Chapter VI

PRESIDENTIAL LEADERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT SYSTEM
Wilson's views on education emphasize the necessity of a high calibre of leadership in a democracy. Even in his earliest writings, Wilson expressed his belief that the quality of leadership had declined in the highest office in the land—that of the President of the United States. In a paper he wrote as a college senior, Wilson spoke of "A marked and alarming decline in statesmanship, a rule of levity and folly instead of wisdom and sober forethought in legislation. . . ." (1) His analysis of the causes of this decline of leadership and his suggestions for its restoration gradually changed in the succeeding years, but he never lost sight of his original goal—vigorous, intelligent, responsible leadership. These changes in his views illustrate the fact that his political philosophy is based on an essentially pragmatic approach. In his earlier writings Wilson discussed the problems of the decline and restoration of leadership primarily in terms of the structure of government. Later he saw the problem almost entirely in terms of the character and personality of the President. The Presidency, he felt, was

as strong as the man in it. In his doctoral dissertation, *Congressional Government*, and the various articles he wrote prior to that he advocated the first view. After 1885, Wilson began to take the second view which he develops most fully in *The Constitutional Government in the United States*.

Though Wilson directed most of his criticisms in *Congressional Government* at the structure of American government, he did express the view that "the prestige of the Presidential office has declined with the character of the Presidents." (2) The President "... was constituted one of the three great coordinating branches of the government; his functions were made of the highest dignity; his privileges many and substantial... had the presidential chair always been filled by men of commanding character, of acknowledged ability, and of thorough political training, it would have continued to be a seat of the highest authority and consideration, the true centre of the federal structure, the real throne of administration, and the frequent source of policies." (3) Evidently Wilson was not entirely sure whether this decline in the character of the Presidents was the cause or effect of the lessened prestige of the Presidency. The rest of *Congressional Government* stands in contrast to the


(3) Ibid.
statement quoted above, for its main argument is that the
decline in leadership had been caused by defects in the
structure of the American government. Moreover, he explicitly
stated in the same book "that the decline in the character of
the Presidents . . . was not the cause, but only the
accompanying manifestation, of the declining prestige of the
Presidential office." (4)

In his earliest paper on the subject, Wilson declared
that the major reason for the decline of leadership in the
United States was "the absorption of all power by a legislature
which is practically irresponsible for its acts." (5) In the
American governmental system, he said, all business was being
carried on by "irresponsible committees." (6) Moreover, power
tended to be concentrated in the hands of the Speaker of the
House of Representatives and the chairmen of the Congressional
committees. Due to the increasing power of these committees,
Wilson believed, the influence of the President fell from the
high place that it had occupied in the early days of the
government. His main objection to the committee system,
evertheless, was that it involved secrecy. (7) In addition to the

(4) Ibid., 48.
(5) PPW: College and State, I, 20.
(6) Ibid., 104.
(7) Ibid., 103.
disadvantage of secrecy, Wilson believed that "committee government is too clumsy . . . a system to last." (8)

Wilson further attributed the decline of leadership to the rigid application of the theory of the separation of powers, which put the Presidency in a sort of "isolation." (9) He observed, "The President can seldom make himself recognized as a leader; he is merely the executor of the sovereign legislative will; his Cabinet officers are little more than chief clerks, or superintendents, in the Executive departments. . . ." (10) Wilson felt that the proper functioning of government necessitated closer co-operation between the executive and legislative branches. Time and again he reiterated, "The Executive is in constant need of legislative co-operation; the legislative must be aided by an Executive who is in a position intelligently and vigorously to execute its acts." (11) In the American system, however, Wilson felt that co-operation was impossible. Presidential power had declined to the point where the chief executive had become subordinate to Congress:

In so far as the President is an executive officer he is the servant of Congress; and the members of the Cabinet, being confined to executive functions, are altogether the servants of Congress. The

(8) Ibid., 129.
(9) Ibid., 25.
(10) Ibid., 35-6.
(11) Ibid., 41.
President is no greater than his prerogative of veto makes him. . . . (12)

This system is characterized by Wilson as "administration by semi-independent executive agents who obey the dictation of a legislature to which they are not responsible. . . ." (13)

The Presidency had come to be regarded as an office requiring skill in administration rather than dynamic leadership, Wilson felt. The business of the President had become "more administration, more obedience of directions from the masters of policy, the Standing Committees. Except in so far as his power of veto constitutes him a part of the legislature, . . . he is part of the official rather than of the political machinery of the government, and his duties call rather for training than for constructive genius." (14)

To remove what he regarded as the deficiencies in the American system, Wilson advocated a system of cabinet government. This change would give the executive branch 'some part of the unbounded privileges now commanded by the Standing Committees.' (15) This proposal, in other words, meant that the President would select his cabinet from members of the House of Representatives or the Senate. In this way, the

(12) Congressional Government, 177; 173.
(13) Ibid., 24.
(14) Ibid., 170.
President and his cabinet would have an opportunity to initiate legislation and help to enact it. Moreover, the cabinet members and the President would be responsible for explaining their policies to the legislature. As head of the cabinet, the President would also be more directly responsible to the legislature than he was under the prevailing American system. In recommending the cabinet system Wilson saw the possibility of ensuring responsible leadership. He declared that the President "would then be in fact, and not merely in name, the head of his Government." (16)

This proposal, of course, was not original with Wilson. The idea was being discussed in many quarters but it had not been put forth as emphatically by anyone before Wilson. In 1864, George H. Pendleton, chairman of a select committee of the House of Representatives, sought to secure that "heads of executive departments may occupy seats on the floor of the House of Representatives." In 1879, as a senator from Ohio, Dr. Pendleton "raised the question a second time." (17) In 1881 it was reviewed favourably when referred to a Senate committee. (18) Also Gamaliel Bradford was advocating substantially the same idea. (19)

(16) PPwF: College and State, I, 38.


In contrast to other proponents of the idea, however, Wilson recognized that it would necessitate certain constitutional changes. In the first place, it would probably be necessary to adjust the President's term. More important, it would require a provision for the resignation of the cabinet when its policies were not acceptable to the legislature. Such a provision would guarantee the placing of responsibility for legislation and administration, which Wilson thought was essential. Unlike the present system, the cabinet system would prevent the President and his cabinet from being in a position of having to execute a program to which they were opposed. What Wilson was proposing, of course, was a radical change in the structure of government, amounting virtually to a substitution of British Parliamentary government for the American Congressional System. Only such a thorough-going change, he believed, would provide opportunity for the responsible leadership necessary in a democracy:

... somebody must be trusted, in order that when things go wrong it may be quite plain who should be punished... Power and strict accountability for its use are the essential constituents of good government. (20)

Though Wilson had not yet written anything on the nature of the State, his preference for the British system fits in well with the organic concept he supported later. The cabinet system is an attempt to create harmony among the organs of

(20) Congressional Government, 187.
government, in contrast to the system of separation of powers which tries to secure equilibrium by balancing conflicting powers.

A further advantage Wilson saw in the Parliamentary system was that it offered a training ground for a man to become the chief executive. In the structure of the United States government he did not think that Congress provided such an opportunity. In the governorships of the states, however, he felt that men could secure the training and experience necessary to qualify them for the Presidency:

... the Presidency is very like a big governorship. Training in the duties of the one fits for the duties of the other. This [a governorship] is the only avenue of subordinate place through which the highest place can be naturally reached. (21)

The selection of Presidential candidates by a national convention instead of a Congressional party caucus was to Wilson a further reason for the decline in the prestige of the Presidential office. Wilson's objection to the convention method was based on his view that the loosely knit national convention had no way of controlling the actions of the President once he had been nominated. If the President were nominated by a Congressional party caucus the legislators would be in a position to exercise a closer check upon his actions. To Wilson, of course, the British system was

(21) Ibid., 169-70.
preferable to either of these alternatives, for the Prime minister can be deposed when he loses the support of the majority. In the United States, on the other hand, Wilson said, "nothing short of a well-nigh impossible impeachment can unmake a President, except four successions of the seasons. . . . A Prime Minister must keep himself in favor with the majority, a President need only keep alive." (22) Despite his support of the Congressional caucus method, however, Wilson recognized the disadvantages. If it failed, he said, it would be because "it was not an open enough way." (23) Provided that each party decided upon its Presidential candidate openly, selecting from one man who had served the party well, Wilson supported the caucus method.

Within the next few years, however, Wilson began to shift toward the view that the character of the president, not the structure of the government, determines the effectiveness of his leadership. From a number of statements he makes it appears that it was the vigorous leadership of President Grover Cleveland which was chiefly responsible for the change in Wilson's views.

Before further discussing Mr. Cleveland, we will briefly survey Wilson's opinion of some of the Presidents who preceded Cleveland, with special emphasis on the post Civil

(22) Ibid., 167-8.
(23) Ibid., 166.
War Presidents. It was Wilson's poor opinion of American Presidents in the years after the Civil War that influenced his thinking on the subject.

In his History of the American People Wilson judges the early American Presidents as strong Presidents. English traditions were still strong at that time. The President was the central figure in government affairs "partly because the early Presidents were chosen from the ranks of actual party leaders, because of their influence with public men, their hold upon opinion, and their experience in public business." (24)

It was Wilson's opinion that "No President since General Jackson had been the real leader of his party until Lincoln; and Lincoln's term had made no permanent difference in the practices established since Jackson's day." (25)

Wilson states that Johnson and Lincoln had the same views on reconstruction but were entirely different in manner and temper. "Johnson had not a touch of Lincoln's genius for understanding and persuading men." (26) Both were of humble origin but Johnson had succeeded "by virtue of a certain pugnacious force and initiative of character, . . . his powers had never been schooled or refined as Lincoln's had been,


(25) Ibid., 17.

they always retained their native roughness; he was rash, head-
strong, aggressive to the last. The party which had elected
him, too, was already inclined to suspect him." (27)

Mr. Johnson was a southerner and sympathized with the
southerners in everything except their hostility to the union.
He "held strict views of state rights with an arder and
stubbornness characteristic of him; and was sure to yield nothing
for the sake of accommodation. He could not be right without
so exasperating his opponents by his manner of being right as
to put himself practically in the wrong." (28) Wilson contrasts
Johnson and Jackson and says that Johnson was as "self-willed,
imperious, implacable; and as headstrong and tempestuous
as Jackson, without Jackson's power of attracting men, and
making and holding parties." (29)

From his study of Johnson what conclusions does Wilson
make? "... headstrong men like Andrew Johnson will rule only
to ruin; will good parties into extreme and ill-considered
courses by the sheer exasperations of their obstinacy..." (29)
Wilson concludes that men "who are not by natural constitution
equipped for leadership will only make the more conspicuous,
it may be the more disastrous, failures by seeking, in

(27) Ibid.
(28) Ibid.
(29) PPML: College and State, I, 374.
(30) Ibid., 218.
the choice of their advisors, to play a role beyond their talents." (31)

It is true that "the twenty years after Lincoln were marked by the heaviest political attacks ever made on either the person, the office or the powers of the President. (32) President Johnson was overwhelmed by Congress, and for a considerable time the legislative branch of the government was stronger than the executive.

Wilson says very little about General Grant. He was nominated "unanimously and with genuine enthusiasm. . . ." (33) The Republican nominating convention trusted him "as a faithful officer and no politician." (34) He seems to judge Grant's first term as successful. His "soldierly simplicity and directness served the purposes of government sufficiently well, for the tasks of the moment were not those of ordinary civil administration, in which he had no experience. The President, too, showed a sincere desire to keep the public service pure and efficient." (35) But toward the end of his first term the administrative scandals, which marked his Presidency, began. Wilson believes Grant had honourable

(31) Ibid.
(32) George F. Hilton, The Use of Presidential Power (Boston, 1942) 137.
(33) Wilson, Division and Reunion, 225.
(34) Ibid.
(35) Ibid., 229.
intentions but was not "fortunate in his selection of counsellors and subordinates. He found that choosing political advisors on the nomination of politicians was quite different from promoting tested officers in the army; and when his work was over, he confessed, with characteristic simplicity and frankness, that he had been deceived and had failed." (36) It is noteworthy that Wilson speaks without harshness and with sympathy of the weaknesses of Grant while he deals somewhat harshly with Johnson. He apparently holds much more regard for the simple, honest, human General Grant than the stubborn Johnson who apparently lacked human understanding.

He does not make enough comments on Presidents Hayes and Garfield to give any picture of his opinion of their Presidential qualities. However, in a comment on President Arthur he says, he "had been made Vice-President to please that branch of his party which was least in the confidence of the country. . . ." (37) This would seem to emphasize again his belief that the President must be a leader in his own party. Wilson's relative silence on the next few Presidents lead one to feel that he considers them relatively ineffective.

Wilson seems to indicate, however, that in Grover Cleveland, leadership is once again restored to the Presidency.

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(36) Ibid., 230.
(37) Ibid., 237.
Wilson says that Cleveland did not believe that his task was to guide legislative action, but to check it. "He held very literally . . . to the theory that Congress and the President were not so much associated as offset in the structure of the government, and was inclined to be a strict doctrinaire in the exercise of a complete independence of congressional suggestion." (38) Cleveland "thought of himself always as an administrative officer, not as a party leader." And, "he made up his cabinets upon that theory." (39) Wilson points out that Cleveland surrounded himself "not with a party council, but with capable heads of departments." (40) He seems to feel that it is understandable that Cleveland's fellow party men in the Congress felt he was a "trifle too separate and absolute." (41) Wilson states that it was inevitable, since Cleveland considered that he need not always take the party's advice, that "he should seem to put his own judgment above that of the congressmen who approached him. Sometimes he would patiently confer, persuade, and come to terms of agreement; but at other times he would decline with a noticeable touch of impatience to take any part in the arrangement of legislative plans, and in effect bid members of the houses go

(39) Ibid., 119.
(40) Ibid., 120.
(41) Ibid.
their own way while he went his." (42) Wilson believes that such actions by Cleveland were not only a result of his idea of his office and the situation in which he found himself. They were an expression of his "natural temperament in dealing with men who did not act upon fixed conviction, as he did, but rather upon consideration of political or personal expediency." (43)

From the few comments Wilson makes on the presidents in his historical writings such as The History of the American People and Division and Reunion, it is apparent that he believed that to be an effective leader, a president must have certain character traits as well as be a leader in his own party.

Wilson saw in Cleveland "an altogether exceptional man, a real leader. . . ." (44) Later he stated:

"Mr. Cleveland has been President in ordinary times, but after extraordinary fashion; not because he wished to form or revolutionize or save the government, but because he came fresh to his tasks without the common party training, a direct, fearless, somewhat unsophisticated man of action. In him we got a President, as it were, by immediate choice from out the body of the people . . . and he has refreshed our notion of an American chief magistrate. (45)

What does Wilson mean by chief magistrate? He does not define the term and one can only speculate its meaning from the context in which it is used, the Cleveland administration.

(42) Ibid., 120-1.
(43) Ibid., 121.
(44) PP.: Collere and State, I, 220.
(45) Ibid., 287.
Cleveland was not a politician nor affected by politics. He ran a "pure and businesslike administration. . . ." (46) From these comments we may infer that he referred to a chief magistrate as a non-political, honest and efficient administrator which he considered to be, as shown later, one of the roles of a President.

Wilson saw Cleveland as a man who had made no special attempt to become a strong party leader but, "as if in spite of himself. . . . He could not keep to his role of simple executive." (47) Cleveland seemed to be making Wilson's idea of the Presidency a reality:

The habit of independent initiative in respect of questions of legislative policy was growing upon him. . . . It was singular how politics began at once to centre in the President, waiting for his initiative. . . . Power had somehow gone the length of the avenue, and seemed lodged in one man. . . . the Democrats in the House were made conscious that the eye of the country had been withdrawn from them in matters of policy, and Washington seemed full of Mr. Cleveland, his Secretary of the Treasury and his Secretary of the State. (48)

To Wilson, Cleveland was a living example that there was hope for a revival of Presidential leadership. He no longer felt that it was necessary to change the structure of the government; a man of strong character and intelligence could make the Presidency a position of leadership.

(46) Ibid., 292.

(47) Ibid., 296.

(48) Ibid., 298; 300-1.
His 1907 lectures, published as *The Constitutional Government in the United States*, were the last academic formulation of his ideas. The book stands as an interesting contrast to his previous work, *Congressional Government*. During the previous six years the nation had at the helm an extraordinarily vibrant and energetic personality, Theodore Roosevelt, whose demeanour and bearing were a far cry from the non-entities who had preceded him and whose popularity with the American public was immense. With such a figure in the White House it was no longer possible for Wilson to hold on to the views on the structure of the American government that he had expounded many years earlier. Thus in his work of 1907 Wilson expressed greater confidence in the nature of the Presidency and the potential powers of the office. He asserted:

The presidency has been one thing at one time, another at another, varying with the man who occupied the office and with the circumstances that surrounded him. *(49)*

As an example of the effect of the circumstances of the President's role he cited the Spanish-American War. He pointed out that issues of foreign relations had become "leading questions again, as they had been in the first days of the government," and that "in them the President was of necessity

leader." (50) The field of foreign affairs, Wilson pointed out, was the one place for actual leadership, granted to the President by the Constitution:

The initiative in foreign affairs, which the President possesses without any restriction whatever, is virtually the power to control them absolutely. (51)

The increasing complexity of the American government, he argued, had made the Presidential office a focus of unity:

Greatly as the practice and influence of Presidents has varied, there can be no mistaking the fact that we have grown more and more inclined from generation to generation to look to the President as the unifying force in our complex system, the leader both of his party and of the nation. (52)

What was needed in the Presidency, therefore, more than a man of actual experience, was someone "who will be and will seem to the country in some sort an embodiment of the character and purpose it wishes its government to have..." (53)

From Wilson's writings on George Washington, A History of the American People, and More Literature and Other Essays, we can find out what qualities he regarded as essential in a good President. Wilson gave President Washington and Lincoln the highest praise. He wrote of Washington as a man who "showed... individual force and separateness..." Yet,

(50) Ibid., 59.
(51) Ibid., 77.
(52) Ibid., 60.
(53) Ibid., 65.
"he had been the country's leader through all its Revolution, and was always a kind of hero, whom parties could not absorb." (54) Wilson thus seems to believe that the President should not be subservient to party interests but must do his duty for the good of the nation as a whole. Wilson's own hero was Lincoln. He thought of him as a man who "made the Presidency the government while the war lasted, and gave the nation a great ruler; but his purposes were those of a disciplined and determined party, and his time was a time of fearful crisis, when men studied power, not law." (55) What was the secret of Lincoln's work as a great President? Said Wilson, "It was of the nature of Mr. Lincoln's mind to reduce complex situations to their simples, to guide men without irritating them, to go forward and be practical without being radical,--to serve as a genial force which supplied heat enough to keep action warm, and yet minimized the friction and eased the whole progress of affairs." (56) In asking himself the hypothetical question whether the travails of the reconstruction period might have been avoided if Lincoln had lived, Wilson describes other qualities which, in his opinion, would have been mobilized to good effect by Lincoln. He wrote, "the delicate business might have been carried through with dignity, good temper, and

(54) *American College and State*, I, 286.


simllicity of method; with all the necessary concessions to
passion, with no pedantic insistence upon consistent and
uniform rules, with sensible irregularities and compromises,
and yet with a straightforward, frank, and open way of manage-
ment. . . ." Such an approach on the part of the President,
he stated, "would have assisted to find for every influence its
natural and legitimate and quieting effect." (57) This,
perhaps, represents Wilson's own ideal of how a good President
cught to approach a complex issue. In Wilson's mind Lincoln
was thus emerging as the "first great American." He saw in
Lincoln the qualities of a great leader and came to admire him
more perhaps because Lincoln found in the constitution a
means to carry a nation successfully through crisis. (58)

The qualities in Jefferson that he admired were "a
native shrewdness, tact, and sagacity, an inborn art and
aptmess for combination. . . ." (59) Contemplating on
Jeffersonian ideas Wilson though: they were too abstract for
his pragmatic approach. He said, "It is his speculative
philosophy that is exotic, and that runs like a false and
artificial note through all his thought. It was un-American
in being abstract, sentimental, rationalistic, rather than

(57) Ibid., 371.

(58) Louis Brownlow, The President and The Presidency
(Chicago, 1953) 19.

(59) Woodrow Wilson, Here Literature and other Essays
(Boston, 1936) 198.
practical." (60) He thought Jefferson's writings lacked "hard and practical sense." (61) Wilson believed, "Liberty . . . is not a sentiment, but a product of experience; its derivation is not rationalistic, but practical." (62)

However, Wilson was of the opinion that Hamilton and Jefferson were required to make a nation. He steered safely between them, though in later years he drew closer to Jeffersonian ideals. He calls Hamilton "one of the greatest figures" in American history, though not an 'American'," (63) In Wilson's estimation of great Americans, he considered that some Presidents must be excluded from the list because they did not exemplify a distinctively American standard and type of greatness; Hamilton and Madison were the "great Englishmen bred in America." John Adams and John C. Calhoun were "the great provincials" and Jefferson was a man of "mixed breed." (64) Wilson considered that Henry Clay and Andrew Jackson were indeed "American" but the "supreme American" was Abraham Lincoln. (65)

In Clay, East and West were mixed without being fused or harmonized; he seems like two men. In

(60) Ibid.
(61) Ibid.
(62) Ibid.
(63) Ibid., 108-9.
(64) Ibid., 137.
(65) Ibid., 206.
Jackson there was not even a mixture; he was all of a piece, and altogether unacceptable to some parts of the country—a frontier statesman. But in Lincoln the elements were combined and harmonized. (66)

It is of special interest to note that Wilson, though a southerner by origin and possessing strong feeling for his people, showed objectivity in appraising Lincoln. His interest and admiration for Lincoln never ceased to exist throughout his life.

"Wilson saw in the Presidency an opportunity for "the nationalization of the motive power of the government, to offset the economic sectionalization of the country..." (67)

Because the President is elected by the people as a whole he is in a position both to represent and lead the nation:

His is the only national voice in affairs. Let him once win the admiration and confidence of the country, and no other single force can withstand him, no combination of forces will easily overpower him... If he rightly interpret the national thought and boldly insist upon it, he is irresistible; and the country never feels the zest of action so much as when its President is of such insight and calibre. Its instinct is for unified action, and it craves a single leader... A President whom it trusts can not only lead it, but form it to his own views... If he lead the nation, his party can hardly resist him. His office is anything he has the sagacity and force to make it. (68)

By representation of the nation as a whole, Wilson argued, the

(66) Ibid.
(67)PPCN: College and State, I, 358.
President would be in a position to dominate his own party. No other elected officer represents the people as a whole, no one else is a national choice. Since his executive duties are subordinate, he is not the person mainly responsible for his party's governing efficiency. He, therefore, represents mainly his party's controlling ideals and principles. He can dominate his party because he can be: "spokesmen for the real sentiment and purpose of the country . . . by giving the country . . . the information and the statements of policy which will enable it to form its judgments alike of parties and of men." (69) Because the President is the choice both of his party and of the nation, Wilson declared, he "cannot escape being the leader of his party except by incapacity and lack of personal force. . . ." (70)

Wilson's statement indicates that he now stressed the role of the President as a political leader instead of an administrator. He said elsewhere in the same book that, since the business of government is becoming more complex, the Presidency is becoming more of a political and less of an administrative office. "His executive powers are in commission, while his political powers more and more centre and accumulate upon him and are in their very nature personal and inalienable." (71) As a corollary he believed that under a self-

(69) Ibid., 68.
(70) Ibid., 67.
(71) Ibid.
reliant President "the cabinet is an executive, not a political body." (72) This view, of course, is in sharp contrast to his earlier position that cabinet members should be part of the legislature. Similarly, he thought that cabinet members need not necessarily be appointed from outstanding members of the party. In his article "Mr. Cleveland's Cabinet," Wilson observed that men who had demonstrated their executive ability elsewhere than in public life had been appointed. His changed opinion was based on the view that the President as national leader would not have much time to be the actual executive. It was wise, therefore, to select dependable, responsible men even if they did not belong to a party to carry out the administration of the government.

In his new view of the President as a political leader, Wilson stressed the importance of direct Presidential contact with the Congress. Since the President had no legislative power to force Congress to do anything, Wilson strongly advocated the use of his constitutional right to give messages and policy recommendations to Congress, with all the force and influence the President could command. As constitutional justification for this procedure Wilson cited Article II, sec. iii of the Constitution which states that the President:

shall, from time to time, give to the congress information of the state of the union, and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient. (73)

(72) Ibid., 76.

Both George Washington and John Adams, he pointed out, interpreted the statement to mean that they might address the Congress in person. Because Jefferson was an ineffective speaker, the practice of appearing before the Congress was discontinued and the fashion of written messages was established.

According to Wilson, this circumstance unfortunately prevented the development of a more informal and effective exchange of opinion between the President and the Congress. Such exchanges, he felt, because they were public, would have led to more responsible exchanges of opinion. But since Jefferson's time the President had been allowed only "the most formal and ineffectual utterance of advice, . . . ." (74) The President and the Congress "have been shut off from cooperation and mutual confidence to an extent to which no other modern system furnishes a parallel." (75)

As a national leader having the support of the people behind him, Wilson argued that the President could force Congress to support his measures by making direct appeals to public opinion. With the people's support, a President of the highest intelligence and integrity has almost unlimited power. He declared:

The President is at liberty, both in law and conscience, to be as big a man as he can. His capacity will set the limit; and if Congress be

(74) Ibid., 378.
(75) Ibid.
overborne by him, it will be no fault of the
makers of the Constitution ..., but only because
the President has the nation behind him, and
Congress has not. (76)

As Wilson's concept of the Presidency changed, there was
also a change in his ideas on the method of nominating Presi-
dential candidates. He no longer preferred nomination by
Congressional party caucus, but expressed the opinion that
nominating by a convention has "more definite purpose, much
more deliberate choice in the extraordinary process than there
seems to be." (77) He now came to believe that the very method
of selection by convention makes the President the leader of
his party. Wilson was also convinced that the Presidential
candidate need not have long experience in public office:

... the office of President ... does not demand
actual experience in affairs so much as particular
qualities of mind and character which we are at
least as likely to find outside the ranks of our
public men as within them. (78)

Wilson's view of the role of the President, and his
view of leadership in general fit in well with his belief that
the further development of the state and government must not
depend upon chance, but by consciously-directed evolution led
by the ablest men of society.

(76) Constitutional Government, 70.
(77) Ibid., 63.
(78) Ibid., 65.