
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 272

1928 October 19

Salamanco, NY - Campaign Speech

this year - SALAMANCA - OPEN AIR out and are proud and
 willing to call us 5:10 P. M. with Republicans."

October 19, 1928. about this campaign.
 They said that I was drafted for it, but that I got
 drafted I was interested. Applause. Some of my very

My friends: Although I have spent a great
 many days and a great many weeks in the past twenty
 years in visiting different parts of the State of New
 York, this is the first time that I have had the chance
 to speak in Salamanca. I passed through it on the train
 but at last I have the privilege of staying here for a
 few minutes and saying "How do you do" to you; and I
 am particularly happy, particularly glad to be able to
 come here, because I would go a long ways to the home
 town of my old friend Judge Dowd. (Applause.) There
 is not a finer citizen anywhere in the State than Tom
 Dowd.

Judge, I take it that in this community and
 this county, just like all the other communities and
 counties in the State, there is a great deal of interest
 in this election, not only among Democrats but among
 Republicans, too; and we are finding a new type of voter

this year - men and women who come out and are proud and willing to call themselves "Smith Republicans."

You know, I am very keen about this campaign. They said that I was drafted for it, but once I got drafted I got interested. (Applause.) Some of my very kind Republican friends thought it was a shame to draft me. They said I ought to have the sympathy of the entire State in having to run. Well, for a man who deserves sympathy, it seems to me that I am pretty husky. (Laughter and Applause.) Some people, you know, have to run for the Governorship. Well, I can't run for the Governorship, but I hope that the people of this State are going to make it possible for me to walk in. (Applause.)

I don't have to go into details about the issues this year. You know them just about as well as I do. You know the national issues and you know the state issues. I believe that in our State we are proud of the record that this State has made in the past few years in the cause of progressive government. I have travelled up and down the United States a good deal of late and everywhere I go people ask me about details of

the Government of the State of New York, about what we have done in the way of public improvements; what we have done in the way of social legislation; what we have done in the way of reorganizing our government and cutting one hundred and sixty or seventy departments down to eighteen. We are known all over the United States for real progress, and that is one reason that we have this tremendous interest in the candidacy in the United States of the man who is principally responsible for putting our State on the map, Alfred E. Smith. (Applause.) People are realizing that it would not be a bad thing for the United States as a whole. (Applause.)

I spent a good many years down in Washington after I left the State Senate up here, and I can assure you that the government of the United States needs reorganizing and putting on a businesslike basis just in the same way that our State Government needed reorganizing before Governor Smith took hold of it. And so I hope that we are going to look at this election from the point of view of good government, from the point of view of progress, and when we come down to our own State questions you have exactly the same problem, not the question of

putting in good government but the question of continuing it. I am very certain in my own mind that it would be a great mistake to turn over our State Government to reactionaries, to turn it over to people who are not in sympathy with progress. I come from up-State myself. I am an up-State farmer, and I am very certain that the people up-State are well satisfied with the progress that has been made under Governor Smith. That progress must be continued to complete the carrying out of his program, for, as you know, a large part of that program is not yet complete. We have great public works to finish. We have legislation still to put on the statute books. The reorganization of the State Government itself can still be improved, and in addition to that, there are all the new problems that are coming up to face this state.

We have, I noticed in driving today through these counties, the same thing I noticed driving through the Hudson River counties, a very difficult, a very critical situation in regard to the agriculture of the State. As you know, people have been leaving the land, and in the old days we used to say that the farming population of

the United States was the backbone of the nation. That backbone is getting pretty seriously injured today, and it is time for us to take measures to strengthen it, to build up the rural population, the small town population of the United States for the good of the whole country. That is one of the problems that this State must take hold of in the next two years. I have known a good deal about this corner of the State, because for several years I have been a member of the State Council of Parks, and I have followed with the greatest of interest the splendid work that is being done down here in the Taconic State Park. That kind of work has got to continue.

I see as I come through, abandoned farms, hill-sides that need care; the question of forestation ought be of interest to everybody, because I believe that every acre of land in the State of New York ought to be put to the most useful purpose possible. And so, I am very hopeful that two weeks from next Tuesday the people of this State are going to vote for more progress for the handling of their State affairs in a progressive way. I don't believe that we can afford to go back, or even

to stand still for two years. I don't want to see party partisanship injected into the Government of this State. As a matter of fact, you and I know that the Republican voters up-State in large part are dissatisfied with their present leadership, and my quarrel is not with the Republican voters but with the leaders of the Republican Party.

And so I am confident that this year, as on many other occasions, the Democratic Ticket in this State is going to receive the support of hundreds of thousands of Republicans who are good enough Americans to want good Government. (Applause.)

I wish I could stay with you longer, and I am sorry that a little ways back in Olean we had to drop off -- as a matter of fact, they kidnapped Colonel Lehman, the candidate for Lieutenant-Governor, and also Mr. Conway, the candidate for Attorney General. They were to have spoken here with me at this time. So the only surviving member of the State Ticket that I have got with me is the candidate for Comptroller, the man who is now the Comptroller of the State, the man who has done so much to help the businesslike administration of Governor

Smith. He will only be able to say a few words to you because we have to get along in a few minutes in order to make a meeting in Jamestown tonight. And so I bid you "Good bye", and I hope you will let me come back here very soon and that when I come back I can come back in an official capacity. (Prolonged Applause.)

So I bid to you good-bye. I am unfortunately, suffering from a cold and a cough. We started -- the school bus -- at 10:00 and I started, day before yesterday, from Lynch City, and since then, conversation with Orange County, we have looked in every single county along the Savannah river. There is nothing like for an unfortunate incident and a lot of other things. (Laughter.)

We will leave this morning by motor, and we have our air conditioner working today. So I hope you will pardon me as my voice is a little bit hoarse tonight. That is the only part of me, except a couple of weak knees, physically, but not morally. (Laughter and applause.)

We are planning to go on for another two weeks and a half or so, and I sort of got back into my old stride in these past three days. I am getting more and more used to it all the time, and am getting more and