Governor Wilson Has Definite Policy

Trenton correspondence of the New York Times: The flood of comment that has been unloosed by the presentation to the legislature of Governor Wilson's seven anti-trust bills furnishes another illustration of what seems to be a general misconception of the governor's methods. It may help to clear up the situation a little if this misconception is removed. It is one which is sure to cause misleading comment on everything he does and says after he becomes president unless it is removed as soon as possible.

The prevailing note in the comment on the "seven sisters" as the governor calls the bills, was one of surprise that he should be so very definite all of a sudden after being so very vague and indefinite in the speeches he has delivered since election day. Bitter complaint was made after these speeches—the one made at Staunton, Chicago and Trenton—because he uttered only generalities and did not lay down a specific program. It was argued that the country had a right to know just what it had to expect from him, and that instead of letting it know he contented himself with vague pronunciamentos that seemed to conceal threats. Then came the "seven sisters" and the tone of the comment was one of stupification over his extreme definiteness.

If the country is to get along comfortably under President Wilson's administration it should get acquainted with his methods as early as possible. He intends to be perfectly clear and definite at the right time and place, and he does not regard a dinner table as the place. He does regard an official communication as the place.

The country will look in vain, under President Wilson's administration, for any formal programs tossed off at banquets, a custom much in vogue under the past two administrations. It is not likely to get them, either, in letters nominally addressed to some intimate friend and actually given to the press before the intimate friend gets them through the mails. It is more likely to get them in special messages to congress than in any other way. It will then be found that the new president can be definite and precise enough.

His conception of the uses of after-dinner speeches differ from that of his two immediate predecessors. In them he lays down a general line of thought, reserving specifications to be made through a more formal medium. To his friends here it seems that in the trilogy of speeches referred to he specifies the general aim of his administration definitely enough, and that was all he was willing to do, or will ever be willing to do in an after-dinner speech. That his plans are definiteness itself was shown in "the seven sisters," and will be shown again after the 4th of March, but only in official communications.

This is a reversion to methods that prevailed before President Roosevelt's time. Roosevelt availed himself of every method that came to hand when he wanted to get his plans before the public. President Taft has gone much further, making more of his announcements of policy in casual and unofficial speeches than he has made in any other way. The country has grown accustomed to it, but it does not fit in with Governor Wilson's idea.

The three speeches referred to have been taken together as one speech, which, indeed, they are, and as constituting a sudden threat to business. But there was an earlier one which should be ranked as the first chapter in the series, and the only reason why it has not been so ranked is because its purport was not as clearly understood as that of the subsequent ones has been.

That was the speech he delivered in New York just after he returned from Bermuda, the only other speech he has delivered since election. It was the speech in which he talked of building a gibbet higher than Haman's for any one who started a panic. The misunderstanding of that speech extended so far in some quarters it was actually interpreted as a threat to the progressive element in congress, while the most common misconception was that it was a glittering generality intended to make everybody feel comfortable without really threatening anybody.

But it was Chapter I in the list of four speeches declaring the general aim of his administration. Then came the Staunton speech, in which he warned business that it could not regard its wealth as gained for irresponsible use, and it began to be perceived that the president-elect was not talking mere platitudes, but was foreshadowing a policy. Some people began to get uneasy.

The Chicago speech followed, with its warning to business that reform must come with the plea that business should help and not hinder, and there was a burst of bewildered anger. The Trenton speech came two days later, with its announcement that in carrying out the administration's policy only progressives would be put on guard. The quartet of speeches was complete. Governor Wilson will deliver no more until after his inauguration.

However Governor Wilson may be assailed for vagueness, his friends believe that he set out to accomplish a definite end and did accomplish it. He intended to show "the interests" the camp wherein he had pitched his tent and to notify them publicly of the danger that would lie in regarding him as a "reactionary" president. He did it so that they might take notice before he became president and save him the necessity of taking a course of action which otherwise he might be forced to take. As was said in conversation by one senator, who will be one of his lieutenants on the floor of the senate: "He is saying certain things so that he may not be obliged later to do certain other things."

This is as far as Governor Wilson intended to go, his friends say, and as far as he will go until he can make the definite recommendations he has in mind through official channels. It is not likely that his inaugural address will contain anything more definite in the way of program than did, for instance, President Lincoln's first inaugural, or, for that matter, his second. After that the president will find plenty of ways to show how definite his plans are without adopting President Taft's methods of publishing them after dinner.

FRANCE—ITS LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

By William H. B. Hayward, Philadelphia, Pa., author of "Progress in Advanced Countries."

References: Chambers' Encyclopaedia; France of the French, published by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York; United States government reports and World Almanac.

France has been noted for many years as "the playground of Europe," and the people of all nations flock there to enjoy its beauties and amuse themselves. It has a fine climate, the north resembling that of England, slightly modified, while in the south it is semi-tropical. Paris is probably the most beautiful city in the world.

1. Since 1790 France (including Corsica) has been divided into departments, and each department divided into arrondissements, cantons and communes. There are 87 departments.

2. Legislation is in the hands of a national assembly, composed of two chambers (the chamber of deputies and the senate.) In the former, members are elected for four years by universal suffrage. The members of the senate are elected by special bodies of delegates for nine years, one-third returning every three years. The president is elected for seven years by a majority of the votes of the members of the two chambers and can not be re-elected. He appoints and dismisses the ministers of state, who are responsible to the assembly, and may take part in its deliberations. The ministry is composed of twelve members. There are about 300 senators and 592 deputies.

3. The railways partly belong to the state and partly have been granted to private companies for a limited period, at the end of which time, they become state property. There are also certain local lines that come into the possession of the departments at the end of fixed periods.

4. Education is free and compulsory. France now has a larger revenue, expenditure and public debt than any other nation in the world.

5. Wages are comparatively low and the living cost is higher than in England, but there are not so many out of work that are willing to work. The French women are very economical, dress neatly and keep their families on very little. The workers are far better off today than before the revolution. Their condition previously was simply terrible and they were worse off than many slaves.

6. The land is now held largely by the peasants and whole families sometimes live from the proceeds of from two to five acres of ground through careful cultivation of the soil. When the land and crops are good, the owners are comfortable—when not, they often have a very hard time to make ends meet.

7. Considerable of the land is rented by the owners on a percentage basis to the peasants.

8. Agricultural syndicates, societies and banks advance funds to agriculturists crippled by want of sufficient capital. Schools and colleges are established that teach the best methods of farming. To grow tobacco is a privilege granted by the state, that buys every crop at a fair price.

9. The government manufactures its own matches, which are of poor quality and about 10 per cent are worthless.

10. There are numerous taxes to be paid. The ordinary tax on the house is regulated on the basis of rental; there is also a land tax, another on doors and windows; others on carriages, carts, bicycles, dogs, etc. Each commune or district levies a tax for keeping up the roads. As it is now, there are too many different kinds of taxes and this will probably be changed by substituting an income tax instead.

11. The tariff and taxes make the cost of living about 20 per cent higher in France than in England. Clothing also costs more, when the value is considered.

12. There are too many laws and too much official supervision over the people in both France and Germany. The majority of those who leave these countries do so on this account and to escape military service, which is compulsory in both for those who are physically able.

13. The condition of the poor in France is not satisfactory. There are no boards of guardians to look after them and no workhouses to provide for them when in need. There are some almshouses, but not near enough to meet requirements. The poor plead for help at the churches and public places. Poverty is one of the greatest causes for crimes and desperate deeds committed in Paris often come from this. If the conditions of the workers were improved, there would be less need for jails.

14. Public assistance under state direction is given to hospitals and foundlings. Paupers are buried. The money for this comes from the gross receipts of all places of amusement—the tax being 9 per cent. The people themselves are very charitable and give freely to the poor so far as they are able. Churches and religious orders help largely.

15. The government, through establishments of its own, advances money on pledges given by the people at barely enough interest to pay expenses.

16. The French are great gamblers and there are a large number of lottery schemes and gambling houses from whom the state collects 15 per cent.

17. Free nurseries for children whose mothers work are provided by the government.

18. There are many manufacturing interests, but the small farmer is the backbone of the nation.

General conditions between capital and labor are unsatisfactory and unless further changes are made to help the workers more, there is great danger of another revolution before long. The workers have not taken enough personal interest in political life in the past.

The following shows financial conditions:

Per capita circulation, United States, $34.59; France, $39.71. Average deposit per inhabitant, United States, $45.23; France, $26.48. Average deposit account, United States, $466.44; France, $146.39.

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