
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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SPEECH OF FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
AT ST. STEPHEN'S CHURCH, LYNN, MASS., APRIL 11, 1920.

[from Lynn (Mass.) Telegram-News, Apr. 12, 1920]

Unstinted praise for all service men in the war and a plea that everybody get together and work for a successful future of this country was the gist of sentiments expressed by Assistant Secretary, Franklin D. Roosevelt, of the United States Navy in St. Stephen's Church Sunday evening (April 11, 1920). Government officials at this time, he said, should be encouraged in the work they are doing instead of being laughed at and criticized for they are laboring under conditions the like of which the world has never seen.

"With the United States victorious in the war," he said, "it is not the time to rest our oars and let the other fellow do the work, but all must cooperate in a branch of service which in its entirety will be for the benefit of the country at large.

"There are great problems before the American people," he said, "and we should no longer be regarded as an easy-going, care-free nation. We should carry on, and, if disputes arise, we should sit at the conference table, swap views with the other fellow and thereby arrive at a general understanding which will eliminate conflicts. That time is coming, I believe, when one nation will allow another nation something in the matter of controversy."

In closing he said: "I'm not the least bit, as you know, of a militarist, but I believe that we've got to tell the truth to the country--and sometimes to accept the will of the country. We are in danger of drifting back to the view that all wars are over. Congress has been adopting that attitude for a year and over. It has deliberately treated the officers and men of the army and navy in a way that is not a common or garden deal. The result is that the army and navy, reduced far below the legal limit, are going down hill.

"I can't blame a lieutenant, captain, admiral, 'boson or chief petty officer of the naval service for getting out when he finds that not only he can't support himself, but that, if he has a wife and children they are going to starve on the pay you are giving him now. The pay is the pay of 1918, yet you expect them to live as good Americans and gentlemen. O yes! It would cost \$15,000,000 out of a total budget of \$4,500,000,000.

"Officers and men today continue and rightly--to leave the service that is not backed up by the legislative body of the nation.

"Ninety-eight varieties of investigations, which are going on now in Washington at an expense of \$3,500,000.

"Give me the \$3,500,000. It will help feed some of the wives and children of the navy. The responsibility isn't all on the politicians. It's on the people who allow those politicians to live."