

State of the Union Addresses of Warren Harding

Warren Harding

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December 6, 1921

December 8, 1922

State of the Union Address

Warren Harding

December 6, 1921

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS:

It is a very gratifying privilege to come to the Congress with the Republic at peace with all the nations of the world. More, it is equally gratifying to report that our country is not only free from every impending, menace of war, but there are growing assurances of the permanency of the peace which we so deeply cherish.

For approximately ten years we have dwelt amid menaces of war or as participants in war's actualities, and the inevitable aftermath, with its disordered conditions, bits added to the difficulties of government which adequately can not be appraised except by, those who are in immediate contact and know the responsibilities. Our tasks would be less difficult if we had only ourselves to consider, but so much of the world was involved, the disordered conditions are so well-nigh universal, even among nations not engaged in actual warfare, that no permanent readjustments can be effected without consideration of our inescapable relationship to world affairs in finance and trade. Indeed, we should be unworthy of our best traditions if we were unmindful of social, moral, and political conditions which are not of direct concern to us, but which do appeal to the human sympathies and the very becoming interest of a people blest with our national good fortune.

It is not my purpose to bring to you a program of world restoration. In the main such a program must be worked out by the nations more directly concerned. They must themselves turn to the heroic remedies for the menacing conditions under which they are struggling, then we can help, and we mean to help. We shall do so unselfishly because there is compensation in the consciousness of assisting, selfishly because the commerce and international exchanges in trade, which marked our high tide of fortunate advancement, are possible only when the nations of all continents are restored to stable order and normal relationship.

In the main the contribution of this Republic to restored normalcy in the world must come through the initiative of the executive branch of the Government, but the best of intentions and most carefully considered purposes would fail utterly if the sanction and the cooperation of Congress were not cheerfully accorded.

I am very sure we shall have no conflict of opinion about constitutional duties or authority. During the anxieties of war, when necessity seemed compelling there were excessive grants of authority and all extraordinary concentration of powers in the Chief Executive. The repeal of war-time legislation and the automatic expirations which attended the peace proclamations have put an end to these emergency excesses but I have the wish to go further than that. I want to join you in restoring, in the most cordial way, the spirit of coordination and cooperation, and that

mutuality of confidence and respect which is necessary in representative popular government.

Encroachment upon the functions of Congress or attempted dictation of its policy are not to be thought of, much less attempted, but there is an insistent call for harmony of purpose and concord of action to speed the solution of the difficult problems confronting both the legislative and executive branches of the Government.

It is worth while to make allusion here to the character of our Government, mindful as one must be that an address to you is no less a message to all our people, for whom you speak most intimately. Ours is a popular Government through political parties. We divide along political lines, and I would ever have it so. I do not mean that partisan preferences should hinder any public servant in the performance of a conscientious and patriotic official duty. We saw partisan lines utterly obliterated when war imperiled, and our faith in the Republic was riveted anew. We ought not to find these partisan lines obstructing the expeditious solution of the urgent problems of peace.

Granting that we are fundamentally a representative popular Government, with political parties the governing agencies, I believe the political party in power should assume responsibility, determine upon policies in the conference which supplements conventions and election campaigns, and then strive for achievement through adherence to the accepted policy.

There is vastly greater security, immensely more of the national viewpoint, much larger and prompter accomplishment where our divisions are along party lines, in the broader and loftier sense, than to divide geographically, or according to pursuits, or personal following. For a century and a third, parties have been charged with responsibility and held to strict accounting. When they fail, they are relieved of authority; and the system has brought it to a national eminence no less than a world example.

Necessarily legislation is a matter of compromise. The full ideal is seldom attained. In that meeting of minds necessary to insure results, there must and will be accommodations and compromises, but in the estimate of convictions and sincere purposes the supreme responsibility to national interest must not be ignored. The shield to the high-minded public servant who adheres to party policy is manifest, but the higher purpose is the good of the Republic as a whole.

It would be ungracious to withhold acknowledgment of the really large volume and excellent quality of work accomplished by the extraordinary session of Congress which so recently adjourned. I am not unmindful of the very difficult tasks with which you were called to deal, and no one can ignore the insistent conditions which, during recent years, have called for the continued and almost exclusive attention of your membership to public work. It would suggest insincerity if I expressed complete accord with every expression recorded in your roll calls, but we are all agreed about the difficulties and the inevitable divergence of opinion in seeking the reduction, amelioration and readjustment of the burdens of taxation. Later on, when other problems are solved, I shall make some recommendations about renewed consideration of our tax program, but for the immediate time before us we must be content with the billion dollar reduction in the tax draft upon the people, and diminished irritations, banished uncertainty and improved methods of collection. By your sustainment of the rigid economies already inaugurated, with hoped-for extension of these economies and added

efficiencies in administration, I believe further reductions may be enacted and hindering burdens abolished.

In these urgent economies we shall be immensely assisted by the budget system for which you made provision in the extraordinary session. The first budget is before you. Its preparation is a signal achievement, and the perfection of the system, a thing impossible in the few months available for its initial trial, will mark its enactment as the beginning of the greatest reformation in governmental practices since the beginning of the Republic.

There is pending a grant of authority to the administrative branch of the Government for the funding and settlement of our vast foreign loans growing out of our grant of war credits. With the hands of the executive branch held impotent to deal with these debts we are hindering urgent readjustments among our debtors and accomplishing nothing for ourselves. I think it is fair for the Congress to assume that the executive branch of the Government would adopt no major policy in dealing with these matters which would conflict with the purpose of Congress in authorizing the loans, certainly not without asking congressional approval, but there are minor problems incident to prudent loan transactions and the safeguarding of our interests which can not even be attempted without this authorization. It will be helpful to ourselves and it will improve conditions among our debtors if funding and the settlement of defaulted interest may be negotiated.

The previous Congress, deeply concerned in behalf of our merchant marine, in 1920 enacted the existing shipping law, designed for the upbuilding of the American merchant marine. Among other things provided to encourage our shipping on the world's seas, the Executive was directed to give notice of the termination of all existing commercial treaties in order to admit of reduced duties on imports carried in American bottoms. During the life of the act no Executive has complied with this order of the Congress. When the present administration came into responsibility it began an early inquiry into the failure to execute the expressed purpose of the Jones Act. Only one conclusion has been possible. Frankly, Members of House and Senate, eager its I am to join you in the making of an American merchant marine commensurate with our commerce, the denouncement of our commercial treaties would involve us in a chaos of trade relationships and add indescribably to the confusion of the already disordered commercial world. Our power to do so is not disputed, but power and ships, without comity of relationship, will not give us the expanded trade which is inseparably linked with a great merchant marine. Moreover, the applied reduction of duty, for which the treaty denouncements were necessary, encouraged only the carrying of dutiable imports to our shores, while the tonnage which unfurls the flag on the seas is both free and dutiable, and the cargoes which make it nation eminent in trade are outgoing, rather than incoming.

It is not my thought to lay the problem before you in detail today. It is desired only to say to you that the executive branch of the Government, uninfluenced by the protest of any nation, for none has been made, is well convinced that your proposal, highly intended and heartily supported here, is so fraught with difficulties and so marked by tendencies to discourage trade expansion, that I invite your tolerance of noncompliance for only a few weeks until a plan may be presented which contemplates no greater draft upon the Public Treasury, and which, though yet too crude to offer it to-day, gives such promise of expanding our merchant marine, that it will argue its own approval. It is enough to say to-day that we are so possessed of ships, and the American intention to establish it merchant marine is so

unalterable, that a plain of reimbursement, at no other cost than is contemplated in the existing act, will appeal to the pride and encourage the hope of all the American people.

There is before you the completion of the enactment of what has been termed a "permanent" tariff law, the word "permanent" being used to distinguish it from the emergency act which the Congress expedited early in the extraordinary session, and which is the law today. I can not too strongly urge in early completion of this necessary legislation It is needed to stabilize our industry at home; it is essential to make more definite our trade relations abroad. More, it is vital to the preservation of many of our own industries which contribute so notably to the very lifeblood of our Nation.

There is now, and there always will be, a storm of conflicting opinion about any tariff revision. We can not go far wrong when we base our tariffs on the policy of preserving the productive activities which enhance employment and add to our national prosperity.

Again comes the reminder that we must not be unmindful of world conditions, that peoples are struggling for industrial rehabilitation and that we can not dwell in industrial and commercial exclusion and at the same time do the just thing in aiding world reconstruction and readjustment. We do not seek a selfish aloofness, and we could not profit by it, were it possible. We recognize the necessity of buying wherever we sell, and the permanency of trade lies in its acceptable exchanges. In our pursuit of markets we must give as well as receive. We can not sell to others who do not produce, nor can we buy unless we produce at home. Sensible of every obligation of humanity, commerce and finance, linked as they are in the present world condition, it is not to be argued that we need destroy ourselves to be helpful to others. With all my heart I wish restoration to the peoples blighted by the awful World War, but the process of restoration does not lie in our acceptance of like conditions. It were better to, remain on firm ground, strive for ample employment and high standards of wage at home, and point the way to balanced budgets, rigid economies, and resolute, efficient work as the necessary remedies to cure disaster.

Everything relating to trade, among ourselves and among nations, has been expanded, excessive, inflated, abnormal, and there is a madness in finance which no American policy alone will cure. We are a creditor Nation, not by normal processes, but made so by war. It is not an unworthy selfishness to seek to save ourselves, when the processes of that salvation are not only not denied to others, but commended to them. We seek to undermine for others no industry by which they subsist; we are obligated to permit the undermining of none of our own which make for employment and maintained activities.

Every contemplation, it little matters in which direction one turns, magnifies the difficulty of tariff legislation, but the necessity of the revision is magnified with it. Doubtless we are justified in seeking it. More flexible policy than we have provided heretofore. I hope a way will be found to make for flexibility and elasticity, so that rates may be adjusted to meet unusual and changing conditions which can not be accurately anticipated. There are problems incident to unfair practices, and to exchanges which madness in money have made almost unsolvable. I know of no manner in which to effect this flexibility other than the extension of the powers of the Tariff Commission so that it can adapt itself to it scientific and wholly just administration of the law.

I am not unmindful of the constitutional difficulties. These can be met by giving authority to the Chief Executive, who could proclaim additional duties to meet conditions which the Congress may designate.

At this point I must disavow any desire to enlarge the Executive's powers or add to the responsibilities of the office. They are already too large. If there were any other plan I would prefer it.

The grant of authority to proclaim would necessarily bring the Tariff Commission into new and enlarged activities, because no Executive could discharge such a duty except upon the information acquired and recommendations made by this commission. But the plan is feasible, and the proper functioning of the board would give its it better administration of a defined policy than ever can be made possible by tariff duties prescribed without flexibility.

There is a manifest difference of opinion about the merits of American valuation. Many nations have adopted delivery valuation as the basis for collecting duties; that is, they take the cost of the imports delivered at the port of entry as the basis for levying duty. It is no radical departure, in view of varying conditions and the disordered state of money values, to provide for American valuation, but there can not be ignored the danger of such a valuation, brought to the level of our own production costs, making our tariffs prohibitive. It might do so in many instances where imports ought to be encouraged. I believe Congress ought well consider the desirability of the only promising alternative, namely, a provision authorizing proclaimed American valuation, under prescribed conditions, on any given list of articles imported.

In this proposed flexibility, authorizing increases to meet conditions so likely to change, there should also be provision for decreases. A rate may be just to-day, and entirely out of proportion six months from to-day. If our tariffs are to be made equitable, and not necessarily burden our imports and hinder our trade abroad, frequent adjustment will be necessary for years to come. Knowing the impossibility of modification by act of Congress for any one or a score of lines without involving a long array of schedules, I think we shall go a long ways toward stabilization, if there is recognition of the Tariff Commission's fitness to recommend urgent changes by proclamation.

I am sure about public opinion favoring the early determination of our tariff policy. There have been reassuring signs of a business revival from the deep slump which all the world has been experiencing. Our unemployment, which gave its deep concern only a few weeks ago, has grown encouragingly less, and new assurances and renewed confidence will attend the congressional declaration that American industry will be held secure.

Much has been said about the protective policy for ourselves making it impossible for our debtors to discharge their obligations to us. This is a contention not now pressing for decision. If we must choose between a people in idleness pressing for the payment of indebtedness, or a people resuming the normal ways of employment and carrying the credit, let us choose the latter. Sometimes we appraise largest the human ill most vivid in our minds. We have been giving, and are giving now, of our influence and appeals to minimize the likelihood of war and throw off the crushing burdens of armament. It is all very earnest, with a national soul impelling. But a people unemployed, and gaunt with hunger, face a situation quite as disheartening as war, and our greater obligation to-day is to do the Government's part toward resuming productivity and promoting fortunate

and remunerative employment.

Something more than tariff protection is required by American agriculture. To the farmer has come the earlier and the heavier burdens of readjustment. There is actual depression in our agricultural industry, while agricultural prosperity is absolutely essential to the general prosperity of the country.

Congress has sought very earnestly to provide relief. It has promptly given such temporary relief as has been possible, but the call is insistent for the permanent solution. It is inevitable that large crops lower the prices and short crops advance them. No legislation can cure that fundamental law. But there must be some economic solution for the excessive variation in returns for agricultural production.

It is rather shocking to be told, and to have the statement strongly supported, that 9,000,000 bales of cotton, raised on American plantations in a given year, will actually be worth more to the producers than 13,000,000 bales would have been. Equally shocking is the statement that 700,000,000 bushels of wheat, raised by American farmers, would bring them more money than a billion bushels. Yet these are not exaggerated statements. In a world where there are tens of millions who need food and clothing which they can not get, such a condition is sure to indict the social system which makes it possible.

In the main the remedy lies in distribution and marketing. Every proper encouragement should be given to the cooperative marketing programs. These have proven very helpful to the cooperating communities in Europe. In Russia the cooperative community has become the recognized bulwark of law and order, and saved individualism from engulfment in social paralysis. Ultimately they will be accredited with the salvation of the Russian State.

There is the appeal for this experiment. Why not try it? No one challenges the right of the farmer to a larger share of the consumer's pay for his product, no one disputes that we can not live without the farmer. He is justified in rebelling against the transportation cost. Given a fair return for his labor, he will have less occasion to appeal for financial aid; and given assurance that his labors shall not be in vain, we reassure all the people of a production sufficient to meet our National requirement and guard against disaster.

The base of the pyramid of civilization which rests upon the soil is shrinking through the drift of population from farm to city. For a generation we have been expressing more or less concern about this tendency. Economists have warned and statesmen have deplored. We thought for a time that modern conveniences and the more intimate contact would halt the movement, but it has gone steadily on. Perhaps only grim necessity will correct it, but we ought to find a less drastic remedy.

The existing scheme of adjusting freight rates has been favoring the basing points, until industries are attracted to some centers and repelled from others. A great volume of uneconomic and wasteful transportation has attended, and the cost increased accordingly. The grain-milling and meat-packing industries afford ample illustration, and the attending concentration is readily apparent. The menaces in concentration are not limited to the retarding influences on agriculture. Manifestly the conditions and terms of railway transportation ought not be permitted to increase this undesirable tendency. We have a just pride in our great

cities, but we shall find a greater pride in the Nation, which has its larger distribution of its population into the country, where comparatively self-sufficient smaller communities may blend agricultural and manufacturing interests in harmonious helpfulness and enhanced good fortune. Such a movement contemplates no destruction of things wrought, of investments made, or wealth involved. It only looks to a general policy of transportation of distributed industry, and of highway construction, to encourage the spread of our population and restore the proper balance between city and country. The problem may well have your earnest attention.

It has been perhaps the proudest claim of our American civilization that in dealing with human relationships it has constantly moved toward such justice in distributing the product of human energy that it has improved continuously the economic status of the mass of people. Ours has been a highly productive social organization. On the way up from the elemental stages of society we have eliminated slavery and serfdom and are now far on the way to the elimination of poverty.

Through the eradication of illiteracy and the diffusion of education mankind has reached a stage where we may fairly say that in the United States equality of opportunity has been attained, though all are not prepared to embrace it. There is, indeed, a too great divergence between the economic conditions of the most and the least favored classes in the community. But even that divergence has now come to the point where we bracket the very poor and the very rich together as the least fortunate classes. Our efforts may well be directed to improving the status of both.

While this set of problems is commonly comprehended under the general phrase "Capital and labor," it is really vastly broader. It is a question of social and economic organization. Labor has become a large contributor, through its savings, to the stock of capital; while the people who own the largest individual aggregates of capital are themselves often hard and earnest laborers. Very often it is extremely difficult to draw the line of demarcation between the two groups; to determine whether a particular individual is entitled to be set down as laborer or as capitalist. In a very large proportion of cases he is both, and when he is both he is the most useful citizen.

The right of labor to organize is just as fundamental and necessary as is the right of capital to organize. The right of labor to negotiate, to deal with and solve its particular problems in an organized way, through its chosen agents, is just as essential as is the right of capital to organize, to maintain corporations, to limit the liabilities of stockholders. Indeed, we have come to recognize that the limited liability of the citizen as a member of a labor organization closely parallels the limitation of liability of the citizen as a stockholder in a corporation for profit. Along this line of reasoning we shall make the greatest progress toward solution of our problem of capital and labor.

In the case of the corporation which enjoys the privilege of limited liability of stockholders, particularly when engaged in the public service, it is recognized that the outside public has a large concern which must be protected; and so we provide regulations, restrictions, and in some cases detailed supervision. Likewise in the case of labor organizations, we might well apply similar and equally well-defined principles of regulation and supervision in order to conserve the public's interests as affected by their operations.

Just as it is not desirable that a corporation shall be allowed to impose undue exactions upon the public, so it is not desirable that a labor organization shall be permitted to exact unfair terms of employment or subject the public to actual distresses in order to enforce its terms. Finally, just as we are earnestly seeking for procedures whereby to adjust and settle political differences between nations without resort to war, so we may well look about for means to settle the differences between organized capital and organized labor without resort to those forms of warfare which we recognize under the name of strikes, lockouts, boycotts, and the like.

As we have great bodies of law carefully regulating the organization and operations of industrial and financial corporations, as we have treaties and compacts among nations which look to the settlement of differences without the necessity of conflict in arms, so we might well have plans of conference, of common counsel, of mediation, arbitration, and judicial determination in controversies between labor and capital. To accomplish this would involve the necessity to develop a thoroughgoing code of practice in dealing with such affairs. It might be well to frankly set forth the superior interest of the community as a whole to either the labor group or the capital group. With rights, privileges, immunities, and modes of organization thus carefully defined, it should be possible to set up judicial or quasi-judicial tribunals for the consideration and determination of all disputes which menace the public welfare.

In an industrial society such as ours the strike, the lockout, and the boycott are as much out of place and as disastrous in their results as is war or armed revolution in the domain of politics. The same disposition to reasonableness, to conciliation, to recognition of the other side's point of view, the same provision of fair and recognized tribunals and processes, ought to make it possible to solve the one set of questions as easily as the other. I believe the solution is possible.

The consideration of such a policy would necessitate the exercise of care and deliberation in the construction of a code and a charter of elemental rights, dealing with the relations of employer and employee. This foundation in the law, dealing with the modern conditions of social and economic life, would hasten the building of the temple of peace in industry which a rejoicing nation would acclaim.

After each war, until the last, the Government has been enabled to give homes to its returned soldiers, and a large part of our settlement and development has attended this generous provision of land for the Nation's defenders.

There is yet unreserved approximately 200,000,000 acres in the public domain, 20,000,000 acres of which are known to be susceptible of reclamation and made fit for homes by provision for irrigation.

The Government has been assisting in the development of its remaining lands, until the estimated increase in land values in the irrigated sections is full \$500,000,000 and the crops of 1920 alone on these lands are estimated to exceed \$100,000,000. Under the law authorization these expenditures for development the advances are to be returned and it would be good business for the Government to provide for the reclamation of the remaining 20,000,000 acres, in addition to expediting the completion of projects long under way.

Under what is known as the coal and gas lease law, applicable also to

deposits of phosphates and other minerals on the public domain, leases are now being made on the royalty basis, and are producing large revenues to the Government. Under this legislation, 10 per centum of all royalties is to be paid directly to the Federal Treasury, and of the remainder 50 per centum is to be used for reclamation of arid lands by irrigation, and 40 per centum is to be paid to the States, in which the operations are located, to be used by them for school and road purposes.

These resources are so vast, and the development is affording so reliable a basis of estimate, that the Interior Department expresses the belief that ultimately the present law will add in royalties and payments to the treasuries of the Federal Government and the States containing these public lands a total of \$12,000,000,000. This means, of course, an added wealth of many times that sum. These prospects seem to afford every justification of Government advances in reclamation and irrigation.

Contemplating the inevitable and desirable increase of population, there is another phase of reclamation full worthy of consideration. There are 79,000,000 acres of swamp and cut-over lands which may be reclaimed and made as valuable as any farm lands we possess. These acres are largely located in Southern States, and the greater proportion is owned by the States or by private citizens. Congress has a report of the survey of this field for reclamation, and the feasibility is established. I gladly commend Federal aid, by way of advances, where State and private participation is assured.

Home making is one of the greater benefits which government can bestow. Measures are pending embodying this sound policy to which we may well adhere. It is easily possible to make available permanent homes which will provide, in turn, for prosperous American families, without injurious competition with established activities, or imposition on wealth already acquired.

While we are thinking of promoting the fortunes of our own people I am sure there is room in the sympathetic thought of America for fellow human beings who are suffering and dying of starvation in Russia. A severe drought in the Valley of the Volga has plunged 15,000,000 people into grievous famine. Our voluntary agencies are exerting themselves to the utmost to save the lives of children in this area, but it is now evident that unless relief is afforded the loss of life will extend into many millions. America can not be deaf to such a call as that.

We do not recognize the government of Russia, nor tolerate the propaganda which emanates therefrom, but we do not forget the traditions of Russian friendship. We may put aside our consideration of all international politics and fundamental differences in government. The big thing is the call of the suffering and the dying. Unreservedly I recommend the appropriation necessary to supply the American Relief Administration with 10,000,000 bushels of corn and 1,000,000 bushels of seed grains, not alone to halt the wave of death through starvation, but to enable spring planting in areas where the seed grains have been exhausted temporarily to stem starvation.

The American Relief Administration is directed in Russia by former officers of our own armies, and has fully demonstrated its ability to transport and distribute relief through American hands without hindrance or loss. The time has come to add the Government's support to the wonderful relief already wrought out of the generosity of the American private purse.

I am not unaware that we have suffering and privation at home. When it exceeds the capacity for the relief within the States concerned, it will have Federal consideration. It seems to me we should be indifferent to our own heart promptings, and out of accord with the spirit which acclaim the Christmastide, if we do not give out of our national abundance to lighten this burden of woe upon a people blameless and helpless in famine's peril.

There are it full score of topics concerning which it would be becoming to address you, and on which I hope to make report at a later time. I have alluded to the things requiring your earlier attention. However, I can not end this limited address without a suggested amendment to the organic law.

Many of us belong to that school of thought which is hesitant about altering the fundamental law. I think our tax problems, the tendency of wealth to seek nontaxable investment, and the menacing increase of public debt, Federal, State and municipal—all justify a proposal to change the Constitution so as to end the issue of nontaxable bonds. No action can change the status of the many billions outstanding, but we can guard against future encouragement of capital's paralysis, while a halt in the growth of public indebtedness would be beneficial throughout our whole land.

Such a change in the Constitution must be very thoroughly considered before submission. There ought to be known what influence it will have on the inevitable refunding of our vast national debt, how it will operate on the necessary refunding of State and municipal debt, how the advantages of Nation over State and municipality, or the contrary, may be avoided. Clearly the States would not ratify to their own apparent disadvantage. I suggest the consideration because the drift of wealth into nontaxable securities is hindering the flow of large capital to our industries, manufacturing, agricultural, and carrying, until we are discouraging the very activities which make our wealth.

Agreeable to your expressed desire and in complete accord with the purposes of the executive branch of the Government, there is in Washington, as you happily know, an International Conference now most earnestly at work on plans for the limitation of armament, a naval holiday, and the just settlement of problems which might develop into causes of international disagreement.

It is easy to believe a world-hope is centered on this Capital City. A most gratifying world-accomplishment is not improbable.

State of the Union Address
Warren Harding
December 8, 1922

MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS:

So many problems are calling for solution that a recital of all of them, in the face of the known limitations of a short session of Congress, would seem to lack sincerity of purpose. It is four years since the World War ended, but the inevitable readjustment of the social and economic order is not more than barely begun. There is no acceptance of pre-war conditions anywhere in the world. In a very general way humanity harbors individual wishes to go on with war-time compensation for production, with pre-war requirements in expenditure. In short, everyone, speaking broadly, craves

readjustment for everybody except himself, while there can be no just and permanent readjustment except when all participate.

The civilization which measured its strength of genius and the power of science and the resources of industries, in addition to testing the limits of man power and the endurance and heroism of men and women--that same civilization is brought to its severest test in restoring a tranquil order and committing humanity to the stable ways of peace.

If the sober and deliberate appraisal of pre-war civilization makes it seem a worth-while inheritance, then with patience and good courage it will be preserved. There never again will be precisely the old order; indeed, I know of no one who thinks it to be desirable. For out of the old order came the war itself, and the new order, established and made secure, never will permit its recurrence.

It is no figure of speech to say we have come to the test of Our civilization. The world has been passing--is today passing through of a great crisis. The conduct of war itself is not more difficult than the solution of the problems which necessarily follow. I am not speaking at this moment of the problem in its wider aspect of world rehabilitation or of international relationships. The reference is to our own social, financial, and economic problems at home. These things are not to be considered solely as problems apart from all international relationship, but every nation must be able to carry on for itself, else its international relationship will have scant importance.

Doubtless our own people have emerged from the World War tumult less impaired than most belligerent powers; probably we have made larger progress toward reconstruction. Surely we have been fortunate in diminishing unemployment, and our industrial and business activities, which are the lifeblood of our material existence, have been restored as in no other reconstruction period of like length in the history of the world. Had we escaped the coal and railway strikes, which had no excuse for their beginning and less justification for their delayed settlement, we should have done infinitely better. But labor was insistent on holding to the war heights, and heedless forces of reaction sought the pre-war levels, and both were wrong. In the folly of conflict our progress was hindered, and the heavy cost has not yet been fully estimated. There can be neither adjustment nor the penalty of the failure to readjust in which all do not somehow participate.

The railway strike accentuated the difficulty of the American farmer. The first distress of readjustment came to the farmer, and it will not be a readjustment fit to abide until he is relieved. The distress brought to the farmer does not affect him alone. Agricultural ill fortune is a national ill fortune. That one-fourth of our population which produces the food of the Republic and adds so largely to our export commerce must participate in the good fortunes of the Nation, else there is none worth retaining.

Agriculture is a vital activity in our national life. In it we had our beginning, and its westward march with the star of the empire has reflected the growth of the Republic. It has its vicissitudes which no legislation will prevent, its hardships for which no law can provide escape. But the Congress can make available to the farmer the financial facilities which have been built up under Government aid and supervision for other commercial and industrial enterprises. It may be done on the same solid fundamentals and make the vitally important agricultural industry more secure, and it must be done.

This Congress already has taken cognizance of the misfortune which precipitate deflation brought to American agriculture. Your measures of relief and the reduction of the Federal reserve discount rate undoubtedly saved the country from widespread disaster. The very proof of helpfulness already given is the strongest argument for the permanent establishment of widened credits, heretofore temporarily extended through the War Finance Corporation.

The Farm Loan Bureau, which already has proven its usefulness through the Federal land banks, may well have its powers enlarged to provide ample farm production credits as well as enlarged land credits. It is entirely practical to create a division in the Federal land banks to deal with production credits, with the limitations of time so adjusted to the farm turnover as the Federal reserve system provides for the turnover in the manufacturing and mercantile world. Special provision must be made for live-stock production credits, and the limit of land loans may be safely enlarged. Various measures are pending before you, and the best judgment of Congress ought to be expressed in a prompt enactment at the present session.

But American agriculture needs more than added credit facilities. The credits will help to solve the pressing problems growing out of war-inflated land values and the drastic deflation of three years ago, but permanent and deserved agricultural good fortune depends on better and cheaper transportation.

Here is an outstanding problem, demanding the most rigorous consideration of the Congress and the country. It has to do with more than agriculture. It provides the channel for the flow of the country's commerce. But the farmer is particularly hard hit. His market, so affected by the world consumption, does not admit of the price adjustment to meet carrying charges. In the last half of the year now closing the railways, broken in carrying capacity because of motive power and rolling stock out of order, though insistently declaring to the contrary, embargoed his shipments or denied him cars when fortunate markets were calling. Too frequently transportation failed while perishable products were turning from possible profit to losses counted in tens of millions.

I know of no problem exceeding in importance this one of transportation. In our complex and interdependent modern life transportation is essential to our very existence. Let us pass for the moment the menace in the possible paralysis of such service as we have and note the failure, for whatever reason, to expand our transportation to meet the Nation's needs.

The census of 1880 recorded a population of 50,000,000. In two decades more we may reasonably expect to count thrice that number. In the three decades ending in 1920 the country's freight by rail increased from 631,000,000 tons to 2,234,000,000 tons; that is to say, while our population was increasing, less than 70 per cent, the freight movement increased over 250 per cent.

We have built 40 per cent of the world's railroad mileage, and yet find it inadequate to our present requirements. When we contemplate the inadequacy of to-day it is easy to believe that the next few decades will witness the paralysis of our transportation-using social scheme or a complete reorganization on some new basis. Mindful of the tremendous costs of betterments, extensions, and expansions, and mindful of the staggering debts of the world to-day, the difficulty is magnified. Here is a problem

demanding wide vision and the avoidance of mere makeshifts. No matter what the errors of the past, no matter how we acclaimed construction and then condemned operations in the past, we have the transportation and the honest investment in the transportation which sped us on to what we are, and we face conditions which reflect its inadequacy to-day, its greater inadequacy to-morrow, and we contemplate transportation costs which much of the traffic can not and will not continue to pay.

Manifestly, we have need to begin on plans to coordinate all transportation facilities. We should more effectively connect up our rail lines with our carriers by sea. We ought to reap some benefit from the hundreds of millions expended on inland waterways, proving our capacity to utilize as well as expend. We ought to turn the motor truck into a railway feeder and distributor instead of a destroying competitor.

It would be folly to ignore that we live in a motor age. The motor car reflects our standard of living and gauges the speed of our present-day life. It long ago ran down Simple Living, and never halted to inquire about the prostrate figure which fell as its victim. With full recognition of motor-car transportation we must turn it to the most practical use. It can not supersede the railway lines, no matter how generously we afford it highways out of the Public Treasury. If freight traffic by motor were charged with its proper and proportionate share of highway construction, we should find much of it wasteful and more costly than like service by rail. Yet we have paralleled the railways, a most natural line of construction, and thereby taken away from the agency of expected service much of its profitable traffic, which the taxpayers have been providing the highways, whose cost of maintenance is not yet realized.

The Federal Government has a right to inquire into the wisdom of this policy, because the National Treasury is contributing largely to this highway construction. Costly highways ought to be made to serve as feeders rather than competitors of the railroads, and the motor truck should become a coordinate factor in our great distributing system.

This transportation problem can not be waived aside. The demand for lowered costs on farm products and basic materials can not be ignored. Rates horizontally increased, to meet increased wage outlays during the war inflation, are not easily reduced. When some very moderate wage reductions were effected last summer there was a 5 per cent horizontal reduction in rates. I sought at that time, in a very informal way, to have the railway managers go before the Interstate Commerce Commission and agree to a heavier reduction on farm products and coal and other basic commodities, and leave unchanged the freight tariffs which a very large portion of the traffic was able to bear. Neither the managers nor the commission tile@@ suggestion, so we had the horizontal reduction saw fit to adopt too slight to be felt by the higher class cargoes and too little to benefit the heavy tonnage calling most loudly for relief.

Railways are not to be expected to render the most essential service in our social organization without a fair return on capital invested, but the Government has gone so far in the regulation of rates and rules of operation that it has the responsibility of pointing the way to the reduced freight costs so essential to our national welfare.

Government operation does not afford the cure. It was Government operation which brought us to the very order of things against which we now rebel, and we are still liquidating the costs of that supreme folly.

Surely the genius of the railway builders has not become extinct among the railway managers. New economies, new efficiencies in cooperation must be found. The fact that labor takes 50 to 60 per cent of total railway earnings makes limitations within which to effect economies very difficult, but the demand is no less insistent on that account.

Clearly the managers are without that intercarrier, cooperative relationship so highly essential to the best and most economical operation. They could not function in harmony when the strike threatened the paralysis of all railway transportation. The relationship of the service to public welfare, so intimately affected by State and Federal regulation, demands the effective correlation and a concerted drive to meet an insistent and justified public demand.

The merger of lines into systems, a facilitated interchange of freight cars, the economic use of terminals, and the consolidation of facilities are suggested ways of economy and efficiency.

I remind you that Congress provided a Joint Commission of Agricultural Inquiry which made an exhaustive investigation of car service and transportation, and unanimously recommended in its report of October 15, 1921, the pooling of freight cars under a central agency. This report well deserves your serious consideration. I think well of the central agency, which shall be a creation of the railways themselves, to provide, under the jurisdiction of the Interstate Commerce Commission, the means for financing equipment for carriers which are otherwise unable to provide their proportion of car equipment adequate to transportation needs. This same agency ought to point the way to every possible economy in maintained equipment and the necessary interchanges in railway commerce.

In a previous address to the Congress I called to your attention the insufficiency of power to enforce the decisions of the Railroad Labor Board. Carriers have ignored its decisions, on the one hand, railway workmen have challenged its decisions by a strike, on the other hand.

The intent of Congress to establish a tribunal to which railway labor and managers may appeal respecting questions of wages and working conditions can not be too strongly commended. It is vitally important that some such agency should be a guaranty against suspended operation. The public must be spared even the threat of discontinued service.

Sponsoring the railroads as we do, it is an obligation that labor shall be assured the highest justice and every proper consideration of wage and working conditions, but it is an equal obligation to see that no concerted action in forcing demands shall deprive the public of the transportation service essential to its very existence. It is now impossible to safeguard public interest, because the decrees of the board are unenforceable against either employer or employee.

The Labor Board itself is not so constituted as best to serve the public interest. With six partisan members on a board of nine, three partisans nominated by the employees and three by the railway managers, it is inevitable that the partisan viewpoint is maintained throughout hearings and in decisions handed down. Indeed, the few exceptions to a strictly partisan expression in decisions thus far rendered have been followed by accusations of betrayal of the partisan interests represented. Only the public group of three is free to function in unbiased decisions. Therefore the partisan membership may well be abolished, and decisions should be made by an impartial tribunal.

I am well convinced that the functions of this tribunal could be much better carried on here in Washington. Even were it to be continued as a separate tribunal, there ought to be contact with the Interstate Commerce Commission, which has supreme authority in the rate making to which wage cost bears an indissoluble relationship. Theoretically, a fair and living wage must be determined quite apart from the employer's earning capacity, but in practice, in the railway service, they are inseparable. The record of advanced rates to meet increased wages, both determined by the Government, is proof enough.

The substitution of a labor division in the Interstate Commerce Commission made up from its membership, to hear and decide disputes relating to wages and working conditions which have failed of adjustment by proper committees created by the railways and their employees, offers a more effective plan.

It need not be surprising that there is dissatisfaction over delayed hearings and decisions by the present board when every trivial dispute is carried to that tribunal. The law should require the railroads and their employees to institute means and methods to negotiate between themselves their constantly arising differences, limiting appeals to the Government tribunal to disputes of such character as are likely to affect the public welfare.

This suggested substitution will involve a necessary increase in the membership of the commission, probably four, to constitute the labor division. If the suggestion appeals to the Congress, it will be well to specify that the labor division shall be constituted of representatives of the four rate-making territories, thereby assuring a tribunal conversant with the conditions which obtain in the different ratemaking sections of the country.

I wish I could bring to you the precise recommendation for the prevention of strikes which threaten the welfare of the people and menace public safety. It is an impotent civilization and an inadequate government which lacks the genius and the courage to guard against such a menace to public welfare as we experienced last summer. You were aware of the Government's great concern and its futile attempt to aid in an adjustment. It will reveal the inexcusable obstinacy which was responsible for so much distress to the country to recall now that, though all disputes are not yet adjusted, the many settlements which have been made were on the terms which the Government proposed in mediation.

Public interest demands that ample power shall be conferred upon the labor tribunal, whether it is the present board or the suggested substitute, to require its rulings to be accepted by both parties to a disputed question.

Let there be no confusion about the purpose of the suggested conferment of power to make decisions effective. There can be no denial of constitutional rights of either railway workmen or railway managers. No man can be denied his right to labor when and how he chooses, or cease to labor when he so elects, but, since the Government assumes to safeguard his interests while employed in an essential public service, the security of society itself demands his retirement from the service shall not be so timed and related as to effect the destruction of that service. This vitally essential public transportation service, demanding so much of brain and brawn, so much for efficiency and security, ought to offer the most attractive working conditions and the highest of wages paid to workmen in any employment.

In essentially every branch, from track repairer to the man at the locomotive throttle, the railroad worker is responsible for the safety of human lives and the care of vast property. His high responsibility might well rate high his pay within the limits the traffic will bear; but the same responsibility, plus governmental protection, may justly deny him and his associates a withdrawal from service without a warning or under circumstances which involve the paralysis of necessary transportation. We have assumed so great a responsibility in necessary regulation that we unconsciously have assumed the responsibility for maintained service; therefore the lawful power for the enforcement of decisions is necessary to sustain the majesty of government and to administer to the public welfare.

During its longer session the present Congress enacted a new tariff law. The protection of the American standards of living demanded the insurance it provides against the distorted conditions of world commerce. The framers of the law made provision for a certain flexibility of customs duties, whereby it is possible to readjust them as developing conditions may require. The enactment has imposed a large responsibility upon the Executive, but that responsibility will be discharged with a broad mindfulness of the whole business situation. The provision itself admits either the possible fallibility of rates or their unsuitableness to changing conditions. I believe the grant of authority may be promptly and discreetly exercised, ever mindful of the intent and purpose to safeguard American industrial activity, and at the same time prevent the exploitation of the American consumer and keep open the paths of such liberal exchanges as do not endanger our own productivity.

No one contemplates commercial aloofness nor any other aloofness contradictory to the best American traditions or loftiest human purposes. Our fortunate capacity for comparative self-containment affords the firm foundation on which to build for our own security, and a like foundation on which to build for a future of influence and importance in world commerce. Our trade expansion must come of capacity and of policies of righteousness and reasonableness in till our commercial relations.

Let no one assume that our provision for maintained good fortune at home, and our unwillingness to assume the correction of all the ills of the world, means a reluctance to cooperate with other peoples or to assume every just obligation to promote human advancement anywhere in the world.

War made us a creditor Nation. We did not seek an excess possession of the world's gold, and we have neither desire to profit unduly by its possession nor permanently retain it. We do not seek to become an international dictator because of its power.

The voice of the United States has a respectful hearing in international councils, because we have convinced the world that we have no selfish ends to serve, no old grievances to avenge, no territorial or other greed to satisfy. But the voice being heard is that of good counsel, not of dictation. It is the voice of sympathy and fraternity and helpfulness, seeking to assist but not assume for the United States burdens which nations must bear for themselves. We would rejoice to help rehabilitate currency systems and facilitate all commerce which does not drag us to the very levels of those we seek to lift up.

While I have everlasting faith in our Republic, it would be folly, indeed, to blind ourselves to our problems at home. Abusing the hospitality of our shores are the advocates of revolution, finding their deluded followers

among those who take on the habiliments of an American without knowing an American soul. There is the recrudescence of hyphenated Americanism which we thought to have been stamped out when we committed the Nation, life and soul, to the World War.

There is a call to make the alien respect our institutions while he accepts our hospitality. There is need to magnify the American viewpoint to the alien who seeks a citizenship among us. There is need to magnify the national viewpoint to Americans throughout the land. More there is a demand for every living being in the United States to respect and abide by the laws of the Republic. Let men who are rending the moral fiber of the Republic through easy contempt for the prohibition law, because they think it restricts their personal liberty, remember that they set the example and breed a contempt for law which will ultimately destroy the Republic.

Constitutional prohibition has been adopted by the Nation. It is the supreme law of the land. In plain speaking, there are conditions relating to its enforcement which savor of nation-wide scandal. It is the most demoralizing factor in our public life.

Most of our people assumed that the adoption of the eighteenth amendment meant the elimination of the question from our politics. On the contrary, it has been so intensified as an issue that many voters are disposed to make all political decisions with reference to this single question. It is distracting the public mind and prejudicing the judgment of the electorate.

The day is unlikely to come when the eighteenth amendment will be repealed. The fact may as well be recognized and our course adapted accordingly. If the statutory provisions for its enforcement are contrary to deliberate public opinion, which I do not believe the rigorous and literal enforcement will concentrate public attention on any requisite modification. Such a course, conforms with the law and saves the humiliation of the Government and the humiliation of our people before the world, and challenges the destructive forces engaged in widespread violation, official corruption and individual demoralization.

The eighteenth amendment involves the concurrent authority of State and Federal Governments, for the enforcement of the policy it defines. A certain lack of definiteness, through division of responsibility is thus introduced. In order to bring about a full understanding of duties and responsibilities as thus distributed, I purpose to invite the governors of the States and Territories, at an early opportunity, to a conference with the Federal Executive authority. Out of the full and free considerations which will thus be possible, it is confidently believed, will emerge a more adequate, comprehension of the whole problem, and definite policies of National and State cooperation in administering the laws.

There are pending bills for the registration of the alien who has come to our shores. I wish the passage of such an act might be expedited. Life amid American opportunities is worth the cost of registration if it is worth the seeking, and the Nation has the right to know who are citizens in the making or who live among us anti share our advantages while seeking to undermine our cherished institutions. This provision will enable us to guard against the abuses in immigration, checking the undesirable whose irregular Willing is his first violation of our laws. More, it will facilitate the needed Americanizing of those who mean to enroll as fellow citizens.

Before enlarging the immigration quotas we had better provide registration for aliens, those now here or continually pressing for admission, and establish our examination boards abroad, to make sure of desirables only. By the examination abroad we could end the pathos at our ports, when men and women find our doors closed, after long voyages and wasted savings, because they are unfit for admission. It would be kindlier and safer to tell them before they embark.

Our program of admission and treatment of immigrants is very intimately related to the educational policy of the Republic. With illiteracy estimated at from two-tenths of 1 per cent to less than 2 per cent in 10 of the foremost nations of Europe it rivets our attention to its serious problem when we are reminded of a 6 per cent illiteracy in the United States. The figures are based on the test which defines an illiterate as one having no schooling whatever. Remembering the wide freedom of our public schools with compulsory attendance in many States in the Union, one is convinced

that much of our excessive illiteracy comes to us from abroad, and the education of the immigrant becomes its requisite to his Americanization. It must be done if he is fittingly to exercise the duties as well as enjoy the privileges of American citizenship. Here is revealed the special field for Federal cooperation in furthering education.

From the very beginning public education has been left mainly in the hands of the States. So far as schooling youth is concerned the policy has been justified, because no responsibility can be so effective as that of the local community alive to its task. I believe in the cooperation of the national authority to stimulate, encourage, and broaden the work of the local authorities. But it is the especial obligation of the Federal Government to devise means and effectively assist in the education of the newcomer from foreign lands, so that the level of American education may be made the highest that is humanly possible.

Closely related to this problem of education is the abolition of child labor. Twice Congress has attempted the correction of the evils incident to child employment. The decision of the Supreme Court has put this problem outside the proper domain of Federal regulation until the Constitution is so amended as to give the Congress indubitable authority. I recommend the submission of such an amendment.

We have two schools of thought relating to amendment of the Constitution. One need not be committed to the belief that amendment is weakening the fundamental law, or that excessive amendment is essential to meet every ephemeral whim. We ought to amend to meet the demands of the people when sanctioned by deliberate public opinion.

One year ago I suggested the submission of an amendment so that we may lawfully restrict the issues of tax-exempt securities, and I renew that recommendation now. Tax-exempt securities are drying up the sources of Federal taxation and they are encouraging unproductive and extravagant expenditures by States and municipalities. There is more than the menace in mounting public debt, there is the dissipation of capital which should be made available to the needs of productive industry. The proposed amendment will place the State and Federal Governments and all political subdivisions on an exact equality, and will correct the growing menace of public borrowing, which if left unchecked may soon threaten the stability of our institutions.

We are so vast and so varied in our national interests that scores of

problems are pressing for attention. I must not risk the wearying of your patience with detailed reference.

Reclamation and irrigation projects, where waste land may be made available for settlement and productivity, are worthy of your favorable consideration.

When it is realized that we are consuming our timber four times as rapidly as we are growing it, we must encourage the greatest possible cooperation between the Federal Government, the various States, and the owners of forest lands, to the end that protection from fire shall be made more effective and replanting encouraged.

The fuel problem is under study now by a very capable fact-finding commission, and any attempt to deal with the coal problem, of such deep concern to the entire Nation, must await the report of the commission.

There are necessary studies of great problems which Congress might well initiate. The wide spread between production costs and prices which consumers pay concerns every citizen of the Republic. It contributes very largely to the unrest in agriculture and must stand sponsor for much against which we inveigh in that familiar term--the high cost of living.

No one doubts the excess is traceable to the levy of the middleman, but it would be unfair to charge him with all responsibility before we appraise what is exacted of him by our modernly complex life. We have attacked the problem on one side by the promotion of cooperative marketing, and we might well inquire into the benefits of cooperative buying. Admittedly, the consumer is much to blame himself, because of his prodigal expenditure and his exaction of service, but Government might well serve to point the way of narrowing the spread of price, especially between the production of food and its consumption.

A superpower survey of the eastern industrial region has recently been completed, looking to unification of steam, water, and electric powers, and to a unified scheme of power distribution. The survey proved that vast economies in tonnage movement of freights, and in the efficiency of the railroads, would be effected if the superpower program were adopted. I am convinced that constructive measures calculated to promote such an industrial development--I am tempted to say, such an industrial revolution--would be well worthy the careful attention and fostering interest of the National Government.

The proposed survey of a plan to draft all the resources of the Republic, human and material, for national defense may well have your approval. I commended such a program in case of future war, in the inaugural address of March 4, 1921, and every experience in the adjustment and liquidation of war claims and the settlement of war obligations persuades me we ought to be prepared for such universal call to armed defense.

I bring you no apprehension of war. The world is abhorrent of it, and our own relations are not only free from every threatening cloud, but we have contributed our larger influence toward making armed conflict less likely.

Those who assume that we played our part in the World War and later took ourselves aloof and apart, unmindful of world obligations, give scant credit to the helpful part we assume in international relationships.

Whether all nations signatory ratify all the treaties growing out of the

Washington Conference on Limitation of Armament or some withhold approval, the underlying policy of limiting naval armament has the sanction of the larger naval powers, and naval competition is suspended. Of course, unanimous ratification is much to be desired.

The four-power pact, which abolishes every probability of war on the Pacific, has brought new confidence in a maintained peace, and I can well believe it might be made a model for like assurances wherever in the world any common interests are concerned.

We have had expressed the hostility of the American people to a supergovernment or to any commitment where either a council or an assembly of leagued powers may chart our course. Treaties of armed alliance can have no likelihood of American sanction, but we believe in respecting the rights of nations, in the value of conference and consultation, in the effectiveness of leaders of nations looking each other in the face ace before resorting to the arbitrament of arms.

It has been our fortune both to preach and promote international understanding. The influence of the United States in bringing near the settlement of an ancient dispute between South American nations is added proof of the glow of peace in ample understanding. In Washington to-day are met the delegates of the Central American nations, gathered at the table of international understanding, to stabilize their Republics and remove every vestige of disagreement. They are met here by our invitation, not in our aloofness, and they accept our hospitality because they have faith in our unselfishness and believe in our helpfulness. Perhaps we are selfish in craving their confidence and friendship, but such a selfishness we proclaim to the world, regardless of hemisphere, or seas dividing.

I would like the Congress and the people of the Nation to believe that in a firm and considerate way we are insistent on American rights wherever they may be questioned, and deny no rights of others in the assertion of our own. Moreover we are cognizant of the world's struggles for full readjustment and rehabilitation, and we have shirked no duty which comes of sympathy, or fraternity, or highest fellowship among nations. Every obligation consonant with American ideals and sanctioned under our form of government is willingly met. When we can not support we do not demand. Our constitutional limitations do not forbid the exercise of a moral influence, the measure of which is not less than the high purposes we have sought to serve.

After all there is less difference about the part this great Republic shall play in furthering peace and advancing humanity than in the manner of playing it. We ask no one to assume responsibility for us; we assume no responsibility which others must bear for themselves, unless nationality is hopelessly swallowed up in internationalism.

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