
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

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**Suggested letter to Wyoming County
Newspaper Editors**

SUGGESTED LETTER FOR THE GOVERNOR TO WRITE TO ALL PAPERS
IN WYOMING COUNTY IN ANSWER TO SENATOR KNIGHT'S RECENT STATEMENT.

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Editor of The _____
Warsaw NEW YORK

Dear Sir:

I have carefully read Senator Knight's letter headed "A Plain Statement of Facts", recently printed in Wyoming papers. In that letter, written in behalf of the Republican candidate for Assembly from Wyoming County, the Senator resents what he terms "part statements" that have appeared in advertisements in the local press. I have not seen these advertisements, but from the Senator's letter it would appear that "part statements" in Wyoming are not all confined to the advertisements against which he so loudly cries.

Senator Knight complains because the bill which would have thrown the entire cost of bridge construction upon the State during 1929 was vetoed. I disapproved this bill at the earnest request of both the Superintendent of Public Works and the Commissioner of Highways. They urged my veto because, as the Senator admits, the bill did not provide an appropriation with which to carry out the intent of the measure. Senator Knight's letter, however, states in large capitals that, "These moneys were available for bridge construction"; but he neglected to say that if the State had assumed the counties' share of the cost of bridges (over \$1,000,000), the mileage of new roads would necessarily have been reduced by that amount, for this sum, contributed this year by the counties, would have had to be taken from highway construction money. The Senator must know that robbing Peter to pay Paul is poor business policy. In the 1930 budget I am including this \$1,000,000 formerly paid by the counties, and I shall gladly approve a bill which would relieve the counties of this charge.

Regarding highway construction in Wyoming County, the Senator carefully says, "Wyoming has been faring well in the matter of improved roads", and, "Much (new construction) was let last year", and further, "If any one is to be blamed for this, and I do not say

there is, let me say that a Democratic Department of Highways did not recommend any roads for this year for this county." This is an extraordinary mixture of caution and "part statements". It also reveals the Senator as a skilful inventor; for I deny that any such thing as a "Democratic Department of Highways" exists. We have in New York State a Department of Public Works in which is the Division of Highways, and no one should know better than the Senator that under no Democratic administration, certainly since 1918, has politics been allowed to interfere with highway activities. What happened to our highways under the Republican administration of 1921-22 is too painful to recall.

The Senator also knows, or should know, that highway construction is required by law to be carried on as equitably as practical in all our 57 up-state counties. He knows, or should know, that Wyoming, being fully up to, if not slightly ahead of its quota, was not legally entitled to any new construction during 1929. Instead, therefore, of inventing a "Democratic Department of Highways", he could have given the taxpayers the "Plain Statement of Facts" that during 1927 and 1928 the following highway contracts were under way in Wyoming:

(NEW CONSTRUCTION)		
<u>ROAD</u>	<u>MILES</u>	<u>COST</u>
Varysburg-Attica, No. 8260	7.55	\$366,449.70
" " , No. 8260-A	1.64	49,996.18
Bliss-Pike, No. 8292	6.31	305,137.25
Pavilion-Piffard, No. 1777	3.59	131,514.40
(mileage in Wyoming only)		
Pike-Castile, No. 8299	4.84	204,819.40
(RECONSTRUCTION)		
Warsaw-Gainesville, R.C.1660	0.08	11,208.50
County Line-Arcade, R.C.1155	1.64	59,793.75
Java Center-Java Village, R.C.1753	3.59	169,492.50
Bennington-Attica Center, R.C.1768	0.05	2,361.30
Warsaw-Gainesville, R.C.3210	2.12	114,642.55
Wales Center-Varysburg, R.C.1773	0.16	29,423.00
TOTALS	31.57	\$1,444,838.53
CONTEMPLATED CONSTRUCTION FOR 1930		
<u>ROAD</u>	<u>MILES</u>	<u>COST</u>
Perry-Mt. Morris	3.00	165,000.00
Fillmore-Portageville (pavement)	3.96	160,000.00
Smith Cor's-Rock Glen	6.80	350,000.00
TOTALS	13.76	\$675,000.00

The above is a record that would need no apology, even from a "Democratic Department of Highways", if one existed.

The Senator also tells the voters of Wyoming some "facts" about the proposed hydro-electric power development on the St. Lawrence River. He says his party "does not favor the expenditure of over half a billion dollars to build a dam and perhaps billions more for development and distribution." I do not know where the Senator gets his figures. I have heard that during the heat of a political campaign figures arrive from strange sources. But the Joint Board of Engineers appointed by the governments of the United States and Canada, which Board made a long and exhaustive study of the project and should know what they are talking about, place the cost of the dam including the head and tail races at \$148,500,000, or just \$351,500,000 less than the Senator's figure for the same work. As the Report of the Joint Board of Engineers was ~~submitted after years of exhaustive study and was~~ written by engineers of the highest standard, I prefer to accept their figure. And further, the Senator knows, or should know, that it ~~has never been~~ ^{is not} proposed by either political party that the State— or more properly, the Power Trustees— should undertake the transmission of the power.

Very truly yours

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Governor.

To the Editor of
Warsaw, N. Y.

My dear Sir:

I have read with amazement a long letter published in your paper addressed by Senator Knight to Assemblyman Hanley. It is not the custom for the Governor or the Executive Department to take any part in local, political campaigns but in view of the fact that the letter is written by the President pro tem of the Senate, and in view of the amazing statements in this letter, I feel that the whole truth should be made clear.

First, in regard to Senator Knight's statement that the Governor could have approved the bill for the payment of Bridge Construction wholly by the State Senator Knight is guilty of a deliberate attempt to deceive.

The Bill was disapproved at the earnest request of both the Superintendent of Public Works and the Commissioner of Highways. Furthermore, Senator Knight's own colleague, Speaker McGinniss, told the Governor that as the Bill carried no appropriation, there was nothing for him to do but to disapprove the Bill. Senator Knight quibbles when he says that moneys were available from other appropriations, for Bridge Construction. If the Governor had taken money from other appropriations for Bridge Construction, Senator Knight would have been the first to charge the Governor with an illegal act. The other appropriations were clearly intended by the Legislature for the regular highway construction and could not be diverted by the Governor alone for a purpose for which they were not intended.

Why does Senator Knight stoop to petty innuendo of calling the Governor's Agricultural Advisory Committee his "so-called" Advisory Committee?

Why does Senator Knight refer to "the Democratic Department of Highways?" We have in New York State a Department of Public Works in which there is the Division of Highways and ^{no one} ~~anyone~~ should know better than the Senator that under no Democratic administration, certainly since 1918, has politics been allowed to interfere with highway activities. What happened to the State's highways under Governor Miller's administration of 1921 and 1922, is too painful to recall.

Why does Senator Knight deliberately misrepresent Governor Roosevelt's proposal for the power development of the St. Lawrence River by public trustees? He says, his party "does not favor the expenditure of over half a billion dollars to build a dam and perhaps billions more for development and distribution! Neither does anyone else. I do not know where the Senator gets his figures. They are, of course, utterly absurd and he would not have used them if ~~he~~ had thought twice.

In regard to Wyoming County's roads, the Senator also knows, or should know, that highway construction is required by law to be carried on as equitably as possible in all of our fifty-seven up-state counties. He knows, or should know, that Wyoming, being fully up to, if not slightly ahead of its quota, was not legally entitled to any new construction during 1929. If he had told the whole truth he would have pointed out that during 1927 and 1928, highway contracts for one million four hundred forty-four thousand, eight hundred thirty-eight dollars and fifty-three cents (\$1, 444, 838.53) were underway in

Wyoming, And that the proposed construction for 1930 in Wyoming, covers 13.76 miles at a total cost of \$675,000.

Senator Knight's letter is so glaringly, so grossly partisan, that the average citizen who reads it will change its title to "A Plain Misstatement of Facts." It seems most unfortunate that some men in high public office lose their heads in the heat of a campaign.

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SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR

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SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNOR

ALL THE
LOCAL NEWS
THAT'S FIT
TO PRINT

The

VOLUME 41

A PLAIN STATEMENT OF FACTS

WITH REGARD TO MR. HANLEY'S
SERVICES IN THE LEGISLATURE

Senator Knight Shatters the Half Truths and Mis-
representations with His Personal Statement
of the Actual Facts

Arcade, New York,
October 21, 1929.

Hon. Joe. R. Hanley,
Perry, New York.
My Dear Assemblyman:

I note in various county newspapers certain "political advertisements" intended to reflect upon your work in the legislature. Some of these are misstatements. Some are intentional part statements which do not reveal the facts. I have no fear the people of the county will be influenced by such methods of political opponents. All this is a part of the program being attempted to be carried out thru the assembly districts thru the state. However, in fairness to you, I feel that I should give my personal knowledge of certain matters to which those statements refer.

The bill putting the total expense of the constructing of bridges on the state was passed in 1928 and 1929. It was vetoed both years. There was **ABSOLUTELY NO JUSTIFICATION** for such vetoes. The bill carried no appropriation. That was unnecessary. Each year we appropriated \$3,000,000 for bridge construction. Each year we appropriated many millions for highway construction. These **MONEYS WERE AVAILABLE FOR BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION** such as this bill proposed. Even if that were not true, the bill would have established a policy in the state which the state could and would have met by ample appropriations sponsored by the Governor's so-called advisory committee. That committee recommended a bill which **WOULD HAVE** left part of the cost on the county. The republican bill relieved them entirely.

It is said that you opposed the substitution of the Federal census for the state census. That is a half truth. You opposed the abolition of the state census with provision for a state census in case the Federal census could not be used. The latter position is imperative. We have no control over the Federal census. Our census is taken to permit the apportionment of members of the legislature. That has to be done under the constitution. If the Federal census does not supply the material from which such apportionments must be made, we would have to supply it in the state. **THE REPUBLICAN PARTY** unanimously favors the abolition of the state census, with the use of the Federal census so far as it can be used to meet our apportionment provisions.

It is said that you opposed water power development by the state. That is true. That is the position of the republican party, and has been its position for years. We do not favor the expenditure of over half a billion dollars to build a dam on the St. Lawrence river, and then spend perhaps billions more for development and distribution. We had enough of government ownership of the railroads during the late war. At no time have you ever favored the sale of the state's water rights. Your party and you have consistently favored state leasing with full power of control and recapture.

You have rightly opposed putting the department of Farms and Markets into a political maw. Year after year

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You have rightly opposed putting the department of Farms and Markets into a political maw. Year after year the democrats in the legislature have favored doing just that. Does your opponent take a different position?

You opposed abolition of the motion picture censorship. Does your opponent favor such abolition.

It is not true that you have "uniformly opposed humanitarian welfare and labor bills." Quite the contrary to the fact. You have consistently voted for many bills of this character. We have in this state concededly the most liberal workmen's compensation law in the United States. Year after year we have been further extending it. Only last year the State Federation of Labor went on record as commending the work of the legislature on labor and such like measures. You voted this year for the most advanced poor law ever written. You voted this year to set up a commission to study Old Age Want. You voted for the Housing Bill. You voted for vast appropriations for labor, health, and social service work. You voted to extend the occupational disease law till today it includes practically every known occupational disease. You rightly voted against State Insurance as wholly undemocratic, and socialistic. The reference to the "One Day Rest in Seven Bill" is not a fair one. That bill would have prevented the operation on Sunday of even employees in dairies. **EVERY FARMER** would have been materially and disastrously affected by such a measure. There were other very good reasons why the bill should not have become law. Would your opponent have supported this bill?

You **VOTED FOR** and not against the bill further limiting the hours of labor of women and minors.

It is true that you have voted against certain other measures mentioned in this advertisement, as four year term for Governor, restoration of direct primary for state offices, initiation of constitutional amendments by direct petition, and others. In each of such votes you have voted in a way that has been the republican party position for years and will stand the test of any fair examination and

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A PLAIN STATEMENT OF FACTS

(Continued from page 1)

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A PLAIN STATEMENT OF FACTS

(Continued from page 1)

I do not know where any statement that you voted against the investigation of the criminal laws and the defects in other laws gets its source. You voted for the decedent's estate law. The committee was continued and you voted to continue it. You voted to continue the crime commission. These commissions are functioning today, and both were supported by republicans unanimously.

You have given careful attention to all matters which have come before the legislature. You have been constant in your attention. You have taken an active part in the discussion of many of the major measures. You have developed to a position among the leaders of the assembly. Your ability has won the confidence and attracted the attention of all your colleagues.

As a member of the important assembly committee on Education, you took an active part in framing the legislation for tax relief for the rural schools. You sat in on the conference on the various farm relief measures and had a thorough knowledge of them. Few could have done more; many have done less. It is said that Wyoming got no highway construction this year. Not a dollar can be obtained from the state for highways till appropriated BY THE LEGISLATURE. Wyoming has been faring well in the matter of improved roads. True no new construction was let in this county this year. Much was let last year. There was necessarily a lot up this year. If any one is to be blamed for this, and I do not say there is, let me say that the DEMOCRATIC DEPARTMENT of highways DID NOT recommend any roads for this year for this county. NO democrat assemblyman can change that. When it is changed a republican legislature will have to approve changes. I am sure that you can be relied on to look after the best interest of the county as regards its roads.

You have served your constituents faithfully and well. A lot of money is being dumped into this county this year and being spent in the effort to elect a democrat assemblyman. The memory of no living man goes back to the time when Wyoming County had a democrat assemblyman. The interest of the county today, as in the past, is best served by men of a party in the legislature in sympathy with the problems of the county. The time is a long way off when Wyoming County will be content to ally its interests with those of Tammany Hall.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN KNIGHT.

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