

the questions of Mexico and the European war, partly in consequence of Mr. HUGHES's vociferous agitation of them, but chiefly because of their intrinsic importance and the fact that our policy as to them lies so obviously within Executive discretion. As to these the record is not so clear. In regard to Mexico there have been some mistakes, some lack of consistent purpose, some inevitable disappointments, which it is natural to attribute to lack of foresight or of firmness. But through them all and despite them all two things have been accomplished. The Government has been kept from aggressive intervention in Mexico, and the republics to the south of us have been convinced that no such aggression was within the scope of our purpose, or of rational possibility. In the basis thus established for effective pan-American accord and co-operation, the gain to the United States is incalculable. It may well be a turning point in our relations directly with this continent and indirectly with the rest of the world.

In regard to the war in Europe no one can deny that Mr. WILSON's leadership has encountered criticism which at the time was hard to answer. This was due in some degree rather to his somewhat venturesome phrase-making than to the real purposes he has had in view. But also no one can deny that he has honorably kept our country at peace amid infinite difficulties and temptations. He has secured from the German Government acknowledgment of the rights of our citizens upon the high seas and pledges for their future observance. And with all the complexities arising from the conflict of passions and interests—a conflict more savage and wider than the world has ever before seen—the President has done no act that impairs the potential influence of our Government when the time comes to aid in the restoration of peace and in making future wars less probable and less terrible. Reflecting on the incredible and unprecedented forces of chaos with which he has had to contend, we think that his leadership has justified itself and that Mr. HUGHES's plea to the country to replace it by his own is futile and not without a touch of impudence.

#### MR. WILSON AS A LEADER.

It may be said that Mr. WILSON began his task of leadership with the beginning of the campaign of 1912. He set for his party a high standard of appeal to the country, marked by a dignity and candor rendered more conspicuous by the violent personalities raging in the ranks of his opponents. It was his aim, if victory came, to put his party on the path of constructive action. In this, it is true, he won definite advantage over the Republicans, who stubbornly chose an attitude almost wholly obstructive, and over the Progressives, whose sanest ideas were in great degree appropriated by the new Democratic leader. That was sagacious politics, but also it was sound statesmanship.

Victory came, and it was very promptly made plain how definite and how earnest was the intention of the President to use all the power and influence he possessed to guide the action of his party. He selected a Cabinet which, to say the least, was not pre-eminently strong, either for the specific tasks of their departments or for the hold they had on the general confidence of the country. But the weakest, the one least trusted by the people, unquestionably possessed influence in Congress. If he was chosen for that reason, with the expectation that the President's leadership would thereby be advanced in its earliest and most critical stage, it must be conceded that the expectation was realized. The same policy may be traced in other Cabinet appointments. With this provision made for preparing the way, Mr. WILSON proceeded to establish relations with the National Legislature. His methods, if not wholly different in kind, were markedly original in the degree to which they were pursued, as compared with those of other Presidents. Their spirit was shown and sharply emphasized by his plan of addressing Congress in person—a plan no President had ventured on since JOHN ADAMS. Essentially it was a bold step. It was a challenge, in a sense it was a defiance, addressed to those elements in Congress and in either party which had come to look on Congress as the depository of controlling power.

Along with this assumption of an intimate and personal relation between Congress and the President came a policy of frequent and frank conference between the President and the party leaders in Congress. In numerous ways the sense of common responsibility, of systematic co-operation as well as of common party interests was cultivated. It would be too much to say that in this way Mr. WILSON controlled his party's action. There is no reason to suppose that he aimed to do so. But clearly he influenced it. He had a substantial part in it, and that may be supposed to satisfy his conscience and his legitimate ambition. Undoubtedly he had failures and made mistakes, and his policy of leadership brought these pretty severely and distinctly to the debit side of his account. But judged by the results of the first year and a half of his Administration, the credit side was much the heavier. The work of his party in tariff legislation and in the reform of the banking and currency system—really in the creation of such a system—was an achievement of capital importance. Considering the manifold difficulties arising from the previous condition of the party, from its apparently innate and incurable tendency toward destructive action on these subjects, the net outcome was almost a miracle. It was largely due to the influence of the President. It would have been wholly impossible without that influence. On these matters there can be no sincere dispute as to the value of Mr. WILSON's leadership.

But all this may easily be forgotten. It is true that Mr. HUGHES, by his short-sighted and uninformed treatment of the tariff question, is doing all he can to turn public attention to the facts which he ignores, and the working of the financial system becomes more plainly beneficent with every successive test to which it is subjected. But quite naturally the public mind is more concerned with