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

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 198

1920 October 5

Lawrence, KS - Campaign Speech

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HON. F. D. ROOSEVELT
LAWRENCE, KAN., OCT. 5, 1920

People are getting heartily sick of post mortems.

Senator Harding the other day wasted part of a speech in trying to prove that the President of the United States had himself scrapped the League of Nations and that all the blame attached to him. I am perfectly willing to let history and the people of the United States decide this particular question in the days to come. What is before the Nation at the present time is distinctly not so much a question of the controversy which raged around the subject of the League during the past year in Washington as it is what is going to be done with the League in the coming year.

Incidentally it is amusing to read these words from Senator Harding, in view of the fact that he has been criticizing the President of the United States for taking his own initiative in negotiating peace and in drawing up the Covenant of the League in conjunction with the other Nations. Senator Harding in trying to excuse his votes in the Senate, went on to say: "But when I am President I am going to be in another capacity and become the negotiating agent and must speak for America. When that time comes I am going to be in favor of some association or society of nations for the promotion of world peace". I will leave it to any intelligent person to ask himself if this is not the position taken by President Wilson - the position which Senator Harding has been criticizing for many months. Again I insist that Senator Harding get away from a discussion of things which are not issues. The more he talks, however, the clearer he makes it appear that his advocacy of some vague kind of a world association means in plain English a scrapping of the existing League - in other words an appeal to the forty-one nations who are now members of the League to undo all of the work which has been done, to meet again around a peace table to listen to a new plan as yet not formed even in the mind of Senator Harding.

Getting down to brass tacks, Senator Harding knows that a programme of this kind is impossible and that he would become the

laughing stock of the civilized world if he were to put up to them a proposition of this kind. He knows that the nations will point out to him that the League is a going concern and that it has accomplished wonderful results already, even without us.

Many good people had up to recently believed that Mr. Harding would find some way for the United States to enter the League. His recent statements, especially his endorsement of Senator Borah's speeches, have, however, made it clear that he has absolutely no intention of making it possible for this country to become one of the family of nations. As the days go by, more and more people are coming to me to express their appreciation of the clear purpose of the Democratic campaign and of the fact that we have by insistent demands forced Senator Harding off the fence which was intended by him to hold the opposing factions of his own party in line. Now he is burning his bridges behind him. He never had any clear idea of how he was going to get out of this mess if he were elected, but he hoped to postpone the evil day of decision until after election. Thousands of voters are leaving him in disgust and are lining up behind a candidate who says what he means and proposes that the United States enter the League with every safeguard to American rights properly preserved.

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HON. F. D. ROOSEVELT
LAWRENCE, MASS., OCT. 5, 1920

People are getting heartily sick of post mortems.

Senator Harding the other day wasted part of a speech in trying to prove that the President of the United States had himself scrapped the League of Nations and that all the blame attached to him. I am perfectly willing to let history and the people of the United States decide this particular question in the days to come. What is before the Nation at the present time is distinctly not so much a question of the controversy which raged around the subject of the League during the past year in Washington as it is what is going to be done with the League in the coming year.

Incidentally it is amusing to read these words from Senator Harding, in view of the fact that he has been criticising the President of the United States for taking his own initiative in negotiating peace and in drawing up the Covenant of the League in conjunction with the other Nations. Senator Harding in trying to excuse his votes in the Senate, went on to say: "But when I am President I am going to be in another capacity and become the negotiating agent and must speak for America. When that time comes I am going to be in favor of some association or society of nations for the promotion of world peace". I will leave it to any intelligent person to ask himself if this is not the position taken by President Wilson - the position which Senator Harding has been criticising for many months. Again I insist that Senator Harding get away from a discussion of things which are not issues. The more he talks, however, the clearer he makes it appear that his advocacy of some vague kind of a world association means in plain English a scrapping of the existing League - in other words an appeal to the forty-one nations who are now members of the League to undo all of the work which has been done, to meet again around a peace table to listen to ^{an} ~~an~~ American plan as yet not formed even in the mind of Senator Harding.

Getting down to brass tacks, Senator Harding knows that a programme of this kind is impossible and that he would become the

laughing stock of the civilized world if he were to put up to them a proposition of this kind. He knows that the nations will point out to him that the League is a going concern and that it has accomplished wonderful results already, even without us.

Many good people had up to recently believed that Mr. Harding would find some way for the United States to enter the League. His recent statements, especially his endorsement of Senator Borah's speeches, have, however, made it clear that he has absolutely no intention of making it possible for this country to become one of the family of nations. As the days go by, more and more people are coming to me to express their appreciation of the clear purpose of the Democratic campaign and of the fact that we have by insistent demands forced Senator Harding off the fence which was intended by him to hold the opposing factions of his own party in line. Now he is burning his bridges behind him. He never had any clear idea of how he was going to get out of this mess if he were elected, but he hoped to postpone the evil day of decision until after election. Thousands of voters are leaving him in disgust and are lining up behind a candidate who says what he means and proposes that the United States enter the League with every safeguard to American rights properly preserved.