Franklin D. Roosevelt — "The Great Communicator"

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Brooklyn, NY - Campaign Speech

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECH OF HON.F.D.ROOSEVELT
BROOKLYN, N.Y., OCT.26,1920

Here is a true story which I wish every Republican would read - that is those Republicans who really believe that they care for their country more than they do for their party.

After a meeting the other night a well-to-do businessman came up to me and said: "Mr. Roosevelt, I agree with what you have said in regard to the League of Nations. I regard that issue as the most important which has been before this country since 1860. I want the United States to join the League of Nations. I realize that a vote for Harding is a vote to stay out, and that a vote for Cox is a vote to go in. In addition to that, I firmly believe that Cox, because of his splendid executive record, would make a better President than Harding. I very much wish that I could vote for Cox and the League of Nations". I said - "Why not?" He replied, extending his arm in a deprecatory manner, - "Because I am a Republican".

There is a tremendous lesson to be learned from that story. A vast number of voters in every State of the Union understand the lesson, and though normally affiliated with the Republican Party, will cast their votes for Cox and the League of Nations this year. It does not mean that they will become Democrats. It does not mean that they will cease to call themselves, as a general rule, Republicans, but it does mean that they understand the importance of this election to the future of the United States. They are thinking of the days of the war when we were all united in not only the purpose of winning the war, but in seeking a way to prevent a repetition of such a war.

One other tendency among thinking voters has become very apparent to me in the last few days. They are beginning to realize that the election of Senator Harding does not mean the conduct of

national affairs by the Republican Party during the coming two years or four years. The reason for this is, of course, perfectly, obvious. The present leadership of the Republican Party is hopelessly divided. Merely for campaign purposes, they have held together, after a fashion. It is true that Senator Johnson has said that pro-League Republicans who intended to vote for Harding were hypocrits, and it is true that some Republicans have regarded Senator Johnson and his followers as crazy radicals.

It is the time after election which must be looked to - the future, and not the past. All thinking people realize that if Mr. Harding is elected he is going to have a from November 3rd on the most trying task within his own party which as ever confronted a President Elect or a President. We have a fair sample of the way he intends to handle that difficulty by the way in which he has flopped from one side to the other during this campaign. There is no particular harm when a candidate goes through these reversals of form, but it is another matter when a President does so.

Hundreds of Republicans have said to me - "For purely selfish party reasons, it would be a very good thing if Senator Harding were not elected. If he is, the Republican Party will split itself wide open - the country will become disgusted with them and will turn out every Republican the first chance they get". Many others have expressed the opinion to me that Senator Harding is so wholly lacking in administrative qualifications that if he is elected his administration would be characterized as a complete business failure.

Among the businessmen of New York I have come across [redacted] who

many cases of individuals who are sincerely desirous of obtaining a good business administration of our national affairs. They have looked into the record of Senator Harding and into that of Governor Cox, and they have made up their minds that the man who has so successfully conducted the government of the State of Ohio for six years, is best qualified to put our national government on a better business basis.

Lastly, I have been tremendously impressed by the great swing of sentiment toward Governor Cox by men and women in New York who have or are interested in commercial transactions connected with foreign trade. All of the world realizes that the financial stability of the great majority of nations has been severely shaken and that it is even now in a dangerous condition. It is still wholly possible to prevent a crash, but at the same time unless cooperative action is taken, the danger will increase rather than diminish. Of course, if a crash in foreign parts should actually occur, the United States would be seriously affected. Almost all who are connected with our foreign trade realize that the United States ought, as a mere matter of self-prevention to take part in the attempts which are being made to stabilize and improve world finance. These people look forward with dread to another long period of hesitating and unsettled foreign relations. They are, frankly, afraid of what would happen if Senator Harding were elected. They are afraid of another long fight between different factions of the Republican Party. If for no other reason than a selfish one, the United States must immediately resume her place at the table with other nations in order that economic and financial difficulties resulting from the war may be straightened out and placed in a safe position. There is every indication that the country begins to appreciate this important factor. It is, of course, reasonable to add that if a collapse occurs because of the United States not taking part in world affairs, it is not merely

Americans who are connected with our foreign commerce who will suffer. Every other American will fell the blow indirectly - even those who live in the Middle of the country or on the farms.

The campaign of win-at-any-cost conducted by Republican managers is well borne out by the disgusting episode of the cartoon published in the current issue of Harvey's Weekly. Thw public of the United States understands the sacrilegious character of this dusgusting picture. It is an insult to the whole Christian World.

This cartoon would not become a factor in this election were it merely the work of an individual who happened to edit an individually conducted paper. Itswhole significance lies in the fact that it was published by Mr. George Harvey. This gentlemen's connection with Senator Harding ought to be known to all. His partisan bitterness has been shown for months. In June, 1920, he was one of the select few who directed the nomination of Senator Harding of Ohio at the midnight conference in Chicago during the Republican National Convention. Since that time he has been more active than any other individual in the conduct of Senator HardningIs campaign. XI I wish to call attention to the fact that Mr. Harvey for a long period of time this autumn not only lived in Marion, Ohio, but in the intimacy of Senator Harding's onw home.

Persons familiar with methods of the English style have recognized in many of Senator Harding's carefully prepared addresses a close resemblance to the writings of Mr. George Harvey.

I am filled with amazement at the thought that from the same source should have come appeals to the Motherhood of America and immediately thereafter the sneering and sacrilegious lampoon on subjects which concern the deepest religious convictions of millions

That the connection between Senator Harding, Mr. George Harvey and the Republican Campaign Managers may be made still more definite, it is right to call attention to the fact that the cartoon in the current issue of Harvey's Weekly was drawn by a man named Reid, a person who has been employed by the Republican National Committee to draw cartoons for it.

The picture in question, in addition to being a high sacrilege and a disgusting attack on a man, who, whatever his party affiliations have been, still is the President of all Americans, men, women and children of every political state--- Woodrow Wilson.

Tomorrow is Theodore Roosevelt's birthday. To me his memory will always stand for one characteristic more than any other - Fair Fighting. He hit hard, but he taught young America to hit above the belt.

I wish he were alive today. He had definite convictions. He was not afraid to take a position and maintain it. He never wobbled. He never sought to evade even when members of his own party disagreed with him.

During his lifetime he was first to make objection to unfair political methods of misrepresentation. At all times he acknowledged the respect due to the Presidency of the United States. He understood the distinction between fair criticism and disrespectful villification.

It is easy to attempt to capitalize America's great dead. It is easy to claim an exclusive patent on the American Flag for political purposes. It is easy to insist on what Washington, Jefferson, Cleveland and Roosevelt would have said were they alive today. I hope that good Americans will agree with me that the lives of America's statemen speak for themselves and that it is wholly unworthy to use their names for thoroughly political objects.

Citizens of the United States, regardless of party, join in respectful tribute to the memory of Theodore Roosevelt. Men and women of all parties understand his accomplishments and his definition of the policy of the square deal.

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