

In the Isthmus Canal treaty of 1901 between Great Britain and the United States, commonly known as the Hay-Pauncefote treaty, the first section of the Third Article reads:

The canal shall be free and open to the vessels of commerce and of war of all nations observing these rules, on terms of entire equality, so that there shall be no discrimination against any such nation or its citizens or subjects in respect of the conditions or charges of traffic or otherwise. Such conditions and charges of traffic shall be just and equitable.

In the act regulating the maintenance and operation of the Panama Canal, approved Aug. 24, 1912, Section 5, it is declared:

The President is hereby authorized to prescribe and from time to time change the tolls that shall be levied by the Government of the United States for the use of the Panama Canal: Provided that * * * no tolls shall be levied upon vessels engaged in the coastwise trade of the United States.

The President came yesterday before the Congress to state "his judgment, "very fully considered and maturely "formed," that this exemption is in "plain contravention of the treaty with Great Britain." Any one who will take the trouble to read the language of the treaty and that of the statute, as we have above cited them, can see that the judgment of the President is not only well founded but is indisputable. Mr. WILSON is fully justified in saying that no communication he has addressed to the Congress has carried "graver or more "far-reaching implications to the interest of the country." He points out that everywhere outside the United States the treaty and the act are interpreted as he interprets them, and urges Congress to put on one side whatever difference of opinion may exist here and live up to our obligations as they are generally read by those who are directly or indirectly interested in them. We do not see that Congress can possibly refuse an appeal so just, so wise, so plainly dictated by the highest interests of the nation, so essential to the keeping of national faith.