

Opens the Campaign

President Roosevelt practically opened the campaign for the coming election with a strong letter of indorsement of the present members of congress, whom he insists, should be returned. His communication was sent to Congressman James E. Watson, of Indiana, whom he congratulated upon tendering his services to the congressional committee. The president reviews the work of congress in his letter and incidentally forecasts some of the subjects that are to be considered by the next session. His letter in full, follows:

Oyster Bay, N. Y., Aug. 18, 1906.

My Dear Mr. Watson:—I hear, through Speaker Cannon and Representative Sherman, that you have volunteered to give your services to the congressional committee for the entire campaign, without regard to the effect it may have upon your canvass in your own district; and I feel like writing you a word of congratulation and of earnest hope for the success of your efforts. If there were only partisan issues involved in this contest I should hesitate to say anything publicly in reference thereto. But I do not feel that such is the case. On the contrary, I feel that all good citizens who have the welfare of America at heart should appreciate the immense amount that has been accomplished by the present congress organized as it is, and the urgent need of keeping this organization in power. With Mr. Cannon as speaker, the house has accomplished a literally phenomenal amount of good work. It has shown a courage, good sense and patriotism such that it would be a real and serious misfortune for the country to fail to recognize. To change the leadership and organization of the house at this time means to bring confusion upon those who have been successfully engaged in the steady working out of a great and comprehensive scheme for the betterment of our social, industrial and civic conditions. Such a change would substitute a purposeless confusion, a violent and hurtful oscillation between the positions of the extreme radical and the extreme reactionary, for the present orderly progress along the lines of a carefully thought-out policy.

Compliments Congress.

The interests of this nation are as varied as they are vast. Congress must take account, not for one national need, but of many and widely different national needs; and I speak with historic accuracy when I say that not in our time has any other congress done so well in so many different fields of endeavor as the present congress has done. No congress can do everything. Still less can it, in one session, meet every need. At its first session the present congress, in addition to the many tasks it actually completed, undertook several tasks which I firmly believe it will bring to completion in its second session next winter. Among these I hope and believe that the bills to prohibit political contributions by corporations, and to lower the duties on imports from the Philippine islands, each of which has been passed by one house, will be enacted into law. I hope, and I have reason to believe, that favorable action will be taken on the bill limiting the number of hours of employment of railway employees. These and one or two other measures, the enactment of

which I have reason to hope for, are important. But far more important are the measures which have actually been passed, and as to these measures I wish to reiterate that they are not important in a merely partisan sense, but are important because they subserve the welfare of our people as a whole, of our nation as an entirety. They are important because those who enacted them into laws thereby showed themselves to be fit representatives of all good Americans.

Panama Canal.

In affairs outside of our own country our great work has been beginning to dig the Panama canal. The acquisition of the canal strip was due to the initiative of congress; and the fact that the work thereon is now being done in the most thorough and satisfactory fashion is due to the action of the present congress at the session just closed. Only this action rendered the work possible, and the heartiest acknowledgements are due to the far-seeing patriotism of those who thus made it possible. The digging of the Panama canal is the colossal engineering feat of all the ages. No task as great of the kind has ever been undertaken by any other nation. The interests banded together to oppose it were and are numerous and bitter, and most of them with a peculiarly sinister basis for their opposition. This sinister opposition rarely, indeed, ventures openly to announce its antagonism to the canal as such. Sometimes it takes the form of baseless accusation against the management, and of a demand for an investigation under circumstances which would mean indefinite delay. Sometimes it takes the form of determined opposition to the adoption of plans which will enable the work to be done not merely in the best but in the quickest possible way. Had congress

been either timid or corrupt, and had not the leaders of congress shown the most far-sighted resolution in the matter, the work of building the canal would never have been begun or, if begun, would now have halted. The opposition even now being made by the ratification of the Santo Domingo treaty, which is one more step in the efforts to make peaceful and secure the waters through which the route of the canal leads; the constant effort to delay, on one pretext and another, the actual work on the canal—all prove how essential it is that if the American people desire the Panama canal to be built in speedy and efficient fashion they should uphold the hands of those who, in the present congress, have so effectively championed this work.

No less praiseworthy has been the attitude of this congress in continuing to build and maintain, on a high plane of efficiency, the United States navy.

Business Use of Wealth.

Our external affairs are important, but our internal affairs are even more important; and no other congress for many a long year has, as regards the betterment of our internal affairs, so much and such excellent work to its credit. The tremendous social and industrial changes in our nation have rendered evident the need of a larger exercise by the national government of its power to deal with the business use of wealth, and especially of corporate wealth, in interstate business. It is not too much to say that the course of congress within the last few years, and the hearty agreement between the executive and legislative departments of the nation in taking the needed action each within its own

sphere, have resulted in the nation for the first time definitely entering upon the career of proper performance of duty in these matters. The task is peculiarly difficult, because it is one in which the fanatical or foolish extremist, and the reactionary, whether honest or dishonest, play into one another's hands; and they thereby render it especially hard to secure legislative and executive action which shall be thorough-going and effective, and yet which shall not needlessly jeopardize the business prosperity which we all share, even though we do not all share it with as much equality as we are striving to secure. It is a very easy thing to play the demagogue in this matter, to confine one's self merely to denouncing the evils of wealth, and to advocate, often in vague language, measures so sweeping that, while they would entirely fail to correct the evils aimed at they would undoubtedly succeed in bringing down the prosperity of the nation with a crash. It is also easy to play the part of the mere obstructionist; to decline to recognize the great evils of the present system, and to oppose any effort to deal with them in rational fashion—thereby strengthening immensely the hands of those who advocate extreme and foolish measures. But it is not easy to do as the present congress and its immediate predecessors have done; that is, sternly to disregard alike the self-interest of those who have profited by the present evils, and the wild clamor of those who care less to do away with them than to make a reputation with the unthinking of standing in extreme opposition to them. But this is precisely what the present congress has done. Instead of enacting anti-trust laws which were either so vague or so sweeping as completely to defeat their own subjects, it has given us an interstate commerce law which will enable us to exercise in thorough fashion a supervision over the common-carriers of this country, so as, while scrupulously safeguarding their proper interests, to prevent them from charging excessive rates; to prevent their favoring one man at the expense of a weak man; and require them to be fully accountable to the public for the service which, to their own profit, they render the public. The previous congress, by the enactment of the Elkins law and by the creation of the department of commerce and labor, including the bureau of corporations, had enabled us to make great strides in advance along the path of thus bringing the use of wealth in business under the supervision and regulation of the national government—for, in actual practice, it has proved a sham and pretense to say that the several states can thus supervise and regulate it. The strides taken by the present congress have been even longer in the right direction. The enactment of the pure food bill and the passage of the bill which rendered effective the control of the government over the meat-packing industries are really along the same general line as the passage of the interstate commerce law, and are second only to it in importance.

Conservatism vs. Radicalism.

Perhaps the peculiar merit of these laws is best shown by the fact that while they have aroused the deepest anger of the reactionaries, of the men who make a fetish of wealth, they have not satisfied the unwise extremists; and the present congress, in achieving this merit, has acted in the exact spirit of Abraham Lincoln, who was never to be frightened out of go-

ing forward by the cries of those who feared progress, nor yet to be hurried into precipitate advance by the demands of the crude-thinking, though often well-meaning, men who are not accustomed soberly to distinguish between phrase-making and action. To the men who come in the latter category all we need say is to bid them possess their souls in peace. They have advocated action; but we have taken action; and the fact that this action has been sober and temperate has been in no small degree the cause of its far-reaching efficiency. To the former class—to the reactionaries, who seem to fear that to deal in proper fashion with the abuses of property is somehow an attack upon property—we would recall the words of Edmund

Burke: "If wealth is obedient and laborious in the service of virtue and public honor, then wealth is in its place and has its use. But if this order is changed and honor is to be sacrificed to the conservation of riches, riches, which have neither eyes nor hands nor anything truly vital in them, cannot long survive the well-being of . . . their legitimate masters. . . . If we command our wealth we shall be rich and free. If our wealth commands us we are poor indeed."

New Labor Laws.

In addition to thus dealing with the proper control of capitalistic wealth, congress has also taken important steps in securing to the wage-workers certain great rights. At the session that has just closed, an employers' liability law was enacted which puts the national government in its proper place as regards such legislation. An eight-hour law was already on the statute books; but, as is almost inevitable with such laws, there was at first great confusion as to whose duty it was among the different public officials to enforce it. This confusion has now been remedied and the law is in process of thorough enforcement. If this enforcement demonstrates the need of additional legislation to make this eight-hour law effective, I shall ask for such legislation. I may add that next year I shall ask congress to put in the permanent form of law the provision I have made by executive order for securing to the wage-workers under the government half-holidays during the summer months, just as regular holidays are now secured by law for the salaried clerical workers in the classified service. No congress has ever more clearly shown its practical appreciation of the fact that welfare of the wage-workers, and the welfare of the tillers of the soil, make the real basis of the welfare of the nation as a whole. We will do everything that can be done to further the interest of the farmer and the wage-worker; and this declaration is subject only to one reservation—which is, that for no man, and no body of men, will we do anything that is wrong.

Urges Square Deal for All.

Our constant aim is to do justice to every man, and to treat each man as by his own actions he shows that he deserves to be treated. We favor the organization of labor, as we favor the organization of capital; but on condition that organized labor and organized capital alike act in a spirit of justice and fair dealing, and with due regard to both the letter and the spirit of the law. We heartily favor trades unions, and we recognize in them, as in corporations, when properly conducted, indispensable instruments in the economic life of the present day; but