
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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1920 October 16

Hamilton, OH - Campaign Speech

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HONF.D.ROOSEVELT,
HAMILTON, OHIO, OCTOBER 16, 1920

The signs multiply. I cannot take up a paper in big towns or little towns without finding more lists of people, Republicans, Progressives and Independents, who are switching from Harding to Cox. The new slogan, based on this tremendous overturn in sentiment, is going to be from now on - "Everybody is doing it".

The nation has caught on. Readers in every community joyously pick up the morning paper and improve their appetite for breakfast by reading of the latest "flip-flop" executed by the distinguished gentleman who is running for the Presidency on the Republican Ticket. Bets are being made as to whether each day will be a "now you see it" day, or a "now you don't" day.

The "wiggle and wobble" continued yesterday in Senator Harding's trip through Indiana. At Indianapolis he talked about his same old theory of forming some new kind of an association, and at New Albany he again suggested a peace by resolution of Congress.

A new and very ~~more~~ serious issue has been added to the campaign. The biggest issue remains, of course, the one of whether we shall join the forty-one nations in the League or remain outside in a position of isolation. What voters are beginning to realize is the tremendous danger of electing to the Presidency of the Nation a man who has conducted a campaign like that of Senator Harding.

A prominent Republican in Marion, Ind., said to me last night: "I have become thoroughly convinced that a man who is weak and vacillating in one thing is apt to be weak and vacillating in everything. Senator Harding's "facing both ways" policy on

international affairs means that he would face both ways on domestic questions also. The big issues of reconstruction, of labor, of transportation, of marketing, of reclamation, all demand a clear eye and a firm hand in the coming years. We need a leader in the Presidency. I am wholly satisfied that Senator Harding has not the clear eye and firm hand necessary to help the nation in solving these great problems. No man can be a successful President who tries to hunt with the hounds and run with the hare at the same time".

That thought must be in the minds of hundreds of thousands of voters. All except those who vote a party ticket blindly will be influenced by this new issue in the campaign. Most voters are really patriotic enough to put the good of their Country first, and it is because of this we are ~~getting~~ more ^{strongly marked evidence} every day of the definite turn of the tide in opposition to a man who would be a thoroughly weak chief executive for the nation.

Frankly, I wondered ten days ago whether the voters of the Country would wake up in time to the true situation. I wondered if we had sufficient time left before Election day to make the great issue of the League of Nations clear. But these ten days have convinced me that during the early part of the campaign, when the voters were not talking very much, they were still doing a tremendous amount of quiet thinking. The concrete expression, the result of this thinking, is now coming to light. It is being demonstrated at ~~every~~ meeting and in every newspaper throughout the Land. If the Election were tomorrow, Senator Harding would be defeated, and yet the tide is by no means at its flood. The next two weeks will see its ~~minimum~~

culmination. I am more confident than at any other time in the campaign, not merely that Governor Cox will be elected, but that the voters will literally overwhelm the candidacy of Senator Harding, first of all on the great issue of the League of Nations, the carrying out of the basic purpose of our participation in the war, and secondly as an expression of their determination to avoid placing in the White House a man of weakness and vacillation.

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