

The 63d—the People's Congress

The New York World gives the following review of the work of the 63d congress up to the time of its recent adjournment:

"The best that can be said of any congress during its life is that it has been true to its trust. Time alone will determine the wisdom of its deeds. The sixty-third congress, in session longer than any other in our history, is noteworthy for its industry. It should always be even more memorable for its faithfulness to the pledges upon which it was chosen. For those pledges the people no less than their congress must bear the responsibility.

"When this congress began its labors, April 7, 1913, certain great measures of reform had been promised by both parties for years. Except for two years in the house of representatives, the republicans had been in complete control of the government since 1897. They had been bound by their platforms to reduce and equalize tariff and other taxation, to extend and strengthen the anti-trust law, to reform our finances, to stop the exploitation of Alaska and to promote justly the principles of self-government in the Philippines.

"To every one of these obligations they had proven false. In most cases they had done nothing. Revising the tariff twice, they increased its burdens upon consumers. Enacting some useful and progressive legislation in other directions, they studiously ignored or rejected popular demands for relief from privilege, extortion and monopoly. Such was the situation a year ago last spring, when for the first time in more than fifty years a democratic president with a congress having a dependable democratic majority in both branches took office.

"For good or for ill, this congress, co-operating with this president, has met the issues of the last twenty years in accordance with its covenants. It has dealt with several new problems besides. No other congress has enacted so many laws reaching to the very foundations of finance, commerce, industry and social order. In no other congress has there been more freedom from lobbyists and

promoters. At the hands of no other congress have the people suffered less from demagoguery and violence.

"The sixty-third congress has revised downward in the interest of consumers a tariff whose schedules not many years ago were sold to the contributors of campaign funds.

"It has reformed our banking and currency systems, putting an end to a financial tyranny centralized in a private coterie.

"It has supplemented and clarified the anti-trust laws, establishing personal guilt, preventing monopoly and interlocking directorates, and emancipating labor from unwarranted prosecutions and summary punishments without trial by jury.

"It has levied an income tax by means of which wealth must bear a share of public burdens heretofore heaped solely for consumption.

"It has created a trade commission empowered to investigate and report upon commercial oppressions that tend toward criminality.

"It has amended the employees' arbitration law, by which means it recently, in the case of the railroads, averted what threatened to be the greatest strike ever known.

"It has provided for the construction of a government railroad in Alaska and for the leasing of public coal lands in that territory, thereby forever protecting national rights in a dependency long menaced by the avarice of a moneyed sovereignty.

"It has passed in one branch an act extending the liberties of the Filipinos and preparing the way for their self-government, a fulfillment not only of our most solemn pledges but a reaffirmation of the principles underlying our own freedom as expressed in the Declaration of Independence.

"These are the mighty promise-keeping performances of the sixty-third congress. Of its many achievements relating to issues unforeseen, we shall cite only the repeal of the Panama canal tolls act in which a former congress had violated a treaty to serve the coastwise-shipping monopoly; the act authorizing the president to use force at Vera Cruz, but not declaring war upon the people of Mexico; the admission of foreign built ships to American registry; the extension of the emergency currency act, anticipating the activities of the federal reserve banks, not yet in operation, and the establishment of a bureau of maritime insurance to continue during the European war.

"In proof of the rectitude of purpose displayed in this remarkable record and of the fact that both parties have long been pledged to root privilege and plutocracy out of our laws, reference may be made to the attitude of the minority on some of these questions. Republican leadership, of course, was antagonistic, but it could not prevent men who respected their word from standing true. In the senate, on the first passage of the Clayton anti-trust bill, seven republicans voted with the democrats; in the house, fifty-six republicans. In the house, no republican voted against the trade-commission bill; in the senate; twelve republicans favored it. In the senate, the banking and currency bill received the votes of four republicans; in the house, forty-nine republicans. Practically all of the important measures above referred to had republican support in considerable numbers. The most notable exception is that of the tariff act, and even as to that, six republicans in the house and two in the senate aligned themselves with the democrats in perfect accord.

"When partisans, usually hostile, unite in this way, it is clear that

honor and principle and reason abide on both sides. The time was ripe, indeed, for these movements forward, but progress such as this would not have been made except under highly favorable conditions, when the temper of the people was known. In both houses the majority was ably and sincerely led. There was an unalterable purpose to respect public opinion. There was the most laborious industry. There was unlimited patience. Above all else, there was the lofty inspiration of the White House, which, to the condemnation of a great party, had not been there before.

"Nothing in a republic is more inspiring than obedience to the popular will. The sixty-third congress has been more than obedient. It has been highly appreciated. It has been a people's congress in which the best traditions of representative government have been courageously

maintained. It must look to the people for its rewards. To the people belongs the triumph, all of which they saw, a large part of which they were."

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