

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, AUGUST 10, 1913.—Copyright, 1913, by the Sun Printing and Publishing Association.

## John Lind, Plain Man and Plain Talker, Recipient of One of Most Remarkable Diplomatic and Difficult Tasks

### President Wilson's Unofficial Envoy to President Huerta of Mexico Is a Man of His Word—Son of Swedish Immigrants, Made His Own Way in the World—Flabbergasted the Politicians Once by Refusing a Renomination for Governor of Minnesota

THE man who wouldn't be Governor, perhaps because he knew by experience just what being a Governor meant, has now received at the hands of President Woodrow Wilson one of the most extraordinary tasks ever given out at the White House. John Lind, he of the plain name and plain countenance, is to go to Mexico and speak for President Wilson, if please, until President Huerta leaves, which may be to-morrow and may be never, President Huerta having

"Wrong again, John," says Mr. Wilson with marked traces of joy. "You're thinking of inertia. Huerta is the President of Mexico, and I fear he's just the other way about—you don't have to overcome anybody; he will start something anyway. I see you are just the man I want. You are, of course, thoroughly conversant with Mexican problems?"

"Oh, utterly," says Lind, trying to remember one. "I can't give you a regular job," ex-

read and write and figure a little before he went to school at all. In spite of the hardships of pioneer life in a wilderness the son was sent to school from the very first year of the family's arrival in America. He finished his early schooling in 1871, when he was 17. Then, like many other youths, in order to get money for further education he taught in little rural schools in Sibley county, Minnesota, for two years.

He had saved up a few hundred dollars and turned on him in 1890 and refused to reelect him. John Lind took his defeat calmly. He just stuck around practicing law when he got a chance, which was often, and then ran for Congress again. Those who couldn't see him for Governor a second time sent him back to Washington, and so he spent the years 1893 to 1905 listening to debates and offering a few remarks, laws and amendments himself and sending home a reasonable amount of seeds to make glad the Minnesota wilds or tame places, according to his constituents' surroundings.

Meanwhile other things had come to Lind. He was made president of the board of regents of his alma mater, the University of Minnesota, and various clubs took him in, though not badly, including the Minneapolis Club and the Coda Club. And also the Congressman and ex-Governor had made himself a very cheerful home indeed at 1775 Colfax avenue, Minneapolis, a home furnished with Mrs. Lind and young Linds and a pleasant resort after a hard day at the office in the New York Life Building.

So there you have the outline of John Lind's career—plain, severe, candid and yet inspiring in its record of reserved achievement.

An episode in Lind's life that shows the plain, frank person he is a little better than any other came in 1910. He had declared that under no circumstances would he be a candidate for Governor again. Having said this with his usual way of meaning what he said Lind started for Alaska, that being a cool and pleasant place in July, better even than Minneapolis.

What had stirred Lind to a refusal of a renomination was the matter of county option. Lind was for it. Months before the convention he had made plain his belief that the Democratic State platform should contain a county option plank. But in spite of years and years of experience with their man the politicians went around saying over and over that John Lind didn't mean it, not this time. If county option were quietly ignored and Lind were nominated he wouldn't refuse to run, said the politicians.

Lind had got as far toward Alaska as Everett, Wash., in July when the State convention was held. The politicians went around patting each other on the back at the success of their little scheme. The anti-optionists were in control of things and they honored Lind's scheme of putting it up to the counties by paying no attention to it at all in the platform that was adopted without dissent.

Then they nominated Lind for Governor. No one else's name was even mentioned. That showed how much they wanted the man.

Lind's son, who is a business man at Everett, and who was entertaining his father ere the pilgrimage north, wired the convention after it had done its work that it might as well reconvene and do the job right. His father wouldn't run and still meant it. Lind himself gave out a little statement to the same effect and then to escape being pestered went into the woods for a day or two. Within a week he had sailed for Alaska without once looking Minneapolisward.

Back home they couldn't understand that is the politicians couldn't. Running around in narrowing circles, they said John Lind was merely tired and out of sorts and would come back from Alaska refreshed and reinvigorated for a short run and a long term.



John Lind.

evinced a much greater disposition to be listened to than to hearken himself.

How unusual John Lind's mission is may be judged from the following report from Washington:

"It is pointed out that Mr. Lind holds no office which is recognized between nations; that President Huerta may decline to see him altogether, and that a grave responsibility rests upon his shoulders in speaking for the President direct among the factional representatives in Mexico.

"The Administration insisted that it should be made plain that Mr. Lind was acting entirely in an unofficial capacity in his mission to Mexico, but that he possesses most extraordinary powers in speaking for President Wilson is admitted."

The Administration insisted that it should be made plain, did it? Made as plain as the plain ungarlanded nose on John Lind's classically severe countenance, no doubt. Diplomats in Washington on hearing of John Lind's new role especially invented for him are said to have gone around wearing their faces long and trimmed with an abundance of surprise gathered up tastefully at frequent intervals in little wrinkles, frowns, smiles and frowns. No wonder. Whoever heard of sending a man to do plain talking in diplomacy?

What really happened, as most people will surmise, was about like this. President Wilson, discreetly concealing all traces of doubt, perturbation, excitement, worry, alarm and annoyance, but wearing on his own plain countenance a touch of satisfaction over a timely idea, sends for John Lind and speaks somewhat as follows:

"John, you don't know Spanish by any chance?"

Lind grins and allows that he doesn't know Spanish, but he has been fruitfully studying it at a correspondence school for the last three months, a business of which not even his theoretical enemies have yet accused him.

plains the President, "but if you're willing to take a chance with the climate, the germs, the tarantulas and the tango you can drop down that way and do the talking for me."

John Lind merely reaches for a condensed time table.

That is a slightly fanciful conception of the arrangement Mr. Wilson concluded with Gov. Lind, but there are some other things about it that are true. Gov. Lind doesn't speak Spanish, he isn't any more familiar with Mexican affairs than the man in the street. But he is honest, fearless, sincere and able and he has the immense advantage in President Wilson's eyes of not having a complete set of opinions of how Mexico should be run (1) to suit foreign investors, or (2) to accelerate intervention, or (3) to bring about annexation, or even (4) to suit himself.

Why did President Wilson invent the job? The answer that finds most favor in Washington is that the Administration being opposed to either intervention or the recognition of President Huerta decided that personal contact with the Mexican Executive was the surest, quickest and most proper course to adopt.

How did President Wilson come to pick John Lind for the job? Well, selecting Lind for a task of that kind is not nearly so striking a piece of work as inventing the job itself. Given such an unusual job you need an unusual man to fill it, and Lind is just that man.

An official record of his career reads very tamely. Here are the bare facts concerning him. Later incidents may be set down that throw his character, his manner of thought and action into high relief.

From 1881 to 1885 he held his first political office, receiver at the land office in Tracy, Minn. In 1887, two years after he quit the land office, he was elected to Congress. By this time he had been pretty well over the State and had lived and worked in half a dozen places. Minnesotans in goodly numbers knew John Lind for a calm, self-contained, capable, good hearted lawyer who never beat about the bush and who usually managed to call the other fellow's bluff.

Lind was in Congress six years straight from 1887 to 1893. Then the vicissitudes of politics spared him not and he went back to applying the laws he had helped make. But pretty soon war was declared with Spain—in 1898 if you remember. Lind said little but did much, with the result that he served as first lieutenant and quartermaster of the Twelfth Minnesota Volunteers throughout the war. Some thought he shone most as a lieutenant; others liked the grub he handed out, and all agreed that in spite of that very sober face of his he was an honor to the regiment.

Something left out? Oh, yes, come to think of it, Lind had run for Governor of Minnesota on the Democratic ticket in 1896—very bad year that for Democrats. And then he went into the war, and when he came out what did he do but let a lot of pleased Democrats and fellow citizens name him for Governor again! The noteworthy thing about the nomination this time was that John Lind was elected.

That was in 1899 and he held office till 1901. Pickle Swedes and other Min-

nesotans had turned on him in 1900 and refused to reelect him. John Lind took his defeat calmly. He just stuck around practicing law when he got a chance, which was often, and then ran for Congress again. Those who couldn't see him for Governor a second time sent him back to Washington, and so he spent the years 1893 to 1905 listening to debates and offering a few remarks, laws and amendments himself and sending home a reasonable amount of seeds to make glad the Minnesota wilds or tame places, according to his constituents' surroundings.

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