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Wilson's Inability to Delegate Tasks to Others Helped Wreck His Health, Former Secretary Says

By CHARLES L. SWEM, Confidential secretary and stenographer to Woodrow Wilson during his eight years in the White House. (Copyright, 1923. Reproduction in any form prohibited.)

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Wilson felt greatly the added duties devolving upon him during the war. Although he was always calm, decisive, and even abrupt in his contacts and decisions, there was an atmosphere and anxiety surrounding him in those days. There was too much haste required in his actions, too little time for the deliberation to which he was accustomed.

He distrusted his own judgment more than his own. One felt rather than saw his reaction of uncertainty to the extreme pressure.

In his anxiety to leave nothing undone to win the war, he delegated a great deal of authority that he would never have allowed to leave his hands during peace time, but for the most part he held rigidly to his belief in personal responsibility.

From the day of declaration of war to the armistice terms, scarcely was an action taken of any consequence without his knowledge and explicit approval. He required it, he insisted upon it.

Wilson's Physical Decline.

Such a responsibility of necessity entailed an enormous volume of work, not alone in supervision, but in the mere routine task of keeping himself advised. He was always a methodical man, but as his job developed he booted down his routine to the very essence.

He arose a little earlier and retired later, crowding in an engagement here and a conference there, spaces he had usually before set aside for reading or recreation. This program he religiously maintained during the progress of the war, except only when an occasional breakdown would confine him to bed. Then a halt would be called, but only until such time as he had strength enough to rise from his bed and begin again.

My impression of the period is a hectic one, considering that I was myself "on tap" at all hours of the day and night, but I have a picture of a man hard-driven and pressed, possessed of a grim determination to win the war as quickly and as thoroughly as possible, conserving by method and foresight every ounce of physical energy so that he might successfully carry the burdens that increased daily.

The volume of business that he transacted at this time is almost beyond belief, particularly to one aware of his physical limitations. Most of his letters of these days were brief memoranda, giving a decision on a pending question or asking information. Long letters coming to his desk would be digested sometimes by the sender, but more frequently that duty would fall to my lot. The digest would be attached to the letter and placed before him. He gained his knowledge of the contents of the letter from the digest usually; if he desired more information, the letter was before him. In that manner he was enabled to engage his supervising activities. He insisted upon a memorandum rather than an interview on all possible occasions. People used so much time in giving him atmosphere, he declared, when all he wanted, all he had time for was facts.

Nothing was too trivial for him

to note and give ear to that might have a bearing upon the conduct of the war. Communicative seeking the recognition of the government for all sorts of inventions or criticizing methods of officials of the administration, letters which ordinarily would have been handled as routine, but which, somehow, reached him, he insisted upon making the subject of serious and unbiased investigation. It was an unprecedented war; he felt he could afford to turn down no suggestion that was sincerely offered, without giving it a trial. He invited the ideas of all who might by chance possess one.

One Friday afternoon in August, 1917, I boarded the Mayflower with him and Mrs. Wilson and sailed down the Potomac to York river. The next day, while newspapers carried an item to the effect that the president was enjoying a week-end rest, he quitted the Mayflower and climbed the ganjplank of the U. S. S. Pennsylvania, the flagship of the Atlantic fleet, then lying in harbor awaiting orders to proceed abroad.

On the stern of the boat, under flapping canvas, were assembled the officers of the fleet. They were dressed in spotless white and stood at rigid attention as the commander-in-chief silently approached. He had asked for this conference in Washington and had come expressly for it. So closely was the secret of his visit guarded that Washington learned of it with surprise after the war had ended.

There on the quarter-deck, standing on a covered hatch, with a 14-inch gun barrel grazing his uncovered head, he took the navy into his confidence. Never before, I dare say, has a fighting unit about to enter battle, listened to such a thrilling and inspiring message from its commander-in-chief. With biting sarcasm he attacked British complacency and told with confidence what he expected of the American fleet. He placed himself, he said, at the disposal of any officer of the navy who had an idea about running the war.

"Bees at the Hive."

And in an "amateur" way he took a hand himself. He pressed the suggestion of a steel net across the narrowest portion of the North sea in order to bottle up the German submarines at their base. This appealed to him strongly, and when it was frowned upon by his own naval advisers, with characteristic tenacity he had it thoroughly threshed out by the mechanical experts of the government. When he was finally convinced that it was impracticable, he turned his thoughts to an alternative scheme. He got behind the American plan to lay a mine barrage across the North sea and forced it through. This barrage proved to be the most effective means devised during the war of restricting the activities of the submarine menace.

On more than one occasion, impressed by the merit of an idea or a scheme presented, he had an investigation and trial made of his own initiative, once or twice at his own expense.

And at odd hours of the day or night it was not surprising to see him seated at his little typewriter in a corner of his study before a huge American flag, draped full length from the ceiling, pounding out a verbal broadside directed against the morale of the central empires.

Perhaps the most surprising thing to Mr. Wilson's friends was not that he broke down after the peace conference, but that he did not succumb long before, during the war period, to the strain of the burdens that he relentlessly insisted upon carrying upon his own shoulders.

This inability of his to delegate a virtue and a weakness. From the typing of his own letters, to the formulation of a foreign policy, he found it impossible to trust out of his own hands what he felt capable of doing himself. It was this tendency to overburden himself that taxed his physical powers always to the utmost, and eventually broke down his health, but all who had any personal contact with him could not help but be impressed by this sense of personal responsibility. Not that he could not

\$1,000 Bond Missing.
 York, Feb. 13.—All bonds recalled in the reund issue of \$220,000 in York school district have been turned in and canceled except bond No. 79 which is still outstanding. Bonds ceased to bear interest Jan. 1. All bonds are of \$1,000 denomination.

Farmer Found Unconscious at Home Near Barnston
 Special Dispatch to The Omaha Bee, Beatrice, Feb. 13.—John Harma, farmer living west of Barnston, Neb., was found lying unconscious on the floor of his home this morning suffering from sleeping sickness. He was brought to a hospital here, where attending physicians say he cannot recover. His wife is visiting at Denver.

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28½c	25c	22½c	20½c

Tender Juicy Pot Roast, per lb. . . . 10½c
 Best Cuts Fancy Beef Shoulder Roast, per lb. . . . 14½c
 Prime Rolled Rib Roast, per lb. . . . 25c
 Lean Pig Pork Roast, per lb. . . . 14½c
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 100 lbs. Fine Granulated Sugar for . . . \$6.75
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 48-lb sack Puritan Flour for . . . \$2.35
 4 pkgs. Macaroni or Spaghetti for . . . 25c

FRUITS-VEGETABLES.
 Florida Grape Fruit, 5 for . . . 25c
 3 large Atwood Grape Fruit for . . . 28c
 Sunkist Oranges, extra sweet, per dozen . 35c
 8 dozen for . . . 98c
 Comb Honey, each . 20c
 Head Lettuce, each . 10c and . . . 12½c
 Cooking Apples, 3 lbs. for . . . 25c
 Extra Fancy Jonathan Apples, 3 lbs. for . 25c
 Extra Fancy Winsap Apples, per box \$4.50

BUTTER AND EGG DEPARTMENT
 Guaranteed Eggs, per dozen . . . 32½c
 Larged Eyed Swiss Cheese, per lb. . 34½c
 Central Extra Quality Butter, per lb. . 39½c
 Fresh Country Butter, per lb. . . . 32½c
 Iten's Cake Special, 2 lbs. Central Assortment 59c

STANDARD BRAND VEGETABLES.
 Country Gentleman Corn, Evergreen Corn and Tomatoes, Peas, per can . . . 12½c
 per dozen . . . \$1.48

EXTRA STANDARD BRAND CANNED VEGETABLES
 Red Dot Peas, J. M. Corn, No. 3 Cans Ote Tomatoes, Fancy Coleman Wax Beans, per can . . . 17½c
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 3 cans for . . . 75c

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 3 cans for . . . 85c

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SYRUP Log Cabin Medium can, 55c Small can . . . 27c	39c	ORANGES—Extra fancy, Sun Kit, doz.	32c
TOILET PAPER "Waldorf" 3 for 25c 10 for 85c	27c	CAULIFLOWER—"Snowball," pound	15c
POST'S BRAN 2 for 25c	85c	GRAPEFRUIT—Juicy, choice fruit, 4 for	27c
COOKIES Iten's Assorted Chocolate Creams, etc., 6 varieties,	2 Lbs. 55c	GANO COOKING APPLES—5 lbs. for	37c
HAMS "PURITAN" Whole or half	Lb. 31c	CANNED PEAS—Early June, 3 cans	50c
Preserves Pure raspberry and strawberry	3 Jars \$1	CANNED CORN—Country Gentleman, 3 cans	50c
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FLOUR "Blue Bell" 24-lb. Sack \$1.19 48-lb. Sack \$2.25			
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