

cation of such a treaty can hardly be overestimated in the cause of advancing civilization. It may well engage the best thought of the statesmen and people of every country, and I cannot but consider it fortunate that it was reserved to the United States to have the leadership in so grand a work.

It has been the uniform practice of each President to avoid, as far as possible, the convening of Congress in extraordinary session. It is an example which, under ordinary circumstances, and in the absence of a public necessity, is to be commended.

But a failure to convene the representatives of the people in Congress in extra session when it involves neglect of a public duty places the responsibility of such neglect upon the Executive himself.

The condition of the public Treasury, as has been indicated, demands the immediate consideration of Congress.

It alone has the power to provide revenues for the Government. Not to convene it under such circumstances I can view in no other sense than the neglect of a plain duty.

I do not sympathize with the sentiment that Congress in session is dangerous to our general business interests. Its members are the agents of the people, and their presence at the seat of government in the execution of the sovereign will should not operate as an injury, but a benefit.

There could be no better time to put the Government upon a sound financial and economic basis than

now. The people have only recently voted that this should be done, and nothing is more binding upon the agents of their will than the obligation of immediate action.

It has always seemed to me that the postponement of the meeting of Congress until more than a year after it has been chosen deprived Congress too often of the inspiration of the popular will, and the country of the corresponding benefits.

It is evident, therefore, that to postpone action in the presence of so great a necessity would be unwise on the part of the Executive because unjust to the interests of the people.

Our actions now will be freer from mere partisan considerations than if the question of tariff revision was postponed until the regular session of Congress. We are nearly two years from a Congressional election, and politics cannot so greatly distract us as if such contest was immediately pending. We can approach the problem calmly and patriotically without fearing its effect upon an early election.

Our fellow-citizens who may disagree with us upon the character of this legislation prefer to have the question settled now, even against their preconceived views, and perhaps settled so reasonably—and I trust and believe it will be—as to insure greater permanence, than to have further uncertainty menacing the vast and varied business interests of the United States.

Again, whatever action Congress may take will be



given a fair opportunity for trial before the people are called to pass judgment upon it; and this I consider a great essential to the rightful and lasting settlement of the question.

In view of these considerations, I shall deem it my duty as President to convene Congress in extraordinary session on Monday, the 15th day of March.

In conclusion, I congratulate the country upon the fraternal spirit of the people and the manifestations of good-will everywhere so apparent. The recent election not only most fortunately demonstrated the obliteration of sectional or geographical lines, but to some extent also the prejudices which for years have distracted our councils and marred our true greatness as a nation.

The triumph of the people, whose verdict is carried into effect to-day, is not the triumph of one section, nor wholly of one party, but of all sections and all the people.

The North and the South no longer divide on the old lines, but upon principles and policies; and in this fact surely every lover of the country can find cause for true felicitation. Let us rejoice in and cultivate this spirit; it is ennobling, and will be both a gain and blessing to our beloved country.

It will be my constant aim to do nothing, and permit nothing to be done, that will arrest or disturb this growing sentiment of unity and co-operation, this revival of esteem and affiliation which now animates so many thousands in both the old antagonistic sec-

tions, but I shall cheerfully do everything possible to promote and increase it.

Let me again repeat the words of the oath administered by the Chief Justice, which, in their respective spheres, so far as applicable, I would have all my countrymen observe:

"I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States."

This is the obligation I have reverently taken before the Lord Most High. To keep it will be my single purpose; my constant prayer—and I shall confidently rely upon the forbearance and assistance of all the people in the discharge of my solemn responsibilities.