



4-9-1917

Letter From Philander C. Knox to Huntington-Wilson, April 9, 1917

Philander C. Knox

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United States Senate,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

PHILANDER C. KNOX
PENNSYLVANIA

April 9, 1917.

Ans April 14

Mr. Huntington Wilson,
Roosevelt Hospital,
New York City.

My dear Wilson:

I have just seen Clark, who tells me that you are laid up in the hospital, having had an operation on your shoulder. I am sorry to hear of your misfortune, but glad to be informed that you are convalescing rapidly.

There have been a lot of things done over here since I saw you, with which I am sure you have kept track and a greater part of which is in entire accord with your own inclinations and wishes. You will perhaps be interested to know that the war resolution as offered by Senator Martin in the Senate and as it came down from the throne was at my instance wholly rewritten in its essential parts, as it will appear by the inclosed copy of the resolution, ^{by} amendment being to strike out all which you will see erased and substitute the italics, in which form it finally passed, ^{was} the amendment being accepted by the House of Representatives. The obvious defects in the resolution as presented were that

Mr. Huntington Wilson, #2.-

it made a noise like a declaration of war but upon analysis it amounted to nothing. There was no specific direction to utilize the Army and Navy, although perhaps I assume that that could be inferred from the general words, but the suggestion that Congress by resolution authorized the President to use all of the resources of the country, as distinguished from the resources of the Government, would have made us ridiculous in the chancelleries of the world, where it is well known that, under our system, the resources of the country can only be made available by taxation and appropriation under legal proceedings, and that before they become resources of the Government they must be segregated in this way and the owners compensated. The resolution as it passed, as you will observe, contained a specific authorization and direction to use the resources of the Government, which means such resources of the Government as have been made resources of the Government by law, and then in order to give the world notice that we mean to go through with the matter, Congress pledged the resources of the country to secure the victorious ending of the war, this last pledge being merely tending to the moral effect.

I am greatly interested in Oliver's book, which I have received a few days ago from Brentano's. He is a strong and lucid writer.

Mr. Huntington Wilson, #3.-

I am sending you a copy of the speech I made in Pittsburgh two days before the President delivered his address to Congress. This was at the largest and most enthusiastic meeting that was ever held in the city for any purpose, the enormous Exposition Music Hall being crowded to its capacity and four or five outside overflow meetings were held. The people were tense, soberminded, but enthusiastically responsive to the high ^{points} ~~performance~~.

I sincerely hope you will quickly be released from the hospital and that your shoulder will give you no further trouble.

Very sincerely yours,



Inclosure.

K-B

S