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Newspaper Comment on the Wilson-Harvey Incident

New York World: But we can see nothing shocking in giving this frank answer to a plain question. Presumably Col. Harvey wanted the truth when he asked the question. Presumably Governor Wilson believed he was telling the truth when he answered.

"Ingratitude!" arises the chorus of Governor Wilson's shocked opponents. We should be far from shocked even if we could discover ingratitude in Governor Wilson's position.

Ingratitude is one of the rarest virtues of public life. "Gratitude" is responsible for many of our worst political abuses. Upon "gratitude" is built every corrupt political ma-

chine; upon "gratitude" is founded the power of every ignorant and unscrupulous boss; in "gratitude" is rooted the system of spoils, of log-rolling, of lobbying. Lorimer was elected by "gratitude." Payne-Aldrich bills are passed for "gratitude." Harriman campaign funds are raised for "gratitude." The great majority of the voices which are denouncing Wilson's ingratitude are the voices of machine politicians, chief among whose stock in trade is this "gratitude."

No, what we need in public life is a great deal more of discriminating ingratitude. Such "ingratitude" as gave Charles E. Hughes the confidence of the people when he opposed the bosslets who had helped to elect him; such "ingratitude" as gave Governor Wilson himself the applause of the people when he defeated for the senatorship Jim Smith, who had helped to elect him.

New York Evening Post: The American people can hardly be called upon to throw overboard one of the most promising candidates for the next presidency simply because he gave to a plain question a plain answer. "I have from Col. Harvey and Governor Wilson," says Col. Watterson, "statements according to the memory of each touching what did actually happen and was spoken on the occasion named. These do not materially differ. They coincide with my own recollection." Let us have these statements, and let the public judge whether what Wilson said was simply the frank utterance of a truth in reply to a friend's candid request for information, or, as so many eagerly hasten to assert, a deliberate act of selfishness or ingratitude. And in the meanwhile, let it be remembered that this affair is but the latest of a series of bombs exploded at the feet of Governor Wilson, which, whatever else they may be, are an indisputable evidence of the formidable character which his prospects for the presidency have assumed in the eyes of his enemies.

Louisville Evening Post: The circumstance reveals to the people a leader who is an uncompromising truth teller; a man self-reliant, and courteous and candid; a man not subservient to practical politicians and discarded party leaders seeking new alliances; a man who does not surrender personal responsibility for any of his acts even to political associates who presume on a real or an imaginary personal and political intimacy.

Of that stuff great men are made, and if the democrats are seeking a great man for leader; one of intellectual power, whose career makes him available, they may see him portrayed in this account of a conference strictly confidential, the revelations from it leaving Governor Wilson untouched, and Watterson and Harvey thoroughly discredited.

Newark (N. J.) Evening-News: The charge made by Col. Watterson that Governor Wilson is no Tilden but an "ingrate" (familiar word), no statesman, but a school-master, is simply confirmatory evidence of Wilson's determination to put policies above politics, principles above partisanship, an attitude of mind utterly incomprehensible to the old line politician.

It amounts to a renewed pledge to the citizens that Governor Wilson will not recognize partisan obligations as binding upon him, when fulfilling those obligations means putting a man in office whose policies

and sympathies run counter to his own.

Wilson should thank Watterson and Harvey for their carefully laid little plan to get a statement from him and publish broadcast his warning to professional politicians of all classes that they need not serve him if they expect personal gain thereby.

Newark (N. J.) Star (Senator Smith's paper): As a critic, in view of the circumstances, he (Col. Watterson) is outspoken. He got his impressions then and there. "Governor Wilson is not a man to make common cause with his political associates" or to be "deeply sensible of his political obligations." Col. Watterson makes this statement, as he says, reluctantly and with the feeling that it was "needful to a full and impartial knowledge by the public, but more especially by the mass and body of democrats who are earnestly seeking a leader in the coming contest." Col. Watterson's high character as a public man, his long and distinguished services to the democratic party, and his reputation for open candor all give weight to his words, which hardly require further comment.

Baltimore Sun: January 16 the current number of Harper's explained that Governor Wilson had stated directly "that our support was affecting his candidacy injuriously."

Jan. 18 was published Mr. Watterson's statement. On the same date we also published in our morning edition the statement of Mayor Dahlman of Omaha, Neb., that the action of Mr. Harvey is "the collapse of the Wilson boom." Simultaneously appear the criticism of Mr. Shea, a prominent democrat of Wilkesbarre, and the remarks of Mr. Matt J. Regan, "recognized leader of the Bryan democrats of Wisconsin," that the incident "would cost this state to Wilson," and the denunciation of I. T. Jones, "speaking for the Iowa democratic state central committee."

These condemnations, made simultaneously in different parts of the country, before the accused had been

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