

# RIGHT TO CRITICISE, SAYS ROOSEVELT

In Appeal for War Speed He  
Says It Is a Duty to Ex-  
pose Inefficiency.

## INDORSES NEW WAR BILLS

**Backs Chamberlain Committee  
—Answers Stone's Attack—  
Lauds Navy's Recent Work.**

*Special to The New York Times.*

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24.—Before a crowd that packed the assembly room of the National Press Club this afternoon Colonel Theodore Roosevelt pleaded for a speeding up of the war, indorsed the efforts of Senator Chamberlain for increased efficiency in war administration, specifically approved the War Cabinet and Munitions Directorship bills, and made sharp answer to Senator Stone for his attack on himself during his speech in the Senate on Monday.

Colonel Roosevelt did not criticize President Wilson. His only reference to the President was to mention his statement while he was a professor in his work on "Congressional Government," that the country would be helpless unless Congress scrutinized the acts of the Executive and interrogated his administration. Nor did the Colonel make any attack on Secretary Baker, although he referred to illness and lack of uniforms in the army.

He insisted that there must be no partisanship in this war, but contended that it was proper to criticize where criticism would bring good results.

He urged the support of every official as long as he was efficient, but said it was just as much the duty of every one to expose those who were inefficient in the speeding up process. It was the duty to tell the truth, said the former President, and he defended his attitude as a critic by calling attention to his criticisms of the Administration in 1898 for what he regarded as shortcomings in the Spanish war.

Colonel Roosevelt held that the speeding up of shipbuilding was of vital importance, and generally called for haste in helping the Allies.

Colonel Roosevelt spoke of Senator Stone as the same man who had discussed the German vote with Bernard Riddler, voted against the declaration of war, and engaged in filibustering operations against taking action to defend ourselves.

Colonel Roosevelt said the navy had done poorly in the first six months of the war, but since October its work had been "well done."

### **A Duty to Expose Inefficiency.**

Colonel Roosevelt spoke in part as follows:

"At this time no man is a good American unless he is all American. There

**Continued on Page Four.**

**The New York Times**

Published: January 25, 1918

Copyright © The New York Times

# RIGHT TO CRITICISE, SAYS ROOSEVELT

Continued from Page One.

is no such thing now as an American with some alloy in him. Either he is straight United States or he is not United States at all. If he is not anti-German he cannot be pro-American. If he is not in favor of putting this war through to the peace of complete victory he is not a loyal American.

"Our rule should be the same for the nation as for the individual. Do not get into a fight if you possibly can avoid it. If you get in, see it through. Don't hit if it is honorably possible to avoid hitting, but never hit soft. Don't hit at all if you can help it; don't hit a man if you can honorably avoid it; but if you do hit him, put him to sleep.

"No man can be an American if he is not patriotic through and through; and at this time a man's patriotism should be absolute, and in all of our public acts it should mean an utter disregard of partisan politics. No public servant and no private man in his public relation has any business at this time to consider partisan politics. It is our duty to support every official just so long as that official does well. It is only less our duty to expose inefficiency wherever it is found and, therefore, to oppose every official who in any way falls short in his duty to speed up the war and make the strength of the United States as quickly as possible and as efficiently as possible felt in the conflict."

The Colonel here quoted from Wilson's "Congressional Government" to justify the investigations made by Congress committees. The then Prof. Wilson said:

"Unless Congress have and use every means of acquainting itself with the acts and disposition of the administrative agents of the Government, the country must be helpless to learn how it is being served, and, unless Congress both scrutinize these things and sift them by every form of discussion, the country must remain in embarrassing and crippling ignorance of every force which it is most important that it should understand and direct. The informing function of Congress should be preferred even to its legislative function."

## Answer to Senator Stone.

The Colonel then said that he was acting on this principle and he hoped every "upright servant of the people in Congress" would act upon it. He went on:

"In the two houses of Congress during the year that is just closing there has been almost no attempt to hamper the prosecution of the war by injecting partisanship. The most conspicuous exception was furnished the other day by Senator Stone of Missouri. But the partisanship was the least offensive portion of his speech. It was also a mendacious speech, but the mendacity was not the most offensive portion of the speech. The really offensive portion was that it was an attack on the interests of the United States, and, therefore, an insidious effort on behalf of Germany."

"This is the same Senator Stone who a year from last Fall was defending himself from the revelations of Bernard Kiddy as to his (Stone's) negotiations for the German vote, and his effort to persuade the Germans that he, Senator Stone, was speaking with authority when he said that the Government would only make believe to be against them, but would really be for them. This is the same Senator Stone who voted against the declaration of war last year. He is the same Senator Stone who engaged in filibustering operations against our taking action to defend ourselves—filibustering operations of the kind which drew public rebuke to those engaged in them from the President of the United States."

"Senator Stone did all he could to serve Germany against the United States by preventing the entry of the United States into the war against Germany; and he now does all he can to serve Germany by endeavoring to prevent the United States from becoming efficient in the war."

## Praises Chamberlain Committee.

"I care not a snap of my finger for the politics of the man who is doing good work at this time. It is for that reason that I have supported and shall continue to support Senator Chamberlain and his associates in the committee who have been conducting the investigation into the management of the War Department. I have followed pretty carefully the actions of that Senatorial committee. I do not believe that any of its members have been influenced in the smallest degree by partisanship."

"I believe, (no, I am going to alter that statement; I am going to put it as it should be put,) I know that the Senate Investigating Committee has rendered the highest service to this country

"There are few of the older members

here who may recollect the things I said about the Cuban campaign and the failures in the administration of the War Department. I spoke when I was Assistant Secretary of the Navy. I spoke when I was a Colonel in the army, when I was asked to report.

"I should like any man to point any difference in frankness between what I then said of the Administration which I was a part of, the party to which I belonged, and what I said during the last six months, except that I have been more moderate and guarded in the last six months."

"In an official report in connection with the army in Cuba I said it, not to hurt any one, but because it was true, and in the same way I speak of the conditions that have led to the outbreaks of spinal meningitis and the outbreaks of pneumonia, of which the most distinguished victim has been ex-Congressman Gus Gardner. I speak of that now because it is true. I spoke the truth then in order to remedy the conditions. I speak the truth now in order to remedy the conditions and for no other purpose."

## Says Navy Did Poorly for Six Months.

"It is our duty to tell the truth. If conditions are good, tell the truth. If they are bad, tell the truth. If they have been bad and become good, tell the truth."

"Take the Navy Department. In the first six months after this war opened the Navy Department showed poor work, very poor work, owing to indecision and delay—work so poor that if we had been pitted against any formidable enemy able to keep the seas we would have paid in disaster for it. Dating from about Oct. 1 there has come a remarkable change in the Navy Department. From that date to this, on the whole, the Navy Department's work has been well done."

"In standing by the Chamberlain committee, I mean that I earnestly hope that we will adopt legislation they have demanded, and enact into law the propositions for a war board and a head of the Munitions Department. I am well aware that no change in scheme of government can accomplish anything unless the right men are put in; and, after having a war board and a munitions head, if incompetent men are put in, or their powers are narrowly or loosely defined, and there is conflict among them, trouble will come in the future, just as in the past. But the proposal means that at least a proper scheme of administration will be adopted."

"At least we will recognize certain vital facts. One is the need of hurry. Nine-tenths of wisdom is being wise in time. Nine-tenths of efficiency is being efficient so quickly that the time for efficiency will not have passed before it becomes evident. It is a cruel thing and a bitter wrong to our allies to delay needlessly one day, let alone six months or a year, when the war-weary Allies are, with the blood of their best and bravest, fighting the battle to which, by every consideration of honor, we should now be sending our fighting men by the million. The prime need is the need of haste."

## Would Have Taken Locomotives.

"Second only in importance to it is the need of organization. Here in Washington you have had a good many star players, but mighty little team work."

"Take, for instance, a matter that was authoritatively called to my attention. You all know the fuel shortage. You know it has been due largely to an insufficiency in the number of locomotives, and you know that ships needed to carry food to our troops in France have been at the docks for some weeks, because they could not load on account of the failure in locomotives. There are here 200 locomotives built for the Russian Government, and the Russian Minister here, as I am informed, (and if necessary, if the question is queried, I will give my informants' names,) assented to our taking them. The Russian Minister assented two months ago, and for eight weeks we have been leisurely discussing as to whether we could, under the circumstances, take these 200 locomotives and use them. I understand that the discussion is inching along to a favorable conclusion, and that in a few days, or a week or two, we will have the locomotives. But it will be two months after we ought to have had them. What I think, of course, in my views of the proper Governmental policy, should have been done, was to take the 200 locomotives and then discuss."

"That was the course that I followed, and to which I have ever since looked back with impatient satisfaction, in reference to the Panama Canal. If you remember, Panama declared itself independent and wanted to complete the Panama Canal, and opened negotiations with us. I had two courses open. I might have taken the matter under advisement and put it before the Senate in which case we should have had a number of most able speeches on the subject. We would have had a number of very profound arguments, and they would have been going on now, and the Panama Canal would be in the dim future yet. We would have had half a century of discussion, and perhaps the

Panama Canal. I preferred we should have the Panama Canal first and the half century of discussion afterward. And now instead of discussing the canal before it was built, which would have been harmful, they merely discuss me—a discussion which I regard with benign interest."

## Vital Need of Shipping.

"Gentlemen, every man of us in the country needs to understand that the first requisite is to get the ships. There is no use whatever in preparing everything on this side of the water if we cannot get it across."

"The submarines during the last few months have destroyed a greater quantity of tonnage than is being built. If that situation is not reversed sooner or later we shall be in the direst straits to feed our Allies, to feed our own army, to send over men or munitions. Certain things should be done at once. One of the great needs in establishing the War Board is that we should establish some man who should have complete control of the shipping operations. We have excellent men engaged in ship construction, but we have no trained expert directing the shipping operations. They are conducted under three or four conflicting organizations or bureaus."

"Here I speak not only of what I know and of what you know, but of things that have been told me in the last forty-eight hours of ships sent abroad without manifests, because the excellent army officers who were suddenly plunked down in the business of sending them did not know about manifests; a ship sent over with steel rails and returning with the same steel rails for ballast; of cargoes sent over and not unloaded; of ships, needed by one department and seized by another. I could give you a concrete instance of that which they were trying to remedy just yesterday, in order to keep a ship that was needed to send over food to our soldiers."

"The big steel manufacturers should be appealed to to drop all less important work and devote their whole attention to building frames, plates and angles, the essential components of the ships."

"Let the Government supervise the work of the ship construction men. Let it see that no improper profit is allowed to the big manufacturer. Shame and disgrace to the man who makes a fortune out of this war! Allow no profiteering. Allow simply the profit necessary in order to run the business to advantage."

## Hold Workmen to Responsibility.

"So much for the employer. Now for the employe. Let the Government have it understood that in work such as the shipbuilding works, the munition works, all the work done for the Government for the purpose of aiding on the war, the employer and the employe alike are to be held to the responsibilities of the soldiers in uniform. Give them the highest honor if they do the work well; give them medals such as were given for work on the Panama Canal; do everything for them if they do the work well, and do not permit for a moment any practice on the part of the big man or the small man that interferes with doing the work well."

"Protect the laboring man in every way. See that he has full representation and is allowed to organize, that he has his share in the control in the industry and of the profit from the industry. But in return see, by governmental action, that he gives the amplest return for the protection that he receives, for the wages which he gets."

"And now, you newspaper men, tell the truth. No man is to be excused, in peace or in war, if he does not tell the truth. Punish the untruthful man. Punish him a little quicker if he belongs to the newspaper profession than to any other, because he has greater power for mischief."

"Where the work of the censor is necessary for the world efficiency of the Government, it should be continued. But it is a perversion of the censorship to interfere with the telling of the truth when the truth is a necessity for the people to know. Have it clearly understood that the telling of the full truth is to be the rule; that though it may be and will be necessary, from the standpoint of expediency, for the censor to stop certain truths from being told, that the burden of proof must always be on him to show that it is for the public interest that such truths should not be told."

"The American people is a strong people. We are told now and then that the truth would frighten our people so that they would not go on with the war. If they are such a set of weaklings and cowards, then nothing can save us. On the contrary, I believe that the full telling of the truth will wake the American people up to a sterner realization of the task that is before them, and therefore to a sterner resolve that, cost what it may, every deficiency shall be remedied, every wrong undone, every failure by Government officials turned into an achievement and a success, so that as speedily as possible we may harden our giant but soft and lazy strength, and exert it to the fullest degree necessary to bring the peace of liberty in this mighty conflict for civilization and the welfare of mankind."