

ferred to the President's speech simply as a gymnastic exercise.

Mr. Ashurst of Arizona, a Democrat, and Mr. Borah of Idaho, a Progressive Republican, were among those who felt too strongly on the subject to express themselves at all.

Senator O'Gorman of New York, who at first declined to discuss the matter, had something to say later that showed him to be unbending in his opposition to the repeal.

"I yield to no one in respect for the President's motives or patriotism," said Mr. O'Gorman, "and I withhold my approval of his recommendation with regret. Believing his proposal unwise, unnecessary and destructive of the best interests of the American people, my duty as a Senator of the United States offers me no alternative but resistance to the proposed repeal."

Ex-President Taft, Philander C. Knox, ex-Secretary of State, Oscar W. Underwood, Democratic leader in the House of Representatives, and Richard Olney, ex-Secretary of State in Mr. Cleveland's Administration, have asserted that in their opinion the exemption of coastwise vessels from the payment of tolls in the Panama Canal does not violate the Hay-Pauncefote treaty. These gentlemen are lawyers of recognized ability, and the President does not express an opinion to the contrary.

Cites English Lawyers' Views.

He asserts, however, that no one outside of the United States defends our course. If he will read the London Law Review he will learn that even English lawyers have conceded that the tolls exemption is in harmony with our treaty obligations. German and other Continental writers have expressed the same view. Moreover, this opinion is shared by ex-President Roosevelt, in whose Administration the Hay-Pauncefote treaty was framed and adopted.

The President states that the tolls exemption constitutes a mistaken economic policy, but I prefer to accept his judgment, announced when he was a candidate for the Presidency, when he pointed out the obvious economic advantages of this legislation. The platform of the Democratic Party, as well as the platform of the Progressive Party, declared that American ships engaged in coastwise trade should pay no tolls to the end that cheap transportation by water will enforce cheaper transportation by the competing trans-continental railroads.

There has been a systematic effort to confuse the real issue in this controversy. The word 'vessels' as used in the treaty means vessels engaged in over-seas trade. It does not embrace vessels engaged in local or domestic trade. This was the interpretation placed by Great Britain for more than sixty years upon precisely similar language employed in the treaty of 1815. The Supreme Court of the United States in *Olsen vs. Smith*, 195, U. S., recognized the propriety of this interpretation.

We do not exempt American ships engaged in foreign trade. Under the Panama Canal act we treat them as we treat foreign ships. We exempt only coastwise shipping and our right to do so is substantially recognized by the British Government in its note of Nov. 14, 1912, which states: "If the trade should be so regulated as to make it certain that only bona fide coastwise traffic which is reserved for United States vessels would be benefited by this exemption, it may be that no objection could be taken." As we limit the exemption to bona fide coastwise traffic, it is apparent that we are disturbed over a claim which Great Britain concedes to be groundless.

If we must purchase foreign friendship, the price exacted must not involve us in national dishonor and repudiation of party pledges upon which this Administration secured office."

Underwood Still Opposed.

Representative Oscar W. Underwood, Democratic floor leader, refused to make any comment, but said he intended to cast his vote against the repeal. He will also deliver a speech in the House in favor of exempting American coastwise vessels.

The Republican floor leader, Representative Mann, likewise declined to make comment on the message, but is opposed to the repeal bill, and will vote against it.

Talking among themselves members of the House split into two groups. One group felt that the President's grounds for what he asks were ample and sufficient. The other group felt that the President had failed to convince them that there should be such a repeal. But everybody agreed that, as a result of the President's address the Sims bill for the repeal of the exemption clause would in all probability pass.

Among Democratic members who have reversed their positions as a result of President Wilson's appeal is Representative Andrew J. Peters of Massachusetts, a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, who said to-day:

"Although I voted for free tolls two years ago, I am with the President for the repeal of the objectionable clause in the Panama act."

Representative Frederick C. Stevens of Minnesota, ranking Republican member of the House Interstate Commerce Committee, said:

"The President's message is a clarion call to duty. Our committee will at once report out the Sims bill and ask for a special rule to pass it. The Sims bill provides for an unqualified repeal. Chairman Adamson to-day completed his report for the majority of the committee. The minority members will have two or three days in which to make their report. It is predicted that there will not be more than 100 votes in the House against the repeal."

Representative Sims said that the message of the President made the passage of the repeal bill an absolute certainty.

A Subsidy, Says Hitchcock.

"I am in favor of repealing the discrimination," said Mr. Hitchcock, "and I would have voted against it had I been present when it passed the Senate. But I cannot agree with the reasons presented by the President. I would like to vote the repeal because discrimination is not good Democratic doctrine. It is a subsidy of ships. I realize, of course, that that argument would have meant nothing to a Republican who naturally favors subsidies, while the President's argument appeals equally to both parties. But it seems to me that it is not a good reason for a course simply that all the world desires it."

I cannot conceive of a disaster, however, so great as would arise should the Congress now refuse to support the President in the position to which he has committed himself and the country as well. Yet he has gone far beyond his authority in foreclosing the question of the arbitrability of the disputes when arbitration by the constitution itself is reserved jointly to the Senate and the Executive. He has left nothing for the Senate to do but to support him to avoid weakening his hand in all international policies. On the other side, I will add that the repeal demanded by the President will strengthen the diplomatic position of the United States in a number of controversies of a general sort by which the United States is surrounded."

"For agile and graceful cutting of a back somersault," said Mr. Smith of Michigan, "the President's speech could not be surpassed." Mr. Smith went a little further on the floor of the Senate when Mr. Cummins of Iowa called up his bill for a Presidential primary.

"Is there anything in your bill," asked Mr. Smith, "which provides for party platforms upon which candidates are to run for those high offices? I had rather hoped the bill precluded any such error. The binding effect of party platforms has long since been abandoned. A party declaration amounts to very little now. We have just listened to a distinct disavowal of the binding effect of the party platform, and I hope the bill of the Senator from Iowa (Mr. Cummins) contemplates absolute abandonment of this declaration of party principles hereafter."

Simmons Praises Message.

Senator Simmons of North Carolina, Chairman of the Committee on Finance, said:

"I think that the President's message is very clear cut and makes the duty of Senators plain. The Panama act exemption, which the President would repeal, amounts to a policy, and not a principle. If the Senate and the House fail to support the President in his proposition as outlined in his message to-day it seems to me that this country would be left in an unsupportable position, especially from the viewpoint of foreign nations. I am inclined to believe that the Senate will vote to repeal the exemption clause."

Senator Bryan of Florida says: "I voted with my party and for the pledge of my party platform on the Panama Canal Toll act. After hearing the President's message to-day I feel that it is my duty to repeal the exemption clause, although I have not quite made up my mind whether I shall do so or not. If I do support him in his efforts to have

this provision stricken from the bill, it will be from anxiety not to embarrass the President in his foreign policy rather than from any belief that the discrimination violates the treaty."

"I don't want to comment at length on the speech," said Senator Root, "but my impression is that if Congress is going to reverse its previous action in any way the proper thing is for it to repeal the discrimination altogether, and not merely avoid the issue by authorizing the President to impose tolls on American ships."

Overman to Reverse Himself.

Senator Overman of North Carolina said: "I shall reverse myself on the exemption provision. I would not have voted for the exemption of coastwise vessels in the first place if the party platform had not pledged us to it."

Senator Kern of Indiana, majority leader of the Senate, said: "It was a good message. I was Chairman of the Committee on Resolutions at Baltimore that adopted the tolls exemptions plank in the Democratic platform, and I don't want to animadvert against something for which I was partly responsible. But if I vote to reverse myself on the tolls question it will not be because I think I was wrong in the first place. I am still absolutely convinced that it violates no treaties and is good Democratic doctrine. But in order to help the President carry out his foreign policies I think I shall support him, although I have not quite made up my mind. The cogent part of the President's message was his plea for the United States to give the benefit of any doubt about obligations to the side of national integrity."

Senator Gallinger of New Hampshire, leader of the minority, said:

"I think the President extricated himself from an awkward situation with remarkable skill. But there's nothing in his international argument. The situation confronting the United States is simply a case of bluff on the part of certain countries. They have won every diplomatic encounter with us, and they are trying to worst us now."

Senator Shively, Acting Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said he was assured President Wilson's reference to "other matters" meant all foreign matters confronting the Government.

"The Administration has inherited many foreign problems," he said, "and it is necessary that our foreign relations be readjusted. That is what I think the President had in mind."

Representative Knowland of California, Republican, issued a statement asserting that, "because of the failure of a foreign policy, and to please nations that are our commercial rivals, the Government's policy must be reversed, Congress turn a somersault, and this country humiliated in the eyes of the world." He added that in a speech in the pre-election campaign the President had said, referring to the Baltimore free tolls plank: "Our platform is not molasses to catch flies; it means business; men who talk one way and vote another will be retired from public life."

Chairman Adamson of the House Interstate Commerce Committee, who will have charge of the repeal legislation, said the address fitted his ideas exactly.

"The President's address," he said, "means honesty at home and justice abroad. It is not true that we are surrendering to Great Britain if we repeal the free tolls clause. Myself and other Democrats took a position against this piece of rascality before England ever heard of it."

VARIED VIEWS OF CONGRESS.

Approval of Wilson's Aim Not His Reasoning—Republicans Hostile.

Special to The New York Times.

WASHINGTON, March 5.—President Wilson's appeal to Congress to-day urging the repeal of the tolls exemption clause of the Panama Canal act produced a chorus of approval from loyal supporters of the Administration. But from representative Senators of all groups came criticisms of varying degrees of severity. There was the almost unprecedented case of Democrats approving the President's general recommendation but disapproving his reasoning. Republicans were naturally the most critical, and their highest praise was for the skill and nimbleness with which, they said, the President had executed a back somersault. Among Republicans and Democrats alike there were several Senators who refused to discuss the message on the ground that they had committed themselves too far on the other side.

The most striking instances of agreement with the President's conclusions and complete disaccord with his reasoning were furnished by Mr. Kern of Indiana, Chairman of the Committee on Privileges and Elections and majority leader of the Senate, and Mr. Hitchcock of Nebraska, one of the most independent Democrats in the chamber. The minority leader, Senator Gallinger, and Mr. Smith of Michigan, a member of the Committee on Foreign Relations, were among the Republicans who re-