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

**Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension**

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**File No. 145**

**1920 August 20**

**Yakima, WA - Campaign Speech**

FROM SPEECH OF HON. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT  
YAKIMA - AUG. 20, 1920

I wonder if the people of the Nation realize one of the greatest crimes which has been perpetrated on them by the present Republican Congress and the total lack of vision shown by their leaders in one of the most important national questions of the present day. The Administration had begun on a definite and working plan for the reclamation of arid and swamp lands of the Nation, realizing that it was economic waste to allow these lands to lie idle, and realizing also the great need for new homes and for an increased national food supply.

During the fiscal year ending last June 30th the National Government spent \$5,686,000,000. Out of this enormous sum, how much do you suppose went to the United States reclamation service? Only Seven and one-half millions - or only between one and two tenths of one percent. of the whole Government appropriations. The Republican leaders showed themselves to be "penny-wise and pound foolish". Even if we eliminate all of the expenses last year which are chargeable to the war, including the interest on the public debt, and if

we estimate what Senator Harding would call the normal expenses of the Government, based on the pre-war budget of about \$2,000,000,000 a year, we would find that the seven and one-half millions ~~unappropriated~~ <sup>judging by</sup> ~~money~~ appropriated for reclamation was less than a half of one percent of the total appropriations.

Not only was it impossible to start any new projects, to undertake the development of more acres, but it was impossible also, as you people out here in the State of Washington know, to go ahead with projects already undertaken, and it was impossible even to keep in a proper state of repair the work already accomplished.

Previous experience has already shown that these reclamation projects pay for themselves many times over. The money returns to the pockets of the tax-payers a hundred-fold. I want to see that item for reclamation in the National Budget increased from the pittance which we have in the past allowed to it, to a substantial figure - to an amount which will really make itself felt.

The last Republican Congress appropriated nearly \$6,000,000,000. This sum Governor Cox proposes to cut to four billions. If we can do

that I want to see one percent of it at least put into the Reclamation Service. That would mean \$40,000,000 a year. Even that would be little enough to pay for the great national benefits which accrue to every State of the Union, not merely to those in which the project itself is located.

This is one of the truly important steps in solving the high cost of living.

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