
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

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1928 October 29

Flushing (Queens), NY - Campaign Speech

FLUSHING HIGH SCHOOL - FLUSHING

Monday Evening

October 29, 1928.

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Mr. Chairman, and friends of Queens: I am beginning to believe in this Governor-elect stuff. (Laughter.) I didn't think it was possible about two weeks ago, but now I think that it is probable. (Applause.)

We just finished on Saturday night, the candidates on the State Ticket, a very remarkable trip up-State. By my speedometer it was 1450 miles, and we went to pretty nearly all of the important cities of the State of New York above the Bronx. You know, that is not Democratic territory. (Laughter.) It has not been in the past. All I can say to you is, watch the returns this year. (Applause.) It has been mighty hard sledding in the past years for Democrats up-State, and there has been mighty little encouragement in county after county. The Democrats would go out and work, and I have been through this State in a good many

previous campaigns. Let me cite one example.

I remember very well my last trip to a place called Watertown. Well, Watertown is not as dry as it sounds. (Laughter.) It is right next to the Canada border. Last time I was there was eight years ago, running for the Vice-Presidency of the United States, and when I got there the leaders and a handful of enthusiastic Democrats, who could not be anything else, came forward, and there must have been fifty of them in the whole of Watertown (laughter), and they apologized, but they were there all right doing the best they could, and the best I could do in Watertown was to talk to fifty Democrats.

Well, this year, when they had it planned for me to go to Watertown, I said, "Nay, nay, nothing doing." I said, "I have been there before." Well, they insisted, and we put it on the schedule and we all went there, and about ten miles out of town, in the middle of the countryside, we saw ahead of us the road absolutely chock-a-block with automobiles. We thought there was a serious accident. It was a serious accident, and it is going to be more serious a week from Tuesday. (Applause.)

Well, they lined up and they escorted us into town, and about a mile out of town they brought out a band, and we rolled into town behind that band, and when we got into the main square in Watertown the whole square was black with people, everybody, not just Democrats, but Republicans too, and that is a pretty good size.

Well, that night they got the biggest theatre in town, and it held 1800 people, and that was packed, and we went to the theatre behind a torchlight parade, and there were a thousand more people on the outside that couldn't get in. That is Watertown in 1928.
(Applause.)

And I have seen campaign pictures in counties in up-State New York on previous occasions. In the old days, in 1916, 1920 and 1924, if you saw one picture of a Democratic candidate for the Presidency in a distance of 25 miles on those country roads, you were lucky, and this year it is just about a fifty-fifty proposition; there are just as many Smith pictures as there are Hoover pictures. (Applause.)

And then there is the other side to it, too;

that some of our Republican friends are going to catch on to a week from next Wednesday morning, and that is bearing out what people have come up -- not just one or two, but by the dozens -- and said to our party in going through up-State New York, "I have got a Hoover button on; I have got a Hoover picture in my window; I have got a Hoover picture on my car; got to do it; had to do it; neighbors insisted on it; but I am going to vote for Smith." (Applause.) And I have been wondering, and I have been trying to analyze what the reason for it is. We people down here in the city know his personality. We know what he has done. It takes perhaps longer in the country districts for the personality of the man to seep in, but they have got it. They understand what he has accomplished in his eight years in the Governorship, and they are beginning to realize that the same qualities that Smith has proven to the people of New York in our State are needed in Washington. (Applause.)

And that is why, in spite of various other activities on the other side, there is going to be the tremendous quiet vote for Smith, a thinking vote of

people who believe that he is, taking it by and large, the best suited man for the Presidency, and that is why the surprise, in my judgment, is going to be so great.

They talk about the increase in the farmer vote tonight. Yes, there will be an increased farmer vote this year; but I am very certain that of this increased vote -- I am not talking about the cities -- I am not worrying about them -- but out in those country districts I am very firmly convinced that the increased vote this year is going to be more than fifty percent. for Alfred E. Smith. (Applause.) What does that mean? You know perfectly well that in his previous campaigns he came down beaten to the Bronx, with a big majority against him, almost, four years ago, an overwhelming majority. We people in the City of New York have made up for it and put him through. But I believe that two factors in this campaign, first, the tremendous increase of registration in all up-State cities, which will undoubtedly be for Smith; and, secondly, I believe that in the farming districts the greater part, perhaps only a slight majority, but still a majority of the increased vote in the country districts, will be for Smith; that

these two factors mean that he is going to come down to the Bronx with a less difficult task to overcome than he has had in the past.

What is the answer? The answer is a perfectly simple one. You and I know what the magnificent majorities in this city have been. We know how we pulled him through in the City of New York. I don't suppose that there is the most enthusiastic Republican alive in the City of New York that does not admit that the people of New York City this year are going to give him a far greater majority than they have ever done before. (Applause.) That means that he is going to carry the State of New York beyond the shadow of a doubt. (Applause.)

And now, I want to talk about a subject to you that I have kept for this County. It is a subject that affects the whole State, and, as you probably know, I am following in the rather excellent footsteps of Governor Smith, and talking about mostly one subject at a time in this campaign. I am not doing as my friend Mr. Ottinger has done. In his speech of acceptance he promised at least forty-three different varieties of

things to the people of the State; he did not quite get up to fifty-seven. (Laughter.) Almost everything from the reduction of taxes to the elimination of flat tires. (Laughter.)

And tonight I want to talk to you about something that is particularly appropriate in Queens, because here you are the great artery, the great means of access to the farmers of Long Island. I had started -- it was on the tip of my tongue to say that Queens was the neck of the bottle to Long Island. (Laughter and Applause.) But I was afraid that the Anti-Saloon League might object. (Laughter.)

We have heard an awful lot in the past about the drift of the rural population to the cities, and it is true. There are more and more abandoned farms up-State in New York than I have ever seen in my lifetime. There are more and more farms being advertised for tax sales. The farmers cannot make both ends meet, and that is one reason why, as part of my program, a new program for this State, I propose that we should take up seriously this question of retaining the existence of our rural population. In that plan I know that

I have the support of the people who live in New York City, because it is to their interest as well as that of the farmers, that the farms of the State should be maintained. But a lot of reformers and social workers have been worried about the possible effect on future generations that would come from the increased crowding in our cities. Locally, out here, you are not yet crowded, and I hope that the development of this great borough will not be along the lines of crowding. But you know there is an old military axiom that says that for every new weapon of offense that is invented, very quickly there comes along the invention of a weapon of defense, and I am very convinced that that is the trend of the past fifteen years of the rural populations coming into the cities. There has been at the same time the invention, you might say, of our modern civilization, that is taking city people out into the country districts.

There are two modern factors that belong to this movement. One is the great growth of popular sports that we all know about, and the other is the advent of the automobile, which is making it possible

for those of us who live in the cities to get out into the country, whole families at a time. And in that automobile thing I want to say one word about highways. I have been through this State, and as I told you, one end to the other, up and down, to the right and to the left. Everywhere that we have gone, and everyone that has been with me will bear me out in this, we have a perfectly magnificent series of highways, except in one or two places where a new road is being built or an old road being rebuilt, and we bowled along on excellent smooth-surfaced roads, the whole length of the State of New York. That is being duly taken advantage of by the people of the State of New York.

During the eight years of Governor Smith, this State has built 4,713 miles of hard-surfaced roads, and the people of the State of New York have spent \$274,000,000 to do it. Few people, including even those chronic kickers known as the Republican leaders of the Legislature in Albany, begrudge the expenditure of that money. (Applause.) And that fine work is going on, and I believe that the people of the State want it to

go on. But of at least equal importance with this fine highway program which is drawing to a close, its first phase -- in other words, within another year or two we will have completed the originally proposed map of highway development that started away back when I was in the Legislature in 1911. After that we will still have to go on widening roads, taking out curves, improving the surface, and possibly building a good many feeders. Although the task is not done, it is a task that can readily be taken care of from now on out of the current revenues of the State.

But of equal importance with the highway program has been the great program of park and parkway development initiated by Governor Smith in 1923. Up to that time, as you probably know, there had been a scattered, uncoordinated series of local efforts to create park facilities in various places throughout the State, all of this without any general policy. With his almost uncanny ability to sense the needs of the average citizenship at the inception of those needs, Governor Smith, as he has shown in dozens of other cases, was the first to call the attention of the people

of the State to the need for a definite State policy on parks, for a systematic development of construction and acquisition. He realized then, as all the people have since, that the people who need those parks all throughout the State are not those that have the time and money to own great estates and enjoy outdoor life whenever the spirit moves them, but rather those millions of citizens, the great rank and file of us, and particularly the children who have no home of their own in the country and who long for a chance to obtain appreciation at first hand of the value of outdoor life.

Outside of the Adirondack and Catskill Reserve, -- Preserves, as they call them -- particularly all of the lands of this State were held in private ownership, and in almost every case, as you know, there were "No Trespass" signs out against the people who did not own the lands. In New York City, especially, the problem was becoming a critical one, because the increased value, and the constantly increasing value of the land within fairly easy distance of New York -- the value not only of land but of the sea beaches, was making State control soon an impossibility; action had to be taken

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quickly or not at all.

It was in April, 1923, that the Governor recommended this definite State Parks Program. He asked the Legislature for \$15,000,000, or rather, to authorize \$15,000,000 of bonds. At the same time, he recommended the creation of the State Council of Parks to tie in all of these scattered regional parks, that had no head and no tail. That bond issue was approved by the people of the State in the fall of 1924, and in January, 1925, the Governor asked the Legislature to appropriate the money to permit the starting of work on the Parks program.

What happened? And this, I might say, is almost word for word the same story that can be applied to every one of the great public improvements initiated by Governor Smith. Everyone of them has been blocked and hindered and delayed, not by the Republican Party, because our fight is not against the rank and file of the Republican Party in the State of New York, but our fight is against the stupid leadership of that party. (Applause.)

Right here, when he asked them to appropriate

the money, the Legislature saw a chance to give him political embarrassment. They tried before to trip him up, and each time they were the ones that fell. But they have kept on trying. They have kept on trying to fall on him for the past eight years, and one of my little prayers is that when I am elected is that I will have a Legislature of my own party with me. (Applause.) If I have to have a Republican Legislature I shall do my best to treat them just the way Al Smith has. (Applause.)

Right about that time, not so long ago that most of you don't remember it, occurred the famous effort on the part of a number of gentlemen living on Long Island to stop the machinery before it got into working order. Those gentlemen made such a stir in and out of court, that the people in the Legislature were influenced by it and thought that here was the chance to put a spike in the Governor's guns.

Now, to understand that battle it is necessary to call attention to the fact that Long Island, as you know, forms the natural playground for six million men, women and children who live in New York City. The

north and south shores of Long Island are readily accessible, and these shores have been held in private ownership practically all the way to Montauk Point. In order to obtain access to the whole of Long Island, the Long Island Park Commission mapped out two great Parkways, one on the North Shore, and one on the South, and the Commission planned the use of beaches and bays and the providing of recreational parks at suitable intervals.

What happened? The fight by that small group of Long Island residents was sufficiently effective so that the Governor's program and his request for an appropriation failed, first at the regular session, and then at the special session of the Legislature called in the summer. This opposition was perfectly definitely in the face and against the wishes of the expressed opinion of the people as given at the polls. Of course you know, as I know, that it is characteristic of the Governor, when he gets opposition of this kind it just makes him fight the harder.

The story of that long legal battle over the taking over of Deer Range Park at Cental Islip is a

matter fresh in our memories. Who was it headed by, that fight? It was headed by a gentleman named W. Kingsland Macy, now the Republican County Chairman of Suffolk County; just another name added to that list of stupid Republican leaders that I have been talking about. (Applause.) He and his associates tried every known form of legal procedure to stop the State from getting Deer Range Park. Every form of social and political pressure was brought to bear on the Governor, and to bring the story down to date, it was not until the Court of Appeals of this State affirmed the appropriating of that land, that the fight seemed won. Even then Mr. Macy and his friends had to appeal to the Circuit Court of the United States, and were there again turned down.

The successful outcome of the struggle of 1925 and 1926 over the Taylor Estate, an old unoccupied, overgrown acreage at Central Islip, finally seemed to convince the Legislature of the definite will of the people that the Parks Program should be carried out, because in the 1926 session, and in 1927 and 1928, the Legislature had made large appropriations out of current

revenue and out of permanent improvement bond money, for the purpose of park development and acquisition.

The result is that the situation today is this: We have in this State eleven park regions, into which are divided all of the counties of the State. Each of these park commissions or authorities in charge of these regions, is carrying out a well-considered, definitely coordinated plan of parks and parkway developments. All of us who live in the City of New York know about the splendid playground up at Palisades Interstate Park. We know the splendid park development system in Westchester, and we must not forget, however, that the area of this State is large, and that facilities are also being provided at other strategic points.

For instance, the Taconic Commission, of which I happened to have been the Chairman myself, so I am speaking about it somewhat from personal knowledge, that Commission is developing the great tri-state park up the Harlem Valley, where Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York come together. That will be a splendid camping ground within fairly reasonable distance of the City of New York, only a few hours' run. It was opened

last summer and already thousands of people from the City of New York are beginning to use that park.

In addition, we are acquiring the land for a great parkway half way down the Hudson River and the Connecticut Line, starting at the north end of Westchester County and forming an outlet for hundreds of thousands of New York City people who want to go north to the Adirondacks or the Berkshires or the White Mountains of Vermont, or even to Montreal. (Laughter.)

Then, in addition to those nearby projects, there is the Niagara Commission, which is saving for the people of the State for all time, all that remains of the Falls and of the magnificent gorge of the Niagara River. Then there is the Finger Lake Commission, and the Central New York Commission, making available the magnificent scenery of the central part of the State. Then there is the Allegheny Commission down near the southwest corner of the State, near the Pennsylvania line, which has an enormous tract of wild land which it is developing for camping purposes for city dwellers to go to, not only in the summertime, but in any time of the year, because that is one of the interesting phases

of our modern life. We used to think that the recreational time in this country was the two months of July and August, when we could get away for two weeks or three weeks, and possibly a month. However, our time of getting out into the country through development of winter sports and the knowledge that city people have of the fact that you can go out into the country in the wintertime or early spring or late autumn and have a mighty good time, is making the use of parks and parkways of the State not just a summer matter, but an all-year-around matter, and it is a mighty fine thing for the health of the coming generation.

Then, in addition to all of this, we are developing as a State proposition the great Saratoga Springs Reservation, and in time, though it is a subject that is still in its infancy, we will make Saratoga Springs not merely a place of enjoyment, but probably the greatest health center anywhere on this continent.

And finally, to sum up the present situation, the many small parks and battlefields, and they are scattered all over the State, historic mansions and things like that, are all being coordinated and put

under a common supervision, put on a businesslike basis.

As a result of these activities the State now has -- it is rather difficult to sense this for you think in terms of lots in Queens -- we now have two million, two hundred and eighteen thousand acres of park lands belonging to the people of this State. That huge acreage is divided into seventy parks and reservations. The regions provide compact geographical units, and some idea of their value to the people of the State can be gleaned from the fact -- this is just one example -- that last year the Bear Mountain Park, from January 1st to November 1st, was visited by 4,875,000 people, and that is just one park in the State. As high as 35,000 automobiles have used the Bronx River Parkway in one day, and ten thousand bathers have used one little two by four park down at Valley Stream, Long Island, almost every Saturday and Sunday this past summer.

That gives you a pretty good idea of what this Park Program has meant to the people of this State. I am not repeating in my campaign throughout the State, when I bring up these topics from day to day, as proof of what Governor Smith has done for the people of this

And I think in his speech of acceptance as Governor.

State during his eight years in office. Every new topic that I take up comes back to the same simple fact that Governor Smith was the first to think of these great public improvements, and was the first to insist that they be carried through.

What a pity it is that the Republican leadership of this State is so wholly lacking in imagination. I am very certain, from things that I know, that the chief trouble with this opposition is not that these leaders are opposed to these projects; the trouble is that they are sore that Governor Smith thought of them first (applause), and it is rather amusing, after all these years of opposition, that the Governor has so completely won the approval of the voters of the State to his Parks Program; for example, that these Republican leaders, after constant kicks and objections over a period of years, have apparently become philosophical enough to accept the situation. At last the Republican platform, even their platform which has never said a kind word about anything Democratic, even the platform comes out and says that the Parks Program should be continued. (Laughter.) Oh, how generous. (Laughter.) And I think in his speech of acceptance my friend Mr.

Ottinger has said also that he was in favor of parks. Of course. We are getting somewhere, and if they only keep on long enough they will all be voting the Democratic Ticket. (Applause.)

And yet, the trouble is this: We cannot accept in this State that kind of support, because unfortunately history shows that it is not an honest support. I will give you an example. Back there in 1924 there had been an effort made by the Democratic Party for years to get to a forty-eight hour law for the benefit of women and children in industry. Way back when I was in the Legislature in 1911, we fought for and got through a fifty-four hour law, and we were called, Al Smith and Bob Wagner and Jim Foley and some of the rest of us who were working for it -- we were called Socialists in 1911, because we were advocating a law limiting the hours of women and children in industry to fifty-four hours a week. It is wonderful what time does to educate people. Who are the people that were fighting the fifty-four hour law in 1911? Why, they were the same leaders that are today guiding the destinies of the Republican Party in this State. Yes,

we were called Socialists, Radicals, and if the word "Bolshevist" had been invented in 1911, they would have called us that, too. (Laughter.)

And you know, in every campaign that the Governor has run in, somebody on the other side has got panicky towards the end. Somebody has said, "My Lord, this fellow Smith is going to get elected. We have got to do something. We are lost if we don't get after him." And then somebody with a bright idea has got up on the stump and said, "Don't vote for that man Smith, he is a Socialist." (Laughter.) And this year they have been true to form, for last Monday night, just a week ago, in New York, somebody got into a panic, same old story, and Brother Hoover gets up there in Madison Square Garden, looking for an issue, doing anything to stop the swell of the tide for Smith, and he says, "He is a Socialist," and by that token Smith will be elected. (Prolonged Applause.)

Why, it is just "nuts" to him to be called a Socialist. (Laughter.) He knows just what to do when he is called a Socialist, and he has got a mighty good answer, and it is a true answer. If his program for

Socialistic, then we are all Socialists, and if his program for the reduction of hours of women and children is Socialistic, we are all Socialists; and if his program for public improvements for the hospitals of the State and the prisons of the State is Socialistic, we are all Socialists. And if his program for bettering health in this State, for his great aid to the educational program of this State, if they are Socialistic, we are Socialists and we are proud of the name. (Applause.)

Yes, anybody in public life who goes ahead and advocates improvements is called a radical. The Democratic Party in this State has gone on and advocated improvements, and it has put them through, and it has been called radical and everything else, and it is keeping on winning, and the Democratic Party in this State will keep on winning as long as it goes ahead with a program of progress. (Applause.)

It is not only the State, but the cities as well. We have got to go ahead in New York expanding and growing. Yes, we have got to go ahead spending more money. We need additional transit facilities all

the way through, tunnels and bridges bringing together the whole city. I am all for it, and I am perfectly certain that the Democratic Party in Queens is for it, too. (Applause.)

I am very certain that the people of the whole State, and of all the various boroughs, and all of those up-State counties, want progress, and I am mighty keen this year about the way that the Democratic organization is functioning. In every place in this State men and women who believe in the cause are coming out to elect the Democratic Ticket. They have got something to say to the voters, and they can point to a record, a record they don't have to be ashamed of anywhere in the State, whether it be up in Dutchess County, where we Democrats, we organization Democrats, are proud to be Democrats, or out in Buffalo, or in the City of New York; we know this year that we have offered to the nation a New York State organization Democrat that we are not one bit ashamed of. (Applause.)

And we are not only offering this man with personality, this man whom to know is to love, this man who is more human, more understanding of the needs of

the people than any other living man today; but we are offering besides the personality of Alfred E. Smith, we are offering to the Nation a record of accomplishment, and in this State campaign it is a pretty simple issue, a two-fold issue. He has accomplished great things in all these years; he has brought before the people programs like this one I have talked about tonight, as an example. They have in large measure been put through, but they are not finished yet, and the danger of a change in policy in Albany is that those programs, under a different policy, will become discarded or changed, or put into partisan politics, and one of the great assets of the present Democratic policy in the State of New York is that it goes beyond party lines. We are making an appeal to the average man and woman for the good of the State, the progress of the State, and we are asking their support, whether they call themselves Democrats or Republicans or anything else, and that is why we are getting majorities in this State today.

And so we have that to carry through, the completion of a great program. But more than that, you have got the new questions that are coming before the

people of this State in the next two years. Do you want to go back to the type of leadership in New York that is represented by Speaker Machold or Senator Knight, or Assemblyman Hutchison, or Senator Hewitt, or any of those outworn leaders who have been beaten and beaten again, and who, if they come into power, are going to make up for all these long years of political adversity by trying to gain in two years what they have lost; people who are selfish politicians; people who have never had the vision to think first of any of these great measures propounded by our Governor; that is one prospect.

And I don't need to tell you very much about the other. You know my record in this State. You know that I have worked alongside of our Governor in a great many of these great programs which have been put through. All I can tell you is that while I was down in Washington for eight years, gaining a certain amount of experience in running a larger corporation than the Government of the State of New York, spending a good many million dollars in the Navy Department, that experience possibly has helped me along business lines, and in

spite of that absence of nearly eight years in Washington, I am mighty glad to have been back here in this State since 1920, taking a pretty active part in the affairs of the State. You can be quite certain that I approve of the policies of our Governor. You can be quite certain that I shall use every effort to see that his great programs are carried through. And, finally, you can be quite certain that I shall do all that I can to solve and take up and put through the new problems that are coming before this State in the next two years. (Applause.) I don't know if Senator Copeland has been here tonight or not. When he comes he will say this at the close of his speech. I just want to warn you beforehand. Don't tell him I told you so. Just watch and see what he says.

He is going to end up his speech by inviting you good people to make up a train, about the third of March, 1929, a lot of trains out of Queens, and you have got a perfectly good tunnel that will take you all the way to Jersey and then to Washington. (Applause.) And he is going to ask you to come to Washington and march up Pennsylvania Avenue. (Applause.) But, my friends,

I am going to add something to that.

It is all very well about hiring ten or twelve special trains to go down to Washington. But you know people who are going to a big parade at that time need a certain amount of practice, and I am going to suggest that you get a little practice beforehand by hiring some trains and coming up to Albany on January first.

(Prolonged Applause.)

ADDRESS OF
HON. FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
IN QUEENS BOROUGH

file
October 29, 1928.

We have heard much in recent years of the drift of the rural population into the cities. Many reformers and social workers have become fearful about the possible effect on the future generations of Americans which might result from this increased crowding of the population into the city streets.

The old military axiom that every new weapon of offense causes a discovery of a compensating weapon of defense, seems to be working out in the solution of the problem of the enlargement of our city units. For, with the drift of the rural population into the cities, the city dwellers simultaneously seem to discover the advantages of the great outdoors, and the past ten years have been notable for the outflow of city dwellers into country districts for the sake of health and pleasure, not just during the summer months, but in great part throughout the year.

Two modern factors have added in this movement: first, the growth of popular sports of all kinds not confined to the bathing beaches of the old days, but extended now to all sorts of country recreation not only during the hot period, but during the winter months as well. The second factor is the advent of the automobile and the possibilities which this affords for the family unit to transport themselves into every section of the State, and not merely to follow the main railway arteries. This has been greatly aided by the magnificent improvement of the highway system of our State under the leadership of Governor Smith.

During the eight years of Governor Smith we have built or rebuilt 4713 miles of highways in the State of New York at a cost of \$274,000,000. Few people, including even those chronic kickers known as the Republican leaders of the Senate and Assembly, begrudge the expenditure of this money. It has been paid back to the people of the State in a thousand ways.

This splendid work on the highways is continuing and must be continued.

But of at least equal importance has been the great program of park and parkway development initiated by the Governor in 1923. Up to that time there has been a scattered and wholly uncoordinated series of local efforts to create park facilities in various places without any general State policy.

With his almost uncanny ability to sense the needs of the average citizen at the inception of these needs, Governor Smith, as in the case of many similar problems, was the first to call the attention of the State to the need for a definite State policy for a systematic development of construction and acquisition of parks. He realized then, as all the State does now, that the people who need these parks are not those who have the time and money to own great estates and to enjoy outdoor life whenever the spirit moves them, but rather those millions of citizens -- the great rank and file, and particularly the children who have no home of their own in the country and who long for a chance to obtain appreciation at first hand of the value of outdoor life.

Outside of the Adirondack and Catskill reserves, practically all of the lands of the State were held in private ownership, and in almost every case "No Trespass" signs made these lands unavailable for the public. In New York City especially the problem was becoming a critical one, for the increasing value of the sea beaches was rapidly making any state control of these facilities a financial impossibility. Action had to be taken quickly or not at all.

It was in April, 1923 that the Governor for the first time recommended a definite state park policy, and he asked the legislature for the issuances of fifteen millions of bonds for the purpose of acquiring park lands. At the same time he recommended the creation of a State Council of Parks to act as the central advisory agency for all parks outside the forest preserve. This bond issue was overwhelmingly approved by the people in 1924, and the following January the Governor asked the legislature to appropriate this money to permit the starting of work on the park program.

Here, as in so many instances, the Republican leaders of the legislature thought that they could cause political embarrassment to the Governor of the State by holding up the suggested program.

It was about this time that there occurred the famous effort on the part of a number of gentlemen on Long Island to stop the machinery before it got into working order. These gentlemen made such a ^{stir} ~~stir~~ in and out of court, that the Republicans in the legislature were further influenced in opposing the Governor's program.

To understand this battle it is necessary to call attention to the fact that Long Island forms the natural playground for the 6,000,000 men, women and children who live in New York City. The north and south shores of Long Island are readily accessible to the city and these shores were held in private ownership practically all the way to Montauk Point.

In order to obtain access to the whole of Long Island the Long Island Park Commission with the full approval of the State Council of Parks approved two great park arteries. One along the south shore, and the other along the north shore, thus giving access to all points. The Commission planned the use of beaches and bays and the providing of recreational parks at suitable intervals.

The fight by a small group of Long Island residents was sufficiently effective with the legislature so that the Governor's request for the appropriation of the bond money was refused, first at the regular session, and afterwards at the special session of the legislature. And this opposition was in the face of the absolute approval by the people at the polls of this expenditure.

It is characteristic of Governor Smith that the harder the opposition against him, especially when the good of the average citizen is involved, the more he fights for the right.

The story of the long legal battle to prevent the state from taking Deer Range Park at East Islip is a matter fresh in our memories. Headed by W. Kingsland Macy, now the Republican leaders of Suffolk County, every known form of court and legislative action was

taken to prevent the acquisition of the old Taylor Estate for park purposes. Every form of social and political pressure was brought on the Governor, but the Governor continued to fight. It was not until the Court of Appeals of the State had affirmed the appropriating of this land by the state that the rights of the people seemed to be secured, and even then Mr. Macy and his friends have tried to carry the case to the United States Court.

The successful outcome of the struggle of 1925 and 1926 over the Taylor Estate of Long Island seemed to convince the legislative leaders of the definite will of the people that the park program should be carried out, for in the 1926 session and again in 1927 and 1928 THE legislature has appropriated large sums out of current revenues, and out of the permanent improvement bond money for the purposes of park development and acquisition.

The situation today is this: We have today eleven park regions into which are divided all of the counties of the state. Each of the park commissions or authorities in charge of these regions is carrying out a well-considered and definite plan of park and parkway development. All of us who live in New York City know of the splendid playground of the Palisades Interstate Park and that splendid parkway system now being developed in Westchester county. We must not forget, however, that the area of this state is large, and that park facilities are also being provided at other strategic points. For instance, the Taconic Commission, of which I have been chairman since its creation, is developing the great Taconic Park at the point where Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York come together, and we are also

acquiring all right of way for a great central parkway through Westchester county north, with the thought that this will eventually prove to be one of the most important arteries out of New York to all up-state points.

The Niagara Commission is saving the beauties of the Falls and of the Gorge. The Finger Lakes and Central New York Commissions are making available the magnificent scenery of the Central part of the state. The Allegany Commission is opening up a magnificent tract in southeastern New York near the Pennsylvania line.

In addition to these, the Saratoga Springs Development will in time and with the proper appropriations make available for health purposes the magnificent waters of the most famous of all American resorts.

Finally, the many small parks and battlefields and historic monuments throughout the state have been consolidated and put under a common supervision and placed on a business-like footing.

As a result of this activity the state now has 3,218,000 acres of park land divided into about 70 parks and reservations throughout the state. The regions provide compact geographical units and some idea of their value to the people of the state can be gleaned from the fact that 4,875,000 people visited the Bear Mountain Park from January 1, 1927 to November 1st of the same year; that as high as 35,000 automobiles have used the Bronx River Parkway on a single Sunday and holiday, and that 10,000 bathers use one small park at Valley Stream on Long Island almost every Saturday and Sunday during the past summer.

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I am not repeating in my campaign through the state when I bring up from day to day some new topic as proof of what Governor Smith has done for the people of this state during his eight years in office. Every new topic that I take up comes back to the same simple fact: that Governor Smith was the first to think of these great public improvements, and was the first to insist that they be carried through.

What a pity that the present Republican leadership in this state is so wholly lacking in imagination. I am very certain that their constant objections to everything that Governor Smith suggests are due primarily to the fact that he and not they thought of them first. These Republican leaders sometimes have bright thoughts, but history shows that in every case our Governor has had the same thought anywhere from a month to a year before they did.

The Governor has so completely won the approval of the voters of the state, to his park program, that the Republican leaders, after constant kicks and objections over a period of three years, have apparently become philosophical enough to accept the situation.

At last the Republican platform and the Republican candidate for Governor say, meekly, that the park program should be continued. I hope that that means support from these gentlemen after I become Governor on the first of January. Their platform promises are unfortunately not a guarantee of that support, for we know, in the case of other measures, such as the 48-hour law for women and children in industry, that if political expediency stands in the way, they will not hesitate to go back on their campaign promises.

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The recent action of the Republican legislative leaders in refusing to approve the allocation of \$15,000 to survey the proposed parkway on the north shore of Long Island, and \$35,000 for the purchase of rights of way is a case in point. It became necessary for the Governor to accept the generous gift of Mr. August Heckscher to make these surveys possible. All I can hope is that during the next two years these legislative leaders will think more about the good of the people in the state, and the carrying out of the clearly defined approval of the people of the state than they will of mere partisan expediency in the time-wasting ridiculous effort in the usual Albany session of trying to get the Democratic Governor of this state into trouble. So far these efforts have been of no avail, and it is safe to prophesy that the same result will obtain in the future.

Queensboro Bridge - Improvements
General Transit - Communication
Tombards Bridges