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**Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”**  
**The Master Speech Files, 1898, 1910-1945**

**Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension**

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**File No. 477**

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**Tuckahoe, NY - Subsistence Farm Program**

Immediately upon my return from Warm Springs I was presented with a plan worked out, after careful consideration of existing conditions, by the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration of the State. After conferring with Harry L. Hopkins, Charles D. Osborne and John Sullivan of the administration, I can announce that this new and important relief measure is immediately going into effect. The plan, to be financed by State and local relief funds, seems to me to be a profoundly significant one because it is a bold step forward towards alleviating the critical situation of some of those who have suffered so devastatingly in this depression. It is a plan that can give to some a foothold and confidence again in a civilization which has hurled them as a machine does parts on a belt.

The essential feature of this new measure is to transfer a substantial number of dependent families from cities and towns to "subsistence farms" in outlying districts, especially those families who have had farm experience. By "subsistence farms" are meant small farms where families may grow their own food, and become at least partially self-supporting. Many unemployed families, now being supported by home relief funds, may find on these farms genuine and lasting relief. They may secure through the good earth the permanent jobs they have lost in overcrowded, industrial cities and towns.

For months to come each district in the State will in all probability have a heavy burden of dependent families requiring home relief. Thousands of these families have once had farm experience, as a survey of the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration indicates. Both from the point of view of the unemployed families and the taxpayer, the plan of "subsistence farms" is a constructive measure. It reduces the huge cost of relief while it places dependent families in a position at least to partially support themselves in healthy surroundings, of which many of them are now deprived.

Today by letter the administration is authorizing every Public Welfare Commissioner in the State to place such families as they are able on "subsistence farms." The administration is authorizing them to pay the rent of small farms and to provide tools, seed for planting, and household necessities as the law provides. The agricultural advisers of the administration will be offered to any district that wishes them. On their own initiative public welfare commissioners in rural sections have already placed 244 families on farms. That is a beginning.

This farm plan has possibilities which can be realized only through the wholehearted support of the more fortunate. Land is lying idle in various parts of the State. This land can be used for subsistence farms. I urge all owners of such land, whether individuals, savings banks, or insurance companies, to offer this property to their nearest commissioner of public welfare or to the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration. There are also owners of farm land who can employ a man or a family and help them to become self-supporting again. I urge these owners to employ at least one man. My appeal is to all citizens to co-operate with the Temporary Emergency Relief Administration, in this constructive movement. The name of New York has become associated with skyscrapers, machines and great industrial conquests. We, in our mechanical age, have almost forgotten that New York State once ranked first in its agricultural produce. A living from the land is still in the heritage of the New Yorker.

The process of readjustment, of restoring unemployed families to independence, is a slow one, but I believe that the land from whence we so shortly came offers partial sustenance if not a permanent job, for many. We must see that it does.