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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. 175**

**1920 September 20**

**Albany, NY - Campaign Speech**

FDR's Speech at Albany on Monday 9/20

Title

Today marks the opening of my campaign in the State of New York. I seek to make it a campaign along constructive lines, one which will bring home to the men and women of this State the big fact that the principal question this year is the choice of men to conduct the affairs of the National Government during the coming four years. There is very little use in endless talk about the events of the past,<sup>but</sup> there is real use in discussing what this country needs in the future.

We have certain problems which are of great effect upon our daily lives; some of them old problems, but most of them new questions arising out of the world up-setting events of the past few years.

For instance, there is not one family, not one individual, in the whole nation but what has been affected by the increase in the cost of living. It shows itself in food, in clothing, in rents, in necessities and in luxuries. The present cost of living is due to two things, partly the depreciation in the value of money and the tremendous wastage in all nations because of the war, ~~and due very largely~~<sup>but partly</sup> to other causes which lend themselves to change and improvement. The wastage of materials and the destruction caused by the war is gone beyond repair, but a constructive program can better the other factors.

As a matter of fact, many men and women forget the simple fact of history that during the past year and a half a Republican Congress has absolutely failed to act in these matters, even though the pressing need was repeatedly called to its attention. The record of this Republican Congress is one which the Republican campaigners cannot explain away or avoid.

The Democratic nominee for the Presidency and the Democratic platform itself offer definite relief. We propose to take immediate action. While it is not to be expected that it will probably not reduce the cost of living to the point where it was in 1914, it will be of material benefit to every individual and to every family

Here are some concrete proposals:

1 - Increase food production by opening up at once and on a large scale millions of acres of land now unproductive; vast areas in the Middle West and the West can be quickly reclaimed. This will give more foodstuffs and at the same time will offer thousands of new homesteads and farming opportunity to people living in congested cities.

2 - Improve transportation facilities in order that the product of the farms may be brought more quickly and more cheaply to the consumer.

3 - Make farm life more attractive, and direct an intensive campaign to provide better living conditions in the country districts.

4 - Eliminate many of the unnecessary hands through which articles go from the present time pass between the man who produces and the man who uses the articles.

5 - Change the present ineffective laws regarding profiteering so that the public may be assured that selfish individuals will not line their pockets out of undue profits made from the necessities of life.

6 - Provide such regulations of commodities like coal that the average citizen may be assured that the supply will be adequate and the price reasonable.

I want to ask two simple questions: First, have the Republican candidates so far in any of their speeches or statements offered anything like a definite program such as that outlined above? Compare this program, which is only a portion of the whole Democratic program, with the glittering generalities of the Republican platform or the Republican nominees. Secondly, ask yourselves which nominee is best fitted to carry out a program, a man who has absolutely no record for executive experience or the support of progressive measures in his whole career, or a man who has won the recognition of the entire country as the champion of practical measures for social and economic relief, and as the successful executive thrice chosen as leader by the people of his own State?

"By their deeds ye shall know them", "you can tell a man by the friends he keeps". These two proverbs may well be pondered over by the voters between now and November second. Compare the deeds in public life of Harding and of Cox. They have both been in the public life or the public eye for approximately the same length of time. Which one of them has done the most for the State of Ohio? Which one of them has left a mark for the good on the lives of his fellow citizens? Compare the friends and intimates of the two men. Senator Harding has been in comradeship and in actual alliance with the old-time discredited bosses of his own State. He has been in constant opposition to the progressive forces within the Republican Party in the Senate, and has been aligned with men like Penrose and Smoot. Governor Cox, during this same period, has opposed bossism within his party, and associated with himself in the Government of the State of Ohio men and women who were honest advocates of honest popular government, experts in the <sup>Industrial</sup> social ~~and~~, economic and agricultural needs of the day.

Put these men side by side; vote according to your own convictions. I will willingly abide by your choice.

Extracts Roosevelt speech at Albany Monday Night 9/20

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