
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

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FDR Speech File

Speech of

Franklin D. Roosevelt

at the Fourth Annual Dinner of the Episcopal Laymen
of Dutchess County,
Mount Beacon, New York, October 2, 1919.

[Summary from Beacon (N.Y.) Daily Herald, Oct. 3, 1919.]

Franklin D. Roosevelt, Assistant Secretary of the Navy, was then introduced. Mr. Roosevelt spoke on many topics, starting off with the work performed by the navy of the United States, even before this country entered the war. Early in the spring of 1917 Mr. Roosevelt told of how he was in Hayti with a branch of the Marines and how he was recalled to Washington, the reason for his recall being given as "political." An old colonel of the Marines, who had been away from the United States on duty for a number of years settling revolutions, was so filled up with this kind of life that he said the reason for Mr. Roosevelt being called back to Washington was that Charles Hughes was leading a revolting populace against Woodrow Wilson. Arriving in Washington the speaker told how he found plans maturing for the entrance of the United States in the war. The convoy system and the submarine net that later became the topics of the day, were originated by the United States and in the spring of 1917, before war was declared on Germany by the United States, our country, even if it was neutral, suggested these tactics to the British and they were turned down. However, the imagination and the originality of the United States navy won out, as explained by Mr. Roosevelt, and in the autumn of 1917 these movements were being effectively used against the Huns.

The draft army and how it made its great name in the world war were also discussed by Mr. Roosevelt.

Conditions now and years ago were also dwelt upon by the speaker. He said that even now in the twentieth century there were persons living and a good many of them, who wish that they could go back to the "good old days." Mr. Roosevelt said that there was not such a thing in existence as these same "good old days" and that if everyone would live in the present conditions and forget all about the past things in general in this country would be far better.

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