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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**

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**Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension**

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Speech of Franklin D. Roosevelt, in Atlanta, Wednesday, September 26th, 8:30 P. M.

(To be released only after delivery)

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It is very satisfactory, after two months in the North, to come back to Georgia and discover at first hand that most of the stories about the trend to the Republican party in the South are untrue; and that when November comes the South will be found true to its historic principles.

I say this as one who has lived so much in Georgia that he has come to understand and love the people of this state, and it is because of this that I am sure that whatever of misunderstanding of the issues of this campaign may exist today will be wholly removed in the next few weeks.

It is to me a significant fact that most of the false opposition to the nominee of the Democratic party for the presidency is definitely located among those who have had the least opportunity to know him and his record. The further you go away from New York State the wilder become the untrue tales, the sillier become the reasons for opposing him.

In other words, where the average man and woman voter has had an opportunity to study the true facts, you find no repetition of the slanders and misstatements that are being circulated in places which cannot or do not get all the facts.

It is, of course, needless to tell the truth to people who do not want it, whose ears and eyes and minds are for varying reasons closed to the truth, who prefer to follow false gods; or to let prejudice outweigh reason and common sense. These unfortunates exist in small numbers in every community. Perhaps, with the spread of better educational facilities throughout the land, their numbers will gradually grow less.

Nor is it of any use to tell the truth to those men and women like Senator Heflin and Mr. Upshaw and Dr. Straton and Mrs. Willebrandt, who either for notoriety or for private gain are making themselves ridiculous up and down the country. Theirs are minds which do not hesitate to misstate facts so long as they can get on the front page of the newspapers or continue to fill lecture engagements.

It is, however, to hundreds of thousands who use reason and are willing to listen that it is worthwhile to speak, and I want very briefly to review the career of the man who stands such an excellent chance of being our next President - Governor Alfred E. Smith, of New York.

When I first knew this man, in 1911, he was a politician, a member of the lower house of the Legislature in Albany. It was the first Democratic Legislature in more than a dozen years, and many good citizens expected that the session would result in no good to the state. It was, therefore, a surprise to the progressive electorate to find a series of reform measures sponsored by young Smith, the Tammany leader of the majority.

That year gave to the state of New York direct primaries, factory inspection, workmen's compensation, regulation of the hours of work of women and children in industry, better health laws and increased appropriations for the public school system. Young Smith was the leader in this broad movement, and people who were working for social betterment began to notice him. Later he became the speaker of the lower house, and it is interesting to note that during those four years he rose from the ranks of the mere politicians to join those throughout his state who were working heart and soul for the elimination of the old abuses against a new social order.

In 1915 he was sent as a member of the Constitutional Convention, and there he won praise from such men as Root and Wickersham and Stinson as the best informed and ablest member of that body. Yet people call him untutored!

Later on, in the summer of 1918, I was asked to be the Democratic candidate for the Governorship, but as I was starting for overseas war work I could not run. I talked about the availability of Alfred E. Smith with President Wilson. He said to me, "I should be entirely satisfied with Smith's nomination. He seems to be a man who has responded in an extraordinary manner to the awakening forces of a new day and the compulsion of changing circumstances. He seems to have noteworthy support from organizations and individuals of both parties who are working in one way or another for the improvement of government."

I mentioned that Smith was a Catholic, and Wilson said: "The day to take political consideration of that has gone by. People are every day reading the casualty lists of American boys of every creed."

Yet today some people who falsely call themselves ministers of the Gospel are forgetful of the high ideals of only ten years ago.

Smith was elected Governor that year, and again in 1922, and again in 1924, and again in 1926, in every case running far ahead of his ticket.

Why these re-elections by greatly increasing majorities? Because of the simple fact that although a Democrat in a Republican state, he has been the best all-round Governor the state has ever had.

I will not tire you with a catalog of what he has accomplished. It is sufficient to point to our thousands of miles of concrete roads, to our improved prison system, to our building up of the public schools, to our social legislation, and last but not least to the complete re-organization of our state government. It is no criticism of Georgia to say that we in this state could well afford to appoint a commission to study what Smith has accomplished in eight years as Governor of New York.

(-Enquirer Aug-)

Through these years it is worthwhile to study what kind of support he has had; who are his friends. First ask the constitutional lawyers; they will tell you that Smith knows more about the theory and practice of government than any man in this country.

Ask the social workers; they will tell you that Smith has done more to eliminate bad living conditions throughout the state than any other man in it.

Ask the school teachers; they will tell you of the tremendous betterment of public school education under the leadership of the Governor.

Ask thousands of Republican farmers why they are going to vote for Smith for President.

Ask thousands of protestant ministers why they are going to vote for Smith for President.

Ask thousands of doctors and nurses that same question.

Does it mean anything that Smith has the overwhelming support in his own state of the men and women whose life task it is to lift up to a higher plane the lives of their fellow Americans? Is that long list of names of unselfish social workers and teachers and ministers and doctors and nurses any evidence of the kind of a public servant he is? Think that over, you who hesitate to vote for a man just because he is a Catholic. (Pat Gallagher)

One more point about this presidency to which we Democrats are trying to elect Governor Smith. I have known Presidents in the White House ever since my father used to take me as a boy to call on his close friend, Grover Cleveland. I have known Roosevelt, Taft, Wilson, Harding and Coolidge, and I can tell you that Alfred E. Smith will be in dignity and ability a fit successor to the most illustrious of them.

He has the two qualities of dignity and of simplicity of heart which go with great men. I wish that all of you might see as I have seen the fine family life of the Governor and Mrs. Smith and their children - and now their grandchildren too.

If you seek right living, it is there, and a lot of frolic and fun too - a typical American family life that we need more of - the sort that the now thoroughly chilled White House most assuredly needs.

And I wish too that I might take you to some of the great public functions which are presided over so well by the Governor of the state of New York and his gracious wife. You would understand why we who know them want the Smiths - father, mother, children and grandchildren, in the White House.

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During this past week we have seen a man go out into the West and meet the issues. No man or woman in this land but has had a thrill when listening to the radio broadcasting of these great speeches. Even those who may disagree with his opinions are admitting freely that Smith does not equivocate, that he does not evade, that he does not straddle.

Of his opponent this cannot be said; and while Mr. Hoover is an old friend of mine in whom I recognize many fine qualities, still he is a great disappointment to many in this campaign.

I am beginning to subscribe to what a Republican business man wrote me the other day from Indiana. He said, "Ten years ago Hoover was a great engineer; but since he has been in the Cabinets of Harding and Coolidge he has slowly but surely evolved into a rather ordinary politician. Ten years ago Smith was a politician, but since then he has developed himself into a great human engineer."

*The nation has heard A.L. on*

- 1. Farm Relief.*
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