

# TAKE POLITICS FROM AMBUSH SAYS WILSON

## Tells National Press Club Guests His Hobby Is Publicity in Business and Politics.

### WOOD FOR MILITARY RESERVE

#### Would Have Trained Officers in Charge of Militia and a Reserve List of ex-Soldiers.

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 31.—Gov. Woodrow Wilson of New Jersey came to Washington from Trenton this evening and told the National Press Club some of the things he thinks about the necessity and the means of divorcing business from politics. It was the second annual "hobby night" of the Press Club, an occasion on which half a dozen prominent men are invited to make ten-minute speeches about their particular hobbies. The speakers to-night were James Bryce, Ambassador from Great Britain; Franklin MacVeagh, Secretary of the Treasury; Gov. Wilson, Gen. Leonard Wood, Chief of Staff of the Army, and Dr. William H. Welsh of Johns Hopkins University. They were all entertained at dinner before the Press Club affair by Thomas Nelson Page, a member of the club, who presided during the evening.

Ambassador Bryce explained that he had no hobby which he could discuss before the Press Club, and then talked a little about the business of newspaper men in Europe and in the United States. He divided newspaper men into two classes, those who deal in facts and those who deal in views, saying that the presentation of facts is the most important and hardest work, while those who put forth their own views, provided they have talent, usually win the largest reputation.

Picking up what Mr. Bryce had said about the presentation of facts, Gov. Wilson declared that his hobby was publicity, especially of politics and the public business. Although he did not mention specifically any of the matters which have recently engaged his attention, it was plain that what he said bore directly upon just such situations and conditions that he has been having to deal with in the last few months, and that now confront him in the Governorship of New Jersey. He said:

"What we are really after in the field of politics is to drive everything into the field of facts—drive everything into the open. The root of all evil in politics is privacy and concealment. After all, when you think of the things we have been complaining of, they are summed up in this—that the people do not know, and therefore cannot control, the processes of their own politics. It is easy to speak of the standard of the public welfare; it is easy to say that every one should work for the common interest, but first of all you have got to establish the common interest, and the common interest cannot be established upon theories. It cannot be established upon views; it can be established only upon facts. Until you know how the various elements of our economic life and of our social life are related to each other you cannot find the common term. Now, when half of them are in ambush, when half of them are making their plans behind closed doors, when half of them are basing their whole effort upon private rights, then there is no means of coming at the common term at all.

"I wonder if you ever reflected that we have passed through a series of transformations or change without passing through any series of transformations of opinions or of doctrines. You know that the last thing which a man, of an English-speaking race, at any rate, changes, is his opinion. He will change his life, but he will continue to live under the terms of his old opinions. My very distinguished colleague, President Patten of Princeton, once said that it is characteristic of men of our time that they will get along with perfectly inconsistent pieces of ideas, and go on, as he quaintly expressed it, all their lives wearing a coat they cannot button up in front without splitting it in the back.

"Now, that is just about our present condition. The coat we are wearing is a coat which is based upon this old doctrine that a man may do what he will with his own, that he may build up his own private fortune in any manner that suits him, provided he does not do a direct criminal wrong to another, and it is no business of the public to intervene and determine in any degree how his private business is conducted—all that in the face of the fact that almost none of our private business can now properly be described as private business at all. Its reach and complexity have come to be such that it affects whole communities. You cannot segregate it, you cannot treat it as if it were the business of a few individuals, as if it were a property right when the effects of the property right are community changes, and therefore, we cannot button this coat down the front without splitting it down the back. We need a new coat, a new coat of doctrine, namely, that business on its present scale is the service of communities for private profit, and that it is legitimate only in proportion as it so serves; that profit cannot be legitimately built upon considerations wholly private, because no business is in its contents or effect wholly a private matter in our day.

"There is a very clear reason, in my mind, why so few newspaper men have universally influential views. It is because our newspaper men are connected with newspapers that are known not to be disengaged from private interests. If you can once establish the reputation that you are speaking, so far as your knowledge and capacity will enable you to speak, from the viewpoint of the common interest, then your views will be influential, and in proportion as they are disinterested they will be influential.

"That is the reason why my hobby, if I have any, is the hobby of publicity. I cannot imagine anything legitimate that a man is doing that he need be afraid to talk about, nor any legitimate part of the management of a party or of the organization of political movement nor any portion of the public business which can be *privately and confidentially dealt with*.

"The popular movement in our country is to change the machinery of our Government from privacy to publicity; it is to chase it out of committee rooms; it is to get at the nominating process by a widespread method which is called the primary. You cannot conduct a State-wide primary privately. You can conduct a caucus privately, but not a primary—not the present kind of primary.

"Everything we are trying to do, though complicated, is worth doing, because it is sending out a summons to all the partners to take part in the business. That is what interests me, and that is what makes discussion the heart and centre and basis of all our modern affairs.

"That, if I have any, is my hobby. The only reason that I have been taught to ride a high horse is that I was during the greater part of my life trained to talk, and then took the liberty of talking about what I understood was everybody's business."

Major Gen. Leonard Wood, Chief of Staff of the Army, advocated the organization of a military reserve by placing trained officers in charge of the militia, and that men discharged from the army should be held on a reserve list and called for duty in time of war. At the end of eight years, he said, the country would thus have a reserve of 300,000 men. He suggested that schools and colleges give more attention to military instruction, and that rifle shooting be introduced in the public schools.