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

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 179

1920 September 25

Ogdensburg, NY - Campaign Speech

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HON. F.D. ROOSEVELT,
OSSENDERICK, N. Y., SEPT. 25, 1920

I hope that every voter will make a special effort to think back over the history of the past two years and to make application of that history to the present campaign. For instance, it is of distinct interest to think over the change of mind which certain Republican Leaders have sustained on the subject of the League of Nations. The important thing is that where there has been a change of mind, there must have been some motive for it.

What that motive is, is also written in history. We remember that when President Wilson returned to the United States for the first time, bringing with him the first draft of the Covenant of the League, he held conferences with Senator Lodge and with other Republican Leaders, including Senator Harding, and received suggestions from them as to several ways in which they believed the Covenant could be improved.

President Wilson returned to Europe and it became obvious that he would be able to incorporate the suggested changes, including that of definite recognition of the Monroe Doctrine.

This was the turning point in the whole Republican policy. It became obvious that the President was obtaining in Paris a League of Nations satisfactory not merely to the Senate of the United States, but to the whole American people. Here is where partisan politics first came to light. This is the unwritten history of what really happened -

Will H. Hays, Chairman of the Republican National Committee, hurried to Washington and called Senators Lodge, Lorah, Brandegee and others into secret conference. He pointed out to them that a successful outcome of the President's efforts to restore peace and to gain the greatest object of

to gain the greatest object of the War - a permanent peace through the League of Nations - would spell inevitable Republican defeat in the coming Presidential Election, then about a year and half away. He pointed out that President Wilson would be acclaimed throughout the World, as he was being in the United States, as the man who had at last been able to accomplish the World's ideal of putting an end to future wars.

Will Hays delivered in effect an ultimatum to the Republican Senators that they must choose between a surrender of power to the Democratic Party, and a deliberate and carefully planned campaign to throw over the treat of peace and to discredit the President of the United States, in order to secure a victory for the Republican Party.

The choice was made at that time. Partisan advantage was placed first, and the restoration of peace to civilization was thrown deliberately into the discard.

As a result of that determination of more than one year ago, the restoration of peace still hangs in the balance. This is recognized not only here but throughout the World.

I recognize that this deliberate statement of fact will meet with howls of protest and that the Republicans in the Senate who were responsible for what I consider a crime against their own Country and against the peoples of other Nations, will seek to befog the issue by bringing in all kinds of small details and irrelevant data.

Anybody who was in Washington during that period knows, however, in the bottom of his heart that the big essential fact as outlined above is true.

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OSSINSBURG, N. Y., SEPT. 25, 1930

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OSSining, N.Y., Sept. 20, 1930

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OBEDDING, N. Y., SEPT. 22, 1930

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