

President Taft's Message to Sixty-First Congress

Washington, Dec. 6.—Following is the president's message to the Senate and House of Representatives:—During the past year the foreign relations of the United States have continued on a basis of friendship and good understanding.

"The year has been notable as witness to the peaceful settlement of important international controversies before the permanent court of the Hague.

"Arbitration of the fisheries dispute between the United States and Great Britain, which has been the source of nearly continuous diplomatic correspondence since the fisheries convention of 1913, has given an award which is satisfactory to both parties. This arbitration is particularly noteworthy because it is the first arbitration held under the general arbitration act of April 4, 1908, between the United States and Great Britain and disposes of a controversy the settlement of which has required every other resource of diplomacy and which for nearly 30 years has been the cause of friction between two countries whose commercial interest lies in maintaining the most friendly and cordial relations with each other.

"The United States was ably represented before the tribunal. I should be wanting in proper recognition of a patriotic service if I did not refer to the work of the United States and Great Britain and the signal ability and force of argument presented by the court in support of our case by Edwin Root.

"Appreciating the enlightened tendencies of modern times, the congress at this last session passed a law providing for the appointment of a commission of five members to be appointed by the president of the United States to consider the expediency of utilizing existing international agencies for the purpose of limiting the armaments of the nations of the world by international agreement, and of constituting a combined navy of the world in a combined international force for the preservation of universal peace.

"I have not as yet made appointments in this commission because I have invited and am waiting the expressions of foreign governments as to their willingness to cooperate with us in the appointment of similar commissions or representatives who would meet with our commissioners and by joint action seek to make their work effective.

"Several important treaties have been negotiated with Great Britain in the past 12 months. A diplomatic agreement has been reached regarding the arbitration of pecuniary claims which each government has against the other.

"The Near East.—Turkey.—To return the visit of the special embassy sent to announce the accession of his majesty, Mehmet V., emperor of the Ottomans, I sent to Constantinople a special ambassador who was charged with the duty of expressing to the Ottoman government the value attached by the government of the United States to increased and more important relations between the countries and the desire of the United States to contribute to the large economic and commercial development due to the new regime in Turkey.

"The rapid development now beginning in that ancient empire, and the marked progress and increased commercial importance of Bulgaria, Roumania and Serbia, make it particularly opportune that the possibilities of American commerce in the near east should receive due attention.

"The Far East.—The center of interest in far eastern affairs during the past year has again been China. "It is gratifying to note that the negotiations for a loan to the Chinese government for the construction of the trunk railway lines from Hankow southward to Canton and westward through the Yangtze valley, known as the Hukang loan, were concluded by the representatives of the various financial groups in May last, and that the agreement approved by their respective governments. The agreement, already initiated by the Chinese government, is now awaiting formal ratification. The basis of the settlement of the terms of this loan was one of equality and reciprocity between America, Great Britain, France and Germany in regard to financing the loan and supplying materials for the proposed railways and their future branches.

"The application of the principle underlying the policy of the United States in regard to the Hukang loan, viz. that of the internationalization of the foreign interest in such of the railways of China as may be financed by foreign countries, was suggested on a broader scale by the secretary of state in a proposal for internationalization and commercial neutralization of all the railways of Manchuria. While the principle that led to the proposal of this government was generally admitted by the powers, to whom it was addressed, the governments of Russia and Japan apprehended practical difficulties in the execution of the larger plan which prevented their ready adherence. The question of constructing this Chinese railway by means of an international loan is, however, still the subject of friendly discussion by the interested parties.

"The policy of this government in these matters has been brought about by a desire to make use of American capital in the loan to China as an instrument in the promotion of China's welfare and material prosperity without prejudice to her legitimate rights as an independent political power.

"This policy has recently found further exemplification in the assistance given by this government to the negotiations between China and a group of American bankers for a loan of \$50,000,000 to be employed chiefly in currency reform. A preliminary agreement between the American group and

China has been made covering the loan. "The success of this loan and the contemplated reforms which are of greater importance to the commercial interests of the United States and the civilized world at large, it is realized that an expert will be necessary and the government has received assurance from China that such an adviser, who shall be an American, will be engaged.

"The year has further been marked by two important international agreements relating to far eastern affairs. In the Russo-Japanese agreement relating to Manchuria, signed July 4, 1910, this government was gratified to note an assurance of continued peaceful relations in that region and the reaffirmation of the policies with respect to China to which the United States, together with all other interested powers, are alike solemnly committed.

"The treaty annexing Korea to the empire of Japan, promulgated August 22, 1910, marks the final step in a process of control of the ancient empire by her powerful neighbor which has been in progress for several years past. In communicating the fact of annexation to the Japanese government gave to the government of the United States assurance of the full protection of the rights of American citizens in Korea under the changed conditions.

"Latin America.—Under this head the president refers to the centennial anniversary of Mexican independence; the fourth pan-American conference at Buenos Ayres and the work of the international bureau of American republics. He continues:

"During the past year the republic of Nicaragua has been the scene of intense struggles. General Zelaya was throughout his career the disturber of Central America and opposed every plan for the promotion of peace and friendly relations between the five republics. When the people of Nicaragua were finally driven into rebellion by his lawless actions he violated the laws of war by unprovoked execution of two American citizens. This and other offenses made it the duty of the American government to take measures with a view to ultimate reparation and for the safeguarding of its interests. American forces were sent to both coasts of Nicaragua to be in readiness should occasion arise to protect Americans and their interests and remained there until the year was over. These events, together with Zelaya's continued execution of his policy of terror, brought him so clearly to the bar of public opinion that he was forced to resign and to take refuge abroad. Since his complete overthrow of the Madriz government and the occupation of the capital by the forces of the revolution all factions have united to maintain public order and as a result of discussion with an agent of this government sent to Nicaragua at the request of the provisional government, comprehensive plans are being made for the future welfare of Nicaragua including the rehabilitation of public credit.

"It gratifies me exceedingly to announce that the representative republic some months ago placed with American manufacturers a contract for the construction of two battleships and certain additional naval equipment.

"The new tariff law in section 2, respecting the maximum and minimum tariffs of the United States, which provisions came into effect on April 1, 1910, imposed upon the president the duty of determining prior to that date whether or not any unduly discrimination existed against the United States and its products in any country of the world with which we sustained commercial relations.

"To the United States and other countries apparent unduly discrimination against American commerce were found to exist. These discriminations were removed by negotiation. Prior to April 1, 1910, when the maximum and minimum tariff law was in effect, it was to come into operation with respect to imports from all those countries in whose favor no proclamation applying the minimum tariff should be issued by the president. 134 such proclamations were issued.

"This series of proclamations embraced the entire commercial world and hence the maximum tariff of the United States could be given universal application. In testimony to the satisfactory condition of our trade relations with foreign countries.

"Marked advantages to the commerce of the United States were obtained through these tariff settlements. In its general operation this section of the tariff law has thus far proved a guaranty of continued commercial peace.

"The policy of broader and closer trade relations with the dominion of Canada which was initiated in the adjustment of the maximum and minimum provisions of the tariff act of August, 1909, has proved mutually beneficial. The justness of the tariff for the readjustment of the commercial relations of the two countries. The reciprocity on the part of the dominion government of the settlement which was followed in October by the suggestion that it would be glad to have negotiations resumed. In accordance with this suggestion the secretary of state, by my direction, dispatched two representatives of the department of state as special commissioners, to Ottawa to confer with representatives of the dominion government.

"The negotiations were conducted on both sides in spirit of mutual accommodation. The conferences were adjourned to be resumed in Washington in January, when it is hoped that the aspirations of both governments for a mutually advantageous measure of reciprocity will be realized.

"All these tariff negotiations so essential to our commerce and industry revolve on the department of state.

"The Argentine battleship contracts like the subsequent important one for Argentine railway equipment and those for Cuban government vessels were secured for our manufacturers largely through the good offices of the department of state.

"The efforts of that department to secure for citizens of the United States equal opportunity in the markets of the world and to expand American commerce have been most successful.

"Congress is urged to continue to support the state department in its endeavors to further trade expansions. I call attention to this subject without emphasizing the necessity of such legislation as will make possible and convenient the establishment of American banks and branches of American banks in foreign countries. Only by such means can our foreign trade be favorably influenced.

"The completion of the Panama canal will find this government and commercial nation unable to avail itself in international maritime business of this great contribution to the means of the world's commercial intercourse.

"Commercial Aspect.—"Quite aside from the commercial aspect, unless we create a merchant marine, where can we find the sea faring population necessary as a natural navy and where could we find in case of war the transports and subsidiary vessels without which a naval fleet is arms without a body? For many reasons I cannot too strongly urge upon congress the passage of a measure by mail subsidy or other subvention adequate to guarantee the establishment and rapid development of an American merchant marine, the restoration of the American flag to its ancient place upon the seas.

"I strongly commend to the favorable action of the congress the enactment of a law applying to the establishment of the diplomatic and consular service.

"The excellent results which have attended the partial application of civil service principles to the diplomatic and consular services are an earnest object of the benefit of the government by a wide and more permanent extension of those principles to both branches of the foreign service.

"During many years past appeals have been made from time to time to congress in favor of government ownership of railroads and navigation premises abroad. The acquisition by the government of such suitable residences and offices for its diplomatic offices is so important and necessary to an improved diplomatic service that I have no hesitations in urging upon the congress the passage of a measure that would authorize the gradual and annual acquisition of premises for diplomatic employes.

"Treasury Department.—"Estimates for next year's expenses: Every effort has been made by each department chief to reduce the estimated cost of his department for the ensuing fiscal year ending June 30, 1912. These estimates thus make present the smallest sum which will maintain the departments, bureaus and offices of the government and meet its other obligations under authorized contracts. A cut of these estimates would result in embarrassing the executive branch of the government. This remark does not apply to the river and harbor estimates except to those for expenses of maintenance and the meeting of obligations under authorized contracts, nor does it apply to the public building bill nor to the navy building program.

"The final estimates for the year ending June 30, 1912, as they have been sent to the treasury on November 20 of this year for the ordinary expenses of the government, including those for public buildings, rivers and harbors and the navy building program amount to \$650,494,013.12. This is \$2,164,387.36 less than the appropriations for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1911. It is \$16,833,154.44 less than the total estimates including supplemental estimates submitted to congress by the treasury for the year 1911, and is \$5,744,659.19 less than the original estimates submitted by the treasury for 1911. The figures do not include the appropriations for the Panama canal, the policy in respect to which ought to be, and is, to spend as much each year as can be economically and effectively expended in order to complete the canal as promptly as possible. It will be noted that the estimates for the Panama canal for the ensuing year are more than \$55,000,000, an increase of \$20,000,000 over the amount appropriated for this year. The difference due to the fact that estimates for 1912 include something over \$19,000,000 for the fortification of the canal. Against the estimated expenditures of \$630,494,013.12, the treasury has estimated receipts for next year \$580,000,000, making a probable surplus of ordinary receipts over ordinary expenditures of about \$50,000,000, or taking into account the estimates for the Panama canal which are \$55,280,447.48, it will mean a deficit for the next year of about \$7,000,000 if congress shall concur in the estimates for the canal. The cost of the fortification of the canal is about \$19,000,000."

"Antiquated Methods.—The president refers to the antiquated methods in vogue in the treasury department and says that the head of that department has for two years been devoting his time to bringing the department up to date, eliminating waste and reducing the force largely in the interest of economy. By the detection of frauds in weighing sugar upwards of \$4,000,000 have been recovered from the beneficiaries of the fraud and an entirely new system of weighing from the possibility of such a fraud has been devised. The department has perfected the method of collecting duties at the port of New York so as to save the government upwards of \$10,000,000 or \$11,000,000.

"There are entirely too many customs districts and too many customs collectors. These districts should be consolidated and the collectors in charge of them should be abolished or treated as branch offices in accordance with the plan of the treasury department, which will be presented for the consideration of congress.

"An investigation of the appraising system now in vogue in New York City has shown a sacrifice of the interests of the government by under appraisement, which is in the course of being remedied by reorganization and the employment of competent experts.

"Improvements.—"Very great improvement has been made in respect to the mints and assay offices. There is an opportunity for further economy in the abolition of several mints and assay offices that have not become necessary.

"In the bureau of engraving and printing great economies have been effected.

"In our public buildings we still suffer from the method of appropriation which has been so much criticized in connection with our rivers and harbors. Some method should be devised for controlling the supply of public buildings so that they will harmonize with the actual needs of the government. Not only buildings appropriated for by congress which are not needed and buildings left unappropriated for by congress which are needed, but when it comes to the actual construction there has been in the past too little study of the building plans and sites with a view to the actual needs of the government. The last public building bill carried authorization for the estimated expenditure of \$23,011,600, and I approved it because of the many good features it contained. But it was drawn upon an idea that ought to be abandoned. It seems to me that the wiser method of preparing a public building bill would be the preparation of a report by a commission of government experts whose duty it should be to report to congress the government's needs in the way of the construction of public buildings, with the added function of including in their recommendations the relative importance of the various projects.

"Revisions.—"This seems a proper place to consider the operation of the existing tariff bill, which became a law August 6, 1909.

"As an income-producing measure the existing tariff bill has never been exceeded by any customs bill in the history of the country.

"The corporation excise tax, proportioned income, has worked well. The tax has been easily collected. Its prompt payment indicates that the incidence of the tax has not been heavy. It offers, moreover, an opportunity for knowledge by the government of the general condition and business of all corporations, and that means by far the most important part of the business of the country. In the original act provision was made for the publication of returns. This provision was subsequently amended by congress, and the matter left to the regulation of the president. I have decided the issue of the needed regulations.

"The Payne Tariff Act.—"The schedules of the rates of duty in the Payne tariff act have been subjected to a great deal of criticism, some of it just more of it unfounded, and much misrepresentation. The act was adopted in pursuance of a promise by the party which is responsible for it that a customs bill should be a tariff for the protection of home industries, the measure of the protection to be the difference between the cost of production of the imported article abroad and the cost of producing it at home, together with such addition to that difference as might give a reasonable profit to the home producer. The basis for the criticism of this tariff is that in respect to a number of the schedules the declared measure was not followed, but a higher division retained or inserted by way of undue discrimination in favor of certain industries and measures. Little, if any, of the criticism of the tariff has been directed against the protective principle above stated; but the main body of the criticism has been based on the charge that the attempt to conform the measure of protection was not honestly and sincerely adhered to.

"Tariff Board.—"The time in which the tariff was prepared undoubtedly was so short as to make it impossible for the congress, and its experts to acquire the information necessary strictly to conform to the declared measure. In order to avoid criticism of this kind the measure, for the purpose of more nearly conforming to the promise, congress at its last session made provision at my request for the continuance of a board created under the authority of the maximum and minimum clause of the tariff act, and authorized that board to expand the money appropriated under my direction for the ascertaining of the cost of the production at home and abroad of the various articles included in the schedules of the tariff. The tariff board thus appointed has been diligent in preparing itself for the necessary investigations. The hope of those who have advocated the use of this board for tariff purposes is that the question of the rate advance imposed shall become more of a business question and less of a political question to be ascertained by experts of long training and accurate knowledge. The tariff board has been diligent in its preparation and put in operation will be avoided by treating the schedules one by one as occasion shall arise for an increase in rates, and only after it is reported. It is not likely that the board will be able to make a report during the present session of the present congress because a proper examination involves an enormous amount of detail and a great deal of care; but I hope to be able at the opening of the new congress, or at least during the session of that congress to bring to its attention the facts in regard to the schedules in the present tariff that may prove to need amendment.

"Carrying Out Plan.—"The carrying out of this plan of course involves the full cooperation of congress in limiting the consideration in tariff matters to one schedule at a time, because if a proposed amendment to a tariff bill is to involve a complete consideration of all the schedules and another revision, then we shall only repeat the evil from which the business of this country has in times past suffered most grievously by stagnation and uncertainty, pending a resettlement of a law affecting all business directly or indirectly, and the effect of which no wise business man would ignore in new projects and new investments. I cannot too much emphasize the importance and benefit of the plan above given for the treatment of the tariff. It facilitates the removal of noteworthy defects in an important law without a disturbance of business and prosperity, which is even more important to the happiness and comfort of the people than the elimination of instances of injustice in the tariff.

"The inquiries which the members of the tariff board made during the last summer into the methods pursued by other governments with reference to the fixing of tariffs and the determination of their effect upon trade, shows that such government maintains an office or bureau, the officers and employees of which have made their life work the study of tariff matters, and cost of articles imported and the effect of the tariff upon trade, so that whenever a change is thought to be necessary in the tariff law this office

"The source of the most reliable information as to the propriety of the change and its effect.

"I am strongly convinced that we need in this government just such an office, and that it can be secured by making the tariff board already appointed a permanent tariff commission with its duties, its powers and its emoluments as it may seem wise to give. It has been proposed to enlarge the board from three to five. The present number is convenient but I do not know that an increase of two members would be objectionable.

"Whether or not the protective policy is to be continued and the degree of protection to be accorded to our home industries are questions which the people must decide through their chosen representatives; but whatever policy is adopted, it is clear that the necessary legislation should be based on an impartial, thorough and continuous study of the facts.

"Banking and Currency Reform.—"The method of impartial, scientific study by experts as a preliminary to legislation, which I hope to see ultimately adopted as our fixed national policy with respect to the tariff, rivers and harbors, waterways and public buildings, is also being pursued by the nonpartisan monetary commission of congress. An exhaustive and most valuable study of the banking and currency systems of foreign countries has been completed.

"A comparison of the business methods and institutions of our powerful and successful rivals with our own method, is sure to be of immense value.

"I urge the importance of a nonpartisan and disinterested study and consideration of our banking and currency system. It is idle to dream of commercial expansion and of the development of our national trade on a scale that measures up to our matchless opportunities unless we can lay a solid foundation in a sound and enduring banking and currency system. The problem is not partisan, is not sectional—it is national.

"War Department.—"The army now numbers about 80,000 men, of which about 18,000 are engaged in the coast artillery.

"The general plan for an army of the United States at peace should be that of a skeleton organization with an excess of trained officers and thus capable of rapid enlargement by enlistments, to be supplied in emergency by the national guard and a volunteer force.

"There is now pending in congress a bill repealing the recent volunteer act and making provision for the organization of volunteer forces in time of war.

"(Continued on Page Fifteen.)

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"Warmed into life by the sun shining on Southern cotton fields, nurtured by rain and dew, the cotton plant concentrates in its seed that life-giving and life-sustaining quality which is the basis of Cottolene. From Cottonfield to kitchen, human hands never touch the oil from which Cottolene is made. It is a product of Nature.

"Lard comes from the fat of the hog—often impure, always indigestible. Cottolene, on the contrary is pure, and jelly made from the juice of choicest fruit is not more easily digested than this product of the oil extracted from the kernel of the cotton seed.

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