
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 136

1920 August 13

Minneapolis, MN - Campaign Speech

FROM SPEECH OF HONORABLE FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.,
AUGUST 15, 1920 --

In coming to these great centers of the Northwest, my purpose is not merely to speak of the issues of the coming campaign, but to learn from personal contact the needs and aspirations of your people. Our Country is so vast that every candidate on the National Tickets owes it to himself to study needs at first hand.

We have only scratched the surface of successful National Governing. We can never go back, for instance, to the days of a Billion Dollar Congress.

Problems that were once local and could be handled locally have become today national and international. For example, the whole question of the food supply of the Nation, of the growing of crops, and the steps in transportation and distribution to the consumer. These must be viewed nationally, and even internationally. Twenty-five years ago what you were doing in the Northwest with your crops and your live-stock was not of very great importance to people in the East or to people in other lands. Today the increase in population has become so great, especially the increase in the great congested centers, that the

National Government must interest itself more and more in this problem of food production and distribution.

The Republican nominee for the Presidency is reported yesterday as thinking of the Tariff Issue as ~~as~~ a prominent feature of his campaign. I can only remark in passing that he must be much put to it to unearth topics for his "front porch campaign". The tariff was indeed at once time in our history a local issue. It later became a national issue - but seven or eight years ago it was, to everybody's satisfaction, taken out of politics and by a law, supported not only by Democratic but Republican votes, placed under a non-partisan tariff commission, along sound, economic lines. Senator Harding has evidently forgotten that this event took place.

So with questions like that of the food supply of the Nation, we recognize that vast improvement can be made in the existing situation. *They too must be taken out of politics* We recognize that the conditions of farm life must be made even more attractive than they are now in order to increase production. That means better roads; more comforts on the farm not only for farm labor but for the farmer's wife and family as well. It means better

transportation facilities for the farm products. It means, without question, better marketing facilities, and the reduction of the present number of hands through which the article must go before it reaches the ultimate consumer. It means also a thorough study of the needs of the consumers, both here and in Europe.

We appreciate more and more that we are a very intimate and integral part of world affairs, not only in our diplomatic relations but also in our commercial relations. We have begun to know that some action taken by an individual Nation in Europe or in the Far East, or a crop failure thousands of miles away, will have a very direct bearing on our own lives and fortunes back home.

My plea is that in these matters we become more nationally-minded. Too much in the past we have viewed things from the local point of view; too much we have passed laws to take care of a small fraction of a great situation. The world war has shown us that this piecemeal, hit-or-miss method must end.

I feel very certain that I can pledge that if a Democratic Administration is returned to power we shall view these problems in

the large. In Governor Cox we have a great administrator - one who knows the whole nation and one who is neither a time server or a temporizer, but is nationally-minded. He is noted for being one who ~~not only talks but~~ does things ~~now~~. We must have intelligent, scientific and humanitarian study of these great problems, learning from the experience of every locality, and we must solve them in an American way.

During the next four years I look to see a great development along these lines, especially in the better bringing together of the producer and the consumer, with the speedier handling of products and the elimination of the undoubtedly great waste which today exists.

So too with our foreign trade. We need Americans in our diplomatic and consular services who will be thoroughly trained in the understanding of home conditions, and we need to bring through them the understanding of the foreign conditions to the producers and businessmen in every State of the Union.

This will require not merely study, but sympathetic action

resulting therefrom. It shall be done not merely for the benefit of any one class, it must be done for the general good of every group and every section in the Nation.

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