
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

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Hornell, NY - Campaign Speech

HORNELL - OPEN AIR

Friday Afternoon

October 19, 1928

There was the Factory Connection Law, and that was called radical. There was the Pull Crow Law, and that was called radical.

I am glad to come back to Hornell. I haven't been here for a good many years. Last time I think I was in Hornell was when I was a member of the State Senate, before a good many of you people even grew up. That was back at the time of a very famous session of the Legislature -- 1911 -- and the session of 1912. I call it a famous session because those were the years that started a series of progressive measures for the State of New York which, with a few interruptions, have been carried on ever since. It is funny how time makes people take a different attitude towards things.

I remember in 1911 that I was called a Socialist - a radical -- they hadn't invented the term "Red" in those days (laughter) -- because I introduced and tried to get through a law limiting the hours of women in industry to fifty-four hours a week. (Applause) When you think of it, fifty-four hours a week, and only seventeen years ago - that was called radical!

That session also saw a good many other statutes started on their way. There was the Workmen's Compensation Law. That was called radical. There was the Factory Inspection Law, and that was called radical. There was the Full Crew Law, and that was called radical. (Applause). That particular law was introduced by my old friend, Senator Ramsburger of Buffalo, and when he was taken sick, the duty of leading the fight fell on me. (Applause) And we failed the first year, but we got it through the second year, and it is still there. (Applause.)

And so, when you come right down to it, almost anybody who believes in having legislation move with the times is called a radical. I suppose a lot of my friends in this State would call me a radical today. (Laughter) Well, as to the people that have called me a radical - I think it is a term of honor and not one of reproach (Applause.) When you come right down to it, the big issue in the State campaign this year, and in the national campaign, too, for that matter, is whether this State is going to stand still or keep on moving with the times. There is a lot that is left to be accomplished. We can

still further improve our Government. We can pass many other measures for social relief, and I look forward, if things go right, on November sixth, to an extremely active two years in proving that we are still progressive. (Applause.)

I understand that some of my friends around the State are saying that I was drafted in this cause. Well, if I was drafted, I am mighty happy to have been drafted. And some of them are saying around this State that it is too bad that I am such an awfully sick man. Do I look it? (Laughter.)

You know, some candidates for the Governorship have to run for office. I can't. But I am counting on the people of the State giving me a chance to walk in. (Laughter and Applause.)

I wish we could have stayed here longer in Hornell, but we have to get along all the way to Jamestown tonight. I believe in candidates on a State ticket going around and showing themselves, showing that they haven't got anything to be ashamed of, and I have got a mighty good crowd running with me on this ticket, and I am mighty proud of them all. And I hope very much that

you will remember in this campaign that it is mighty important to give to the head of the ticket the support in office of friends of his and not enemies. (Applause.)

Afterwards -- after November sixth is over, I hope to be able to come back in a perfectly simple direct manner and see you at that time in an official capacity, and in the meantime -- of course, I haven't been in Hornell very long -- but judging by the reception that we have had all the way from Middletown in Orange County, clear out through Binghamton, motoring all day yesterday, starting from Elmira this morning, there is no question that people this year are thinking, and we are running across a new kind of voters this year. People who are perfectly willing to stand up and be counted people who call themselves "Smith Republicans." (Applause.)

This big registration that I understand is taking place here is paralleled by the registration all over the United States. More people are going to vote, more men and more women are taking an interest in public affairs this year than ever before. One reason for that, I think, is this: there is no man in the United States who has contributed more to making the generally dry

subject, even an interesting subject, than Alfred E. Smith. (Applause.) And whether everybody agrees with Alfred E. Smith in politics or not they respect him for that great quality so much needed all over the United States, of having people take an interest in their Government. I can assure you that if I am chosen to succeed him in Albany I will do my best to carry on that special work of his in telling the people of the State in plain commoner garden English what is going on in their State Government, and I have an idea from these last couple of days in swinging through the State of New York that this spirit that is abroad in the air this year - this interest that is showing itself all over, means a surprise in certain circles -- means a confirmation in my opinion of our hopes that we are going to have as President of the United States from the fourth of March next, Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York. (Prolonged Applause.)

we have got to enlarge on them, especially on this.
 that I believe the fundamental question that you are going
 to vote on two weeks from next Tuesday is whether we want
 to have progressive government come in Washington, and
 whether we want to have progressive government continue