

Governor Wilson properly estimates the value of publicity as shown by his sweeping indorsement of the party's position on that subject. The demand for publicity is now so universal that one finds it hard to understand how secrecy could have been tolerated so long; how an intelligent people could have been so slow to recognize that elections and all official service are public affairs.

These three reforms, the popular election of senators, the presidential primaries, and publicity will, in themselves, revolutionize American politics and put the people in control of the federal government.

Governor Wilson devotes considerable time to the tariff question. After announcing that "There should be an immediate revision" and that "it should be downward, unhesitatingly and steadily downward," he proceeds to point out the lines along which reduction should proceed. He says that it should begin with the schedules which have been most obviously used to kill competition and to raise prices in the United States, arbitrarily with regard to the prices pertaining elsewhere in the markets of the world, and that "before it is finished or intermitted it should extend to every item in every schedule which affords any opportunity for monopoly, for special advantage to limited groups of beneficiaries or for subsidized control of any kind in the markets of the country—until special favor of every source shall have been absolutely withdrawn and every part of our laws of taxation shall have been transformed from a system of governmental patronage into a system of just and reasonable charges which shall fall where they will create the least burden." When we shall have done this, he continues, we can fix questions of revenue and business adjustment in a new spirit and with clear minds.

This is a very strong statement of the democratic position and will commend itself to those who seek the overthrow of the doctrine that protection should be given for protection's sake and the establishment of the doctrine that tariff laws should be framed for the purpose of raising revenues and for that purpose only. He recognizes, and in his speech declares, that there has been no more demoralizing influence in our politics than the idea that "the government is the grand dispenser of favors, the maker and unmaker of fortunes" and he tersely presents the axiomatic truth that favors are never conceived in the general interest, but always for the benefit of the few.

While planting himself firmly upon the principle that tariff laws should be framed for the purpose of collecting revenue, be so framed as to collect revenue with the least hardship and be carried no further than the necessity of the government requires, he approves of the platform declaration that reductions should be made gradually rather than at one stroke.

Governor Wilson deals at some length with the trust question also. He states the conclusions which can now be drawn from experience and asserts an economic truth, namely, that while up to a certain point, combinations effect economies in administration and increase efficiency by simplifying and perfecting organization, still that this is true only within limits. It is fortunate for the discussion of the subject that he points out that combination and concentration are not economically beneficial when carried too far. The trust magnates assume that a billion dollar corporation can produce more economically than a fifty million dol-

lar corporation, merely because a fifty million dollar corporation may be able to produce more economically than a fifty thousand dollar corporation. The socialist makes the same mistake. Both overlook the fact that there is a leak at each step in the descent of authority from the official head of the concern down to the hand of the workman and that, in time, the total leakage overcomes whatever economic advantage there would otherwise be in consolidation.

He states the democratic position without equivocation or evasion when he declares that he can arrest and prevent monopoly, and that competition can, in a large measure, be revived by changing the laws and forbidding the practices that killed it. The real issue presented by the trust question is whether we shall attempt to restore competition as an effective force or accept the position advanced by socialists and trust magnates, namely, that all competition is hurtful and that monopoly must be accepted as an economic necessity. He takes the democratic position that monopolies are the result of unwise laws rather than a natural development and that the cure is to be found in the withdrawal of the support which legislation or lack of governmental administrative efficiency has conferred.

In discussing the labor question Governor Wilson has happily protested against the distinctions that have been drawn between the laboring classes and classes described in other ways. He insists that laws that safeguard the lives of laboring men, that improve the physical and moral conditions under which they live and make their hours rational and tolerable, together with the laws that give them freedom to act in their own interest and protect them where they can not protect themselves—that such laws can not be properly regarded as class legislation or as anything but measures taken in the interest of the whole people.

Without attempting to outline a plan for currency reform he declares that no mere banker's plan will meet the requirements, no matter how honestly conceived; that it must be a merchants' and farmers' plan as well. This states in another form the doctrine of the Baltimore platform, namely, that banks exist not for the control of commerce but for the accommodation of the public, and that legislation on this subject should have for its object the securing of these accommodations with protection to the public from the abuse of the power which wealth brings to those who possess it.

Governor Wilson's treatment of the Philippine question will be gratifying to those who have in four campaigns indorsed the democratic protest against imperialism. He declares that we are not the owners of the Philippine islands; that we are not even their partners, but that we hold them in trust for the people who live in them.

While the speech of acceptance is not long it covers a very wide field. The democratic candidate is in hearty sympathy with the conservation of the nation's resources, with the development of water transportation, with the completion of the canal, with the revival of the merchant marine, and with the extension of postal facilities. He recognizes the importance of health as a national asset and of vocational training for the people. His work as an educator naturally predisposes him to large views on all subjects connected with the separation of the young for the highest usefulness. He is a champion of economy in government; in a word, he believes that the government should not only be conducted by the people but, as would naturally follow, should be conducted in the interest of all the people. Without assuming to formulate a detailed plan for dealing with every condition which may arise, he lifts into a position of supreme importance the dominating thought of the Baltimore platform and appeals to the country for its co-operation in making popular government a reality throughout the land.

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