
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 420

1931 March 6

Life Insurance Underwriters Dinner

FOR RELEASE UPON DELIVERY

SPEECH OF GOVERNOR FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
AT LIFE INSURANCE UNDERWRITERS DINNER
FRIDAY EVENING, MARCH 6th - 1931

As many of you know I was for ~~four~~ years active in the surety branch of the great field of insurance. I am told that suretyship is one of the oldest of all forms of business, for on an ancient tile found in the ruins of Babylon is a record of the pledging of property by the ^{Grand-Vizier} of a Babylonian King, against the due performance of a royal ^{contract} ~~work~~ by one of the King's ~~warriors~~ ^{hinkmen}.

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Insurance as a whole is indeed historic, - reaching back through hundreds of centuries to meet a very natural human need for protection against all kinds of unforeseen or unknown contingencies.

Life insurance is perhaps one of the younger sisters and yet life insurance today throughout the world has in its volume of business and in the protection which it affords, become the leader ~~of~~ the whole field.

What impresses me most is that insurance as a whole is a constantly changing and a constantly growing force in our individual 2 lives and in our business lives. As ~~the~~ world becomes more and *civilized and* more stabilized we are able to give protection against more and more forms of potential dangers or losses. That is why I have at all times been so ready to go along with new forms of insurance to meet new needs. In other words, I have been a consistent opponent of the school which takes the position that because a new form of risk has never been written before it should not be undertaken in the future.

In the various demands which are made by ~~people~~ worthy citizens for the protection of business and individuals against new risks, one essential basis for all insurance is often forgotten. I refer to the fundamental principle that insurance must, if it is to survive, be based on human experience. San D.
Dany If that fundamental is always kept in mind the stability and the permanence of insurance *assured* will ~~last~~ and its operations will grow.

I take it that from the very first days of life insurance for instance the expectation of human life was based on some sort of actuarial tables, no matter how crude these tables may have been in the beginning. As time went on the information concerning human longevity became more accurate and as modern science improved the tables became ~~less and less subject to violent fluctuations.~~ *a true record of the facts*

By the same token, underwriting, as you gentlemen call it, has progressed with modern science, recognizing for instance as each year goes by that the expectancy of life in this country has appreciably increased. With this recognition has come a lowering of the cost to the individual who seeks to be insured.

It is this reduction of the problem of risk to a business basis which has given the public as a whole ^{the} confidence which they now have in properly managed insurance. And this confidence has been further strengthened by the thought that mere private gain is no longer the goal of those who conduct the business.

In line with the thought that the conduct of the insurance business is keeping up with changing conditions, I want to stress one further point. During ~~these~~ ^{our} our life ~~times~~ ^{time} we have seen many new forms of insurance, - many improvements, many new coverages, and many new methods for the distribution of participating profits and the payment of losses. In our own life time we have seen for instance the rise of workmen's compensation to an accepted place in the insurance world. 4

Today we are giving serious thought to still another form of insurable risk, - that of providing some form of reserves for individual men and women to be used by them for their maintenance and support in times of involuntary unemployment. Here again as was the case a quarter of a century ago when workmen's compensation was being considered there is much unthinking opposition on the principal ground that the proposal is something new. It is not a sound argument to make ~~insurance a new thing~~ that a new thing may prove unsound, ~~just because it is new~~.

I take it that in studying what is somewhat

loosely referred to as unemployment insurance, the insurance world itself will maintain not only ^{an} ~~an~~ open mind but will also apply the ^{same} ~~same~~ fundamental principles of experience and potential risk which they have applied to the existing forms ^{of insurance} ~~of insurance~~. It is of the utmost importance that unemployment insurance like the other forms be based on sound actuarial tables. This is the fundamental which will prevent a mere dole or gift on the part of either private agencies or governments themselves.

The other factors entering into unemployment insurance are ^{more} ~~more~~ methods of administration than matters of fundamentals. Whether we shall have group insurance or general insurance, - whether the employer or the employee shall both contribute or only one, what part the State will play in the picture, - - all of these can, I am very certain, be worked out in the days to come.

I use this example of unemployment insurance for two reasons: First, because I am ~~very~~ certain in my own mind that what is now only an experiment affecting about one hundred thousand workers in this country ~~is going to~~ ^{will} become the universal practice throughout the country during the coming generation; and secondly, because, I am sure, that the splendid body of men and women who are engaged in ~~the business~~ ^{this great} ~~business and administration~~ of insurance will take on this new ~~and~~ necessity just as they have taken on other necessities in the past. In so doing, you ~~are~~ will, I am sure, apply the sound principles of experience and good business which have made life insurance so successful and so necessary to all of us.

who are so
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Education - Training
Banks - Insurance
 Better way gear

At Dinner of Life Insurance Underwriters, Hotel Astor,
New York City, March 6, 1931

Unemployment Insurance—A New Form of Insurance

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In the various demands which are made by worthy citizens for the protection of business and individuals against new risks, one essential basis for all insurance is often forgotten. I refer to the fundamental principle that insurance must, if it is to survive, be based on human experience. If that fundamental is always kept in mind the stability and the permanence of insurance will be assured and its operations will grow.

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