

President Wilson Explains Support of Tariff Board

Following is an Associated Press report, dated Washington, D. C., Jan. 26: President Wilson today sent a letter to Chairman Kitchin, of the house ways and means committee, explaining why he had withdrawn his opposition to a tariff commission and now was urging the creation of such a body by congress. He wrote frankly that he had changed his mind because "all the circumstances of the world had changed."

Declaring that he had "no thought whatever of a change in attitude toward the so-called protection question," the President said the proposed commission would have nothing to do with theories of policy, but would be charged only with the duty of seeking facts to guide congress in legislation.

In another letter to Mr. Kitchin last Monday he had set forth fully his ideas of what a tariff commission should be and urged that the ways and means committee consider the matter immediately. He favored a non-partisan expert organization.

War Has Caused Changes

"I have changed my mind," said today's letter, "because all the circumstances of the world have changed, and it seems to me in view of the extraordinary and far reaching changes which the European war has brought about it is absolutely necessary that we should have a competent instrument of inquiry along the whole line of the many questions which affect our foreign commerce.

"I have had in this change of mind no thought whatever of a change of attitude towards the so-called protection question. That is neither here nor there. A commission such as I have suggested would have nothing to do with theories of policy. They would deal only with facts, and the facts which they would seek ought to be the actual facts of in-

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dustry of the conditions of economic exchange prevailing in the world so that legislation of every kind that touched these matters might be guided by the circumstances disclosed in its inquiries.

"I dare say you feel as I do, that it would be folly at this time, or until all the altered conditions clearly are understood, to attempt to deal with problems of foreign commerce by legislation, and yet, having dealt directly and clearly with the whole question of unfair competition within our own borders, it is clear that as soon as we know the facts we ought to deal with the unfair methods of competition as between our own nation and others. This is only one of the many things we probably would wish to deal with. The other matters I have attempted to indicate in my previous letter to you. I am glad to supplement that letter by this explicit statement of the considerations which have been most influential with me.

Conditions Foreshadowed

"You will remember that in my last message to congress I foreshadowed just the conditions which were operating in my mind in this matter. The passage to which I refer was this: 'Many conditions about which we have repeatedly exchanged views are being altered from decade to decade, it is evident under our very eyes, and are likely to change even more rapidly and more radically in the days immediately ahead of us, when peace has returned to the world and the nations of Europe once more take up their tasks of commerce and industry with the energy of those who must bestir themselves to build anew. Just what these changes will be no one can certainly foresee or confidently predict. There are no calculable, because no stable, elements in the problem. The most we can do is to make certain that we have the necessary instrumentalities of information constantly at our service so that we may be sure that we know exactly what we are dealing with when we come to act, if it should be necessary to act at all. We must first certainly know what it is that we are seeking to adapt ourselves to. I may ask the privilege of addressing you more at length on this important matter a little later in the season.'

"I need hardly say that I appreciate very fully the motives by which you are yourself actuated, and it is, therefore, with the greater confidence that I lay the whole matter thus fully before you. Congress has so much to do at the present time that it is clearly impossible that it should be able to collect all the data which such a commission would gather, and I feel that it would presently find such a commission indispensable to it."

In his letter sent to Mr. Kitchin last Monday, the President said:

President's Other Letter

"I am convinced, as I suppose every disinterested person must be, that it would be a mistake to provide for such a board with the idea of serving any particular theory of fiscal policy. What we would need would be, above all things else, a board as much as possible from any strong prepossession in favor of any political policy and capable of looking at the whole economic situation of the country with dispassionate and disinterested scrutiny. I believe we could obtain such a board if the proper legislation were enacted, and it is quite clear to me what

the field of its inquiry and its activities should be."

He outlined in detail his plans for the work of such a board, including the collection of tariff figures, investigation of the output of products at home and abroad, of the workings of commercial treaties and preferential agreements of unfair methods of competition, of dumping and of scientific methods of creating new industries and building up old ones.

MR. BRYAN

(Michael Monahan in the Phoenix.)
It is now clear to all save those who will not see, that Mr. Bryan's act in resigning the portfolio of state was a timely, well-advised and powerful demonstration which has greatly availed to keep us out of this foreign war.

This inestimable service not alone to our country but to humanity at large, may well compensate Mr. Bryan for the abuse of a section of the press and the depreciation of the fat-headed. He has been long inured to the one and he is wise enough to lightly regard the other: for neither interested malice nor public ineptitude will have the smallest weight in determining the final judgment of the nation upon the course he pursued.

I am not a blind follower of Mr. Bryan, and with certain pet theories of his—as to prohibition, for example—I find myself in radical disagreement. But I rate him the foremost exponent of true democracy in our country today—the greatest living personal force in holding this republic to its just traditions.

And so regarding the man, I think his resignation was the biggest act of his career, as it was assuredly the bravest in view of the obloquy sure to be encountered. It signaled the bold intuitive genius of the man—and that absolute devotion to principle which has illumined his entire public life. The attempt of his enemies to show a petty or unworthy motive for it has reacted with disgrace upon their own heads.

He saw the war tide rising and threatening to carry the administration with it. He measured the powerful influences that were seeking to push us into the abyss of war. He estimated the clamor of a stupid or sinister press pretending to voice the sentiment of the whole people. He knew that the conventions of office held him to a certain subordination as well as silence. He realized that he must meet this great public danger in the open as a free man, without party or official trammels. He acted accordingly, and perhaps we shall never fully know how much reason we have to be glad of his decision. I think there is one person who entirely realizes it—the President of the United States!

Mr. Bryan flung himself into the breach with characteristic yet sagacious daring, and instantly, effectively organized the counter-revolution against war, that has dashed the hopes and foiled the plans of the jingoes. It was a brilliant, a masterly, an incomparable piece of work, showing Bryan the patriot and the tactician at his best; and as a public service I believe it can not well be over-estimated. But let your imagination take a bird's-eye view of the immense slaughter-pit of Europe, and then reflect how near we were to bringing the same fate upon ourselves.

Always hated by the press of New York, which has failed to write him down in twenty years of perverse and outrageous depreciation, sounding the full gamut from caricature to calumny,—the rancor of these honest editors, in view of their latest discomfiture at the hands of the Commoner, is scarcely to be realized. The "Sun" and the "Times," for example, are

almost sadistic in their freshly exacerbated spleen against their old enemy; they clearly extract a voluptuous pleasure from it; nay, they will never have done showing the ugly sore and squirting the pus at their readers! The meanness, the malice, the littleness of the exhibition go to prove that American journalism has not bettered remarkably in character since it was stigmatized by Dickens according to its just deserts.

Mr. Bryan can afford to be magnanimous, to smile on these embittered pressmen — nay, even to pity them. For indeed some of these pens of privilege merely write the thoughts of their employers, and the writers themselves hold very different views.

The glory of having done much to avert the horrors of war from this country by an act of supreme courage and patriotism, will doubtless reconcile Mr. Bryan to these minor irritations. And the deep praise of a grateful nation, of which no malice can deprive him, may well drown in his ear the insect chorus of the malignant press.

AS MENACE TO DEMOCRACY

Dr. Harry A. Garfield, president of Williams college, speaking in the Mount Morris Baptist church at Fifth avenue and 126th street, Brooklyn, said:

"Our army and navy ought to be well organized and equipped and economically maintained, but we ought not to have a larger military establishment than we need to police our country and defend our shores. To base our building program upon that of other nations is to put ourselves in the vicious circle of naval competition and to commit ourselves to a policy dictated by Europe and absurdly inapplicable from a political point of view to our needs.

"Democracies have waged great wars," Dr. Garfield continued, "but they have done it wastefully and have succeeded only when they have evolved themselves for the time being into something not democratic. The departure advocated by the enthusiasts for a big army and navy is not for a season, but permanently. If this is to be done, it is folly to attempt longer to maintain our democratic institutions. If necessity dictates that we enter into competition with European states in the maintenance of great army and navy establishments, wisdom demands that we adopt as permanent machinery of government that which under our constitution was intended for emergencies only, in other words, that we put our liberties in commission and clothe our President with autocratic powers and surround him with expert military advisers.

"Political parties are preparing now to make capital out of conditions that need mending. Fears and prejudices are being played upon to put through programs involving vast expenditures. It is the part of wisdom, of true patriotism, to look before we leap. Preparedness in every department of civic and social life is our present need. That is our first line of defense. Military preparedness is our second."

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