

The President's Message On Trusts

Following are Associated Press dispatches, dated Washington, January 20:

President Wilson's suggestion to congress today in his trust address that the government and business men are ready to meet each other half way "in a common effort to square business methods with both public opinion and the law," fell on attentive ears and struck a responsive chord in representatives of different parties. The atmosphere of "co-operation and accommodation" in the message; the reforms proposed, expressed in terms of conservatism, and the spirit of friendliness to supersede antagonism in dealing with big business, which dominated the president's thoughts, roused expression of approval from all sides. Few discordant notes were sounded in comments from members of congress who are to pass on legislation urged to prohibit monopoly and hold men of business within the law.

Throughout the delivery of the address the senators and representatives listened intently to every word, applauding frequently when the president began enumeration of evils which he believed needed remedying.

His proposal for an interstate trade commission to facilitate business and keep it in the straight path; the recommendation of laws to prohibit interlocking directorates and holding companies; suggestions for authority to regulate railroad securities, for an act that would fix guilt on individuals, instead of punishing business, and that the courts be opened to individuals harmed by illegal business—all of these were received with general approval, evidenced by enthusiastic applause.

Before the plaudits of his audience had ceased, and as the president was passing from the house chamber, where his successive appearances since last April have contributed to the nation's history, his utterances had precipitated action.

PRESIDENT FREQUENTLY HALTED BY APPLAUSE

President Wilson was ushered into the crowded chamber at 12:29 o'clock, while the audience rose and gave him prolonged applause and cheers. The president took his place at the clerk's desk and began reading promptly at 12:30 o'clock. His auditors gave rapt attention.

The scene was a colorful one and no less dramatic than on any of the previous occasions when the president, setting aside precedent, came to the halls of congress to address the national legislative body in person.

The high-banked galleries presented a wave of color. On the floor the legislators, in somber conventional garb, packed the hall to its utmost corners. Secretaries Garrison, Daniels and Wilson and Postmaster General Burleson had seats on the floor, and other officials were clustered about the speaker's dais.

As the president read his message he frequently was interrupted with long applause, and at times demonstrations approaching cheering.

Loud applause greeted the conclusion of the president's address at 12:51 o'clock.

PRESS OF THE COUNTRY INDORSE THE MESSAGE

New York Times: "The president's message is a fulfilment of his promise. He had more than once assured the country that the war between government and business was ended, that it would be his policy to build up, not to destroy. * * * There is a corollary and a counterpart to this fair, wise and just pro-

gramme of government policy and remedial legislation. It is that the mouth of the pestilent demagogue shall be shut, that there shall be an end to the attainment of political ambition through the harassing of corporations."

New York World: "Such a message as Mr. Wilson has written cannot fail to be reassuring to American commerce and industry. * * * Whoever reads the president's message must feel at once that here is a man who knows what he is talking about; that here is a man who has a clear, definite purpose; that purpose is to translate into law in a useful, practical and safe way the general verdict of public opinion in the case of the people versus big business, and that this work is to be done not only with a minimum of disturbance to every man who is conducting an honest business in good faith, but with definite assurances to such a man that it is the duty of government to guarantee to him the largest measure of liberty under the law."

New York Tribune: "If railroad rates should be advanced with the sanction of the administration the wheels of business would begin to hum again. The president seemed to realize this himself when he said that 'the prosperity of the railroads and the prosperity of the country are inseparably connected.' That is the note of hope in the message."

New York Herald: " * * * Through the whole of his message President Wilson professes the most friendly sentiment to legitimate business interests and is apparently confident that these desire the legislation he suggests. It is certain, nevertheless, that there will be very serious opposition to the proposed inquisitorial 'trade commission' and to depriving a stockholder of any share in the management of a property in which he has invested his money. Despite its radical suggestions the tone of the message is temperate and calculated to impress the country with the president's concluding declaration, that 'we are about to write the additional articles of our constitution of peace.'"

Chicago Tribune: "Unquestionably the most significant thing about the president's message is its spirit. 'Even a year ago the president would not have made an important public utterance in this spirit, nor perhaps would the public have been ready to receive it in such a spirit. In the last few months opinion has rapidly crystallized under the influence of events which in themselves were a culmination of forces at work for more than a decade.

"The nation's struggles to overthrow the power of concentrated money are pretty well ended. The epoch of uncontrolled individualism, with its excesses of predatory enterprise, is drawing rapidly to a close. The enemy has capitalized and the task recognized by virtually all today is the task of consolidating the popular victory."

Chicago Record-Herald: "Perhaps the most remarkable thing about it is the comfortable assumption that public opinion and business opinion and political opinion have come together in an era of good feeling; that the convictions are the same all around, as is also the purpose to march forward together under the banners of the new freedom. The tone in which this idea is set forth and reiterated is that of a perfect and calm assurance, and that there

is some justification for it there can be no doubt."

Topeka Capital: "With President Wilson's general cleverness nobody supposes, of course, that he is unaware of the universal opinion of the democratic party expressed in the common saying that this party in power is a synonym for hard times. The president, of course, is fully aware of that, in his general awareness of things. He knows what a hindrance to business such a feeling is of itself. And in his character as a great breaker of precedents, it is safe to say that he intends to break that one. It requires no great penetration to read far enough into the president's mind to say that he intends to go out of office a democratic president who didn't have a panic nor a business depression. This is the key to his whole program from last April."

St. Louis Globe-Democrat: "In the main, the message is more explicit and more practical in terms than any of the previous messages Mr. Wilson has read to congress. He is here proposing something definite and concrete to be embodied in legislation, and proposing, too, that business interests shall be given a full and fair hearing before action is taken, and that action, when taken, shall fix the date of the law's operation to give the interests affected time to adjust themselves to new conditions. There is no party issue in this problem, and there can be no party question arise in its discussion any further than Mr. Wilson himself raises it by party caucus rule, in committee and in the two houses. Public opinion, which never has been fooled by the outcry against tariff duties, is behind all honest effort to reach and destroy the real sources of monopoly and of oppression in prices. Should the effort fail, the party in power must be held responsible."

Sioux City (Ia.) Journal: "It is impossible to recall a time when a program of such far reaching economic effect has been offered so quietly and confidently to such an acquiescent audience. Although President Wilson's solution of the trust problem has been received without alarm it will upon close inspection be found to have plenty of teeth. It touches every phase of the trust question upon which there has been recent clarification of public opinion."

Pittsburgh Gazette-Times: " * * * It is not apparent that the president is as universally supported by public opinion as he assumes, but it does seem that the practices of our trust era, which became so pronounced in the later years of last century and in the earlier years of this came to the full flower, must yield to less offensive standards. This is the crux of Mr. Wilson's contention, and if, in his effort to find remedies, he has not concocted as effective a panacea as he hopes, at least he is for dealing a body blow at abuses that, in some form or another have wronged big men and little and precipitated an unrest, social, political and commercial, which is not good for any people."

Columbia, S. C., State: "President Wilson's message on the trust question will bear reading by every man who wants to do business in this country. It is directed to aggregations of capital that would support, even today, a king's ransom. It is no less directed, in the principles that it solidifies in concrete recommendations of laws, to the hope of the toiler seeking emancipation from the wage to become producer and distributor. In the president's message there is nothing that can be

called radical. Truth, on analysis, never is radical; and Wilson's message deals with truth. He goes to what we must call, for the want of a more euphemistic term, the bowels of the situation, as it affects the country as well as the great aggregations of capital."

The Oklahoman, Oklahoma City: "President Wilson's anti-trust message outlines a legislative program for dealing with this and kindred subjects which embodies the best judgment and conscience of the American people. It discloses that the president fully comprehends the evils from which the business world is suffering and also that he understands how to go about it to remedy the same.

"The president makes it plain that private monopoly, which the democratic national platform declares to be 'intolerable and indefensible,' has no place in the business system for the nation."

The Florida Times-Union, Jacksonville: "President Wilson's anti-trust message is admirable in temper, and contains suggestions that will be put in effect easily. There is none of the denunciation in this message that characterized the wordy war waged by a former president on combinations of business which was a war of nothing but words. Its dispassionate nature will evoke dispassionate consideration in return. The message comes at a fortunate time—a time when big business has already decided to adjust itself to the law if it can find out what the law is."

Philadelphia Public Ledger: "The president's attitude is sufficiently conciliatory to inspire business with the hope that at last it will be allowed to move forward with confidence. If the text of the measure is subjected to deliberate analysis and conforms with Mr. Wilson's views, assuming that certain necessary amendments will result from further study of the situation, it is clear that business can put on the harness and go ahead with the bit in its teeth."

New York Evening Post: " * * * Mr. Wilson has never given a better proof of his ability, not only to convey precisely the impression which he desired, but to read the thoughts of his fellow-citizens. The result is a chorus of praise for his message—coming even from political opponents, from railroad men and bankers and merchants as well as from newspapers and politicians—almost unexampled.

"Approval is bestowed upon the president by nearly everybody in congress except the progressives. They, of course, are bound to be dissatisfied. If they confessed themselves satisfied, they would destroy the reason for their existence. So it is not surprising that Representative Murdock gloomily pronounces Mr. Wilson's proposals 'inadequate.'"

The Public, Chicago: "The president's appeal to the captains of industry is not so much to avoid the penalty as to enjoy the reward of right doing. It is easier to maintain law and order where men look upon the law as a friendly guide, than where they see in it only brute force. But, the fundamental democrat may say, the president has not gone to the bottom of the (trust) question; his specific proposals will merely lead to a change in form without really destroying the substance of monopoly. That is not a fair estimate. This message will do more to establish a fellow-feeling, and a human accord among the warring factions in the economic and social world than any other state paper for a gen-