

PRESIDENT SPEAKS TO LABOR.

Germany Must Be Beaten Before Permanent Peace is Established.

Washington, N. Y., Nov. 12.—President Wilson, in a forceful address here before the American Federation of Labor, appealing to the working men of the United States for cooperation in the conduct of the war, made it abundantly clear that he opposes the war against Germany until it has been won.

The text of the President's speech before the American Federation of Labor follows:

Mr. President, Delegates of the American Federation of Labor, Ladies and Gentlemen: I esteem it a privilege and real honor to be thus addressed to your public councils. When your executive committee paid me the compliment of inviting me here I gladly accepted the invitation because it seems to me that this above all other times in our history is the time for common counsel for the drawing out of the energies but of the minds of the nation disclosing to you some of the thoughts that have been gathering in my mind during the last momentous months.

"I am introduced to you as the President of the United States, and yet would be pleased if you would put the thought of the office into the background and regard me as one of your fellow citizens who has come here to speak, not the words of authority, but the words of counsel, the words which men should speak to one another, who wish to be frank in a moment more critical perhaps than the history of the world has ever yet known. A moment when it is every man's duty to forget himself, to forget his own interests to fill himself with the nobility of a great national and world conception and act upon a new platform elevated above the ordinary affairs of life, elevated to where men have views of the long destiny of mankind.

"I think that in order to realize just what this moment of counsel is it is very desirable that we should remind ourselves just how this war came about and just what it is for. You can explain most wars very simply, but the explanation of this is not so simple. Its roots run deep into all the obscure soils of history and in my view this is the last decisive issue between old principles of power and the new principles of freedom.

"The war was started by Germany. Her authorities deny that they started it. But I am willing to let the statement I have just made await the verdict of history. And the thing that needs to be explained is why Germany started the war. Remember what the position of Germany in the world was—as enviable a position as any nation has ever occupied. The whole world stood in admiration of her wonderful intellectual and material achievements and all the intellectual men of the world went to school to her. As a university man, I have been surrounded by men trained in Germany men who had returned to Germany because nowhere

also could they get such thorough and searching training, particularly in the principles of science and the principles that underlie modern material achievements.

"Her men of science had made her industrious perhaps the most competent industries in the world, and the label 'made in Germany' was a guarantee of good workmanship and of material. She had access to all the markets of the world and every other man who traded in those markets feared Germany because of her effective and almost irresistible competition. She had a place in the sun. Why was she not satisfied? What more did she want? There was nothing in the world of peace that she did not already have and have in abundance.

"We boast of the extraordinary pace of American advancement. We show with pride the statistics of the increase of our industries and of the population of our cities. Well, those statistics do not match the recent statistics of Germany. Her old cities took on youth grew faster than any American cities ever grew; her old industries opened their eyes and saw a new world, and went out for its conquest; and yet the authorities of Germany were not satisfied. You have one part of the answer to the question why she was not satisfied in her methods of competition. There is no important industry in Germany upon which the government has not laid its hands to direct it, and, when necessary, control it.

"You have only to ask any man whom you meet, who is familiar with the conditions that prevailed before the war in the matter of international competition, to find out the methods of competition which the German manufacturers and exporters used under the patronage and support of the government of Germany. You will find that they were the same sort of competition that we have tried to prevent by law within our own borders. If they could not sell their goods cheaper than we could sell ours, at a profit to themselves, they could get a subsidy from the government which made it possible to sell them cheaper anyhow; and the conditions of competition were thus controlled in large measure by the German government itself. But that did not satisfy the German government.

"All the while there was lying behind its thought, in its dreams of the future, a political control which would enable it in the long run to dominate the labor and the industry of the world. They were not content with success by superior achievement; they wanted success by authority. I suppose very few of you have thought much about the Berlin-Bagdad Railway. The Berlin to Bagdad Railway was constructed in order to run the threat of force down the flanks of industrial undertakings of half a dozen other countries, so that when German competition came in it would not be resisted too far—because there was always the possibility of getting German armies into the heart of that country quicker than any other armies could get there. Look at the map of Europe now. Germany, in thrusting upon us again and again the discussion of peace, talks about what? Talks about Belgium, talks about Northern France, talks about Alsace-Lorraine. Well, those are deeply interesting subjects to us and to them, but they are not talking about the heart of the matter.

"Take the map and look at it. Germany has absolute control of Austria-Hungary, practical control of the Balkan States, control of Turkey, control of Asia Minor. I saw a map in which the whole thing was printed in appropriate black the other day, and the black stretched all the way from Hamburg to Bagdad—the bulk of German power inserted into the heart of the world. If it can keep that, she has kept all that her dreams contemplated when the war began. If she can keep that, her power can disturb the world as long as she keeps it—always provided, for I feel bound to put this proviso in, always provided the present influences that control the German Government continue to control it.

"I believe that the spirit of freedom can get into the hearts of Germans and find as fine a welcome there as it can find in any other hearts. But the spirit of freedom, does not suit the plans of the pan-Germans. Power cannot be used with concentrated force against free peoples if it is used by free people.

"You know how many intimations come to us from one of the Central Powers that it is more anxious for peace than the chief Central Power; and you know that it means that the people in that Central Power know that if the war ends as it stands, they will in effect themselves be vassals of Germany notwithstanding that their populations are compounded with all the people of that part of the world and notwithstanding the fact that they do not wish in their pride and proper spirit a nationality to be so absorbed and dominated.

"Germany is determined that the

political power of the world shall be long to her. There have been such ambitions before. They have been in part realized. But never before have those ambitions been based upon so exact and precise and scientific a plan of domination.

"May I not say that it is amazing to me that any group of people should be so ill-informed as to suppose, as some groups in Russia apparently suppose, that any reforms planned in the interests of the people can live in the presence of a Germany powerful enough to undermine or overthrow them by intrigue or force. Any body of free men that compounds with the present German government is compounding for its own destruction. But that is not the whole of the story. Any man in America, or anywhere else who supposes that the free industry and enterprise of the world can continue if the pan-German plan is achieved and German power fastened upon the world, is as fatuous as the dreamers of Russia.

"What I am opposed to is not the feeling of the pacifists, but their stupidity. My heart is with them, but my mind has a contempt for them. I want peace, but I know how to get it, and they do not.

"You will notice that I sent a friend of mine, Col. House, to Europe, who is as great a lover of peace as any man in the world; but I did not send him on a peace mission; I sent him to take part in a conference as to how the war was to be won, and he knows, as I know, that that is the way to get peace, if you want it for more than a few minutes.

"All of this is a preface to the conference that I referred to with regard to what we are going to do. If we are true friends to freedom—our own or anybody else's—we will see that that power of this country and the productivity of this country is raised to its absolute maximum and that absolutely nobody is allowed to stand in the way of it.

"When I say that nobody is allowed to stand in the way, I don't mean that they shall be prevented by the power of the government, but by the power of the American spirit. Our duty, if we are to do this great thing and show America to be what we believe her to be, the greatest hope and energy of the world, then must be to stand together night and day until the job is finished.

"While we are fighting for freedom we must see, among other things, that labor is free; and that means a number of interesting things. It means not only that we must do what we have declared our purpose to do see that the conditions of labor are not rendered more onerous by the war—but also that we shall see to it that the instrumentalities by which the conditions of labor are improved are not blocked or checked. That we must do. That has been the matter about which I have taken pleasure in conferring from time to time with your president, Mr. Gompers. And, if I may be permitted to do so, I want to express my admiration of his patriotic courage his large vision and his statesmanlike sense of what is to be done. I like to lay my mind alongside of a mind that knows how to pull in harness. The horses that kick over the traces will have to be put in a corral.

"Now to 'stand together' means that nobody must interrupt the processes of our energy, if the interruption can possibly be avoided without the absolute invasion of freedom. To put it concretely, that means this: Nobody has a right to stop the processes of labor until all the methods of conciliation and settlement have been exhausted; and I might as well say right here that I am talking to you alone. You sometimes stop the courses of labor, but there are others who do the same, and I believe that I am speaking of my own experiences not only but of the experience of others when I say that you are more reasonable in a large number of cases than the capitalists.

"I am not saying things to them personally yet, because I haven't had a chance. But they have to be said, not in any spirit of criticism, because I would like to see all the critics reported. But in order to clear the atmosphere and come down to business everybody on both sides has got to transact business and the settlement is never impossible when both sides want to do the square and right thing. Moreover, a settlement is always hard to avoid when the parties can be brought face to face. I can differ with a man much more radically when he is not in the room than I can when he is in the room, because then the awkward thing is that he can come back at me and answer what I say. It is always dangerous for a man to have the floor entirely to himself. And, therefore, we must insist in every instance that the parties come into each other's presence and there discuss the issues between them.

"Therefore, my counsel to you is this: Let us show ourselves Americans by showing that we do not want to go off in separate camps or groups

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by ourselves, but that we want to cooperate with all other classes and all other groups in a common enterprise, which is to release the spirits of the world from bondage.

"I would be willing to set that up as the final test of an American. That is the meaning of democracy. I have been very much distressed, my fellow citizens, by some of the things that have happened recently. The mob spirit is displaying itself here and there in this country. I have sympathy with what some men are saying, but I have no sympathy with the men that take their punishment into their own hands, and I want to say to every man who does join such a mob that I do not recognize him as worthy of the free institutions of the United States. * * * And so I want to utter my earnest protest against any manifestations of the spirit of lawlessness anywhere or in any cases.

"Why, gentlemen, look what it means: We claim to be the greatest democratic people in the world and democracy means, first of all, that we can govern ourselves. If our men have not self-control, then, they are not capable of the great thing which we call democratic government. A man who takes the law into his hands is not the right man to cooperate in any form of or development of law and institution. And some of the processes by which the struggle between capital and labor is carried on are processes that come very near to taking the law into your own hands. I do not mean for a moment to compare them with what I have just been speaking of, but I want you to see that they are mere graduations of the unwillingness to cooperate and the fundamental lesson of the whole situation is that we must not only take common counsel, but that we must yield to and obey common counsel.

"Not all of the instrumentalities for this are at hand. I am hopeful that in the very near future new instrumentalities may be organized by which we can see to it that various things that are now going on shall not go on. There are various processes of the dilution of labor and the unnecessary substitution of labor and bidding in distant markets and unfairly upsetting the whole competition of

labor, which ought not to go on—I mean now on the part of employers—and we must interject into this some instrumentality of cooperation by which the fair thing will be done all around. I am hopeful that some such instrumentalities may be devised, but whether they are or not we must use that we have, and upon every occasion where it is necessary to have such an instrumentality organized upon that occasion if necessary.

"And so, my fellow citizens, the reason that I came away from Washington is that I sometimes get lonely down there. There are so many peo-

ple in Washington who know things that are not so, and there are so few people in Washington who know anything about what the people of the United States are thinking about, I have to come away to get reminded of the rest of the country; I have to come away and talk to men who are up against the real thing and say to them: 'I am with you if you are with me.' And the only test of being with me is not to think about me personally at all, but merely to think of me as the expression for the time being of the power and dignity and hope of the United States."

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