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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**

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LUNCHEON TENDERED BY  
GOVERNOR FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT,  
and  
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR HERBERT H. LEHMAN,  
to the  
Representatives of the Foreign Press,

OCTOBER 27, 1930

NEW YORK CITY

1 PM.

GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT: Dr. Moscowitz: My Friends:  
During the past week in coming through the state, as each day has gone by, my good friends of the Press who have been accompanying me have been more and more secretly amused, because in every speech I have made I have referred to the fact that I was in this campaign talking more about Government than about politics. It got to the point finally then, when they were no longer secretly amused, but openly amused; because after all, it was a campaign trip.

Nevertheless, I can't quite disassociate my mind as to the difference or any difference between Government and politics; although I have made that distinction. What I mean is that politics ought to be, even though it is not, elevated into the realms of the government. Because, after all, in any political campaign, what candidates ought at least to be working for is to give to the electorate as a whole, a picture of the problems of Government.

Now, in this campaign, my three associates and I are running for State office, as you know. And in so doing, it is a fair proposition for us to talk a little bit about the things that have happened in the past two years, and also about the things that may happen in the next two years

and also about the things that may happen in the next two years if we are sent back to Albany.

Among the problems that we have dealt with, are two that I want to refer to very briefly to-day:

The first is very closely and very definitely associated with the problems of the foreign born in this country. Dr. Moscovitz is wholly right in saying that those who have come to us from other countries have come here with aspirations. They have come here with a very high hope in their hearts, that they could not only improve their status financially, but also that they could do something for their families, and their children, and their wives, which they could not have accomplished had they not come to our shores.

Now that means inevitably that the foreign-born population of this country and of this state -- I might also say, especially in this state, -- are interested in what the state is doing along social lines; what it is doing to improve the conditions of life for the average citizen.

And, as you know, for the past eight years in Albany, there has been pushed and successfully pushed year by year a very definite program of social improvement and social reform. It was begun by my predecessor Governor Smith. (applause) And he carried out, quite frankly, a super-human task -- a task of definite accomplishment along lines of legislation and of administration which have put this state in the forefront among all the other states. And during the past two years, we have built upon that program, and we have continued to bring certain benefits to the people of the State,--benefits which have either been in the making for sometime or have been brought about by new conditions.

I need only to refer to a few of them. You know very well that the wards of this state, the patients in our hospitals and the prisoners, have had inadequate care, for the reason that there were not enough accommodations to take care of them. Furthermore, we have gone along medical and social lines so fast in the last few years that it is worth while from the practical, economic point of view, to take even better care of the patients and prisoners of the

State than we ever have before. I can cite, for instance, two examples that will bring it home to everybody I know. Last year, the hospitals for Mental Diseases -- the things that we used to call Insane Asylums in the old days, -- in spite of the overcrowding, in spite of the fact that we have 55,000 patients in hospitals that were built to accommodate 45,000 -- 12,000 more than there ought to be in those hospitals -- in spite of that, we have increased in each succeeding year, the number of cures in hospitals.

25 Or 30 years ago, when any person in our own community went to one of those state hospitals, the chances were that in one chance out of 999 they would never come out. To-day, the figures show that 22½ percent of all of the patients who go into the state hospitals come out cured, and are restored to their families.

That, not only from the humanitarian point of view, but from the economic point of view, is one of the greatest strides that have been taken in this particular line of work. And by the same token, with the prisoners of the state, we have gone through what is called a crime wave during the past 10 years, and we have treated, under the existing laws, criminals in an even larger manner than we had before, forgetting the fact that out of every 100 boys -- because most of them are boys, -- who go wrong in any way, and are sent to prison, 92 out of those 100 boys come back. They are released from prison, and they come back into our communities, and, while it is perfectly true that a great many experts, a great many fine citizens who have been taking an interest in the prison problem in the science of penology, during the past 15, or 20 years, have been complaining about the conditions in the prisons, have been complaining about the fact that we cannot, either in our sentencing or parole system, taking care of these young men in the right way, with the object of making them good citizens when they come out -- in spite of that, it has only been within the past year or year and a half that the public as a whole has become interested in this problem. You never can get anywhere in legislation or in an administration until the public becomes interested; and certainly today the public of this state is tremendously interested all over the country in the prison problem, and hospital problem.

We are going ahead in the prison hospital, or prison problem, and hospital problem on a perfectly definite program, and definite basis, aimed at the year of 1935.

That is why we are submitting this year to the voters the proposition of the state-bond issue for the building of more institutions.

But, back of all of that, I consider that this work constitutes a very definite proof that the people of the state are people of liberal thought: That they are people who want to see our social conditions improved. Remember, it was only two years ago in the campaign that anything was said in this state at all about the problem of taking care of old people. Other countries had taken care of their old people along the lines of old age insurance of some kind. But we, in this country have done practically nothing about it. And, that I regard as one of the greatest demonstrations of what public opinion can do in a very short time. Because it was only a year ago last spring that the Legislature authorized a Commission to investigate and report a system of old age security against want, and it was only this spring that the Legislature took up the plan and actually put it on the statute books. Here again, placing the State of New York in the forefront of this type of social legislation. (applause)

Now, I am inclined to think that we in this country, in Governmental positions, have never given quite as much study and thought to the rest of the world as we might have done. It is actually a fact, as you gentlemen know, that on social problems almost every government in the old world has antedated us in undertaking the solution of the problems. In Europe, in many countries, the care of the aged is not a new story. In Europe, the care of the feeble minded, and the insane was probably started even before it was started in this state 50 years ago. And in Europe, for example, various systems have been actually worked out, differing from each other, to be sure, for the solution of the problem of unemployment.

Now, how many public men in this country, how many people who are connected with government, how many political leaders, if you like, know anything, or care anything about what has been tried in other nations of the world? Why,

under our system of state government, I go to a Governors' Conference every year, and I am perfectly amazed at those conferences to find that some sister-state in the middle west, or out on the Pacific Coast, has actually tried out something that I have got in mind for suggesting next year. We don't know our brothers and sisters. We don't know enough about what is going on in the world. And that is why I am always, and always have been very, very keen about keeping in touch with those of foreign birth in our country; those who have come to us, -- especially the intellectual leaders that Dr. Moscovitz has referred to -- those intellectual leaders who know more than merely the intellectual side of the people -- intelligent leaders -- of what has been going on in other states and other countries of the world.

I have had a great many advantages, I am glad to say, which came to me through no fault of my own. When I was a boy, my family used to take me abroad a great deal, and in that way, I became -- many years ago -- not merely a tourist, but actually a dweller in many of the lands of Europe. And after that, I had another privilege which came to me, because of my profession. When I started in to practice law in this city, away back in 1907, I was assigned the task by a very large law office of covering all of the cases in the Municipal Courts of the City of New York. And a better training could not be had than that. I think I obtained at least a smiling acquaintance with at least 8 different languages. (laughter)- And I could tell at least whether the interpreters was telling the truth or not. (laughter).

And so I am very firmly convinced that there is a great deal more in this campaign than mere issues between the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, -- much deeper issues between the candidates on either side. I can see that the really greatest issues in this campaign are wrapped up in a war between two schools of thought -- the School of liberal progress, which has been victorious in this state for the past 8 years. That on the one side! And, on the other side, the School -- I won't call it reaction -- perhaps that is almost ~~ix~~ unfair -- but I would call it the School of "not-knowing-about-it". (laughter-applause) The School of a lack of acquaintance, a first hand knowledge of the problems of social welfare especially.

And you will find, I am convinced this year, as has been the case two years ago, four years ago, six years ago, eight years ago -- that practically all of the forces of liberal thought, both in the city, and in the state, are lined up in the army that is represented, certainly, at this time, as it has been for these years past, by the Democratic Ticket rather than the other ticket. (applause).

It is a dream. We are all dreamers -- thank heaven. If we weren't dreamers -- if we weren't seeking something better all the time, - well there wouldn't be any of us in America. Whether one came over in the past ten years, or 20 years, or 50 years; Or, whether one's ancestors came over two hundred or three hundred years ago, we all came over for exactly the same reason. And we are all going to be here in the days to come for exactly the same reason. And most of us are going to keep our dream with us, and are going not merely to hope that our dream will come ~~true~~ true, but we are going to work to see that it comes true. (applause-prolonged)

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