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

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 157

1920 September 3

Augusta, ME - Campaign Speech

For President
JAMES M. COX

HEADQUARTERS Franklin D. Roosevelt

GRAND CENTRAL PALACE
NEW YORK

For Vice-President
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Augusta, Maine, 9/3/30



An amusing, but at the same time a pathetic incident occurred in the Maine campaign the other day. A young man, touring the State on behalf of the Republican National Committee, is quoted as talking about the high cost of living. In his remarks, he said the cost of living is being kept up by the retaining in Washington of sixty thousand unnecessary and useless Democratic government clerks. ^{and that} They should be discharged and compelled to do productive work. A few minutes later in the same speech, evidently forgetting what he had said before he wound up by declaring that if the Republicans are victorious in the coming election they will see to it that after the 6th of March next the sixty thousand Democratic clerks in Washington will be replaced by sixty thousand tried and true Republicans. I use this story as a very good example of the way the Republican campaign is being run in Maine. In its essentials, it is a campaign of pure criticism and a mere appeal to put Republicans in office. It is, of course, unnecessary to point out that that young man knows nothing about the laws of the United States for he could not refer to sixty thousand Democratic clerks if he were aware of the fact that for a great many years all government employes have been under the Civil Service, and that during the past eight years the figures show that just as many Republicans have entered the Government service as Democrats. The Civil Service Law, of course, prohibits party faith entering into the question of appointment in any conceivable way.

But the young man was right in one respect. There are too many government employes for the work which has to be done. I have been a student of this problem for a long time, and as everybody knows I have advocated a complete reorganization of government business. In this respect, the Democratic cam-

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paigh offers something constructive, thereby differing wholly from the Republican campaign of criticism and abuse. Last spring, in Washington, a Congressional commission which had been at work for nearly a year handed down a comprehensive and useful report on the reclassification of the Government service. It showed conclusively that people doing the same kind of work are called by dozens of different titles and receive dozens of varieties of pay. Two men or two women working even side by side in the same department may be differently classified, and one may receive one hundred dollars a month and the other one hundred and fifty dollars a month. The report of this commission standardized all government employment, gave the same title to the same kind of work, and established a uniform scale of pay for that work. It recommended also ~~xxx~~ standards of pay commensurate with the importance of the ~~work~~ and in line with the rates of pay in private business. This report received the hearty support of the administration and of the great majority of the government workers themselves. Yet the Republican Congress failed wholly to take any action on the report and has left the same old system in effect.

Last year in some of the important branches of the government doing research and scientific work, the turnover among the skilled employees ran to over sixty per cent. In other words, two men and women out of every three left the government service to go into private employ. The reason for this was that the Government did not give adequate compensation. In many of the positions the salaries have not been changed since the Civil War, and yet the Republican Congress seems to think that the government can be efficient and that people will remain for what is not even a living wage. Let me give you an example of the attitude of some of the Republican leaders in Congress. The ~~New~~ ^{U.S.} Department asked for an appropriation of twenty thousand dollars in order to establish an historical section to collect, ~~xxx~~ classify and index Naval records of America's part in the great war. We wished to do this while the material was still available, and we wished to put it in such shape that future historians would

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and it readily available. It was, in other words, a matter of real importance to our future national history. We ~~asked~~ Congress to allow us to spend five thousand dollars out of this sum to pay a skilled and highly trained historian to be selected from the staff of some great university. We asked for permission to employ an assistant historian at four thousand dollars. The other eleven thousand dollars was to go for the pay of two or three clerks and for the purchase of filing cases and index cards, etc. Congress gave us the twenty thousand dollars all right and authorized us to establish the historical section, but they put in a neat little clause that the Navy Department could ~~not~~ employ anybody in that section at more than eighteen hundred dollars per annum. The result has been that the whole purpose of the appropriation has been injured. Unfortunately, one cannot secure the services of competent historians for eighteen hundred dollars a year, even for the pleasure of serving the United States Government.

The Democratic candidates in this election propose a definite program in regard to government employees. We believe that the Government of the United States should be not ~~the~~ ^{one} of the ~~worst~~ employers in the whole country but should be the model employer. We believe that government clerks, government scientists and other highly ~~trained~~ ^{prained} individuals should be paid what they would normally get in private employ. We believe, of course, in the enforcement of the Civil Service law and the ~~removal~~ ^{leaving out} of party lines in selecting the great body of workers for the United States.

But at the same time, we believe that the standards required of government employees should be raised to the highest. If the United States becomes the model employer, it should also ask that those in its employ give the highest possible kind of service. In this way the efficiency of the Government can be very greatly increased. In this way, also, the number of employees can be greatly reduced. Let me give you a simple example. In my own office in Washington, I found that I could not get my work done with three second-rate ineff-

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efficient stenographers, but that I could get my work done with two firstclass effective stenographers. I might mention that it costs less to employ two expert stenographers than to employ three secondclass ones.

The government service can be increased in efficiency by giving adequate salaries and at the same time demanding vastly better work. In doing this, the total cost to the government, and therefore to the people of the United States, can be very materially reduced. I have had for over a year a standing offer with the Committee on Appropriations of Congress. I have told them that I would save 7½% of the total of all Navy salaries if they would give me authority to fix the pay of these employees. I would do this by discharging many of the least efficient employees and by using part of their pay, but only a part of it, to ~~reward~~ ^{increase the efficiency of} those who are ~~efficient~~ ^{left}. If this same purpose is carried out, it will save the taxpayers of the United States several hundred millions of dollars in the course of every succeeding year. However, in line with its ^{known} ~~well established~~ custom, ^{this} Congress paid no attention to my request.

This is just one of the instances of the progressive program which the progressive Governor of Ohio proposes to put into effect when he is elected President of the United States.

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