
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

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MR. CHAIRMAN, Gentlemen of the Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen: During the World War, the Summer of '18, a new Navy destroyer left our shores for the coast of France. About 200 miles off the Irish Channel the commanding officer of this destroyer told one of the young lieutenants who had come into the Navy from civil life to shoot the sun at noon; in other words, to determine the position of the ship. The young man shot the sun, took his figures over to the chart board and after about 10 minutes the commanding officer noticed he was still scratching his head. He went over and said, "Lieutenant, I will take your figures and work out our position," and the lieutenant moved off.

About five minutes later the commanding officer, after doing a little figuring, summoned the lieutenant to come back, and he said, "Young man, take of your hat. This is a solemn moment."

The lieutenant said, "Why, sir?"

The commanding officer said, "My boy, I find from your figures that we are now in the middle of Westminster Abbey."

I take it that we Governors are somewhat concerned with the navigation of a fleet of 48 ships.

At a time when our country, in common with most of the rest of the world, is suffering from a severe dislocation of economic progress, all of the people are naturally and properly asking questions about state and national navigation. It seems strange to them that, with capacities for production developed to the highest degree the world has ever seen, there should come this severe depression,

when many who are anxious to work cannot find food for their families while at the same time there is such a surplus of food supplies and other necessities that those who are growing crops or manufacturing can find no markets.

This situation has suggested to many that some new factor is needed in our economic life and this new factor must come from utilizing our experience and our ingenuity to draft and to organize concerted plans for the better use of our resources and the better planning of our social and economic life in general.

It is not enough to talk about being of good cheer. Frankly, I cannot take the Pollyanna attitude as a solution of our problems. It is not enough to apply old remedies. A new economic and social balance calls for positive leadership and definite experiments which have not hitherto been tried.

Our country was of necessity developed in a highly individualistic way. Hardy and determined men went into a new wilderness to carve out homes, to gain a living for their families and to build a future for their race. But the settling of all the land on the continent, the development of a highly organized system of industry and the growth of a huge population have created new and highly complicated problems. In times of booming industry we can overlook defects of organization and danger signals from industry and agriculture, but in times such as the present these symptoms attain a new importance and show us the urgency of the new problems we have to face.

More and more, those who are the victims of dislocations and defects of our social and economic life are beginning to ask respectfully, but insistently of us who are in positions of public responsibility why government can not and should not act to protect its citizens from disaster. I believe the question demands

an answer and that the ultimate answer is that government, both state and national, must accept the responsibility of doing what it can do—soundly with considered forethought, and along definitely constructive, not passive lines.

These lines fall naturally into a number of main heads, such, for instance, as scientific tariff aimed primarily to create a movement of world commodities from one nation to another; such, for instance, as a better thought-out system of national taxation than we have at the present; such, for instance, as a survey and plan to cut the excessive cost of local government; such, for instance, as the extension of the principle of insurance to cover fields of sickness and of unemployment which are not now reached; such, for instance, as the problem of a dislocation of a proper balance between urban and rural life.

It is this last phase that I am concerned with today and the phrase that best covers all its aspects is "Land Utilization and State Planning."

Land Utilization involves more than a mere determination of what each and every acre of land can best be used for, or what crops it can best grow. That is the first step; but having made that determination, we arrive at once at the larger problem of getting men, women and children—in other words, population—to go along with a program and carry it out.

It is not enough to pass resolutions that land must, or should, be used for some specific purpose; Government itself must take steps with the approval of the governed, to see that plans become realities.

This, it is true, involves such mighty factors as the supply and not the over-supply of agricultural products; it involves making farm life far more attractive both socially and economically than it is today; it

involves the possibilities of creating a new classification of our population.

We know from figures a century ago 75 per cent of the population lived on farms and 25 percent in cities. Today the figures are exactly reversed. A generation ago there was much talk of a back-to-the-farm movement. It is my thought that this slogan is outworn. Hitherto, we have spoken of two types of living and only two—urban and rural. I believe we can look forward to three rather than two types in the future, for there is a definite place for an intermediate type between the urban and the rural, namely, a rural-industrial group.

I can best illustrate the beginnings of the working out of the problem by reviewing briefly what has been begun in the State of New York during the past three years towards planning for a better use of our agricultural, industrial and human resources.

The State of New York has definitely undertaken this as a governmental responsibility. Two-and-a-half years ago the State administration realizing that the maladjustment of the relationship between rural and city life had reached alarming proportions undertook a study of the agricultural situation with the immediate purpose of relieving impossible and unfair economic conditions on the farms of the State, but with the broader ultimate purpose of formulating a well thought out and scientific plan for developing a permanent agriculture.

The immediate situation was met by the enactment of several types of laws that resulted in the relief of farms from an uneven tax burden and made a net saving to agricultural communities of approximately twenty-four million dollars a year.

First, the State adopted additional State aid for rural education especially in the communities which are so sparsely settled that one-room schools predominate. This State aid gave the smaller rural schools the same

advantages already enjoyed by the schools in the large communities.

Second, by a fair equalization of State aid to towns for the maintenance of dirt roads, putting this aid on the basis of mileage rather than on a basis of assessed valuation. Thereby strictly contrary to the old Biblical formula of "To him who hath shall be given."

Third, through the gasoline tax additional aid is given to the counties for the development of a definite system of farm-to-market roads.

Fourth, the State is embarked on a definite program of securing cheaper electricity for the agricultural communities. We propose to harness the St. Lawrence river as a part of this program, and the electricity developed is by the new law intended primarily for the farmer, the household user, and small industrialist or store-keeper rather than for large industrial plants.

This was the program to relieve immediate needs, but it has rapidly developed into something which is far deeper and far more important for the future, in other words, State planning. We have felt that if city planning and even county planning are worth while, how much more important is it that the State as a whole should adopt a permanent program both social and economic and statewide in its objectives. In all of this work, it is worth recording that not only the immediate program but also the long-time planning is being worked out in a wholly non-partisan manner. It has, of course, received the benefits of study by the Legislature and legislative commissions. Much of the program has been worked out by the Governor's Agricultural Advisory Commission. This Commission consists of representatives of the great farm organizations such as The Grange, the Farm and Home Bureau, Master Farmers, the Dairymen's League, the G.F.L., members of the Legislature, representatives of State Colleges and various Departments of the State Govern-

ment. It received the hearty cooperation of the Mayors' Conference, and unselfish businessmen who are willing to give thought to the future of the State and country.

This State program calls for an intensive development of the good land. For the farms that are on a permanent basis, we have definitely embarked on a policy of providing a farm-to-market road that is passable at all times, available electric power, telephone lines, hospital facilities, and a good high school. We believe that as a general State policy, it is better, under present day conditions to provide these services and use the good land intensively rather than attempt to use the sub-marginal land.

A good many people, I find, from different parts of the country, visualize the State of New York as consisting primarily of the City of New York, but it is worth while remembering, I think, that nearly 6,000,000 people in the State live outside of that city, and it is worth while remembering, I think, that New York has always ranked high among the States of the Union in the total value of its agricultural products. In recent years we have ranked somewhere between third and seventh in that value among all the States in the Union, and this in spite of the fact that the State of New York is only twenty-ninth in area.

In spite of this high rank in agriculture, we believe that there is still a large amount of land now being tilled that is better suited for other purposes than for farming.

When we came to the definite acceptance of responsibility for State planning, the first obvious step was to find out what the land area of the State consisted of. I am going somewhat into detail for my colleagues on this for the reason that a great many other States are beginning to embark on the same kind of program, reforestation, drainage, all looking toward the proper use of land, but I hope you will bear in mind that all of this planning for the details dovetails into the larger ultimate picture.

We know, for example, that out of thirty million acres,

three million were in cities, villages, residential and industrial areas; five million were in mountains and forests, of which the State has acquired two million acres for parks; and by the way, of this five million the State itself has about two million acres or the great Adirondack and Catskill preserves; four million were once farmed but now abandoned, leaving a total of eighteen million acres for agriculture, divided into one hundred and sixty thousand farms.

The first definite step was to start a survey of the entire State. This involved a study of all the physical factors both above and below the surface of the soil, and a study of economic and social factors, such as market possibilities, what the area is now being used for, for what it is best adapted, and how people live, and so detailed that it gives separate data for each ten acre square. Already one whole county has been thus surveyed and we expect to cover the entire eighteen million acres involved within the next ten years or less.

Why is this survey being made? We are proceeding on the assumption that good economics require the use of good materials. For example, fifty years ago, the State of New York every year mined thousands of tons of iron ore and turned it into iron and steel. The discovery and development of vast fields of a more economical grade of iron ore in Minnesota and other sections of the country forced the closing of the New York State iron mines. The raw materials didn't meet the economic standard. By the same token it may have been profitable when land was first cleared to farm this land, but today, with the tremendous competition of good land in this country and in other parts of the world it has become uneconomical to use land which does not produce good crops.

Therefore, we propose to find out exactly what every part of the State is capable of producing. From the surveys already made we have come to the belief that

a certain percentage of the farm land in the State now under cultivation ought to be abandoned for agricultural purposes. I shouldn't be surprised if that percentage ranked as high as somewhere between 20 and 25 percent. We are faced with a situation of hundreds of farmers attempting to farm under conditions where it is impossible to maintain an American standard of living. They are slowly breaking their hearts, their health and their pocket-books against a stone wall of impossibilities and yet they produce enough farm products to add to the national surplus; furthermore, their products are of such low quality that they injure the reputation and usefulness of the better class of farm products of the State which are produced, packed, shipped along modern economic lines.

If this is true in the State of New York, it is, I am convinced, equally true of practically every other State east of the Mississippi and of at least some of the States west of the Mississippi.

What then are we to do with this sub-marginal land that exists in every State which ought to be withdrawn from agriculture? Here we have a definite program. First, we are finding out what it can best be used for. At the present time it seems clear that the greater part of it should be put into a different type of crop—one which will take many years to harvest but one which, as the years go by, will, without question, be profitable and at the same time economically necessary—the growing of crops of trees.

This we are starting by a new law providing for the purchase and reforestation of these lands in a manner approved by the State, part of the cost being borne by the county and part by the State. Furthermore, a constitutional amendment will be voted on by the people this autumn providing for appropriations of twenty million dollars over an 11-year period to make possible the purchase and reforestation of over 1,000,000 acres of land,

which is better suited for forestry than for agriculture.

We visualized also the very definite fact that the use of this sub-marginal agricultural land for forestry will, in the long run pay for itself (we will get that \$20,000,000 back many times over) and will from the very start begin to yield dividends in the form of savings from waste. For instance, the farms to be abandoned will eliminate the necessity of maintaining hundreds and even thousands of miles of dirt roads leading to these farms, the maintenance cost of which averages about \$100 a mile a year. The reforestation of these farms eliminates the need for providing thousands of miles of electric light and telephone lines reaching out into uneconomical territory. The reforestation of these farms will eliminate the existence and upkeep of many small scattered one room schools which cost approximately \$1,400 each per year in New York State.

That is why we are confident that over a period of years this State planning will more than pay for itself in a financial saving to the population as a whole.

Modern society moves at such an intense pace that greater recreation periods are needed, and at the same time our efficiency, State and National, in production is such that more time can be used for recreation. That is increasingly evident in this particular year. By reforestation, this land can be turned into a great state resource which will yield dividends at once. The Conservation Commissioner has just issued an order throwing open for hunting and fishing the 25,000 acres recently purchased under this program and all additional reforestation areas when they are purchased.

These reforested areas are largely at the higher elevations at the headwaters of streams. Reforestation will regulate stream flow, aid in preventing floods and provide a more even supply of pure water for villages and cities.

We are asked what will be done for the population now residing on these sub-marginal lands? The answer is two-fold: In the first place, most of the comparatively small number of people on these farms which are to be abandoned will be absorbed into the better farming areas of the State, and, in the second place, we are continuing the idea of the state-wide plan by studying the whole future population trend. That is where there is a definite connection between the city dweller and the population engaged in industry, between the rural dweller and the city dweller, between the farmer and the people engaged in industry.

Experiments have already been made in some states looking to a closer relationship between industry and agriculture. These take two forms,—first, what may best be called the bringing of rural life to industry; second, the bringing of industry to agriculture by the establishment of small industrial plants in areas which are now wholly given over to farming.

In this particular connection the State of Vermont through a splendid commission seems to be taking the lead of all the States I know of in seeking to bring industry to the agricultural regions.

For example, one of the large shoe manufacturing companies was established in a small New York village. Many of the workers live in this village and many others live in the open country within a radius of ten miles or more. Another example is a valley in Vermont where a wood-turning factory for the making of knobs for lids of kettles has already been so successful that the trend of the rural population to the city has been definitely stopped and the population of the valley finds that it can profitably engage in agriculture during the Summer with a definite wage-earning capacity in the local factory turning out kettle knobs during the winter months.

As a Nation, we have only begun to scratch the surface

along these lines and the possibility of diversifying our industrial life by sending a fair proportion of it into the rural districts is one of the definite possibilities of the future. Cheap electric power, good roads and automobiles make such a rural industrial development possible.

In other words, there are without question many industries which can succeed just as well, if not better, by bringing them to rural communities and at the same time these rural communities will be given higher annual income capacity. We are restoring the balance.

It is for these reasons that I have spoken so definitely of a third and new type of American life. The rural industrial group. It is my thought that many of the problems of transportation, of over-crowded cities, of high cost of living, of better health for the race, of a better balance of population as a whole can be solved by the States themselves during the coming generation.

I have said by the States themselves because these experiments should and will be worked out in accordance with conditions which vary greatly in different sections of the country. We should not put all of our eggs into one basket. Some of the State methods of approaching the problem may not be economically sound in the light of future experiences, whereas, others may point the way towards a definite national solution of the problem.

I remember many years ago when James Bryce was Ambassador in Washington, I as a young man had the privilege of attending a dinner, and after dinner the discussion came as to the permanence of the American form of government. Lord Bryce, I remember, said this: "The American form of government will go on and live long after most of the other forms of government have fallen or been changed, and the reason is this: In other nations of the world when a new problem comes up it must be tested in a national laboratory, and a solution of the prob-

lem must be worked out, and when it is worked out that solution must be applied to the nation as a whole. Sometimes it may be the correct solution and other times it may be the wrong solution. But here you, in the United States, have 48 laboratories and when new problems arise you can work out 48 different solutions to meet the problem, and out of these 48 experimental laboratories, some of the solutions may not prove sound or acceptable, but out of all of this experimentation history shows you have found at least some remedies which can be made so successful that they will become national in their application."

So, as Lord Bryce says, the American people have 48 laboratories and with all of that competition and cooperation you stand in no danger of falling before the false solution of problems.

In all of this, the States require, of course, the sympathetic cooperation of the National Government as an information gathering body. The National Government can well act as a clearing house for all of us Governors to work through and I think that is the correct and most useful function of Washington. Instead of trying to run the whole works and to dictate methods and details to all of the States along some hard and fast program which may or may not apply in the different sections of the country, the National Government can help us in the several States to work out solutions which, in the long run, will get us somewhere.

I am very confident that during the next few years State after State will realize, as we have begun to do in New York, that it is a definite responsibility for government itself to reach out for new solutions for new problems. In the long run, State and national planning is an essential to the future prosperity, happiness and the very existence of the American people. By those means I think we shall keep out of Westminster Abbey.

Mr. Howe

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Speech of FWR
at Governors Conference
in Indiana

June 2

1931

Franklin D. Roosevelt

ACRES FIT AND UNFIT

State Planning of Land Use
for Industry and Agriculture

Hyde Park

By FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Governor of New York

An address before the Conference of Governors at French Lick, Indiana, June 2, 1931

M R. CHAIRMAN, Gentlemen of the Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen: During the World War in the Summer of '18, a new Navy destroyer left our shores for the coast of France. About 200 miles off the Irish Channel the commanding officer of this destroyer told one of the young lieutenants who had come into the Navy from civil life to "shoot the sun" at noon; in other words, to determine the position of the ship. The young man "shot the sun," took his figures over the chart board and after about 10 minutes the commanding officer noticed he was still scratching his head. He went over and said, "Lieutenant, I will take your figures and work out our position," and the lieutenant moved off.

About five minutes later the commanding officer, after doing a little figuring, summoned the lieutenant to come back, and said, "Young man, take off your hat. This is a solemn moment."

The lieutenant said, "Why, sir?"

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I take it that we Governors are somewhat concerned with the navigation of a fleet of 48 ships.

At a time when our country, in common with most of the rest of the world, is suffering from a severe dislocation of economic progress, all of the people are naturally and properly asking questions about state and national navigation. It seems

strange to them that, with capacities for production developed to the highest degree the world has ever seen, there should come this severe depression, when many who are anxious to work cannot find food for their families while at the same time there is such a surplus of food supplies and other necessities that those who are growing crops or manufacturing can find no markets.

This situation has suggested to many that some new factor is needed in our economic life and this new factor must come from utilizing our experience and our ingenuity to draft and to organize concerted plans for the better use of our resources and the better planning of our social and economic life in general.

It is not enough to talk about being of good cheer. Frankly, I cannot take the Pollyanna attitude as a solution of our problems. It is not enough to apply old remedies. A new economic and social balance calls for positive leadership and definite experiments which have not hitherto been tried.

Our country was of necessity developed in a highly individualistic way. Hardy and determined men went into a new wilderness to carve out homes, to gain a living for their families and to build a future for their race. But the settling of all the land on the continent, the development of a highly organized system of industry and the growth of a huge population have created new and highly complicated problems. In times of booming industry we can overlook defects of organization and danger signals from industry and agriculture, but in times such as the present these symptoms attain a new importance and show us the urgency of the new problems we have to face.

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who are in positions of public responsibility why government can not and should not act to protect its citizens from disaster. I believe the question demands an answer and that the ultimate answer is that government, both state and national, must accept the responsibility of doing what it can do—soundly with considered forethought, and along definitely constructive, not passive lines.

These lines fall naturally into a number of main heads, such, for instance, as scientific tariff aimed primarily to create a movement of world commodities from one nation to another; such, for instance, as a better thought-out system of national taxation than we have at the present; such, for instance, as a survey and plan to cut the excessive cost of local government; such, for instance, as the extension of the principle of insurance to cover fields of sickness and of unemployment which are not now reached; such, for instance, as the problem of a dislocation of a proper balance between urban and rural life.

It is this last phase that I am concerned with today and the phrase that best covers all its aspects is "Land Utilization and State Planning."

Land Utilization involves more than a mere determination of what each and every acre of land can best be used for, or what crops it can best grow. That is the first step; but having made that determination, we arrive at once at the larger problem of getting men, women and children—in other words, population—to go along with a program and carry it out.

It is not enough to pass resolutions that land must, or should, be used for some specific purpose; Government itself must take steps with the approval of the governed, to see that plans become realities.

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We know from figures a century ago 75 per cent of the population lived on farms and 25 per cent in cities. Today the figures are exactly reversed. A generation ago there was much talk of a back-to-the-farm movement. It is my thought that this slogan is outworn. Hitherto, we have spoken of two types of living and only two—urban and rural. I believe we can look forward to three rather than two types in the future, for there is a definite place for an intermediate type between the urban and the rural, namely, a rural-industrial group.

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A good many people, I find, from different parts of the country, visualize the State of New York as consisting primarily of the City of New York, but it is worth while remembering, I think, that nearly 6,000,000 people in the State live outside of that city, and it is worth while remembering, I think, that New York has always ranked high among the States of the Union in the total value of its agricultural products. In recent years we have ranked somewhere between third and seventh in that value among all the States in the Union, and this in spite of the fact that the State of New York is only twenty-ninth in area.

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We know, for example, that out of thirty million acres, three million were in cities, villages, residential and industrial areas; five million were in mountains and forests, and by the way, of this five million the State itself has about two million acres or the great Adirondack and Catskill preserves; four million were once farmed but are now abandoned, leaving a total of eighteen million acres for agriculture, divided into one hundred and sixty thousand farms.

The first definite step was to start a survey of the entire State. This involved a study of all the physical factors both above and below the surface of the soil, and a study of economic and social factors, such as market possibilities, what the area is now being used for, for what it is best adapted, and how people live, and so detailed that it gives separate data for each ten acre square. Already one whole county has been thus surveyed and we expect to cover the entire eighteen million acres involved within the next ten years or less.

Why is this survey being made? We are proceeding on the assumption that good economics require the use of good materials. For example, fifty years ago, the State of New York every year mined thousands of tons of iron ore and turned it into iron and steel. The discovery and development of vast fields of a more

economical grade of iron ore in Minnesota and other sections of the country forced the closing of the New York State iron mines. The raw materials didn't meet the economic standard. By the same token it may have been profitable when land was first cleared to farm this land, but today, with the tremendous competition of good land in this country and in other parts of the world it has become uneconomical to use land which does not produce good crops.

Therefore, we propose to find out exactly what every part of the State is capable of producing. From the surveys already made we have come to the belief that a certain percentage of the farm land in the State now under cultivation ought to be abandoned for agricultural purposes. I shouldn't be surprised if that percentage ran as high as somewhere between 20 and 25 percent. We are faced with a situation of hundreds of farmers attempting to farm under conditions where it is impossible to maintain an American standard of living. They are slowly breaking their hearts, their health and their pocketbooks against a stone wall of impossibilities and yet they produce enough farm products to add to the national surplus; furthermore, their products are of such low quality that they injure the reputation and usefulness of the better class of farm products of the State which are produced, packed, shipped along modern economic lines.

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greater part of it should be put into a different type of crop—one which will take many years to harvest but one which, as the years go by, will, without question, be profitable and at the same time economically necessary—the growing of crops of trees.

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greater recreation periods are needed, and at the same time our efficiency, State and National, in production is such that more time can be used for recreation. That is increasingly evident in this particular year. By reforestation, this land can be turned into a great state resource which will yield dividends at once. The Conservation Commissioner has just issued an order throwing open for hunting and fishing the 25,000 acres recently purchased under this program and all additional reforestation areas when they are purchased.

These reforested areas are largely at the higher elevations at the headwaters of streams. Reforestation will regulate stream flow, aid in preventing floods and provide a more even supply of pure water for villages and cities.

We are asked what will be done for the population now residing on these sub-marginal lands? The answer is two-fold: In the first place, most of the comparatively small number of people on these farms which are to be abandoned will be absorbed into the better farming areas of the State, and, in the second place, we are continuing the idea of the state-wide plan by studying the whole future population trend. That is where there is a definite connection between the city dweller and the population engaged in industry, between the rural dweller and the city dweller, between the farmer and the people engaged in industry.

Experiments have already been made in some states looking to a closer relationship between industry and agriculture. These take two forms,—first, what may best be called the bringing of rural life to industry; second, the bringing of industry to agriculture by the establishment of small industrial plants in areas which are now wholly given over to farming.

In this particular connection the State of Vermont through a splendid commission seems to be taking the lead in seeking to bring industry to the agricultural regions.

For example, one of the large shoe manufacturing companies was established in a small New York village. Many of the workers live in this village and many others live in the open country within a radius of ten miles or more. Another example is a valley in Vermont where a wood-turning factory for the making of knobs for lids of kettles has already been so successful that the trend of the rural population to the city has been definitely stopped and the population of the valley finds that it can profitably engage in agriculture during the Summer with a definite wage-earning capacity in the local factory turning out kettle knobs during the winter months.

As a Nation, we have only begun to scratch the surface along these lines and the possibility of diversifying our industrial life by sending a fair proportion of it into the rural districts is one of the definite possibilities of the future. Cheap electric power, good roads and automobiles make such a rural industrial development possible.

In other words, there are without question many industries which can succeed just as well, if not better, by bringing them to rural communities and at the same time these rural communities will be given higher annual income capacity. We are restoring the balance.

It is for these reasons that I have spoken so definitely of a third and new type of American life. The rural industrial group. It is my thought that many of the problems of transportation, of over-crowded cities, of high cost of living, of better health for the race, of a better balance of population as a whole can

be solved by the States themselves during the coming generation.

I have said "by the States themselves" because these experiments should and will be worked out in accordance with conditions which vary greatly in different sections of the country. We should not put all of our eggs into one basket. Some of the State methods of approaching the problem may not be economically sound in the light of future experiences, whereas, others may point the way towards a definite national solution of the problem.

I remember many years ago when James Bryce was Ambassador in Washington, I as a young man had the privilege of attending a dinner, and after dinner the discussion came to the permanence of the American form of government. Lord Bryce, I remember, said this: "The American form of government will go on and live long after most of the other forms of government have fallen or been changed, and the reason is this: In other nations of the world when a new problem comes up it must be tested in a national laboratory, and a solution of the problem must be worked out, and when it is worked out that solution must be applied to the nation as a whole. Sometimes it may be the correct solution and other times it may be the wrong solution. But you, in the United States, have 48 laboratories and when new problems arise you can work out 48 different solutions to meet the problem. Out of these 48 experimental laboratories, some of the solutions may not prove sound or acceptable, but out of this experimentation history shows you have found at least some remedies which can be made so successful that they will become national in their application."

So, as Lord Bryce says, the American people have 48 laboratories and with all of that competition and

cooperation you stand in no danger of falling before the false solution of problems.

In all of this, the States require, of course, the sympathetic cooperation of the National Government as an information gathering body. The National Government can well act as a clearing house for all of us Governors to work through and I think that is the correct and most useful function of Washington. Instead of trying to run the whole works and to dictate methods and details to all of the States along some hard and fast program which may or may not apply in the different sections of the country, the National Government can help us in the several States to work out solutions which, in the long run, will get us somewhere.

I am very confident that during the next few years State after State will realize, as we have begun to do in New York, that it is a definite responsibility for government itself to reach out for new solutions for new problems. In the long run, State and national planning is an essential to the future prosperity, happiness and the very existence of the American people. By those means I think we shall keep out of Westminster Abbey.



THE LAND SURVEY

OF THE

STATE OF NEW YORK

*As outlined by Governor
Franklin D. Roosevelt in his
message to the Legislature.
Albany, January 26, 1931*

To the Legislature:

In my Annual Message of January 7, 1931, to your Honorable Bodies, I pointed out that we in this state have in our program of remedial legislation for our farmers and rural dwellers progressed to the point where we should formulate a definite far-reaching land policy for the state. In a literal sense, the adoption of such a land policy affects not merely the rural populations of the state, but in an equal degree the entire population of the state. It involves the food supply of all our citizens, their water supply, timber supply, and indeed practically all of their market commodities.

What do we mean by this land policy. Fundamentally we mean that every acre of rural land in the state should be used only for that purpose for which it is best fitted and out of which the greatest economic return can be derived. New York has about thirty million acres of land, of which twenty-seven million acres are rural and non-industrial. Of these about five million acres are in mountains, forests, swamps, and other lands that have never been cultivated. That leaves about twenty-two million acres which were once in farms. Of this acreage four million have been

abandoned or are no longer used for farm purposes. As a result, about eighteen million acres are now devoted to farming.

I propose that the state proceed to find out as soon as possible what these eighteen million acres are best suited for. It seems almost unnecessary to say that land which is suitable for the raising of crops on a profitable basis should not be left idle or devoted to forest purposes; and that, conversely, land which can be used only for tree planting should not be cultivated year after year in a futile effort to raise profitable crops thereon. And yet, it is unquestionably true, that thousands of farmers are year after year spending labor and money in various parts of the state trying to get agricultural products out of land which will never be able to yield a profit in crops, but which should be devoted only to reforestation or recreational purposes.

Our present knowledge of soil conditions enables us to state accurately for what purpose any definite parcel of land is best suited. I believe that the State of New York should be in a position to place at the disposal of its citizens first-hand accurate information as to the actual adaptability of our rural lands for farming in its various phases. To that end, I recommend that the state proceed to make a survey of the rural lands of the state. This survey will probably require about ten years. We should, however, at the earliest possible moment adopt a program of making the survey and start it on its way. As a matter of fact, the first step has been taken. Last year the Legislature on my recommendation appropriated twenty thousand dollars, with a part of which the College of Agriculture at Cornell has made a survey of one whole county—Tompkins County. The survey has been made on the basis of ten acre squares; and

very simple and clear maps have been prepared which can be examined by your Honorable Bodies showing the following data with relation to the plots of land in Tompkins County:

- A. The type of soil.
- B. The climate.
- C. The present use of the land.
- D. An analysis of the people who live on the land in relation to the following particulars:
 1. Is the resident a new settler or has his family been on the land a long time?
 2. Are the young people staying on the land or leaving it?
 3. Does the resident make his livelihood out of it or does he occupy it only as a residence?
 4. Does the farm support the farmer in accordance with the American standard of living?
- E. The contribution which each farm makes to the food supply of the nation.

This survey has proved again what is a matter of common knowledge among agricultural experts, to wit—that a large percentage of the land now in cultivation as farms has no right to remain as farm land. Several generations of farm experience prove that a satisfactory living cannot be made from this land by farming. In some of the townships in Tompkins County, as high as twenty-two per cent of the farm land has been proven to be unadaptable to farm purposes.

With time and money, such a survey could be extended to the entire state. It would include, in addition to the data mentioned above, a study of the location of roads, school facilities, resorts, industrial plants, potential water power resources and power,

transmission and telephone lines. On the basis of such information approximate boundaries can be laid down of areas in which there appears to be possibility of coordination of economic endeavors. With such maps, agricultural and economic experts can proceed to classify the lands of the state and advise accurately the use for each classification. While, of course, it is not suggested that this classification be in any sense compulsory, continued economic effort will gradually result in using each acre of land for that purpose which will be the most profitable.

The two chief uses of rural land are agricultural and forestry. Land adaptable for one should not be used for the other; and land which cannot be used profitably for either should be declared waste land or wilderness areas in which settlements should be discouraged. Even such land has its usefulness, however, for the natural brush and grass cover which will develop over them will be of some assistance in aiding flood control.

The program can go even further and should be even more far-sighted. It can be used as the basis for planning future state and local developments which depend for their complete efficacy upon accurate knowledge of the proper settling of population. For example, when we proceed to construct or improve roads through the rural areas of the state, whether they be dirt roads or improved roads, we should know whether or not the land through which the roads pass will ultimately support the farm population, or whether the farms will have to be abandoned as unsuitable for agriculture. If we could accurately foresee which areas of lands would ultimately be devoted exclusively to reforestation, we would not of course proceed to construct roads through that area with any idea of using such roads as farm to market roads. In

the same way, our policy of establishing additional school facilities could be accurately guided toward the end that they be located in spots where they can best serve surrounding population. This conclusion is equally true in connection with electric power and telephone lines. It would, of course, be economically unsound to construct expensive lines into areas where we know that ultimately electricity and telephones will not be introduced on the farms. Such a survey and land policy will therefore help us to attain the highest maximum efficiency in planning farm to market roads, rural electrification and telephones, and scientific allocation of school facilities.

Also closely tied up with this survey is the whole question of local land assessment. It is generally conceded that the existing unscientific poor assessment of rural lands is at the root of most local tax difficulties. A great deal of this can be eliminated, of course, by improving the machinery of taxation. This is another subject to which I have invited the attention of your Honorable Bodies on a great many occasions, to wit—a reorganization and modernization of local government. But entirely apart from the disadvantages of an antiquated machinery, local land assessment has rarely, if ever, been scientifically coordinated with the adaptability of the land to various uses, or with the actual or potential income producing qualities of the land. An accurate scientific survey of each plot of land would necessarily be of inestimable value to a more accurate relative assessment of various parcels of land, called farms.

Hand in hand with this survey there must go a reforestation program on a scale that has never before been attempted by any state. The thousands of abandoned farm areas can be put to their proper use—the growing of trees and the furnishing of recrea-

tional opportunities. Fortunately, the state has already definitely embarked upon such a program.

I trust that the reforestation amendment will be again passed by your Honorable Bodies this winter and approved by the people next fall. I hope also that along these lines your Honorable Bodies will pass the various recommendations which I have made in my budget, to wit—\$580,000, for the acquisition, maintenance and planting of reforestation areas; ninety-seven thousand dollars for the operation of nurseries and tree planting; one hundred and fifty thousand dollars for the operation of nurseries and tree planting, eight thousand dollars of which has already been made available by Chapter 4 of the Laws of 1931; twenty thousand dollars for the acquisition, maintenance and planting of reforestation areas; twenty-five thousand dollars for the establishment and operation of additional tree nurseries; and twenty-five thousand dollars for the purchase of land for a forest tree nursery.

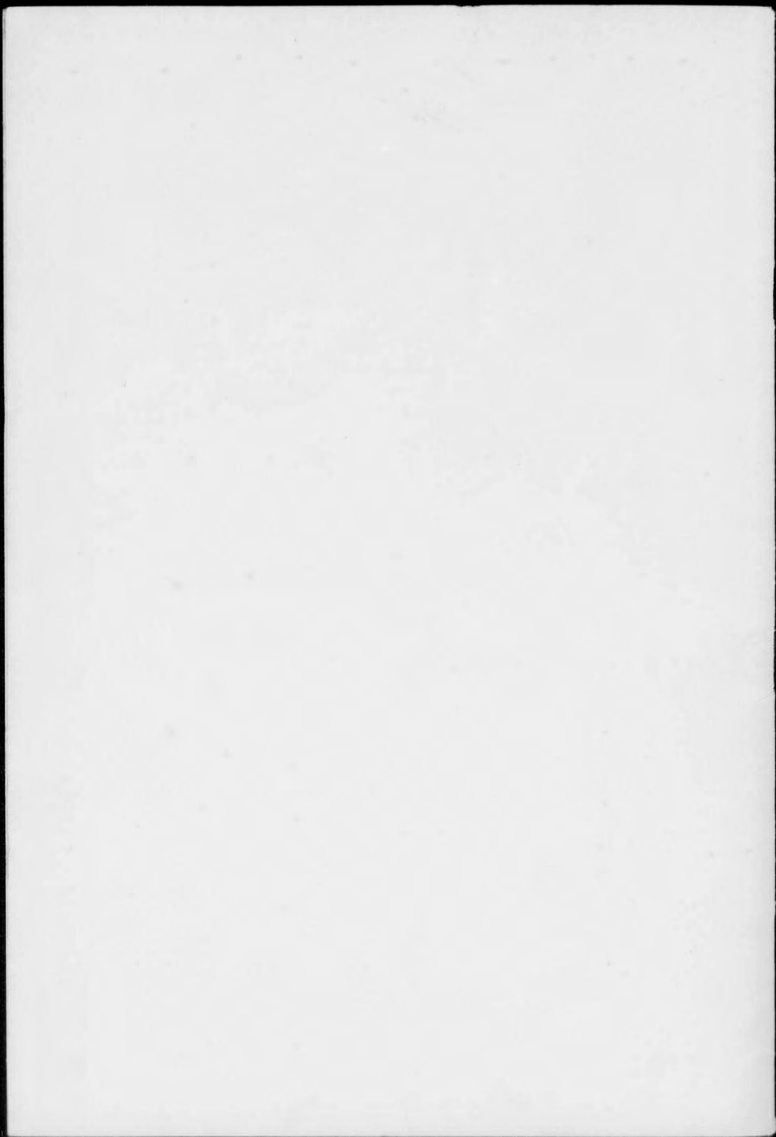
The adoption of a scientific land policy such as I have outlined, as already begun in Tompkins County, should be extended to all the other counties in the state. The continued maintenance of farms on land which are not adapted to farming will be a drag on the social development of rural life. Such farms cannot support an American standard of living; as Americans we cannot encourage a lower standard of living to continue on them. The social significance of readjusting our rural population gradually but ultimately to the end that only the good farm land be used for farming and the poor land be used for reforesting or other purposes should immediately arouse our attention. It will save the state untold wealth by a more advantageous distribution of highway and school moneys; and in connection with the future develop-

ment of water power, it will provide a more scientific basis for distribution of electrical energy for any private corporation or municipal agency which ultimately may be engaged in such activity.

I have recommended to your Honorable Bodies an appropriation of ninety-six thousand dollars for land survey and classification by the College of Agriculture at Ithaca and the School of Forestry at Syracuse as a beginning of this state land survey to form the basis of a state land utilization policy. I trust that this recommendation by me will be adopted; and that this state will immediately embark upon this far-sighted program which I know will be of such social and economic moment to both its urban and rural population.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT.





Before Conference of Governors, French Lick, Indiana, June 2,
1931

Acres Fit and Unfit

Mr. Chairman, Gentlemen of the Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen: During the World War in the Summer of '18, a new Navy destroyer left our shores for the coast of France. About 200 miles off the Irish Channel the commanding officer of this destroyer told one of the young lieutenants who had come into the Navy from civil life to "shoot the sun" at noon; in other words, to determine the position of the ship. The young man "shot the sun," took his figures over the chart board and after about 10 minutes the commanding officer noticed he was still scratching his head. He went over and said, "Lieutenant, I will take your figures and work out our position," and the lieutenant moved off.

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About five minutes later the commanding officer, after doing a little figuring, summoned the lieutenant to come back, and said, "Young man, take off your hat. This is a solemn moment."

The lieutenant said, "Why, sir?"

The commanding officer said, "My boy, I find from your figures that we are now in the middle of Westminster Abbey."

I take it that we Governors are somewhat concerned with the navigation of a fleet of 48 ships.

At a time when our country, in common with most of the rest of the world, is suffering from a severe dislocation of economic progress, all of the people are naturally and properly asking questions about state and national navigation. It seems strange to them that, with capacities for production developed to the highest degree the world has ever seen, there should come this severe depression, when many who are anxious to work cannot find food for their families while at the same time there is such a surplus of food supplies and other necessities that those who are growing crops or manufacturing can find no markets.

This situation has suggested to many that some new factor is needed in our economic life and this new factor must come from utilizing our experience and our ingenuity to draft and to organize concerted plans for the better use of our resources and the better planning of our social and economic life in general.

It is not enough to talk about being of good cheer. Frankly, I cannot take the Pollyanna attitude as a solution of our problems. It is not enough to apply old remedies. A new economic and social balance calls for positive leadership and definite experiments which have not hitherto been tried.

Our country was of necessity developed in a highly individualistic way. Hardy and determined men went into a new wilderness to carve out homes, to gain a living for their families and to build a future for their race. But the settling of all the land on the continent, the development of a highly organized system of industry and the growth of a huge population have created new and highly complicated problems. In times of booming industry and agriculture, but in times such as the present these symptoms attain a new importance and show us the urgency of the new problems we have to face.

More and more, those who are the victims of dislocations and defects of our social and economic life are beginning to ask respectfully, but insistently of us who are in positions of public responsibility why government can not and should not act to protect its citizens from disaster. I believe the question demands an answer and that the ultimate answer is that government, both state and national, must accept the responsibility of doing what is can do—soundly with considered forethought, and along definitely constructive, not passive lines.

These lines fall naturally into a number of main heads, such, for instance, as a scientific tariff aimed primarily to create a movement of world commodities from one nation to another; such, for instance, as a better thought-out system of national taxation than we have at the present; such, for instance, as a survey and plan to cut the excessive cost of local government; such, for instance, as the extension of the principle of insurance to cover fields of sickness and of unemployment which are not now reached; such, for instance, as the problem of a dislocation of a proper balance between urban and rural life.

It is this last phase that I am concerned with today and the phrase that best covers all its aspects is "Land Utilization and State Planning."

Land Utilization involves more than a mere determination of what each and every acre of land can best be used for, or what crops it can best grow. That is the first step; but having made that determination, we arrive at once at the larger problem of getting men, women and children—in other words, population—to go along with a program and carry it out.

It is not enough to pass resolutions that land must, or should, be used for some specific purpose; Government itself must take steps with the approval of the governed, to see that plans become realities.

This, it is true, involves such mighty factors as the supply and not the over-supply of agricultural products; it involves making farm life far more attractive both socially and economically than it is today; it involves the possibilities of creating a new classification of our population.

We know from figures a century ago 75 per cent of the population lived on farms and 25 per cent in cities. Today the figures are exactly reversed. A generation ago there was much talk of a back-to-the-farm movement. It is my thought that this slogan is outworn. Hitherto, we have spoken of two types of living and only two—urban and rural. I believe we can look forward to three rather than two types in the future, for there is a definite place for an intermediate type between the urban and the rural, namely, a rural-industrial group.

I can best illustrate the beginnings of the working out of the problem by reviewing briefly what has been begun in the State of New York during the past three years towards planning for a better use of our agricultural, industrial and human resources.

The State of New York has definitely undertaken this as a governmental responsibility. Two-and-a-half years ago the State Administration realizing that the maladjustment of the relationship between rural and city life had reached alarming proportions undertook a study of the agricultural situation with the immediate purpose of relieving impossible and unfair economic conditions on the farms of the State, but with the broader ultimate purpose of formulating a well thought out and scientific plan for developing a permanent agriculture.

The immediate situation was met by the enactment of several types of laws that resulted in the relief of farms from an uneven tax burden and made a net saving to agricultural communities of approximately twenty-four million dollars a year.

First, the State adopted additional State aid for rural education especially in the communities which are so sparsely settled that one-room schools predominate. This State aid gave the smaller rural schools the same advantages already enjoyed by the schools in the large communities.

Second, by a fair equalization of State aid to towns for the maintenance of dirt roads, putting this aid on the basis of mileage rather than on a basis of assessed valuation. Thereby running strictly contrary to the old Biblical formula of "To him who hath shall be given."

Third, through the gasoline tax additional aid is given to the counties for the development of a definite system of farm-to-market roads.

Fourth, the State is embarked on a definite program of securing cheaper electricity for the agricultural communities. We propose to harness the St. Lawrence river as a part of this program, and the electricity developed is by the new law intended primarily for the farmer, the household user, and small industrialist or store-keeper rather than for large industrial plants.

This was the program to relieve immediate needs, but it has rapidly developed into something which is far deeper and far more important for the future, in other words, State planning. We have felt that if city planning and even county planning are worth while, how much more important is it that the State as a whole should adopt a permanent program both social and economic and statewide in its objectives. In all of this work, it is worth recording that not only the immediate program but also the long-time planning is being worked out in a wholly non-partisan manner. It has, of course, received the benefits of study by the Legislature and legislative commissions. Much of the program has been worked out by the Governor's Agricultural Advisory Commission. This Commission consists of representatives of the great farm organizations such as The Grange, the Farm and Home Bureau, Master Farmers, the Dairymen's League, the G.F.L., members of the Legislature, representatives of State colleges and various Departments of the State Government. It received the hearty cooperation of the Mayors' Conference, and unselfish businessmen who are willing to give thought to the future of the State and country.

This State program calls for an intensive development of the good land. For the farms that are on a permanent basis, we have definitely embarked on a policy of providing a farm-to-market road that is passable at all times,

available electric power, telephone lines, hospital facilities, and a good high school. We believe that as a general State policy, it is better, under present day conditions to provide these services and use the good land intensively rather than attempt to use the sub-marginal land.

A good many people, I find, from different parts of the country, visualize the State of New York as consisting primarily of the City of New York, but it is worth while remembering, I think, that nearly 6,000,000 people in the State live outside of that city, and it is worth while remembering, I think, that New York has always ranked high among the states of the Union in the total value of its agricultural products. In recent years we have ranked somewhere between third and seventh in that value among all the states in the Union, and this in spite of the fact that the State of New York is only twenty-ninth in area.

In spite of this high rank in agriculture, we believe that there is still a large amount of land now being tilled that is better suited for other purposes than for farming.

When we came to the definite acceptance of responsibility for State planning, the first obvious step was to find out what the land area of the State consisted of. I am going somewhat into detail for my colleagues on this for the reason that a great many other States are beginning to embark on the same kind of program, reforestation, drainage, all looking toward the proper use of land, but I hope you will bear in mind that all of this planning for the details dovetails into the larger ultimate picture.

We know, for example, that out of thirty million acres, three million were in cities, villages, residential and industrial areas; five million were in mountains and forests, and by the way, of this five million the State itself has about two million acres or the great Adirondack and Catskill preserves; four million were once farmed but are now abandoned, leaving a total of eighteen million acres for agriculture, divided into one hundred and sixty thousand farms.

The first definite step was to start a survey of the entire State. This involved a study of all the physical factors both above and below the surface of the soil, and a study of economic and social factors, such as market possibilities, what the area is now being used for, for what it is best adapted, and how people live, and so detailed that it gives separate data for each ten acre square. Already one whole county has been thus surveyed and we expect to cover the entire eighteen million acres involved within the next ten years or less.

Why is this survey being made? We are proceeding on the assumption that good economics require the use of good materials. For example, fifty years ago, the State of New York every year mined thousands of tons of iron ore and turned it into iron and steel. The discovery and development of vast fields of a more economical grade of iron ore in Minnesota and other sections of the country forced the closing of the New York State iron mines. The raw materials didn't meet the economic standard. By the same token it may have been profitable when land was first cleared to farm this land, but today, with the tremendous competition of good land in this country and in other parts of the world it has become uneconomical to use land which does not produce good crops.

Therefore, we propose to find out exactly what every part of the State is capable of producing. From the surveys already made we have come to the belief that a certain percentage of the farm land in the State now under cultivation ought to be abandoned for agricultural purposes. I shouldn't be surprised if that percentage ran as high as somewhere between 20 and 25 per cent. We are faced with a situation of hundreds of farmers attempting to farm under conditions where it is impossible to maintain an American standard of living. They are slowly breaking their hearts, their health and their pocket-books against a stone wall of impossibilities and yet they produce enough farm products to add to the national surplus; furthermore, their products are of such low quality that they injure the reputation and usefulness of the better class of farm products of the State which are produced, packed, shipped along modern economic lines.

If this is true in the State of New York, it is, I am convinced, equally true of practically every other State east of the Mississippi and of at least some of the States west of the Mississippi.

What then are we to do with this sub-marginal land that exists in every State which ought to be withdrawn from agriculture? Here we have a definite program. First, we are finding out what it can best be used for. At the present time it seems clear that the greater part of it should be put into a different type of crop—one which will take many years to harvest but one which, as the years go by, will, without question, be profitable and at the same time economically necessary—the growing of crops of trees.

This we are starting by a new law providing for the purchase and reforestation of these lands in a manner approved by the State, part of the cost being borne by the county and part by the State. Furthermore, a constitutional amendment will be voted on by the people this autumn providing for appropriations of twenty million dollars over an 11-year period to make possible the purchase and reforestation of over 1,000,000 acres of land, which is better suited for forestry than for agriculture.

We visualized also the very definite fact that the use of this sub-marginal agricultural land for forestry will, in the long run pay for itself (we will get that \$20,000,000 back many times over) and will from the very start begin to yield dividends in the form of savings from waste. For instance, the farms to be abandoned will eliminate the necessity of maintaining hundreds and even thousands of miles of dirt roads leading to these farms, the maintenance cost of which averages about \$100 a mile a year. The reforestation of these farms eliminates the need for providing thousands of miles of electric light and telephone lines reaching out into uneconomical territory. The reforestation of these farms will eliminate the existence and upkeep of many small scattered one room schools which cost approximately \$1,400 each per year to the State Government.

That is why we are confident that over a period of years this State planning will more than pay for itself in a financial saving to the population as a whole.

Modern society moves at such an intense pace that greater recreation periods are needed, and at the same time our efficiency, State and National, in production is such that more time can be used for recreation. That is increasingly evident in this particular year. By reforestation, this land can be turned into a great state resource which will yield dividends at once. The Conservation Commissioner has just issued an order throwing open for hunting and fishing the 25,000 acres recently purchased under this program and all additional reforestation areas when they are purchased.

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We are asked what will be done for the population now residing on these sub-marginal lands? The answer is two-fold: In the first place, most of the comparatively small number of people on these farms which are to be abandoned will be absorbed into the better farming areas of the State, and, in the second place, we are continuing the idea of the state-wide plan by studying the whole future population trend. That is where there is a definite connection between the city dweller and the population engaged in industry, between the rural dweller and the city dweller, between the farmer and the people engaged in industry.

Experiments have already been made in some states looking to a closer relationship between industry and agriculture. These take two forms,—first, what may best be called the bringing of rural life to industry; second, the bringing of industry to agriculture by the establishment of small industrial plants in areas which are now wholly given over to farming.

In this particular connection the State of Vermont through a splendid commission seems to be taking the lead in seeking to bring industry to the agricultural regions.

For example, one of the large shoe manufacturing companies was established in a small New York village. Many of the workers live in this village and many others live in the open country within a radius of ten miles or more. Another example is a valley in Vermont where a wood-turning factory for the making of knobs for lids of kettles has already been so successful that the trend of the rural population to the city has been definitely stopped

and the population of the valley finds that it can profitably engage in agriculture during the Summer with a definite wage-earning capacity in the local factory turning out kettle knobs during the winter months.

As a Nation, we have only begun to scratch the surface along these lines and the possibility of diversifying our industrial life by sending a fair proportion of it into the rural districts is one of the definite possibilities of the future. Cheap electric power, good roads and automobiles make such a rural industrial development possible.

In other words, there are without question many industries which can succeed just as well, if not better, by bringing them to rural communities and at the same time these rural communities will be given higher annual income capacity. We are restoring the balance.

It is for these reasons that I have spoken so definitely of a third and new type of American life. The rural industrial group. It is my thought that many of the problems of transportation, of over-crowded cities, of high cost of living, of better health for the race, of a better balance of population as a whole can be solved by the States themselves during the coming generation.

I have said "by the States themselves" because these experiments should and will be worked out in accordance with conditions which vary greatly in different sections of the country. We should not put all of our eggs into one basket. Some of the State methods of approaching the problem may not be economically sound in the light of future experiences, whereas, others may point the way towards a definite national solution of the problem.

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So, as Lord Bryce says, the American people have 48 laboratories and with all of that competition and cooperation you stand in no danger of falling before the false solution of problems.

In all of this, the States require, of course, the sympathetic cooperation of the National Government as an information gathering body. The National Government can well act as a clearing house for all of us Governors to work through and I think that is the correct and most useful function of Washington. Instead of trying to run the whole works and to dictate methods and details to all of the States along some hard and fast program which may or may not apply in the different sections of the country, the National Government can help us in the several States to work out solutions which, in the long run, will get us somewhere.

I am very confident that during the next few years State after State will realize, as we have begun to do in New York, that it is a definite responsibility for government itself to reach out for new solutions for new problems. In the long run, State and National planning is an essential to the future prosperity, happiness and the very existence of the American people. By those means I think we shall keep out of Westminster Abbey.