

Reaction Mixed To Johnson Speech

Two underlying themes were apparent Wednesday in the reaction of Wisconsin officials to President Johnson's first address before a joint session of congress.

These were:

- That Mr. Johnson's appearance before congress dramatically demonstrated the continuity of government despite the death of a chief executive.

- That partisan politics, like government, also is a continuing thing.

Perhaps County Executive Doyne best summed up the former when he said the president's address "was something all America needed at this time."

Doyne said the president "hit the nail on the head" in calling for an end to hate, evil and violence.

Major differences in political philosophies, however, were seen in the reaction of some state politicians to Mr. Johnson's plea to push forward the programs of the late President Kennedy.

An example of the Democratic viewpoint was that expressed by Senator Nelson (Wis.):

"President Johnson is absolutely right. The way for this nation to meet the world-wide crisis resulting from the death of President Kennedy is for the congress to act at once on the crucial and urgent matters which have been studied and debated so long already.

"There is no reason why the congress cannot take significant action toward carrying out President Kennedy's major goals before Christmas and there-by give our new president

a major assist in the crushing responsibilities which now face him.

"The American system, humiliated by the events in Dallas, is now on trial before the world. If we really believe in that system, we should show the world how well it can work. We should subordinate partisanship, rally behind the president and meet the needs of the nation which cried for a solution for a long time.

"By doing this, we can convince the world that representative democracy, not hate and violence, rules today in the capital of the free world."

Perhaps the strongest statement from the Republican viewpoint was that of Representative Byrnes, Green Bay. He said:

"We all revere the memory of President Kennedy, and we

all want to be helpful to President Johnson in his hour of trial.

"But we will neither revere the departed president nor be truly helpful to President Johnson if the legislative branch

from which they both sprang considers legislation on any other basis except its merits.

"The merits of the proposed programs have not changed;

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principles and philosophies have not changed.

"We must and will support the new president when we believe him right, but we cannot abdicate from our responsibility to consider legislation only upon the basis of its intrinsic worth."

Democratic Senator Proxmire (Wis.) said that Mr. Johnson's speech was "reassuring."

"He reassured the free world that America would continue to be militarily the most powerful nation on earth, that we will keep our foreign commitments, that we will continue to champion the United Nations, that we will strengthen and extend

world trade and that we will work ceaselessly for peace.

"He reassured the American people that the great Kennedy crusade for civil rights will continue unabated, that we will strive to make our country even more prosperous and that we will do so while keeping government spending at a minimum and the dollar sound.

"But this was also a speech designed to spur this balky congress," Proxmire added.

"The president declared that our main problems are in the congress and asked for congress to act speedily now. This speech marks the opening of a Johnson administration that will become, on the basis of Mr. Johnson's personality and record, one of the strongest this nation has

had," Proxmire said.

Representative Schadeberg (Rep., Burlington) said the speech "in general was a good speech," but added:

"I certainly would take a little exception that we pass legislation as a memorial rather than on the merits of the legislation. The legislation that I opposed or supported in the past has been on the basis of principles that I hold and I certainly would expect to hold these same principles and make my decision on the basis of these principles rather than on emotion.

"This is not to be interpreted as being critical of President Johnson. I have assured him of my full support consistent with my principles."

"Great Message"

Representative Reuss (Dem., Milwaukee) said the occasion "called for a great message and Lyndon Johnson gave one."

"President Johnson told us what I wanted to hear; that the way to honor President Kennedy's memory is to make his dreams come true," said Reuss. "The rest is up to us of the congress."

Representative Zablocki (Dem., Milwaukee) said that

President Johnson's speech, inspired by the dedication of his predecessor and the challenge of the hour, will be recorded as one of the best in history."

"It is the first tangible evidence that President Kennedy did not die in vain," said Zablocki.

Marching Orders Issued

"The decisiveness, sincerity and dedication forcefully outlined in President Johnson's determination to carry out the dreams of his predecessor indicate that congress will act now. The marching orders have been issued. Undoubtedly, the tax legislation, civil rights, medicare and other proposals of the new frontier are going to be pursued with vigor by the new frontiersmen from Texas."

Representative Laird (Rep., Marshfield) said it "was well that the president did not lay down a timetable for action on the various proposals because I believe congress will do well to get all the appropriations bills passed by Dec. 20.

"I was glad to see him put some push on this because several chairmen in the senate are holding up appropriations to bargain on civil rights. It will take strong leadership on the part of the president to shake these appropriations loose by Christmas."

Representative Kastenmeier (Dem., Watertown) said of President Johnson that it was "his finest speech in his finest hour.

"The tone of the speech was excellent. It was simple, short and eloquent — a good restatement of the goals and aspirations of all Americans. I particularly liked his stress on both peace and civil rights."

Gov. Reynolds said the speech

was "a magnificent call to duty and an inspiration to the nation.

"In the face of the tragedy of this past week, the nation is fortunate that it has as able a man as Lyndon Johnson standing by to assume the awesome duties of the presidency. He will be a great president," Reynolds said.

Lt. Gov. Jack Olson said that President Johnson, with his legislative background, was "able to point out the needs of the country . . . we will support him in the immediate days ahead."

Mayor Maier said the speech was "an eloquent and forthright statement of national purpose and of the ideals and objectives which will characterize President Johnson's administration.

"If anybody is capable of delivering the quick realization of our late president's programs, it is President Johnson," he said.