

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S

FIRST ANNUAL MESSAGE.

Demands the Uprooting of Anarchy, Urges Publicity of the Accounts of Trusts, Recommends Reciprocity and Is Strong in Advocacy of Chinese Exclusion and Other Acts for the Further Protection of American Labor.



Though General in Its Recommendations the Message Is Characterized by Vigor and Candor of Expression and a Clear Comprehension of Existing Needs, and Will Undoubtedly Rank High Among State Papers.

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

THE CONGRESS assembled this year under the shadow of a great calamity. On the sixth of September, President McKinley was shot by an anarchist while attending the Pan-American exposition at Buffalo, and died in that city on the fourteenth of that month.

Of the last seven elected presidents he is the third who has been murdered, and the bare recital of this fact is sufficient to justify grave alarm among all loyal American citizens. Moreover, the circumstances of this, the third assassination of an American president, have a peculiarly sinister significance. Both President Lincoln and President Garfield were killed by assassins of types unfortunately not uncommon in history: President Lincoln falling a victim to the territorial passions aroused by four years of civil war, and President Garfield to the revengeful vanity of a disappointed office-seeker. 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 public liberty. If he is guaranteed by even the most just and liberal laws, why are we so hostile to the upright exponent of a free people's sober will as to the tyrannical and irresponsible despot.

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, and we have never had any public man of his position who has been so wholly free from the bitter animosities incident to public life. His political opponents were the first to bear the heaviest and most generous tribute to the broad kindness of nature, the sweetness and gentleness of character which so endeared him to his associates. The student of left history in public life has united the tender affections and home virtues which are all-important in the makeup of national character. A gallant soldier in the great war for the Union, he also shone as an example to all our people because of his conduct in the most sacred and intimate of human relations. There could be no personal hatred of him, for he never acted with aught but consideration for the welfare of others. No one could fail to respect him who knew him in public or private life. The defenders of those numerous criminals who seek to excuse their criminality by asserting that it is exercised for political ends, to which against wealth and irresponsible power. But for this assassination even this base analogy cannot be urged.

President McKinley was a man of moderate means, a man whose stock sprang from the sturdy farmers of the soil, who had himself belonged among the wage-workers, who had entered the army as a private soldier, who was not struck at when the president was assassinated, but the honest toil, which is content with moderate gains after a lifetime of unrequited labor, largely in the service of the public. Still less was power struck at in the sense that power is irresponsible or centered in the hands of a few individuals. The blow struck at him was not a tyranny or wealth, it was aimed at one of the truest 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 had the highest respect for the rights of the people, and he was not content with representing the well thought-out wishes of the people; his anxiety in every crisis was to keep in close touch with the people to find out what they thought and to endeavor to give expression to their thought, after having studied and considered the issue which he had just been requested to preside over. He had just been requested to preside over the cause 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 felt themselves in close and intimate touch with him. The representatives so well and so bravely all their lives, and he had just been requested 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 the occasion to meet the people, and to shake 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 still in the minds of all who saw the dark days, as bitter as 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 no words save of forgiveness to his murderer, of love for his friends, and of unshaken trust in the will of the Most High. Such a death, such a tragedy of such a life, leaves us with infinite sorrow, but with such pride in what he had accomplished and 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 who is mourned as if 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 criminal was a professed anarchist, he flamed by the reckless utterances of a fanatic, and probably also by the reckless utterances of a fanatic who, on the stump and in the public press, appeal to the dark and evil spirits of malice and greed, envy and sullen hatred. The wind is sowed by the men who preach such doctrines, and they cannot escape their share of responsibility for the whirlwind that is reaped. This implies alike to the deliberate demagogue, to the exponent of sensationalism, and to the crude and foolish visionary who, for whatever reason, apologizes for crime or excuses almost discontent.

The blow was aimed not at this president, but at all presidents; at every symbol of government. President McKinley was as emphatically the embodiment of the popular will of the nation expressed through the forms of law as a New England town meeting is in similar fashion the embodiment of the law-abiding purpose and practice of the people of the town. On no conceivable theory could the murder of the president be accounted as due to the protest against "inequality in the social order," save as the murder of all the freedom engaged in a town meeting could be accounted as a protest against that social inequality which puts a mauler in jail. Anarchy is no more an expression of "social discontent" than plucking of pockets or wife-beating.

For the anarchist himself, we have no more concern than for any ordinary murderer. He is not the victim of social or political injustice. There are no wrongs to remedy in his case. The cause of his criminality is to be found in his own evil passions and in the evil conduct of those who surround him, 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 no shape or way, a "product of social conditions," save as an individual man happens to have a purse. It is a travesty upon the great and holy names of liberty and freedom to wring them to be invoked in such a cause. No man or body of men preaching anarchistic doctrines should be allowed to large any more than if preaching the murder of some specific 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 placed in authority. Such individuals as those who not long ago gathered in open meeting to glorify the murder of King Humbert of Italy, representing crime, and the law should ensure their rigorous punishment. They and those like them should be kept out of this country; and if found 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 calls more urgently for the strictest thought of the congress, and more here, it is of the utmost importance that this position be not abandoned, 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 foreign markets essential, under such conditions it would be most unwise to cramp or to fetter the youthful strength of our nation.

Moreover, it cannot too often be pointed out that to strike with ignorant violence at the interests of one set of men almost inevitably endangers the interests of all. The fundamental rule of all national legislation, the rule which maintains all others, is that, on the whole, and in the long run, we shall get up or down together. There are exceptions and in times of adversity some will suffer far more than others; but speaking generally, a period of good times means that all share more or less in them, and in a period of hard times, a few will suffer to a greater or less degree. It surely ought not to be necessary to enter into any proof of this statement, the memory of the few years which began in 1893 is still vivid, and we can contrast them with the conditions in this very year which is now closing. Disaster to great business enterprises can never have its effects limited to the men at the top; it always extends to a greater or while it is bad for everybody, it is worst for those farthest down. The capitalist may be short of his luxuries; but the wage-worker may be deprived of even bare necessities.

The mechanism of modern business is so delicate that extreme care must be taken not to interfere with it in a spirit of rashness or favoritism. Many of the evils we have made in their reaction to denounce the great industrial combinations, which are popularly, although with technical inaccuracy, known as "trusts," appeal especially to hatred and fear. These are precisely the two emotions, particularly when the masses are led by unwise and unscrupulous leaders, which lead to the worst of evil and steady degradation. In facing new industrial conditions, the whole history of the world shows that legislation will generally be both unwise and ineffective unless undertaken after calm inquiry and with sober self-restraint. Much of the legislation directed at the trusts would have been excellent, had it not been for the high and arbitrary claims of the ignorant or reckless agitator who has been the really effective friend of the evils which he has been actually opposing. In dealing with business interests, the government is undertaken by crude and ill-considered legislation to do what may turn out to be a worse and more dangerous thing than the evil which it is intended to remedy. It is not to be undertaken until it is clearly demonstrated that it will be profitable to undertake nothing at all. The men who demand the impossible or the undesirable serve as the allies of the forces with which they are usually at war, for they hamper those who would endeavor to find out in a rational fashion what the wrongs really are and in what manner it is practicable to apply remedies.

The Prevalence of Prosperity. During the last five years, business confidence has been restored, and the nation 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 unwise laws. If the hand of the Lord is heavy upon our country, if flood or drought comes, if the famine 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 gain not by genuine work with head and hand but by gambling in any form, are always a source of weakness, 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 aggregate of citizens which makes the nation, must rest upon individual thrift and energy, resourcefulness and intelligence. Nothing can take the place of the individual capacity; but wise legislation, bold and honest and intelligent administration can give it the fullest scope, the largest opportunity to work to good effect.

To Regulate. The tremendous and highly complex industrial development which we have witnessed in 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 had almost the binding force of law, were once quite sufficient to regulate the accumulation and distribution of wealth. Since the industrial changes which have so enormously increased the productive power of mankind, they are no longer sufficient.

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

The process has aroused much antagonism, a great part of which is wholly without warrant. It is not true that as the rich have grown richer the poor have grown poorer. On the contrary, never before has the average man, the wage-worker, the farmer, the small trader, been so well off as in this country and at the present time. There have been abuses 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 condition of conferring immense incidental benefits upon others. Successful enterprise 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.

For the whole, does great good to our people. Without them the material development of which we are so justly proud could never have taken place. Moreover, we should recognize the immense importance to this material development of leaving as unimpeded as is compatible with the public good the strong and forceful men upon whom the success of business operations inevitably rests. The slightest study of 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 fixes the gulf 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 same business conditions which have produced 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 market which is her right, and it is of the utmost importance that this position be not abandoned, 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 foreign markets essential, under such conditions it would be most unwise to cramp or to fetter the youthful strength of our nation.

Moreover, it cannot too often be pointed out that to strike with ignorant violence at the interests of one set of men almost inevitably endangers the interests of all. The fundamental rule of all national legislation, the rule which maintains all others, is that, on the whole, and in the long run, we shall get up or down together. There are exceptions and in times of adversity some will suffer far more than others; but speaking generally, a period of good times means that all share more or less in them, and in a period of hard times, a few will suffer to a greater or less degree. It surely ought not to be necessary to enter into any proof of this statement, the memory of the few years which began in 1893 is still vivid, and we can contrast them with the conditions in this very year which is now closing. Disaster to great business enterprises can never have its effects limited to the men at the top; it always extends to a greater or while it is bad for everybody, it is worst for those farthest down. The capitalist may be short of his luxuries; but the wage-worker may be deprived of even bare necessities.

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Evil to Be Corrected. All this is true; and yet it is also true that there are real and grave evils, one of the chief being over-capitalization because of its many harmful consequences; and a realistic and practical effort must be made to correct these evils.

There is a widespread conviction in the minds of the American people that the great corporations known as trusts are in certain of their features and tendencies harmful to the general welfare. This springs from no spirit of envy or uncharitableness, nor lack of appreciation of the great industrial achievements that have placed this country at the head of the nations struggling for commercial supremacy. It does not rest upon a lack of intelligent appreciation of the necessity of meeting changing and changed conditions of trade with new methods, nor upon ignorance of the fact that combination of capital in the world's progress demands that great things be done. It is based upon sincere conviction that combination and concentration should be, not prohibited, but supervised and within reasonable limits controlled; and in my judgment this conviction is right.

It is no limitation upon property rights or freedom of contract to require that when men ready from government the privilege of doing business under corporate form, which frees them from individual responsibility, and enables them to call into their enterprises the capital of the public, they shall do so upon absolutely truthful representations as to the value of the property in which the capital is to be invested. Corporations engaged in interstate commerce should be regulated if they are found to exercise a license working to the public injury. It should be as much the aim of those who seek for social betterment to rid the business world of crimes of capitalism as to rid the entire body politic of crimes of violence. Great corporations exist only because they are created and safeguarded by our institutions; and it is therefore our right and our duty to see that they work in harmony with these institutions.

The first essential in determining how to deal with the great industrial combinations is knowledge of the facts—publicity. In the interest of the public, the government should have the right to inspect and examine the workings of the great corporations engaged in interstate business. Publicity is the only sure remedy which we can now invoke. What further remedies are needed in the way of governmental regulation, or taxation, can only be determined after publicity has been obtained by process of law, and in the course of administration. The first requisite is knowledge, full and complete—knowledge which may be made public to the world.

Artificial bodies, such as corporations and joint stock or other associations, depending upon any statutory law for their existence or privileges, should be subject to proper governmental supervision, and full and accurate information as to their operations should be made public regularly at reasonable intervals.

though organized in our state, always do business in many states, often doing very little business in the state where they are incorporated. There is utter lack of uniformity in the state laws about them; and no state has any exclusive interest in or power over their acts. It has in practice proved impossible to get adequate regulation through state action. Therefore, in the interest of the whole people, the nation should, without interfering with the power of the states in the matter itself, also assume power of supervision and regulation over all corporations doing interstate business. This is especially true where the corporation derives a portion of its wealth from the exercise of a monopoly element or tendency in its business. There would be no hardship in such supervision, banks are subject to it, and in their case it is now accepted as a simple matter of course. Indeed, it is probable that supervision of corporations by the national government need not go so far as is now the case with the supervision exercised over them by an conservative state as Massachusetts in order to produce excellent results.

When the Constitution was adopted, at the end of the eighteenth century, no human wisdom could foretell the sweeping changes, alike in industrial and political conditions, which were to take place by the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time it was accepted as a matter of course that the several states were the proper authorities to regulate, so far as was then necessary, the comparatively insignificant and strictly localized corporate bodies of the day. The conditions are now wholly different and widely different action is called for. I believe that a law can be framed which will enable the national government to exercise control along the lines above indicated, profiting by the experience gained through the passage and administration of the Interstate Commerce Act. If, however, the judgment of the congress is that it lacks the constitutional power to pass such a law, then a constitutional amendment should be submitted to confer the power.

Wants New Cabinet Officer. There should be created a cabinet officer, to be known as secretary of commerce and industries, as provided in the bill introduced at the last session of the congress. It should be his province to deal with many other things whatever concerns labor and all matters affecting the great business corporations and our merchant marine.

The course proposed to one phase of what should be a comprehensive and far-reaching scheme of carefully supervised state-ownership for the purpose of broadening our markets, securing our business interests on a safe basis, and making firm our new position in the international industrial world; while scrupulously safeguarding the rights of wage-worker and capitalist, of investor and private citizen, so as to secure equality as between man and man in the republic.

With the sole exception of the farming interest, no one matter is of such vital moment to our whole people as the welfare of the wage-workers. If the farmer and the wage-worker are well off, it is absolutely certain that all others will be well off too. It is therefore a matter for hearty congratulation that on the whole, and in the long run, we shall get up or down together. There are exceptions and in times of adversity some will suffer far more than others; but speaking generally, a period of good times means that all share more or less in them, and in a period of hard times, a few will suffer to a greater or less degree. It surely ought not to be necessary to enter into any proof of this statement, the memory of the few years which began in 1893 is still vivid, and we can contrast them with the conditions in this very year which is now closing. Disaster to great business enterprises can never have its effects limited to the men at the top; it always extends to a greater or while it is bad for everybody, it is worst for those farthest down. The capitalist may be short of his luxuries; but the wage-worker may be deprived of even bare necessities.

Fair Play. The national government should endeavor to maintain the highest quality of service for labor, and the highest quality of service for the employer. If possible, legislation should be passed, in connection with the interstate commerce law, which will render effective the efforts of different states to do away with the competition of convict contract labor in the open labor market. So far as practically possible, the conditions of government work, particularly those which should be made to order the enforcement of the eight-hour law, and certain in all industries carried on directly or indirectly for the United States government, women and children should be protected from excessive hours of labor, from night work, and from work under insanitary conditions. The government should provide by contracts that all work should be done under "fair conditions, and in addition to setting a high standard should uphold it by proper inspection, extending, if necessary, to the sub-contractors. The government should forbid all night work for women and children, as well as excessive overtime. For the benefit of a powerful indirect aid to such laws, provision should be made to turn the inhabited alleys, the extension of which is a reproach to our Capital City, into minor streets, where the inhabitants can live under conditions favorable to health and morals.

American wage-workers work with their heads as well as their hands. Moreover, they take a keen pride in what they are doing; so that, independent of the reward, they wish to turn out a perfect job. This is the great secret of our success in competition with the labor of foreign countries. The most vital problem with which this country, and for that matter the whole civilized world, has to deal, is the problem which has for one side the betterment of social conditions, moral and physical, in large cities, and for another side the effort to deal with that tangled far-reaching questions which we group together when we speak of "labor." The chief factor in the success of each man—wage-worker, farmer, and capitalist alike—must ever be the sum total of his own individual qualities and abilities. Second only to this comes the power of acting in combination or association with others. Very great good has been and will be accomplished by associations or unions of wage-workers, when managed with foresight, and when their combined insistence upon their own rights with full respect for the rights of others. The display of these qualities in such bodies is a duty to the nation no less than to the associates themselves. Finally, there must also in many cases be action by the government in order to manufacture the rights and interests of all. Under our constitution there is much more scope for such action by the state and the municipality than by the nation. But on points such as those touched on above, the national government can act.

When all is said and done, the rule of brotherhood remains as the indispensable pre-requisite to success in the kind of national life for which we strive. Each man must work for himself, and unless he works no outside help can avail him; but each man must remember also that he is indeed his brother's keeper, and that while no man who refuses to walk can be carried with advantage to himself or

anyone else, yet that each at times stumbles or halts, that each at times needs to have the helping hand outstretched to him. To be permanently effective, aid must always take the form of helping a man to help himself, and we can all best help ourselves by joining together in the work that is of common interest to all.

Restrict Immigration. Our present immigration laws are unsatisfactory. We need every honest and efficient immigrant fitted to become an American citizen, every immigrant who comes here to stay, who brings here a strong body, a good head, and a resolute purpose to do his duty well in every way and to bring up his children as law-abiding and God-fearing members of the community. But there should be a comprehensive law enacted with the object of working a three-fold improvement over our present system. First, we should aim to exclude absolutely not only all persons who are known to be believers in anarchistic principles or members of anarchistic societies, but also all persons who are of a low moral tendency or of unsavory reputation. This means that we should require a more thorough system of inspection abroad and a more rigid system of examination at our immigration ports, the former being especially necessary.

The second object of a proper immigration law should be to secure by a careful and not merely perfunctory educational test, some intelligent capacity to appreciate American institutions and act sanely as American citizens. This would keep out all anarchists, for many of them belong to the intelligent, criminal class. But it would do what is also in point, that is, tend to decrease the sum of ignorance, so potent in producing the envy, suspicion, malignant passion, and hatred of order, out of which anarchistic sentiment inevitably springs. Finally, all persons should be excluded who are below a certain standard of economic fitness to enter our industrial field as competitors with American labor. There should be proper proof of personal capacity to earn an American living and enough money to insure a decent start under American conditions. This would stop the influx of cheap labor, and the resulting competition, should be excluded who are below a certain standard of economic fitness to enter our industrial field as competitors with American labor. There should be proper proof of personal capacity to earn an American living and enough money to insure a decent start under American conditions. This would stop the influx of cheap labor, and the resulting competition,

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Reciprocity. There is general acquiescence in our present tariff system as a national policy. The first requisite to our prosperity is the continuity and stability of this economic policy. Nothing could be more unwise than to disturb the business interests of the country by any general tariff changes at this time. Doubt, apprehension, uncertainty are exactly what we should avoid in the interest of our commercial and material well-being. Our experience in the past has shown that sweeping revisions of the tariff are apt to produce conditions closely approaching panic in the business world. Yet it is not only possible, but eminently desirable, to combine with the stability of our economic system a supplementary system of reciprocal benefit and obligation with other nations. Such reciprocity is an incident and result of the firm establishment and preservation of our present economic policy. It was especially provided for in the present tariff law.

Reciprocity must be treated as the handmaiden of protection. Our first duty is to see that the protection granted by the tariff in every case where it is needed is maintained, and that reciprocity be sought for, so far as it can safely be done without injury to our home industries. Just how far this is, must be determined according to the individual case, remembering always that every application of our tariff policy to meet our shifting national needs must be conditioned upon the cardinal fact that the duties must never be reduced below the point that will cover the difference between the labor cost here and abroad. The well-being of the wage-worker is a prime consideration of our entire policy of economic legislation.

Subject to this proviso of the proper protection necessary to our industrial well-being at home, the principle of reciprocity must command our hearty support. The phenomenal growth of our export trade emphasizes the urgency of the need for wider markets and for a liberal policy in dealing with foreign nations. Whatever is merely petty and cautious in the way of trade restrictions should be avoided. The customers to whom we dispose of our surplus products in the long run, directly or indirectly, purchase these surplus products by giving us something in return. Their ability to purchase our products should, as far as possible, be secured by arranging our tariff as to enable us to take from them those products which we can use without harm to our own industries and labor, or the use of which will be of marked benefit to us.

It is most important that we should maintain the high level of our present prosperity. We have now reached the point in the development of our country where we are not only able to supply our own markets but to produce a constantly growing surplus for which we must find markets abroad. To secure these markets we can utilize existing duties in any case where they are no longer needed for the purpose of protection, or in any case where the article is not produced here and the duty is no longer necessary for revenue, as giving us something to offer in exchange for what we ask. The cordial relations with other nations which are so desirable will naturally be promoted by the course thus required by our own interests.

The natural line of development for a policy of reciprocity will be in connection with those of our productions which no longer require all of the support once needed to establish them upon a sound basis, and with those others where either because of natural or of economic causes we are beyond the reach of successful competition.

I ask the attention of the senate to the reciprocity treaties laid before it by my predecessor.

For a Merchant Marine. The condition of the American merchant marine is such as to demand remedial action by congress. It is deplorable to us as a nation that our merchant marine should be utterly insignificant in comparison to that of other nations which we overtop in other forms of business. We should no longer submit to conditions under which only a trifling portion of our great commerce is carried in our own ships. Each man must work for himself, and unless he works no outside help can avail him; but each man must remember also that he is indeed his brother's keeper, and that while no man who refuses to walk can be carried with advantage to himself or