
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Boston, MA - Campaign Speech

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF MR. F.D. ROOSEVELT
BOSTON, MASS., SEPT. 15, 1920

When the Democratic Party came into power in 1912 conditions in the Country were in a chaotic state, and the President with the aid of a Democratic Senate and a Democratic House of Representatives, set about, without the loss of time, to remedy these unsatisfactory conditions, and in a period of nearly six years prior to the present Republican Congress there was more legislation of a constructive nature put on the statute books than has ever been placed there by any administration since the formation of the Union. While there are many measures which can be dignified by terming them "most important", there are many more which linked with these "most important" measures make the great record of the Democratic Party one in which every American citizen now has such justifiable pride. I will not attempt to point out at this time any particular measure, but rather will give you a resume' of every act passed by the Democratic Administration, each one of which has been of immeasurable benefit to the people of the Country:

1. The Income Tax
2. The Federal Reserve System

It is needless to point out the fact that these two measures were the controlling factor in making it possible for this Country to finance the great World War recently successfully won.

3. Publicity of Campaign Expenses

Were it not for this measure, it would probably have been impossible to have detected the fraud in a certain election which terminated in the indictment, conviction and sentence of a Republican member of the United States Senate.

4. The eight-hour Day
5. Safety appliances on railroads and mines

6. Workmen's Compensation Act.

7. Farm Loan Banks

What farmer in this Country would want to go back to that portion of the "good old days" advocated by the Presidential Nominees on the Republican Ticket? This law for the first time made possible the financing of the agricultural interests of America.

8. Federal aid for good roads

9. Soldier's compensation Laws

10. War Risk Insurance

11. Pensions for soldiers of all our wars

12. Establishment of the Department of Labor.

This department was established after great pressure had been exerted by the Democratic House of Representatives. The establishment of this Bureau gave to Labor a seat in the President's Cabinet, and today the laboring-man is feeling the effect of the many acts which have been placed on the books for his benefit, i.e., the 8-hour law; the child labor law; the workmen's compensation law, and many others. In fact, in the three or four years more remedial legislation covering the great questions of labor has been enacted than in any previous period of thirty or forty years. Practically all of this beneficial legislation had the direct opposition of Senator Harding himself and the little group in the Senate with whom Senator Harding has aligned himself in the present campaign. In other words, this group of "political friends" has never given its sanction, much less its vote, to remedy the many difficulties which the laboring masses of the Country had to face.

While discussing the attitude of the Presidential nominees on this great subject, let me ask you to look into the record of the Democratic candidate, Governor Cox. See his stand upon all matters affecting labor, and you will find that he has always been in favor of justice to labor. This is borne out by the straw votes which have been taken in the mines and factories of Ohio, where Governor Cox received ten voters to each one cast in favor of the Senator from Ohio.

13. Establishment of the Department of Commerce

14. The Tariff Commission

15. The Federal Trade Commission

16. Our Merchant Marine

17. Our Naval Forces

16. "The Thousand and one War Measures" which enabled us to so organize the government of the United States as to successfully finance and successfully carry out the great business of helping our Allies to defeat the Central Powers in the World War.

Let me repeat, ~~think~~ however, once more, the fact that these great achievements were not accomplished altogether by the Democratic Party. They had the support of the far-seeing, Progressive Republicans in the House and Senate. These men joined hands with the Democratic members of Congress in order to remedy the unsatisfactory conditions which I have stated existed in the Country prior to 1912.

One of the issues in this campaign, as you all know, is the question of our relations with foreign powers and our duty toward our recent allies. There is talk or rather mere words coming out of Marion, Ohio, of a proposition to establish "an association of nations". What does the Senator from Ohio mean by "an association of Nations"? Does he intend to go back to the days of the Hague Tribunal, when every one knows that this organization failed utterly. With the tremendous progress made by the World in the last few years, it has not been possible for this Country to have a weak foreign policy. In the first place, a weak foreign policy is contrary to any policy which the Country has had in the past. We have always been enough American and possessed with enough courage to stand by the rights of Countries which are associated with us in North, South and Central Americas. It has been the great moral force of our Country which has kept for them for the past ninety-nine years their liberty and their independence, and now for the first time the Republican National Candidates want this Country to have a foreign policy which is straddling and even pure cowardice.

One of the Republican "achievements" is the defeat of the

League of Nations, and in the place of this established League with its thirty-seven members, the Republican Party is advocating what I have just termed a foreign policy of straddling and even pure cowardice. No League or Association of Nations can be drawn up in absolute perfection. Our Constitution was not perfect. If it had been, there would have been no necessity for its nineteen amendments. The power of amending is strong enough to take care of any League of Nations idea. This has been proved by the fact that it was strong enough to help in rounding out the Constitution of the United States. Everywhere I have tried to bring out that Governor Cox and I are more than willing to incorporate in the covenant of the League of Nations at statement in black and white that no provision of the Treaty or of the League shall in any way conflict with the rights of the people of this Country or the rights of Congress to declare war or consider the advisability of ordering our Army and Navy to participate in foreign wars.

In closing, let me say a word about the result of the State Election in Maine. I simply want to remind you of the old proverb that good things go by threes, and of the fact that the State of Maine went Republican in September 1912 but that a Democrat was elected to the Presidency; that the State of Maine went largely Republican in 1916 but that a Democrat was elected to the Presidency, and that with Maine going heavily Republican in September 1912 for the third time a Progressive Democrat will be elected to the Presidency by the Country in November.

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