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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The president's message is remarkable for what it does not say. That portion of the message devoted to Panama is the only really interesting feature.

So far as the administration's Panama policy is concerned, Mr. Roosevelt does not hesitate to accept the responsibility, making it very plain, indeed, that he is proud of his achievements with respect to the new republic on the isthmus. Sifted down, Mr. Roosevelt's defense of his Panama policy is that "the end justifies the means," although he makes an effort, and a feeble one, to show that there are precedents for his course, and that he is sustained by the interpretation which several distinguished secretaries of state, during the earlier days, placed upon the treaty of 1846.

Aside from its reference to Panama, the message is one of the strangest documents that was ever sent from the White house. It reads more like the report of a department chief, who understands that he is expected to go into details, but who is very reluctant to express an opinion concerning any of the policies with which he deals.

The president ignores altogether the tariff question.

In treating the financial situation, the president says that the same liberty should be granted the secretary of the treasury to deposit customs receipts as is granted him to deposit all receipts from other sources. He then dismisses the financial question by directing attention to his message of December 2, 1902. He again asks the consideration of congress for the plans then proposed.

It will be remembered that in his message of December 2, 1902, the president said that "it is necessary that there should be an element of elasticity in our monetary system." In that message he said: "Banks are the natural servants of commerce and upon them should be placed as far as practicable the burden of furnishing and maintaining a circulation adequate to supply the needs

of our diversified industries and our domestic and foreign commerce, and the issue of this should be so regulated that a sufficient supply should be always available for the business interests of the country." He suggested "the use of such instrumentalities as will automatically supply every legitimate demand of productive industries and commerce not only in the amount, but in the character of the circulation; and of making all kinds of money interchangeable and at the will of the holder convertible into the established gold standard."

Since the message of December, 1902, was delivered, we have been told that Mr. Roosevelt meant "automatic currency;" and from the definitions we subsequently received, we have learned that Mr. Roosevelt's "automatic currency" or Mr. Shaw's "emergency currency" means nothing more nor less than asset currency.

The president refers to the merchant marine in a way to justify the impression that he is in favor of a ship subsidy, although he does not seem to be willing to state his position clearly. It may not be doubted that when the commission, the creation of which is recommended by the president, shall make its report, it will present a subsidy scheme.

Even upon the question of abolishing the tariff between the United States and the Philippines, the president treads very lightly. He points out that "congress should ever keep in mind that peculiar obligations rest upon us to further in every way the welfare of these communities;" and he adds: "The Philippines should be knit closer to us by tariff arrangements," but he leaves congress to guess whether he is in favor of abolishing the Philippine tariff or making a marked reduction in that tariff.

The president seems to have a weakness for commissions and so he announces that he has appointed a commission whose duty it will be to investigate the operation of existing land laws and recommend whatever changes may be desirable. On this subject, the president says that his

purpose is "to effect the largest practicable disposition of the public lands to actual settlers who will build permanent homes upon them," and it is safe to say that a very large majority of the American people are heartily in sympathy with that purpose.

It will be observed that while the president reiterates the recommendations made in his message of December, 1902, with respect to the currency question, he does not take the trouble to reiterate his statements with respect to the tariff question. Many people will wonder how the president could persuade himself to ignore altogether the tariff question just at this time when that question is being more generally discussed among the people than for several years.

The president touches very lightly upon the trust question, speaks enthusiastically of the new department of commerce, says that the work of the bureau of corporations will be productive of great good, emphasizes the plan of "publicity," leaving the impression upon his reader that that is the sole thing to be desired in treating the great trust evil. In fact, the president seems to regard the trust question, concerning which there is large discussion among the people, as of comparatively little importance. So anxious does he seem to be to avoid giving the slightest offense to the trust magnates that the word "trusts" is not at all conspicuous and is used in an incidental way perhaps in half a dozen places.

Altogether, the message must be unsatisfactory, even to republicans, because it leaves the impression that it was written not by a man whose greatest anxiety is for the correct solution of public problems, but rather by a man whose largest concern is for a nomination to the office he now holds.

Those who will carefully read the president's message from the beginning to the end will, we think, conclude that it bears the earmarks of an ambitious politician rather than the impress of a great president.

MR. ROOSEVELT ON PANAMA

In dealing with the Panama question, in his message to congress, Mr. Roosevelt is not entirely candid. It is not difficult to learn from his treatment of the subject that he takes great pride in the part his administration has played in that sorry affair; and yet he lacks candor because while he goes into such details as may suit his purpose, directing attention even to every riot that occurred on the isthmus, he deliberately ignores in his statement of the treaty of 1846, the guarantee by the United States of Colombia's (then New Granada) sovereignty over the isthmus; and while ignoring this important guarantee, Mr. Roosevelt pushes to the front our guarantee of "the perfect neutrality" of the isthmus.

For instance, pretending to describe the treaty of 1846, Mr. Roosevelt says:

"In the year 1846, this government entered into a treaty with New Granada, the predecessor upon the isthmus of the republic of Colombia, and of the present republic of Panama, by which treaty it was provided that the government and citizens of the United States should always have free and open right of way across the isthmus of Panama, by any modes or communications that might be constructed, WHILE IN RETURN our government guaranteed the PERFECT NEUTRALITY of the above mentioned isthmus with the view that the free transit from the one to the other sea might not be interrupted or embarrassed."

Now, look at the treaty of 1846. In that treaty, after the government of Colombia (then New Granada) had guaranteed to the government of the United States the right of way across the

isthmus, and certain other privileges, which our government had eagerly sought for, it was said:

"And in order to secure to themselves the tranquil and constant enjoyment of these advantages and as an especial compensation for certain advantages and for the favors they have acquired by the fourth, fifth and sixth articles of this treaty, the United States GUARANTEE POSITIVELY AND EFFICACIOUSLY to New Granada by the present stipulation the perfect neutrality of the before mentioned isthmus, with the view that the pre-transit from the one to the other sea may not be interrupted or embarrassed at any future time while this treaty exists; and, IN CONSEQUENCE, THE UNITED STATES ALSO GUARANTEE IN THE SAME MANNER THE RIGHT OF SOVERIGNTY AND PROPERTY WHICH NEW GRANADA (now COLOMBIA) HAS AND POSSESSES OVER THE SAID TERRITORY."

Not one word, in Mr. Roosevelt's description of the treaty of 1846, to show that the United States "positively and efficaciously" guarantee to New Granada (now Colombia) the right of sovereignty and property which New Granada (now Colombia) has and possesses over the said territory.

That in omitting this very important provision from his description of the treaty of 1846, Mr. Roosevelt acted deliberately, is plainly to be seen when it is observed that he goes to the trouble of quoting from Secretary of State Seward in 1865 and from Attorney General Speed in 1865, and all to the effect that the guarantee of New Granada's sovereignty did not mean that the United States would become a party to Colombia's

domestic troubles, but that this guarantee was meant rather to protect the Colombian government as against other and foreign governments.

But how do these quotations from Messrs. Seward and Speed help Mr. Roosevelt?

Mr. Seward said: "The United States has taken and will take no interest in any question of the internal revolutions in the state of Panama or any state of the United States of Colombia, but will maintain a perfect neutrality in connection with such domestic altercations;" and when the president of the United States of Colombia had called upon the American government for a force to protect the isthmus of Panama from a body of insurgents of that country, Mr. Seward said that "neither the text nor the spirit of the stipulation in that article impose an obligation on this government to comply with the requisition."

But, if the insurgents at that time in Panama had called upon Mr. Seward for a force to protect them from the parent government, what would Mr. Seward have said? If the proposition had been made that the United States government interfere in that revolution in behalf of the insurgents and against the parent government, what would Mr. Seward have said?

Unquestionably, his answer would have been the same as the answer quoted by Mr. Roosevelt in his message. Mr. Seward would have said to the insurgents that "The United States has taken and will take no interest in any question of internal revolution in the Colombian government." He would have said that "the United States will maintain a perfect neutrality in connection with such domestic altercations." Because every intelligent man knows that he would have said it, because the very language used by Mr. Seward and quoted by Mr. Roosevelt justifies that belief,