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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. 148**

**1920 August 21**

**Portland, OR - Campaign Speech**

FROM SPEECH OF HON FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT  
PORTLAND, OREGON - AUG. 21, 1920

Tonight I want to express my pleasure in getting to the State of Oregon so early in the campaign, and at the same time to say that I am indeed sorry that I could not have carried out the original program which called for meetings in two other cities of this State. I have learned better than ever before the truth of the old axiom that "It is impossible to be in two places at the same time", and of the other old axiom that "Possession is nine points of the law" - for my Washington friends seized me and would not let go.

I want to start off by making a prophecy. I recognize that the State of Oregon is claimed as absolutely safe by the Republican leaders; but on the other hand, a large number of independent observers, who have studied the situation, have stated it as their opinion that the electoral vote of Oregon must be placed in the doubtful column. If these independent observers are right, as I believe them to be, my prophecy is definite that Oregon will be found casting the majority of its votes on November second for the Democratic Ticket.

I base this prophecy on two great big fundamental facts in

our modern public life and politic<sup>al</sup> contests. These two facts are scarcely open to dispute. Either one of them is sufficient to bring my prophecy true - with the assistance of both of them there can be no room for doubt.

The first of these truths is that today, more than ever before in our national history, the voters of the United States are using their heads. It is very evident in every State of the Union that narrow partisanship is becoming less and less prevalent. It is equally evident that what might be called inherited partisanship is also passing away. A generation ago a very large proportion of the voters of the Nation, in both the Democratic and Republican Parties, were partisans because their fathers or their grandfathers had belonged to a particular party. People inherited their political faith with as great or even more regularity than they inherited the old homestead or their father's watch.

Many elements contributed in the old days to this unfortunate tendency, but the greatest factor probably was the existence of <sup>the war</sup> ~~war~~ and bad feeling between political opponents.

A hundred years ago people in the United States used to fight duels over politics. The feeling ran high prior to elections, and violence was not an exception. The fighting of the Civil War did little to eradicate bad feeling.

But as these later years have passed by, this old antagonism has largely disappeared, and with its disappearance we are losing, gradually but surely, an antiquated and un-American method of voting a ticket because "grandpa" did.

I am perfectly willing to let two classes in the community vote for Senator Harding this year, without any effort to call <sup>them</sup> away. Those who have studied the relative merits of the two platforms, who have studied the relative merits of the two candidates, and who after that are honestly of the opinion that Senator Harding would make the best President for the next four years, should vote for him. So, also, those who are guided by the opinions of their Republican grandfathers, ~~who~~ <sup>and</sup> would vote for him anyway. It would be useless to argue with that type of mind.

I do not ask the vote of any man, Democratic or Republican, unless it be a vote of conviction.

It is because I am so certain of the appeal which Democratic ideals are making this year to those who are willing to use their individual judgment that I give this as one of the great reasons for my prophecy of Democratic success in this State this year.

The other great reason is that the American people are on the whole a pretty wise people, and that they will not be fooled or misled by lies or misstatements; and the campaign of the Republican leaders, as disclosed thus far, is so full of misrepresentations that the voters have plenty of time to discriminate - to call the bluff - to discover the truth, and to punish those who are the guilty parties.

I suppose it is because the Democratic campaign has put the Republicans on the defensive that they are driven to the use of despicable methods. Let me give you an example. During the past week I have been demolishing the silly argument about England being able to out-vote us six to one in the League of Nations. I have shown, first of all, that it is the Council of the League which is the true governing body, and that in that Council the whole British Empire has but one vote, just the same as the United States; and I have shown that while in the Assembly,

a very large body which has primarily only recommendatory powers, five of Great Britain's dominions, like Canada, South Africa and Australia, each have a vote, the United States of America will undoubtedly have the support of twice as many of our neighboring and friendly Republics in the West Indies and South America. I cited, for instance, the fact that the Republic of San Domingo is at the present time being administered by the United States Navy, and that as the interests of the two countries are closely bound up together, the votes of both countries would undoubtedly be found in the same column.

The same thing is true of the Republic of Haiti, though in that particular case they have a President and Cabinet of their own.

It is true also that the interests of other Republics, such as Cuba, Panama, Nicaragua and Brazil, are so akin to ours that we <sup>shall</sup> ~~should~~ be of mutual support to each other in the Assembly of the League of Nations.

What I am driving at is this. The above simple and clear statement got under the skin of the partisan Republican leaders to such an extent and under the skin particularly of the partisan Republican

Press, that they send some one to the State Department the other day and misrepresented me, saying that I had said that the United States has " " control over the Governments south of us. A cleverly worded story appears from Washington, making it appear that the State Department has denied my claim about these Republics in the League of Nations. I ~~am~~ *am I glad* ~~conclude~~ *conclude* that the State Department has denied the absolutely false statement given to them as coming from me. I wholly agree with the State Department. I reiterate exactly what I said before that the United States will have voting side by side with it in the League of Nations, not six States but at least twice that number, and ~~the~~ *this because of* the simple fact that these little Republics have the same kind of interests that we have and that it is even more certain that we will all be voting the same way than that Canada, Australia and South Africa will be found voting with England.

That is a very good illustration of the kind of misrepresentation to which they have been driven. By they I mean the present people in control of the Republican campaign. That kind of campaigning is not acceptable to the voters of this Nation - to the voters of any political

party, and they will show their resentment when they are put to it.

I believe in playing this game on the level - in giving a square deal even to one's opponent. That is the other reason why I am very certain that the people of Oregon are going to put the State in the Democratic column in November.

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2 Phases

Possession

9 Pto

Prophecy

Refusal -  
Indefinite.

2 Reasons

Either one enough

A. Voters losing their  
heads.

Grandpa -

Rancor -

Hardship can have those

B. Voters resent his  
misrepresentation and  
a string of dead owners



