
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNOR FOR THE UNITED PRESS - FEB. 2, 1931.

This winter every patriotic citizen is working with time and money to relieve the serious conditions of unemployment which extend through almost every part of the country. Only two years ago many prominent people were saying publicly that the industrial boom then in progress would continue indefinitely and that never again would the United States suffer economically; so much for ill-considered prophecy based on unsound thinking and a failure to read history.

That is one of the particular reasons for the Conference of the Governors of Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio, recently held in Albany. We all felt that something should be done in addition to the relief of the existing emergency by studying some of the fundamental causes and also some of the remedies proposed for the prevention of another period in the future like the one we are now passing through.

We listened to the reports of statisticians and experts. Two of the significant points brought out were that the wage payments in the nation as a whole were about nine and a half billion dollars (\$9,500,000,000) less in 1930 than in 1929 - an appalling decrease in the purchasing power of the country -; and the other startling fact was that in spite of all of the efforts made by the Federal, State, City, County and other government agencies, the total volume of public works in 1930 and in 1931 total no more than the public works in 1929.

The Governors reached three conclusions. The first was to appoint a committee of seven, with one representative from each State, in order to get a definite report on all existing or proposed forms of unemployment insurance. This will cover the various European methods, both voluntary insurance and compulsory insurance; it will cover the existing forms of voluntary insurance

now in effect among certain corporations and certain organizations of workers in the United States; and it will cover also suggested forms of what are known as Americanized plans for unemployment insurance on a comprehensive scale with at least government supervision. With this study of unemployment insurance will, of course, be included the suggestion of the creation of government reserves to be built up during periods of prosperity and used for public works in periods of depression.

The second study authorized by the Governors will be that of labor laws and taxes on industry, with the purpose of making all of these more uniform and thus lessen the migration of labor and industry from one state to another.

The third step creates an experimental clearing house between the seven states, in order to work out plans for a better system of public and private government agencies and also for getting better and more uniform statistics covering the whole area of the seven states. It has been clearly demonstrated, I think, that the Federal statistics of the Department of Labor have proven themselves almost completely worthless during the past year and a half. What these states seek to do is to prevent insofar as possible the aggravation of conditions in unemployment in any one locality by the influx of additional unemployed from other places and at the same time making available workers for those localities which are ready to put more people to work.

In other words the whole Conference is looking to the future in a constructive way and believes that the time has come to take thought of the morrow instead of pursuing the old policy of making silly prophecies and hoping that the day of reckoning will not arrive too soon.