

# President Wilson Says "Duty First"

Washington, D. C., Sept. 1, 1914.

Honorable Woodrow Wilson, The White House, Washington, D. C. My dear Mr. President: For some time the national democratic congressional committee has been receiving requests from every state in the Union, urging us to enlist your active participation in the important election contest just before us. These requests come from scores of friends of your administration who view with intense pride and satisfaction the splendid achievements that have resulted through, to use your own phrase, the co-operation of one "human being with other human beings in a common service."

I hazard nothing when I say that you are very near to the hearts of the American people and that your presence amongst them would be to them a source of much gratification.

I realize how occupied you are in these trying days and how steadfastly you have remained at your post of duty, safeguarding the best interests of all the people in this great crisis and for that reason I almost hesitate to take up with you the matter of a speaking campaign. However, it is important that we who are responsible for putting before the American people in the coming election contest, as best we can, the splendid record of achievement of your administration, should know as early as possible to what extent, if any, you can give us your valuable time.

Yours very sincerely,  
FRANK E. DOREMUS.

## PRESIDENT WILSON'S REPLY

September 4, 1914.

My dear Mr. Doremus:

I have read your letter of September 1st with a keen appreciation of its importance. It appeals to me as the leader of the party now in power with peculiar force and persuasiveness. The close of a very extraordinary session of congress is at hand which has, I venture to say, been more fruitful in important legislation of permanent usefulness to the country than any session of congress within the memory of the active public men of our generation. A great constructive program has been carried through for which the country has long waited, and has been carried through with the approval and support of judicious men of all parties; and we have abundant reason to congratulate ourselves upon the record that has been made during the busy seventeen months we have devoted to our great legislative task. Certainly in ordinary circumstances, if we were free to disengage ourselves for the purpose, we would be warranted in now directing our energies to a great campaign in support of an appeal to the country to give us the encouragement of its endorsement at the autumn elections.

We could go to the country with a very sincere appeal to which there need be no pretence or boast of any kind but a plain statement of things actually accomplished which ought to be and I think would be entirely convincing. It is a record which shows us at peace with all the world; the questions which plagued business with doubt and uncertainty and irresponsible criticism out of the way, thoughtfully settled and disposed of; the apparent antagonism between government and business cleared away and brought to an end with the plain reckoning accomplished; the path for sure-footed adjustment clear ahead of us, prosperity certain to come by means which all can approve and applaud.

Moreover, there is a program of another kind ahead of us to which it is inspiring to look forward,—a program free from debate except as to the best means by which to accomplish what all desire. The great questions immediately ahead of us are the building up of our merchant marine with all that means in the development and diversification of our foreign commerce and the systematic conservation and economic use of our national resources, subjects much talked about but little acted upon. Here are other great pieces of constructive legislation waiting to be done to which we could turn without any controversy except, as I have said, as to the best ways of doing them.

I believe that ways can be found to do these things readily enough if the country will give us its generous support and trust us to do them; and it would have been a genuine pleasure to me to ask to be given again colleagues such as I have had in the two houses of congress during the

present memorable session. I trust that there will be many occasions upon which I may have the privilege of calling the attention of my fellow-countrymen to the fine and unselfish service which has been rendered them by their present representatives, ready at all times to respond to any appeal which spoke convincingly of the public welfare.

But in view of the unlooked-for international situation our duty has taken on an unexpected aspect. Every patriotic man ought now to "stay on his job" until the crisis is passed and ought to stay where his job can best be done. We must do whatever is necessary and forego whatever is necessary to keep us in close and active concert in order to relieve in every possible way the stress and strain put upon our people during the continuance of the present extraordinary conditions. My job, I now know, can be done best only if I devote my whole thought and attention to it and think of nothing but the duties of the hour. I am not at liberty and shall not be, so far as I can now see, to turn away from these duties to undertake any kind of political canvass.

In the present emergency I am keenly aware of the two-fold responsibility I am called upon to discharge; the responsibility which devolves upon me as president of the United States and the responsibility under which I am laid as leader of a great political party. Of course, the whole country will expect of me and my own conscience will exact of me that I think first of my duties as president, responsible for exercising so far as I have the ability, a constant guidance in the affairs of the country, both domestic and foreign. The labors of congress have a natural and customary limit; the work of the houses can be and will be finished; congress can adjourn. But the president cannot, especially in times like these, turn away from his official work even for a little while. Too much depends upon his keeping all the threads of what is occurring in his hands.

I have, therefore, reached the conclusion that I cannot in any ordinary sense take an active part in the approaching campaign; that I must remain here to attend to the serious work sure to fill the months immediately before us,—months that will carry with them obligations, no doubt, of the most tremendous sort. I know that you will feel similarly about your own obligations; that members of congress, too, without distinction as to party affiliations, will feel that they must remain to do their work of necessary and pressing service and bring it to a successful conclusion.

I shall, no doubt, take occasion as opportunity offers to state and perhaps restate to the country in the clearest and most convincing terms I can command the things which the democratic party has attempted to do in the settlement of great questions which have for many a long year pressed for solution, and I earnestly hope that they will generously open their minds to what I may have to say; but I shall not allow my eagerness to win their approval or my earnest desire to be granted by their suffrages the support of another congress to interfere with the daily performance of my official duties or distract my mind from them. The record men make speaks for itself. The country cannot be deceived concerning it and will assess it justly. What it chiefly expects and demands and what it will certainly be most surely won by is the performance of duty without fear or favor and without regard to personal consequences.

And certainly this is a time when America expects every man to do his duty without thought of profit or advantage to himself. America is greater than any party. American can not properly be served by any man who for a moment measures his interest against her advantage. The time has come for great things. These are days big with destiny for the United States, as for the other nations of the world. A little wisdom, a little courage, a little self-forgetful devotion may under God turn that destiny this way or that. Great hearts, great natures, will respond. Even little men will rejoice to be stimulated and guided and set an heroic example. Parties will fare well enough without nursing if the men who make them up and the men who lead them forget themselves to serve a cause and set a great people forward on the path of liberty and peace.

Cordially and sincerely yours,  
WOODROW WILSON.

## MISREPRESENTATION AS ARGUMENT

Mr. Watterson, who is nothing if not interesting, has turned his mental artillery against woman suffrage. Here is one of his comments:

"Feminism, among the more advanced, avows itself the enemy of a man made world and a man written Bible and all existing institutions, including marriage and the home; it proposes the abolition of sex and the re-creation of woman in the barbaric image of man, each woman to choose the father of her child, and as many fathers as she cares to have, polygamy and the polygamous instinct to be shifted from masculine to feminine initiation."

Such arguments as those presented by the Kentuckian do much more to advance woman suffrage than anything that the women can say in their own behalf. The style of disputation that misrepresents the opponent's position and then feigns righteous indignation at that which no one advocates, betrays a consciousness of weakness. People are in the habit of putting forth the best argument they have, and when a debater launches such a slander as the above, it is a confession that his cartridge box is empty. If Mr. Watterson is ever fortunate enough to become acquainted with the rank and file of the women who favor equal suffrage, he will find them quite normal, entirely respectable and intent upon the performance of that which they regard a duty. They have seen the ballot used (without protest from Mr. Watterson) by those who conspired against the home, and the women are not far from right when they conclude that the mother who raises a boy has as much right to use the ballot to protect him as the man-killer has to employ it to aid in the destruction of the youth of the land.

W. J. BRYAN.

## THE VERDICT OF CIVILIZATION

War is the foulest fiend that ever vomited forth from the mouth of hell.—Jean Jacques.

I abhor war and view it as the greatest scourge of mankind.—Thomas Jefferson.

There never was a good war or a bad peace.—Benjamin Franklin.

My country is the world; my countrymen are all mankind.—William Lloyd Garrison.

The more I study the world, the more am I convinced of the inability of force to create anything durable.—Napoleon Bonaparte.

God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth.—Paul on Mars Hill

We have abolished slavery from civilized countries, the owning of man by man. The next great step that the world can take is to abolish war, the killing of man by man.—Andrew Carnegie.

My first wish is to see the whole world at peace, and the inhabitants of it as one band of brothers, striving which should most contribute to the happiness of mankind.—George Washington.

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive . . . to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.—Abraham Lincoln.

The method by which states prosecute their rights cannot under present conditions be a process of law, since no court exists having jurisdiction over them, but only war. But through war, even if it result in victory, the question of right is not decided.—Emanuel Kant.

The doctrine that violence, oppression, inhumanity, is an essential element of society, is so revolting that, did I believe it, I would say, let society perish, let man and his works be swept away, and the earth be abandoned to the brutes. Better that the globe should be tenanted by brutes than by brutalized men.—William Ellery Channing.

But what a cruel thing is war, to separate and destroy families and friends, and mar the purest joy and happiness God has granted us in this world; to fill our hearts with hatred instead of love for our neighbors and to devastate the fair face of the beautiful world.—Robert E. Lee.

There will be the full complement of backs broken in two, of arms twisted wholly off, of men impaled upon their bayonets, of legs smashed up like bits of firewood, of heads sliced open like apples, of other heads crunched into soft jelly by the iron hoofs of horses, of faces trampled out of all likeness to anything human. This is what skulks behind "a splendid charge." This is what follows, as a matter of course, when our fellows rode at them in style and cut them up famously.—Charles Dickens.