
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Radio Address on Agriculture

RADIO ADDRESS BY FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT OVER STATIONS

WGY AND WHAM, THURSDAY EVENING, MARCH 7, 1929.

I am glad to have been given the privilege of using the Agricultural Hour of tonight's radio program to tell, not only those engaged in farming up-state, but those who live in our cities, as well, just what I have planned and what others have planned to help agriculture in the State of New York. Perhaps it is even more important that I should tell those who live in the cities exactly what is proposed than it is to try and make it plain to the farmers themselves. This is because those who depend on farming for their income have naturally followed very much more closely the work of the Agricultural Commission which I appointed as almost my first official act. While I feel sure from the letters I have received from all over the state, that the great majority of those most directly interested feel that the relief which we propose will be a real relief and a real help to them, I am not so sure that those who live in towns and cities realize entirely how much the prosperity of the farmer directly affects their own prosperity. So there are probably a great many city dwellers who have not read much more than the headlines in the newspapers on this subject, under the impression that it was not one which directly affected them.

If you stop to think a moment, you will realize that the prosperity of our town dwellers depends a great deal upon the prosperity of our farmers, because most of our town dwellers earn their living directly or indirectly either by making things to sell or by selling things which other people make, and prosperous farmers mean many customers and increased incomes to all. In this state we cannot help the farmers without the support of the town dwellers any more than we can do things by legislation to help our towns and cities without the help of the farmers, thus, you see, there is a personal responsibility not only on the farmers but on our city dwellers to understand and give their support to legislation intended to help either the rural or the city districts of our state. This is as it should be, because it would be a very bad thing indeed if your representatives in the Legislature divided up on matters for the good of the whole state, so that all the city people voted one way and all the representatives from the rural counties voted another.

I have made certain recommendations to the Legislature, based on the findings of a committee of agricultural experts. Certain other members of the Legislature have introduced bills differing in some ways with some of the things which I have proposed. This makes it very important that all citizens of the state understand clearly just what these different proposals are, and also that they make it clear to their representatives

in the Legislature which way they think is the best to bring about better times for our rural districts.

First of all, I want to correct a misunderstanding which seems to have grown up in some places, that this is a party question and that the Republican voters of this state are all in favor of one plan and the Democratic voters are all in favor of another. There never was a problem put before our Senate and Assembly so absolutely non-partisan and free from political questions as this matter of agricultural relief. It is true that the way which I think is the best way has been put into a bill which carries out specific recommendations which I, as Governor, made to the Legislature, and that I am a Democrat; but on the other hand it is also true that my recommendations were based on the recommendations made to me by this special Agricultural Commission about which I spoke a moment ago. Now it happens that after I had picked the men and women best qualified to study the whole problem and to draw up this report, without regard to their political belief, I found that this Commission consisted of eighteen Republicans and only three Democrats. So you see what I am asking you to consider tonight is a plan proposed by a commission almost entirely Republican and submitted to the Legislature by a Democrat. I do not see how it would be possible to find anything more non-partisan than

this; and in making up your own minds about it I hope you will decide what you think is the best way, and that where there has been a difference of opinion among some of the members of the Legislature on some parts of this general plan, you will decide entirely on the merits of each point in controversy, remembering that it is a matter of no importance whatever whether the person who has suggested the way you think best happens to be a Democrat or a Republican.

Everybody has agreed that something must be done for our rural districts. In its party platform the Republican party promised, as they promised a great many times before without ever finding time to get around to it, really to do something for the farmer, and the Democrats in their platform made it clear that they were going to insist that something really be accomplished this year. It seemed to me one of the most important things before the citizens of the state today, and as a candidate for Governor I promised to do everything I could to get action -- something done instead of something merely talked about -- in case I was elected. I also felt that this whole problem should be studied by people who were recognized, not only in this state alone but all over the country, as people who understood all the difficulties of the farm question and had given a very great deal of their time to the consideration of this question alone. So as soon as it was known that I was elected I asked some of our real agricultural experts to meet with me, as an informal and

voluntary Agricultural Commission, so that I could have their definite recommendations at the earliest possible moment after I actually assumed the office of Governor. This Commission met in early December and has worked hard, and I want to let everybody in the state realize how unselfishly they have given up their time and how seriously they have considered the whole question. There has been no spirit of partisanship in their findings. They have thought only of what is good for the state and what is good for the rural districts which need help so badly. Certainly, the things they propose are worthy of very serious consideration, and in all that part of the bill now before the Legislature, which is practically putting into the form of law their recommendations, I hope you will remember that it is the unanimous conclusion of twenty-one men and women, peculiarly qualified to judge what is the best thing to do.

The enthusiasm and speed with which the Commission worked seemed to have a stimulating effect on the leaders of the Republican majority in the Legislature, who in January appointed a committee of legislators also to look into the question. Of course, I am glad that the Democratic party leaders show such cooperation and that their willingness has proved contagious as shown not only by the hasty appointment of a legislative committee, but by the speed with which many of the items which I or my commission have advocated have been introduced in the form of party bills by

various Republican members as soon as I had made public the recommendations I intended to present to our Senate and Assembly.

I am utterly indifferent as to whether the legislation actually passed is that technically introduced by a Republican member or a Democratic member. That is the least important thing, but what is very important is that the laws which are made represent the best and wisest of the various conflicting ideas as to the way to carry out agricultural relief, and that the whole question does not become confused in the minds of either the legislators or the people, with politics. I feel sometimes that political leaders spread out, as it were, a sort of sticky fly paper to attract voters to their side, with the result that many a swift-winged and industrious bee of forward and progressive legislation becomes hopelessly entangled and dies an unfortunate victim of political ambitions. Let us keep this problem at least out of any such unfortunate entanglements and consider it on its merits.

Now as for the plan itself:

My commission, as I have said, began a study of the whole problem of agricultural relief even before I assumed office. It was early apparent to these experts that if any plan of relief for the rural sections were to succeed, additional revenue must

be found to meet the cost. In view of the experience in practically all of the other states and in view of the fact that the increased use of automobiles has made necessary our great but expensive system of roads, a tax on gasoline seemed to afford the most logical and the most equitable means of raising this additional money.

The commission accordingly recommended a two-cent gasoline tax and suggested that forty per cent of the proceeds of this tax should go toward providing additional aid to the poorer counties in the construction of highways, thus lightening their present heavy burden.

In keeping with these recommendations, I sent a special message to the Legislature, asking that a gasoline tax be passed and providing the manner in which the proceeds of such tax should be used.

That very day, Senator Hewitt, Republican Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, introduced a bill which purports to cover the same ground. Actually, there are some very important differences in the two bills, although

the Hewitt bill also proposes a two-cent gasoline tax and also provides for spending the money on highways. In the first place, the bill which I recommended outlines a comprehensive plan. It provides for the appropriation of \$4,000,000. to cover the larger part of the cost of constructing highways and bridges in the state highway system. It provides \$600,000. to relieve towns and villages of the cost of maintenance of state highways and \$4,200,000. additional aid to the counties in the construction of badly needed additional county highways connecting with the main trunk lines, a total of \$8,800,000. These roads are what the engineers call a "lateral system of highways". These proposals all go together as part of a general plan, and appropriations for them ought not to be passed separately; yet Senator Hewitt's bill fails to provide for maintenance of highways by the state. Maintenance of the highways is embodied in still another separate Republican bill. It is not, I think, good business to pass laws in such piecemeal fashion, because in the end you will probably not have a completed program.

Also, the bill which I recommended provided for a cut in the income tax. It is estimated that the gasoline tax will yield about twenty-two million dollars a year. The automobile license tax will, it is estimated, this year yield as the state's share \$28,500,000, making a total of \$50,500,000 paid by owners and users of automobiles. With the \$8,800,000 additional state aid proposed, as contained in my recommendations, the state will spend on highways a total of \$56,300,000. In other words, the state would spend on roads \$5,800,000 more than the total taxes paid by automobile owners and users.

The authorization of a gasoline tax would relieve funds from other tax sources which are now being applied to highways. This would give to the state on June 30, 1930 an estimated surplus larger than is necessary.

I also think it is good business to provide how this surplus shall be used, in the same measure creating the tax, and the bill carrying out my recommendations so provides. The Republican bill has no such provision.

But there is an even more important difference between the two bills. Under both bills part of the proceeds of the tax would be given to the counties for the development of county highways. Under the Hewitt bill this money would be handed over to the county boards to be spent by them under the existing loosely drawn laws.

Under some of these laws the county boards may distribute the money to the towns to be spent by the 933 elected town superintendents of highways very largely as they please. This,

experience has shown, almost insures that a considerable amount of the more than \$4,000,000 will be wasted. More than half the counties follow this practice with present state aid with the result that the money is being spent on short stretches of road and on roads which do not fit into the general plan of highways. Moreover, many of the town highway superintendents are without experience in highway building.

For example, here is an instance of one of the evils of this system which has just come to my attention. The 1929 highway construction program of one of the counties in the southern part of the state calls for the expenditure of about \$250,000 on fifty-one different pieces of highway. No one of these projects will create a complete road unit, with the result that at the end of 1929 that county will have little patches of roads leading nowhere. Now were this money spent on five or six projects, each related to the county system as a whole, under the supervision of a county superintendent, they would have probably twenty-five per cent. more and better roads, all connected with the other good roads of the county and with no bad stretches in between.

I am strongly of the opinion that the system employed by the Federal Government of requiring federal supervision and approval of highways built with federal aid should be adopted by our state and this is what I proposed in my recommendations.

The bill which I recommended requires all money contributed

by the state to be placed in a state aid fund. Before any of it can be spent by the county, the county superintendent of highways must prepare a map showing a system of connected lateral roads, properly related to the state highways system, and this plan must be approved both by the county supervisors and by the state superintendent of public works. Before any money can be spent on this county highway map, a list of the roads to be built in any one year, showing the type of road, length, width and thickness must be similarly approved.

After a study of the whole highway problem my Commission recommended that additional aid to the counties from the proceeds of a gasoline tax be based on the comparative ability of the county to pay a share of the construction costs. Consequently the amount of money to be provided by the state in the bill I recommended is based upon the county property valuations. The Hewitt bill places ^{on the state} the entire cost of roads up to twenty feet wide regardless of the ability of the county to pay. If the road is over twenty feet wide the additional cost is to be paid 65 per cent by the state and 35 per cent by the county. Apparently the assumption is that the poorer, sparsely settled counties do not need highways more than twenty feet wide. As a matter of fact some of the heaviest travelled roads are through sparsely settled sections where the local traffic amounts to almost nothing and a twenty foot roadway is inadequate. This whole plan of distribution is in my opinion and the opinion of my Commission and the highway department unscientific and unbusinesslike.

The Hewitt bill provides that the state shall pay one-half the cost of the right of way for new highways in all but the three counties of Westchester, Nassau and Erie. Why they were left out only the sponsors of the bill know, but it is probably because if those counties were included the bill which the state would have to pay would be too high. I doubt if the people in the counties left out can find much consolation in that.

But can you imagine what a fine time some Boards of Supervisors would have laying out roads through their friends' property and fixing the cost of the right of way with the state paying half the bill.

We come now to the question of tax reduction. It is estimated that the gasoline tax, now agreed upon by both parties as necessary, will produce \$22,000,000 additional revenue for the first year. This will all be spent on highway construction and in addition the \$28,500,000 received from the auto license fees. This gives \$50,500,000 from auto taxes.

It is proposed to spend \$56,000,000 for highway construction and maintenance by the state, so we shall be spending \$6,000,000 more on highways than we get from the motorists.

The application of all the gas tax and license fee tax to highways relieves other taxes now used for county highways and it will give us for this year and this year only a larger surplus than is necessary. I hold that no government is justified in taking from its taxpayers more money than is needed for the support

of government in any single year. We can reduce taxes between twelve and thirteen million dollars this year, but probably only for this year, as next year we will have an additional expenditure of \$8,000,000. for education alone and other costs are necessarily increasing.

The question arises, then, as to the form this tax reduction is to take. Now, I am wholeheartedly in favor of wiping out the direct state tax on real estate, and I hope we will later be able to do so. Since this tax reduction is probably a temporary measure, however, it should be extended to the greatest possible number of individuals and that is what I propose in advocating a reduction in the personal income tax.

It has been a popular assumption that elimination of the direct state tax would more directly benefit the strictly rural counties of the state. I shared that impression until I began a detailed study of the whole matter before sending my message to the Legislature. I was surprised to find that exactly the opposite is true. It may also surprise some of the Republican members of the Legislature from these rural counties to learn that their counties would benefit more from an income tax reduction than from removal of the direct tax.

In about thirty-five of the strictly rural counties of the state, twenty per cent of the estimated income tax for this year exceeds the amount which they would save by

abolishing the direct tax.

Taking the State as a whole there is little difference between the two proposals. The Tax Department estimates that twenty per cent of the income tax will amount to \$12,800,000. while the direct state tax, based on last year's returns will amount to \$12,600,000.

But in such counties as Allegany, Cattaragus, Chenango, Delaware, Jefferson, Livingston, Orleans, Steuben, Warren and Yates, to mention a few, the greatest benefit is to be derived from a reduction of the income tax. In these and the other counties which have no large cities the difference in favor of the income tax reduction totals practically a quarter of a million dollars.

Moreover, it seems to me, a reduction of the income tax this year is the most practical measure of relief in that it is a saving which is certain to benefit the taxpayer. In the case of the direct state tax, however, there is no assurance that the saving will not be absorbed by the local governments with no reduction to the taxpayer.

The proposed reduction of the income tax would be borne entirely by the state. There would be no reduction in the amount of income tax returned to the counties so that there would be no excuse for a corresponding increase in local taxes.

I wonder if those who advocate the elimination of the direct state tax as opposed to a reduction of the income tax realize that the greatest benefit under that plan would be to those who least need reduction. I refer to the fact that the direct state tax is paid in larger amounts by the big holders of real estate, the railroads and large business and industrial plants. Does anyone believe that this saving will be passed on to those who pay taxes only indirectly, the rent-payer, the consumer and the traveler? We know from experience that such will not be the case.

There are more than a half million income taxpayers in the state. I hold this temporary tax reduction, made possible by a gasoline tax, would be more equitably distributed by a reduction in the income tax than by elimination of the direct tax at this time. I am sure that were a referendum possible, the people of the state would so decide.

Radio Address, Agricultural Hour, March 7, 1929

The Governor Discusses Farm Problem and Outlines Plan of Relief Sponsored by Agricultural Advisory Commission

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I am glad to have been given the privilege of using the "Agricultural Hour" of tonight's radio program to tell, not only those engaged in farming up-state, but those who live in our cities, as well, just what I have planned and what others have planned to help agriculture in the State of New York. Perhaps it is even more important that I should tell those who live in the cities exactly what is proposed than it is to try and make it plain to the farmers themselves. This is because those who depend on farming for their income have naturally followed very much more closely the work of the Agricultural Advisory Commission which I appointed as almost my first official act. While I feel sure from the letters I have received from all over the State, that the great majority of those most directly interested feel that the relief which we propose will be a real relief and a real help to them, I am not so sure that those who live in towns and cities realize entirely how much the prosperity of the farmer directly affects their own prosperity. So there are probably a great many city dwellers who have not read much more than the headlines in the newspapers on this subject, under the impression that it was not one which directly affected them.

If you stop to think a moment, you will realize that the prosperity of our town dwellers depends a great deal upon the prosperity of our farmers, because most of our town dwellers earn their living directly or indirectly either by making things to sell or by selling things which other people make, and prosperous farmers mean many customers and increased incomes to all. In this State we cannot help the farmers without the support of the town dwellers any more than we can do things by legislation to help our towns and cities without the help of the farmers. Thus, you see, there is a personal responsibility not only on the farmers, but on our city dwellers as well to understand and give their support to legislation intended to help either the rural or the city districts of our State. This is as it should be, because it would be a very bad thing indeed if your representatives in the Legislature divided up on matters for the good of the whole State, so that all the city people voted one way and all the representatives from the rural counties voted another.

I have made certain recommendations to the Legislature, based on the findings of a committee of agricultural experts. Certain other members of

the Legislature have introduced bills differing in some ways with some of the things which I have proposed. This makes it very important that all citizens of the State understand clearly just what these different proposals are, and also that they make it clear to their representatives in the Legislature which way they think is the best to bring about better times for our rural districts.

First of all, I want to correct a misunderstanding which seems to have grown up in some places, that this is a party question and that the Republican voters of this State are all in favor of one plan and the Democratic voters are all in favor of another. There never was a problem put before our Senate and Assembly so absolutely non-partisan and free from political questions as this matter of agricultural relief. It is true that the way which I think is the best way has been put into a bill which carries out specific recommendations which I, as Governor, made to the Legislature, and that I am a Democrat; but on the other hand it is also true that my recommendations were based on the recommendations made to me by this special agricultural commission about which I spoke a moment ago. Now it happens that after I had picked the men and women best qualified to study the whole problem and to draw up this report, without regard to their political belief, I found that this commission consisted of eighteen Republicans and only three Democrats. Accordingly, you see that what I am asking you to consider tonight is a plan proposed by a commission almost entirely Republican and submitted to the Legislature by a Democrat. I do not see how it would be possible to find anything more non-partisan than this, and in making up your own minds about it I hope you will decide what you think is the best way, and that where there has been a difference of opinion among some of the members of the Legislature on some parts of this general plan, you will decide entirely on the merits of each point in controversy, remembering that it is a matter of no importance whatever whether the person who has suggested the way you think best happens to be a Democrat or a Republican.

Everybody has agreed that something must be done for our rural districts. In its platform the Republican party promised, as they promised a great many times before without ever finding time to get around to it, really to do something for the farmer, and the Democrats in their platform made it clear that they were going to insist that something really be accomplished this year. It seemed to me to be one of the most important things before the citizens of the State today, and as a candidate for Governor I promised to do everything I could to get action—something done instead of something merely talked about—in case I was elected. I also felt that this whole problem should be studied by people who were recognized, not only in this State but all over the country, as people who understood all the difficulties of the farm question and had given a very great deal of their time to the consideration of this question. So as soon as it was known that I was elected, I asked some of our real agricultural experts to meet with me, as an informal and voluntary agricultural commission, so that I could have their definite recommendations at the earliest possible moment after I actually assumed the office of Governor. This commission met early in December and has worked hard, and I want to let everybody in the State realize how unselfishly they have given up their time and how seriously they have considered the whole question. There has been no spirit of partisanship in their findings. They have thought only of what is good for the State and what is good for the rural districts which need help so badly. Certainly, the things they propose are worthy of very serious consideration. The bill now before the Legislature practically puts into the form of law their recommendations, and I hope you will remember that it embraces the unanimous conclusions of twenty-one men and women, peculiarly qualified to judge what is the best thing to do.

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tagious as shown not only by the hasty appointment of a legislative committee, but by the speed with which many of the items which, I or my commission have advocated, have been introduced in the form of party bills by various Republican members as soon as I had made public the recommendations I intended to present to our Senate and Assembly.

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The commission accordingly recommended a two-cent gasoline tax and suggested that forty per cent of the proceeds of this tax should go toward providing additional aid to the poorer counties in the construction of highways, thus lightening their present heavy burden.

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Also, the bill which I recommended provided for a cut in the income tax. It is estimated that the gasoline tax will yield about \$22,000,000 a year. The automobile license tax will, it is estimated, this year yield as the State's share \$28,500,000, making a total of \$50,500,000 paid by owners and users of automobiles. With the \$8,800,000 additional State aid proposed, as contained in my recommendations, the State will spend on highways a total of \$56,300,000. In other words, the State would spend on roads \$5,800,000 more than the total taxes paid by automobile owners and users.

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I also think it is good business to provide how this surplus shall be used in the same measure creating the tax, and the bill carrying out my recommendations so provides. The Republican bill has no such provision.

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Under some of these laws the county boards may distribute the money to the towns to be spent by the 933 elected town superintendents of highways very largely as they please. This, experience has shown, almost insures that a considerable amount of the more than \$4,000,000 will be wasted. More than half the counties follow this practice with present State aid with the result that the money is being spent on short stretches of road and on roads which do not fit into the general plan of highways. Moreover, many of the town highway superintendents are without experience in highway building.

For example, here is an instance of one of the evils of this system which has just come to my attention. The 1929 highway construction program of one of the counties in the southern part of the State calls for the expenditure of about \$250,000 on fifty-one different pieces of highway. No one of these projects will create a complete road unit, with the result that at the end of 1929 that county will have little patches of roads leading nowhere. Now were this money spent on five or six projects, each related to the county system as a whole, under the supervision of a county superintendent, they would have probably twenty-five per cent more and better roads, all connected with the other good roads of the county and with no bad stretches in between.

I am strongly of the opinion that the system employed by the Federal Government of requiring federal supervision and approval of highways built with federal aid should be adopted by our State and this is what I proposed in my recommendations.

The bill which I recommended requires all money contributed by the State to be placed in a State aid fund. Before any of it can be spent by the county, the county superintendent of highways must prepare a map showing a system of connected lateral roads, properly related to the State highways system, and this plan must be approved both by the county supervisors and by the State Superintendent of Public Works. Before any money can be spent on this county highway map, a list of the roads to be built in any one year, showing the type of road, length, width and thickness must be similarly approved.

After a study of the whole highway problem my commission recommended that additional aid to the counties from the proceeds of a gasoline tax be based on the comparative ability of the county to pay a share of the construction costs. Consequently the amount of money to be provided by the State in the bill I recommended is based upon the county property valuations. The Hewitt bill places the entire cost of roads up to twenty feet wide on the State regardless of the ability of the county to pay. If the road is over twenty feet wide the additional cost is to be paid 65 per cent, by the State and 35 per cent, by the county. Apparently the assumption is that the poorer, sparsely settled counties do not need highways more than twenty feet wide. As a matter of fact some of the heaviest travelled roads are through sparsely settled sections where the local traffic amounts to almost nothing, and a twenty foot roadway is inadequate. This whole plan of distribution is in my opinion and the opinion of my commission and the highway department unscientific and unbusinesslike.

The Hewitt bill provides that the State shall pay one half the cost of the right of way for new highways in all but the three counties of Westchester, Nassau and Erie. Why they were left out only the sponsors of the bill know, but it is probably because of the fact that if those counties were included the bill which the State would have to pay would be too high. I doubt if the people in the counties left out can find much consolation in that.

But can you imagine what a fine time some boards of supervisors would have laying out roads through their friends' property and fixing the costs of the right of way with the State paying half the bill?

We come now to the question of tax reduction. It is estimated that the gasoline tax, now agreed upon by both parties as necessary, will produce \$22,000,000 additional revenue for the first year. This will all be spent on highway construction, and with the \$28,500,000 received from the auto license fees will total \$50,500,000, all from auto taxes.

It is proposed to spend \$50,000,000 for highway construction and maintenance by the State, so we shall be spending \$6,000,000 more on highways than we get from the motorists.

The application of all the gas tax and license fee tax to highways relieves other taxes now used for county highways and it will give us for this year and this year only a larger surplus than is necessary. I hold that no government is justified in taking from its taxpayers more money than is needed for the support of government in any single year. We can reduce taxes between twelve and thirteen million dollars this year, but probably only for this year, as next year we will have an additional expenditure of \$8,000,000 for education alone, and other costs are necessarily increasing.

The question arises, then, as to the form this tax reduction is to take. Now, I am wholeheartedly in favor of wiping out the direct State tax on real estate, and I hope we will later be able to do so. Since this tax reduction is probably a temporary measure, however, it should be extended to the greatest possible number of individuals and that is what I propose in advocating a reduction in the personal income tax.

It has been a popular assumption that elimination of the direct State tax would more directly benefit the strictly rural counties of the State. I shared that impression until I began a detailed study of the whole matter before sending my message to the Legislature. I was surprised to find that exactly the opposite is true. It may also surprise some of the Republican members of the Legislature from these rural counties to learn that their counties would benefit more from an income tax reduction than from removal of the direct tax.

In about thirty-five of the strictly rural counties of the State, 20 per cent of the estimated income tax for this year exceeds the amount which they would save by abolishing the direct tax.

Taking the State as a whole there is little difference between the two proposals. The State Tax Department estimates that 20 per cent of the income tax will amount to \$12,800,000 while the direct State tax, based on last year's returns will amount to \$12,600,000.

But in such counties as Alleghany, Cattaraugus, Chenango, Delaware, Jefferson, Livingston, Orleans, Steuben, Warren and Yates, to mention a few, the greatest benefit is to be derived from a reduction of the income tax. In these and the other counties which have no large cities the difference in favor of the income tax reduction totals practically a quarter of a million dollars.

Moreover, it seems to me, a reduction of the income tax this year is the most practical measure of relief in that it is a saving which is certain to benefit the taxpayer. In the case of the direct State tax, however, there is no assurance that the saving will not be absorbed by the local governments with no reduction to the taxpayer.

The proposed reduction of the income tax would be borne entirely by the State. There would be no reduction in the amount of income tax returned to the counties so that there would be no excuse for a corresponding increase in local taxes.

I wonder if those who advocate the elimination of the direct State tax as opposed to a reduction of the income tax realize that the greatest benefit under that plan would be to those who least need reduction. I refer to the fact that the direct State tax is paid in larger amounts by the big holders of real estate, the railroads and large business and industrial plants. Does anyone believe that this saving will be passed on to those who pay taxes only indirectly, the rent-payer, the consumer and the traveler? We know from experience that such will not be the case.

There are more than a half million income taxpayers in the State. I hold this temporary tax reduction, made possible by a gasoline tax, would be more equitably distributed by a reduction in the income tax than by elimination of the direct tax at this time. I am sure that were a referendum possible, the people of the State would so decide.