

THE MESSAGE OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

Text of the Message.

To the Senate and House of Representatives: The congress assembled this year under the shadow of a great calamity. On September 8 President McKinley was shot by an anarchist while attending the Pan-American exposition at Buffalo, and died in that city September 14.

Of the last seven elected presidents, he is the third who has been murdered, and the last who died in the prime of his life. He has justly given a name to the terrible passions aroused by four years of civil war, and President Garfield to the revengeful vanity of a disappointed officeholder. President McKinley was killed by an utterly depraved criminal belonging to that body of criminals who object to all governments, good and bad alike, who are against any form of popular liberty if it is guaranteed by even the most liberal laws, and who are hostile to the upright exponent of a free people's sober will as to the tyrannical and irresponsible despot.

Tribute to President McKinley.

It is not too much to say that at the time of President McKinley's death he was the most widely loved man in all the United States, while we have never had any other man in his position who has been so wholly free from the bitter animosities incident to public life. His political opinions were the first to bear the heaviest and most generous tribute to the broad kindness of nature, the treatment of enemies and of friends which endeared him to his close associates. To a standard of lofty integrity in public life he united the tender affections and home virtues which are all-important in the makeup of national character. A gallant soldier in the war of the union, he also shone as an example to all our people because of his conduct in the most sacred and intimate of home relations. There was no personal hatred of him, for he never acted with aught but consideration for the welfare of his country. He was not a man who could not be trusted in public or private life. The defenders of those murderous criminals who seek to excuse their criminality by asserting that it is exercised for political ends, in-veigh against wealth and irresponsible power. But for this assassination even this base apology cannot be urged.

President McKinley was a man of moderate means, a man whose stock sprang from the sturdy tillers of the soil, who had himself belonged among the wage workers. He had entered the army as a private soldier. Wealth was not struck at when the president was assassinated, but the honest toil which is content with moderate gains after a lifetime of unremitting labor, largely in the service of the public. Still less was power struck at when the assassin's power is irrevocably centered in the hands of any one individual. The blow was not aimed at tyranny or wealth. It was aimed at one of the strongest champions the wage worker has ever had, at one of the most faithful representatives of the system of public rights and representative government who has ever risen to public office. President McKinley filled that political office for which the entire people vote, and no president—not even Lincoln himself—was ever earnestly anxious to resign his office. He had just been re-elected to the presidency because the majority of our citizens, the majority of our farmers and wage workers believed that he had faithfully upheld their interests for four years. They with him. They felt that they were represented in close and intimate touch so well and so honorably all their ideals and aspirations that they wished him to continue for another four years to represent them.

And this was the man at whom the assassin struck. That there might be nothing lacking to complete the Judas-like infamy of his act, he took advantage of an occasion when the president was meeting the people generally, and advancing as if to take the hand outstretched to him in kindly and brotherly fellowship, he turned the noble and generous confidence of the victim into an opportunity to strike the fatal blow. There is no baser deed in all the annals of crime.

The shock, the grief of the country are bitter in the minds of all who saw the dark days while the president yet hovered between life and death. At last the light was stilled in the kindly eyes and the breath went from the lips that even in mortal agony uttered words that were a revelation to his murderer, of love for his friends and of unflinching trust in the will of the Most High. Such a death, crowning the glory of such a life, leaves us with infinite sorrow, but with such pride in what he had accomplished in his own personal character, that we feel the blow not as struck at him, but as struck at the nation. We mourn a good and great president who is dead; but while we mourn we are lifted up by the splendid achievements of his life and the grand heroism with which he met his death.

When we turn from the man to the nation, the harm done is so great as to excite our gravest apprehensions and to demand our wisest and most resolute action. This national tragedy is a lesson which should be firmly fixed in the minds of all, and should be the teaching of professed anarchists, and probably also by the reckless utterances of those who, on the stump and in the public press, appeal to the dark and evil spirits of malice and greed, and who feel that the blow is not as struck at him, but as struck at the nation. We mourn a good and great president who is dead; but while we mourn we are lifted up by the splendid achievements of his life and the grand heroism with which he met his death.

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and chaos to the most beneficial form of social order. His protest of contempt for workmen is outrageous in its impudent folly; for if the political institutions of this country do not afford opportunity to every honest and intelligent son of toil, then the door of hope is forever closed against him. The anarchist in every age is not merely the enemy of system and of progress, but the deadly foe of liberty. If ever anarchy is triumphant, its triumph will last for but one brief moment, to be succeeded for ages by the gloomy night of despotism.

The anarchist himself, whether he preaches or practices doctrines, we need not have one particle more concern than for an ordinary murderer. He is not the victim of social or political injustice. There are no wrongs to remedy in his case. The cause of criminals is to be found in his own evil passions and in the evil conduct of those who urge him on, not in any failure by others or by the state to do justice to him or his. He is a malefactor, and nothing else. He is in no sense, in the eyes of any sane man, a "product of conditions," a highwayman is "produced" by the fact that an unarmed man happens to have a purse. It is a travesty upon the great and holy names of liberty and freedom to permit them to be invoked in such a cause. No man or body of men, professing anarchistic doctrines, should be allowed to murder any more than if preaching the murder of some specified private individual. Anarchistic speeches, writings and meetings are essentially seditious and treasonable. I earnestly recommend to the congress that in the exercise of its wise discretion it should take into consideration the coming to this country of anarchists or persons professing principles hostile to all government and justifying the murder of those who are the friends of individual liberty. Those who do not long ago gathered in open meeting to glorify the murder of King Humbert of Italy perpetrate a crime, and the law should ensure their rigorous punishment. They and those like them should be banished from this country, and if here they should be promptly deported to the country whence they came, and far-reaching provision should be made for the punishment of those who stay. No matter how long they have been in this country, they should be promptly deported to the country whence they came, and far-reaching provision should be made for the punishment of those who stay. No matter how long they have been in this country, they should be promptly deported to the country whence they came, and far-reaching provision should be made for the punishment of those who stay.

Give Federal Courts Jurisdiction.
The federal courts should be given jurisdiction over any man who kills or attempts to kill the president or any man who by the constitution or by law is in line of succession for the presidency, while the punishment for an unsuccessful attempt should be proportioned to the enormity of the offense against our institutions.

Anarchy is a crime against the whole human race, and all mankind should band against the anarchist. His crime should be treated as an unpardonable crime against nations, like piracy and that form of man-stealing known as the slave trade; for it is of far blacker infamy than either. It should be so declared by treaties among all civilized powers. Such treaties would give to the central government the power of dealing with the crime.

A grim commentary upon the folly of the anarchist position was afforded by the attitude of the law toward this very criminal who had just taken the life of the president. The people would have torn him limb from limb if it had not been that the law he defied was at once invoked in his behalf. So far from his deed being committed on behalf of the people against the government, the government was obliged to exert its full police power to save him from instant death at the hands of the people. Moreover, his deed worked not the slightest dislocation in our governmental system, and the danger of a recurrence of such deeds, no matter how great it might grow, would work only in the direction of strengthening and giving substance to the forces of order. No man will ever be restrained from becoming president by any fear as to his personal safety. If the risk to the president's life became great, it would mean that the office would more and more become a liability to be filled by men of spirit who would make them resolute and merciless in dealing with every friend of disorder. This great country will not fall into anarchy, and if anarchists should ever become a serious menace to its institutions, they are not merely to be stamped out, they would involve in their own ruin every active or passive sympathizer with their doctrines. The American people are slow to wrath, but when their wrath is once kindled it burns like a consuming flame.

Proof of Prosperity.
During the last five years business confidence has been at its highest position. It is to be congratulated because of its present abounding prosperity. Such prosperity can never be created by law alone, although it is easy enough to destroy it by mischievous laws. If the hand of the Lord be upon our country, we shall have no doubt some human wisdom is powerless to avert the calamity. Moreover, no law can guard us against the consequences of our own folly. The men who are idle or credulous, the men who seek gains not by genuine work with head or hand but by the cunning and craft of a speculator, are a menace not only to themselves but to others. If the business world loses its head, it loses what legislation cannot supply. Fundamentally the welfare of each citizen, and therefore the welfare of the nation, must rest upon individual thrift and energy, resolution and intelligence. Nothing can take the place of this individual capacity; but wise legislation and honest and intelligent administration can give it the fullest scope and the largest opportunity to work to good effect.

The tremendous and highly complex industrial development which went on with ever accelerated rapidity during the latter half of the nineteenth century brings us face to face at the beginning of the twentieth with very serious social problems. The old laws, and the old customs which had almost the binding force of law, were once sufficient to regulate the accumulation and distribution of wealth. At the present time the industrial changes which have so enormously increased the productive power of mankind, they are no longer sufficient.

The growth of cities has gone on beyond comparison faster than the growth of the country, and the unbuilding of the great industrial centers has meant a startling increase, not merely in the aggregate of wealth, but in the number of very large individual, and especially of very large corporate, fortunes. The creation of these great fortunes has not been in any way due to the tariff nor to any other governmental action, but to natural causes in the business world, operating in other countries as they operate in our own.

The process has aroused much antagonism, and the feeling has been created that there has been abuse connected with the accumulation of wealth; yet it remains true that a fortune accumulated in legitimate business can be accumulated by the person specially benefited only on conditions of conferring immense incidental benefits upon others. Successful enterprises, of the type which benefits all mankind, can

only exist if the conditions are such as to offer great prizes as the rewards of success.

Combinations and Trusts.

The captains of industry who have driven the railway systems across this continent, who have built up our commerce, who have developed our manufactures, have on the whole done great good to our people. Without them the material development of which we are so justly proud could never have taken place. It is therefore to be recognized the immense importance to this material development of leaving as unhampered as is compatible with the public good the strong and forceful men upon whom the success of business operations greatly rests. The slightest change in business conditions will satisfy anyone capable of forming a judgment that the personal equation is the most important factor in a business operation; that the business ability of the man at the head of any business concern, big or little, is usually the factor which does the work between striking success and hopeless failure.

An additional reason for caution in dealing with corporations is to be found in the international commercial conditions of today. The business world is so intermingled that the great aggregations of corporate and individual wealth have made them very potent factors in international commercial competition. Business concerns which have the largest means at their disposal and are managed by the ablest men are naturally those which take the lead in the strife for commercial supremacy among the nations of the world. America has only just begun to assume that commanding position in the international business world which we believe will be more and more the case in the future.

It is of the utmost importance that this position be not jeopardized, especially at a time when the overflowing abundance of our own natural resources and the skill, business energy and mechanical aptitude of our people make for a most favorable market. Under conditions it would be most unwise to cramp or to fetter the youthful strength of our nation.

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