
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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1932 August 27

Seagirt, NJ - Campaign Speech

ADDRESS OF GOVERNOR FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
AT SEAGIRT, NEW JERSEY,
SATURDAY, AUGUST 27, 1932

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I am particularly happy to be the guest today of my old friend the Governor of New Jersey. This friendship is not only a personal one between Governor Moore and myself; it is also an official friendship because of the historic relations between New Jersey and New York, running back into the Colonial period when for a time the two colonies had only one royal governor *for both provinces.*

The relations between the two states have been of an intimate character marked by cordial relations between them and their executives. So it is now, and I hope - - and have every reason for the hope - - will continue to be.

In these latter days New Jersey and New York stand out among all the states as the originators in a new form of cooperation and mutual assistance which has found practical demonstration in the Port Authority. We in New York recognize just as you do in New Jersey that the greatest of American harbors is a heritage of both states, and in this spirit of mutual recognition and cooperation, projects of the greatest importance to the business of the entire nation have been undertaken and carried to a successful conclusion along lines of sound finance, sound planning and sound advantage to those who live on both sides

of the Harbor and the Hudson River.

May this spirit of cooperation continue in all the days to come. I am confident that it will so continue as long as the voters in both states sustain, as they do now, the sound Democratic principle that state affairs are best administered by the states themselves. We in New Jersey and New York are not afraid to trust the states even though the administration in Washington, as I shall show today, seems to doubt that the States can be trusted to administer their own affairs.

Once upon a time an orator who was describing the scenery of his state remarked that in the North it was "MOUNTAINOUS" and that in the South it was "MOISTERIOUS".

That classic description reminds me of the Republican national ticket this year, -- "HIGH AND DRY" at one end and at the other end INCREASING MOISTURE.

BUT before I come to further elucidation on that point let me make another clear.

However we may differ as to method, we all agree, that temperance is ~~as one of~~ one of the cardinal virtues. In dealing with the great social problems in my own state, such as the care of the wards of the State, and in combatting crime, I have had to consider most earnestly this question of temperance.

It is bound up with crime, with insanity and, only too often, with poverty. It is increasingly apparent that the intemperate use of intoxicants has no place in this new mechanized civilization of ours. In our industry, in our recreation, on our highways, a drunken man is more than an objectionable companion - - he is a peril to the rest of us. The hand that controls the machinery of our factories, that holds the steering wheel of our automobiles, and the brains that guide the course of finance and industry, should alike be free from the effects of over-indulgence in alcohol.

But the methods adopted since the great war with the purpose of achieving a greater temperance by the forcing of prohibition have been accompanied in most parts of the country by complete and tragic failure. I need not point out to you that general encouragement of lawlessness has resulted; that corruption, hypocrisy, crime and disorder have emerged, and that instead of restricting, we have extended the spread of intemperance. This failure has come for this very good reason: we have depended too largely upon the power of governmental action instead of recognizing that the authority of the home, the authority of the school and particularly the authority of the churches in these matters are the fundamental ~~for~~ ^{foundations} upon which we must build. The recent recognition of this fact by the present administration is an amazing piece of

hindsight. There are others who have had foresight.

A friend showed me recently an unpublished letter of Henry Clay, written a hundred years ago. In this letter he said that the movement for temperance "has done great good and will continue to do more"; but "it will destroy itself whenever it resorts to coercion or mixes in the politics of the country."

The letter continues: "The misfortune in human affairs is that we convince ourselves ~~from~~ ^{of} what we suppose to be right and then we endeavor, as we ought to do, to persuade others, but if we fail to convince them, we then resort to force."

Another statesman, given to the nation by this state of New Jersey, pointed out this necessary course when federal prohibition first became a great issue. President Wilson foresaw the ~~human~~ economic and social results of such an attempt. It was not necessary for him to live through the disastrous experience in order to come to the conclusion now confessed by our present President. In statesmanship an ounce of foresight is better than a pound of hindsight.

The experience of nearly one hundred and fifty years under the Constitution has shown us that the proper means of regulation is through the states, with control by the federal government limited to that which is necessary to protect the states in the exercise of their legitimate powers. This I submit is the principle embodied in our Democratic platform; and I state further that it is not the principle stated in the Republican platform or in the speeches of acceptance of the two candidates of the Republican party.

This time of depression has caused us to see even more plainly than before not only the political and moral consequences of our action but its economic results as well. We threw on the table as spoils to be gambled for by the enemies of society the revenue that our government had theretofore received, and the underworld acquired unparalleled resources thereby. The multiplication of enforcement agencies created resentment and a cynical and complacent attitude toward lax enforcement resulting from connivance between such agencies and the law breakers. The general disregard for and defiance of such law of nationwide application bred disrespect for other law. The attempt to impose the practice of a virtue by mandate of the fundamental law, produced an attitude of intolerance to other forms of restraint and a denial even of the basis of authority. The violation of fundamental principles set in motion a chain of consequences that no one not politically blind could fail to see; and all the time a steady flow of profits resulting from the exactions of a newly created industry was running into the pockets of racketeers. The only business of the country that was not helping to support the government was in a real sense being supported by the government. This was the business that was the direct product of the 18th Amendment and the Volstead law, -- a business ~~which was~~ more lucrative, ~~and~~ more vicious, ~~and~~ more corrupting in its

influence on the enforcement agencies of government, ~~and more widespread in its operations than was the old saloon itself.~~

Unquestionably our ^{federal} tax burden would not be so heavy nor the forms that it takes so objectionable if some reasonable proportion of the unaccounted millions now paid to those whose business has been reared upon this stupendous blunder could be made available for the expenses of government. ~~Of this condition, as we shall now proceed to see, the Republican party is either fatuously ignorant or wilfully blind.~~

On this subject the two parties offer the voters a genuine choice this year. On the one hand a definite method of relief in the true American tradition, with the states authorized to carry out their part of the responsibility, and the nation doing what it is practically and constitutionally able to do. On the other side, evasion and indirection.

I should be something less than candid — in fact I should be dishonest — if I did not in this campaign continue to speak very plainly of these evasions, insincerities and deceptions. As I have repeatedly pointed out, Republican leaders are attempting to fight this battle with words. And in fighting with words we may use them either as a flaming sword, frankly, honestly and with courage, to press home the cause of truth, — or we may use them

as shields, to turn aside, evade, and obstruct the attack of an adversary. It is in this latter sense that the Republicans have been fighting a battle of words. Now a shield is a bigger thing than a sword and so when they would use words as a defense, they must use more of them. Witness the Republican platform, -- long, indirect, ambiguous, insincere, false, compared with the concise sincerity of our own platform. And this is especially true of what they say about prohibition. We first have a long, rambling party pronouncement in the Republican platform. And then we have long, rambling explanations of its meaning. Words upon words. Evasions upon evasions. Insincerity upon insincerity. A dense cloud of words. We rush into the cloud to find whether there is meaning and substance at the bottom of it all, and we find nothing. When we emerge from the cloud, we see another in the distance and we rush over to that. And again we find nothing. And so we rush from cloud to cloud and find at the bottom of each, nothing but dust, meaningless, worthless dust, at the bottom of a cloud of words.

One of the stories that we learned in our youth was that of the famous Oracle of Delphi. In ancient Greece, it is told, there was a place where volcanic gas came forth from a crevasse in the earth. Over this crevasse the Pagans built a temple and directly above the fumes arising from the earth, they set the throne of the Oracle. When the Oracle was partially

stupefied by the poisons in the gas, she uttered strange and incoherent words. The high priests of the temple were supposed to tell the people the meaning of these incoherent words. The people never suspected that the priests were not possessed of a real understanding of these words and that they interpreted them to suit their own convenience. But great issues were decided by this method. Pagan kings came to the Oracle and on its incoherent mumblings the fate of nations was sometimes staked.

In June, the Republican Oracle sat in Chicago. There was a fume of heated oratory; clouds of prohibition proposals were emitted; the Resolutions Committee and the Convention itself succumbed to the stupefying influence. It uttered words in the party platform — words and more words, till meaning was lost and reason slumbered. And then when the Convention ended and the people asked the high priests of the party what it all meant, the answers were so diverse that one was tempted to suspect the worst — that it meant nothing at all. The Secretary of State explained in the choicest phrases of Republican diplomacy; Senator Borah spoke out in his forthright fashion and said it sounded wet to him; President Butler said the words were dry.

I suspect that those who wrote that plank thought that it would sound dry to the drys and wet to the wets. But to the consternation of the high priests it sounded dry to the wets and

wet to the dries. This was very serious indeed. Something had to be done about it.

Well, something was done about it. The Democratic party fairly and squarely met the issue. It adopted, by an overwhelming vote, a plank so plain and clear and honest that no one could doubt its meaning and the candidates accepted this statement one hundred per cent.

And then public opinion moved by a true American admiration for brave and honest statement expressed itself in no uncertain terms. It liked the Democratic platform. It liked people who spoke their minds. It liked courage and candor. This must have been disturbing to the high priests of the Republican party, but, as always, they hesitated and temporized. And then in the six weeks following the Democratic Convention, a vast air of expectancy surrounded the White House. Rumors came forth that the high priests were to speak. People were to be told at last the meaning of what the June Oracle had said.

There were difficulties in the way, because the high priests had often spoken of this subject before. In 1928 the Republican candidate for the Presidency said: "I do not favor the repeal of the eighteenth amendment:" and, amplifying his meaning at that time, he said: that it was "a great social and economic

experiment noble in motive and farreaching in purpose."

He brought about the creation of the Commission on Law Enforcement and Obedience composed of "an able group of distinguished citizens of character and independence of thought, representative of different sections of the country." When after eighteen months of sincere and painstaking work, this Commission reported its findings to him, he submitted them to the Congress commending all of the minor findings of the Commission but not approving of the Commission's proposed revision of the eighteenth amendment.

He condemned ^{the report} ~~it~~ with faint praise, thus: "It should stimulate the clarification of the public mind and the advancement of public thought." It did stimulate and clarify the public mind to the extent that it showed ^W ~~them~~ that what ^W ~~they~~ had long suspected was true, that national prohibition had not been and could not be enforced. But it apparently did not stimulate and clarify the Presidential mind because the White House, so far as prohibition was concerned, fell into a deep silence. As the Republican Convention approached, according to the newspapers of the time, appeal after appeal was made to him and innumerable drafts of a prohibition plank were submitted to him. Out of it all came the incoherent utterance of the Chicago Oracle to which I have alluded.

At last, on the eleventh ^{day} of August, the President spoke to the people. To anyone who will read the prohibition plank in the Republican platform and the remarks of the President on this question in his acceptance speech, the difficulty under which he labors will become obvious and the reason for his use of meaningless words will become clear. It is the difficulty that ^{always} attends sacrificing principles for votes, and attempting to conceal that fact by the use of pussy-cat words. That statement can be no better substantiated than by the President's own statement that "I have always sympathized with the high purpose of the eighteenth amendment." Does that spell out a prohibitionist attempting to retain the support of the dregs?

But the President has at last learned what the facts have shown these many years -- that laws opposed by majority sentiments "create resentment which undermines enforcement and in the end produces degeneration and crime."

This seems to mean State Home Rule. But apparently the President does not really believe in State Home Rule, if by the use of force there can be effective federal control. He is willing to believe in the principle of state control only when the federal government cannot get away from the destruction of state control.

His statement proceeds deliberately to misrepresent the position of the Democratic party. He says: "Our opponents pledge the members of their party to destroy every vestige of constitutional and effective federal control of the traffic."

I have the right to assume that the President read the Democratic platform and on that assumption I charge that this statement was made to mislead the people of this country and I assert that a mere reading of the plain, unequivocal provisions of the Democratic platform will sustain that charge. So that there can be no possible misunderstanding, let me read the provisions of the Democratic platform on this point. It begins:

"We advocate the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. To effect such repeal we demand that the Congress immediately propose a Constitutional Amendment to truly representative conventions in the states called to act solely on that proposal."

So much for repeal. Now what does it tell the states to do:

"We urge the enactment of such measures by the several states as will actually promote temperance, effectively prevent the return of the saloon and bring the liquor traffic into the open under complete supervision and control by the states."

It then clearly states what the President either accidentally overlooked or deliberately misrepresented:

"We demand that the Federal Government effectively exercise its power to enable the states to protect themselves against importation of intoxicating liquors in violation of their laws."

It then goes on to speak of the Volstead Law:

"Pending repeal, we favor immediate modification of the Volstead Act to legalize the manufacture and sale of beer and other beverages of such alcoholic content as is permissible under the Constitution and to provide therefrom a proper and needed revenue."

Thus the Democratic platform expressly and unequivocally opposes the return of the saloon and with equal emphasis it demands that there be federal control of the liquor traffic to protect so-called dry states. Only on the theory of seeking to return to power by the mere use of words can such statements of the President of these United States be explained.

But meanwhile, another high priest has been heard from. In the period following August eleventh, the anti-repealists in the Republican party raised their voices in lamentation, like Jeremiah of old:

"There is none to comfort me; all mine enemies have heard of my trouble; they are glad thou has done it."

The Republican candidate for Vice President heard this wailing. Also like Jeremiah of old he called to his party: "Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."

He hastened to avow his devotion to the Republican platform but he found in the words of the Oracle full justification for the belief

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that the eighteenth amendment should not be repealed. And so, in the true spirit of those who in ancient times controlled the Oracle for their own ends, provision is made for all possible contingencies.

It is said that an ancient king when he consulted the Oracle as to the probability of his success in a war that he was about to undertake, was told that if he went to war a great army would be destroyed. But he did not realize that the Oracle had not made it clear that it might be his own army that would be destroyed. My friends, the high priests have failed to inquire of the Oracle the answer to the question that the king of old, forgot. A great army is to be destroyed. But they do not realize which army it is to be.

In N. Y. State in 1930 there was one party which
It means another example of, the man who tried to ride two horses
at the same time. The Republican party had one foot -- its candidate for Governor -- on the wet horse -- and the other foot -- its candidate for Lieutenant Governor, on the dry horse.

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The voters of New York State saw that it was a circus stunt --

the voters insisted on going in opposite
honest wets and honest drys, -- Democratic, Republican and

directions - the rider fell between.
Independent - were disgusted. They threw the ticket into the

discard.

This year the Republican national leaders have tried the same circus stunt. The answer of the voters throughout the nation will be precisely the same.

In the last analysis, my friends, the prohibition issue comes down to a question of faith and confidence in leadership and in the words of leaders.

However people may differ as to the principle of prohibition, national or state, they all will agree that a temporizing and insincere policy is disastrous not only to the cause of prohibition but to that of temperance as well. The present leadership stands convicted of attempting to evade and confuse this issue. The honest dry will I know honor more the honest wet than the shifty dry; and the anti-prohibitionist prefers,

~~//////~~

I know, the four-square dry to the uncertain wet. All will join in condemning a fearful and timid practice of evasion.

Here as before I emphasize that the deep question in this campaign is one of confidence in leadership -- in leaders. The measure of the truth of what they say is what they have said; the measure of what they will do is what they have done.

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SPEECH OF GOVERNOR FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

PROHIBITION

Seagirt, New Jersey

August 27, 1932

I am particularly happy to be the guest today of my old friend the Governor of New Jersey. This friendship is not only a personal one between Governor Moore and myself; it is also an official friendship because of the historic relations between New Jersey and New York, running back into the Colonial period when for a time the two colonies had only one royal governor for both provinces.

The relations between the two states have been of an intimate character marked by cordial relations between them and between their executives. So it is now, and I hope -- and have every reason for the hope -- that it will continue to be.

In these latter days New Jersey and New York stand out among all the states as the originators of a new form of cooperation and mutual assistance which has found practical demonstration in the Port Authority. We in New York recognize just as you do in New Jersey that the greatest of American harbors is the heritage of both states, and in this spirit of mutual recognition and cooperation, projects of the greatest importance to the business of the entire nation have been undertaken and carried to a successful conclusion along

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

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lines of sound finance, sound planning and sound advantage to those who live on both sides of the Harbor and of the Hudson River.

May this spirit of cooperation continue in all the days to come. I am confident that it will so continue as long as the voters in both states sustain, as they do now, the sound Democratic principle that state affairs are best administered by the states themselves. We in New Jersey and New York are not afraid to trust the states even though the administration in Washington, as I shall show today, seems to doubt that the states can be trusted to administer their own affairs.

Once upon a time an orator who was describing the scenery of his state remarked that in the North it was "mountainous" and that in the South it was "moisterious".

That classic description reminds me of the Republican national ticket this year -- "high and dry" at one end and at the other end "increasing moisture".

But before I come to further elucidation on that point let me make another clear.

However we may differ as to method, we all agree that temperance is one of the cardinal virtues. In dealing with the great social problems in my own State, such as the care of the wards of the States, and in combatting crime, I have had to consider most earnestly this question of temperance. It is bound up with crime, with insanity and, only

too often, with poverty. It is increasingly apparent that the intemperate use of intoxicants has no place in this new mechanized civilization of ours. In our industry, in our recreation, on our highways, a drunken man is more than an objectionable companion -- he is a peril to the rest of us. The hand that controls the machinery of our factories, that holds the steering wheel of our automobiles, and the brains that guide the course of finance and industry, should alike be free from the effects of over-indulgence in alcohol.

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Clay said that the movement for temperance "has done great good and will continue to do more" but "it will destroy itself whenever it resorts to coercion or mixes in the politics of the country."

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There were difficulties in the way, because the high priests had often spoken of this subject before. In 1928 the Republican candidate for the Presidency said: "I do not favor the repeal of the eighteenth amendment", and, amplifying his meaning at that time, he added that it was "a great social and economic experiment noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose".

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He condemned the report with faint praise, thus: "It should stimulate the clarification of the public mind and the advancement of public thought." It did stimulate and clarify the public mind to the extent that it showed it that what it had long suspected was true, that national prohibition had not been and could not be enforced. But it apparently did not stimulate and clarify the Presidential mind because the White House, so far as prohibition was concerned, fell into a deep silence. As the Republican Convention approached, according to the newspapers of the time, appeal after appeal was made to him and innumerable drafts of a prohibition plank were submitted to him. Out of it all came the incoherent utterance of the Chicago Oracle to which I have alluded.

At last, on the eleventh day of August, the President spoke to the people. To anyone who will read the prohibition plank in the Republican platform and the remarks of the President on this question in his acceptance speech, the difficulty under which the President labors will become obvious and the reason for his use of meaningless words will become clear. It is the difficulty that always attends sacrificing principles for votes, and attempting to conceal that fact by the use of pussy-cat words. That statement can be no better substantiated than by the President's own statement that "I have always sympathized with the high purpose of the eighteenth

amendment". Does that spell out a prohibitionist attempting to retain the support of the drys?

But the President has at last learned what the facts have shown these many years -- that laws opposed by majority sentiments "create resentment which undermines enforcement and in the end produces degeneration and crime".

This seems to mean State Home Rule. But apparently the President does not really believe in State Home Rule, if by the use of force there can be effective Federal control. He is willing to believe in the principle of State control only when the federal government cannot get away with the destruction of State control.

His statement proceeds deliberately to misrepresent the position of the Democratic party. He says: "Our opponents pledge the members of their party to destroy every vestige of constitutional and effective federal control of the traffic."

I have the right to assume that the President read the Democratic platform and on that assumption I charge that this statement was made to mislead the people of this country and I assert that a mere reading of the plain, unequivocal provisions of the Democratic platform will sustain that charge. So that there can be no possible misunderstanding, let me read the provisions of the Democratic platform on this point. It begins:

"We advocate the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. To effect such repeal we demand that the Congress immediately propose a Constitutional Amendment to truly representative conventions in the states called to act solely on that proposal."

So much for repeal. Now what does it tell the states to do:

"We urge the enactment of such measures by the several states as will actually promote temperance, effectively prevent the return of the saloon and bring the liquor traffic into the open under complete supervision and control by the states."

It then clearly states what the President either accidentally overlooked or deliberately misrepresented:

"We demand that the Federal Government effectively exercise its power to enable the states to protect themselves against importation of intoxicating liquors in violation of their laws." It then goes on to speak of the Volstead Law:

"Pending repeal, we favor immediate modification of the Volstead Act to legalize the manufacture and sale of beer and other beverages of such alcoholic content as is permissible under the Constitution and to provide therefrom a proper and needed revenue."

Thus the Democratic platform expressly and unequivocally opposes the return of the saloon and with equal

emphasis it demands that there be federal control of the liquor traffic to protect dry states. Only on the theory of seeking to return to power by the mere use of words can such statements of the President of these United States be explained.

But, meanwhile, another high priest has been heard from. In the period following August eleventh, the anti-repealists of the Republican party raised their voices in lamentation, like Jeremiah of old.

The Republican candidate for Vice-President heard this wailing. He hastened to avow his devotion to the Republican platform but he found in the words of the Oracle full justification for the belief that the eighteenth amendment should not be repealed. And so, in the true spirit of those who in ancient times controlled the Oracle for their own ends, provision is made for all possible contingencies.

It is said that an ancient King when he consulted the Oracle as to the probability of his success in a war that he was about to undertake, was told that if he went to war a great army would be destroyed. But he did not realize that the Oracle had not made it clear that it might be his own army that would be destroyed. My friends, the high priests have failed to inquire of the Oracle the answer to the question that the King of old, forgot. A great army is to be destroyed. But they do not realize which army it

is to be.

In New York State in 1930 there was a party which tried to ride two horses at the same time. The Republican party had one foot -- its candidate for Governor -- on the wet horse -- and the other foot -- its candidate for Lieutenant Governor, on the dry horse. The voters of New York State saw that it was a circus stunt -- honest wets and honest dries, -- Democratic, Republican and Independent -- were disgusted. They threw the ticket into the discard.

This year the Republican national leaders have tried the same circus stunt. The answer of the voters throughout the nation will be precisely the same.

In the last analysis, my friends, the prohibition issue comes down to a question of faith and confidence in leadership and in the words of leaders.

However people may differ as to the principle of prohibition, national or state, they all will agree that a temporizing and insincere policy is disastrous not only to the cause of prohibition but to that of temperance as well. The present leadership stands convicted of attempting to evade and confuse this issue. The honest dry will, I know, honor more the honest wet than the shifty dry; and the anti-prohibitionist prefers, I know, the four-square dry to the uncertain wet. All will join in condemning a fearful and timid practice of evasion.

Here, as before, I emphasize that the deep question in this campaign is one of confidence in leadership -- in leaders. The measure of the truth of what they say is what they have said; the measure of what they will do is what they have done.

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August 27, 1932

Speech. Seagirt, N. J.

I am particularly happy to be the guest today of my old friend the Governor of New Jersey. This friendship is not only a personal one between Governor Moore and myself; it is also an official friendship because of the historic relations between New Jersey and New York, running back into the Colonial period when for a time the two colonies had only one royal governor for both provinces.

The relations between the two states have been of an intimate character marked by cordial relations between them and between their executives. So it is now, and I hope--and have every reason for the hope--that it will continue to be.

In these latter days New Jersey and New York stand out among all the states as the originators of a new form of cooperation and mutual assistance which has found practical demonstration in the Port Authority. We in New York recognize just as you do in New Jersey that the greatest of American harbors is the heritage of both states, and in this spirit of mutual recognition and cooperation, projects of the greatest importance to the business of the entire nation have been undertaken and carried to a successful conclusion along lines of sound finance, sound planning and sound advantage to those who live on both sides of the Harbor and of the Hudson River.

May this spirit of cooperation continue in all the days to come. I am confident that it will so continue as long as the voters in both states sustain, as they do now, the sound Democratic principle that state affairs are best administered by the states themselves. We in New Jersey and New York are not afraid to trust the states even though the administration in Washington, as I shall show today, seems to doubt that the states can be trusted to administer their own affairs.

Once upon a time an orator who was describing the scenery of his State remarked that in the North it was "MOUNTAINOUS" and that in the South it was "MOISTEROUS."

That classic description reminds me of the Republican national ticket this year,--"HIGH AND DRY" at one end and "INCREASING MOISTURE."

BUT before I come to further elucidation on that point let me make another clear.

However we may differ as to method, we all agree that temperance is one of the cardinal virtues. In dealing with the great social problems in my own State, such as the care of the wards of the State, and in combatting crime, I have had to consider most earnestly this question of temperance. It is bound up with crime, with insanity and, only too often, with poverty.

It is increasingly apparent that the intemperate use of intoxicants has no place in this new mechanized civilization of ours. In our industry, in our recreation, on our highways, a drunken man is more than an objectionable companion--he is a peril to the rest of us. The hand that controls the machinery of our factories, that holds the steering wheel of our automobiles, and the brains that guide the course of finance and industry, should alike be free from the effects of over-indulgence in alcohol.

But the methods adopted since the Great War with the purpose of achieving a greater temperance by the forcing of Prohibition have been accompanied in most parts of the country by complete and tragic failure. I need not point out to you that general encouragement of lawlessness has resulted; that corruption, hypocrisy, crime and disorder have emerged, and that instead of restricting, we have extended the spread of intemperance. This failure has come for this very good reason: We have depended too largely upon the power of governmental action instead of recognizing that the authority of the home, the authority of the school and particularly the authority of the churches in these matters are the fundamental forces on which we must build. The recent recognition of this fact by the present administration is an amazing piece of hindsight. There are others who have had foresight. A friend showed me recently an unpublished letter of Henry Clay, written a hundred years ago. In this letter Clay said that the movement for temperance "has done great good and will continue to do more" but "it will destroy itself whenever it resorts to coercion or mixes in the politics of the country."

Another statesman, given to the nation by this State of New Jersey, pointed out this necessary course when federal prohibition first became a great issue. President Wilson foresaw the economic and social results of such an attempt. It was not necessary for him to live through the disastrous experience in order to come to the conclusion now confessed by our present President. In statesmanship an ounce of foresight is better than a pound of hindsight.

The experience of nearly one hundred and fifty years under the Constitution has shown us that the proper means of regulation is through the states, with control by the federal government limited to that which is necessary to protect the states in the exercise of their legitimate powers. This I submit is the principle embodied in our Democratic platform; and I state further that it is not the principle stated in the Republican platform or in the speeches of acceptance of the two candidates of the Republican party.

This time of depression has caused us to see even more plainly than before not only the political and moral consequences of our action but its economic results as well. We threw on the table as spoils to be gambled for by the enemies of society the revenue that our government had theretofore received, and the under-world acquired unparalleled resources thereby. The multiplication of enforcement agencies created resentment and a cynical and complacent attitude toward lax enforcement resulting from connivance between such agencies and the law breakers. The general disregard for and defiance of such law of nation-wide application bred disrespect for other law. The attempt to impose the practice of virtue by mandate of the fundamental law, produced an attitude of intolerance to other forms of restraint and denial even of the basis of authority. The violation of fundamental principles set

in motion a chain of consequences that no one not politically blind could fail to see; and all the time a steady flow of profits, resulting from the exactions of a newly created industry, was running into the pockets of racketeers. The only business of the country that was not helping to support the government was in a real sense being supported by the government. This was the business that was the direct product of the 18th Amendment and the Volstead law,—a business which is lucrative, vicious and corrupting in its influence on the enforcement agencies of government.

Unquestionably our tax burden would not be so heavy nor the forms that it takes so objectionable if some reasonable proportion of the uncounted millions now paid to those whose business has been reared upon this stupendous blunder could be made available for the expenses of government.

On this subject the two parties offer the voters a genuine choice this year. On the one hand a definite method of relief in the true American tradition, with the states authorized to carry out their part of the responsibility, and the nation doing what it is practically and constitutionally able to do. On the other side, evasion and indirection.

I should be something less than candid—in fact I should be dishonest—if I did not in this campaign continue to speak very plainly of these evasions, insincerities and deceptions. As I have repeatedly pointed out, Republican leaders are attempting to fight this battle with words. And in fighting with words we may use them either as a flaming sword, frankly, honestly and with courage, to press home the cause of truth,—or we may use them as shields, to turn aside, evade, and obstruct the attack of an adversary. It is in this latter sense that the Republicans have been fighting a battle of words. Now a shield is a bigger thing than a sword and so when they would use words as a defense, they must use more of them. Witness the Republican platform,—long, indirect, ambiguous, insincere, false, compared with the concise sincerity of our own platform. And this is especially true of what they say about Prohibition. We first have a long, rambling party pronouncement in the Republican platform. And then we have long, rambling explanations of its meaning. Words upon words. Evasions upon evasions. Insincerity upon insincerity. A dense cloud of words. We rush into the cloud to find whether there is meaning and substance at the bottom of it all, and we find nothing. When we emerge from the cloud, we see another in the distance and we rush over to that. And again we find nothing. And so we rush from cloud to cloud and find at the bottom of each, nothing but dust, meaningless, worthless dust, at the bottom of a cloud words.

One of the stories that we learned in our youth was that of the famous Oracle of Delphi. In ancient Greece, it is told, there was a place where volcanic gas came forth from a crevasse in the earth. Over this crevasse the Pagans built a temple and directly above the fumes arising from the earth, they set the throne of the Oracle. When the Oracle was partially stupefied by the poisons in the gas, she uttered strange and incoherent words. The high priests of the temple were supposed to tell the people the meaning of these incoherent words. The people never suspected that the priests were not possessed of a real understanding of these words and they interpreted them to suit their own convenience. Pagan kings came to the Oracle and on its incoherent mumblings the fate of nations was sometimes staked.

In June, the Republican Oracle sat in Chicago. There was a fume of heated oratory; clouds of prohibition proposals were emitted; the Resolutions Committee and the Convention itself succumbed to the stupefying influence. It uttered words in the party platform--words and more words, till meaning was lost and reason slumbered. And then when the Convention ended and the people asked the high priests of the party what it all meant, the answers were so diverse that one was tempted to suspect the worst--that it meant nothing at all. The Secretary of State explained in the choicest phrases of Republican diplomacy; Senator Borah spoke out in his forthright fashion and said it sounded wet to him; President Butler said the words were dry.

I suspect that those who wrote that plank thought that it would sound dry to the dries and wet to the wets. But to the consternation of the high priests it sounded dry to the wets and wet to the dries. This was very serious indeed. Something had to be done about it.

Well, something was done about it. The Democratic party fairly and squarely met the issue. It adopted, by an overwhelming vote, a plank so plain and clear and honest that no one could doubt its meaning and the candidates accepted this statement one hundred per cent.

And then public opinion, moved by a true American admiration for brave and honest statement expressed itself in no uncertain terms. It liked the Democratic platform. It liked people who spoke their minds. It liked courage and candor. This must have been disturbing to the high priests of the Republican party, but, as always, they hesitated and temporized. And then in the six weeks following the Democratic Convention, a vast air of expectancy surrounded the White House. Rumors came forth that the high priests were to speak. People were to be told at last the meaning of what the June Oracle had said.

There were difficulties in the way, because the high priests had often spoken of this subject before. In 1928 the Republican candidate for the Presidency said: "I do not favor the repeal of the eighteenth amendment;" and, amplifying his meaning at that time, he added that it was a "great social and economic experiment noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose."

He brought about the creation of the Commission on Law Enforcement and Obedience composed of "an able group of distinguished citizens of character and independence of thought, representative of different sections of the country." When after eighteen months of sincere and painstaking work, this Commission reported its findings to him, he submitted the report to the Congress commending all of the minor findings of the Commission but not approving of the Commission's proposed revision of the eighteenth amendment.

He condemned the report with faint praise, thus: "It should stimulate the clarification of the public mind and the advancement of public thought." It did stimulate and clarify the public mind to the extent that it showed it that what it had long suspected was true, that national prohibition had not been and could not be enforced. But it apparently did not stimulate and clarify the Presidential mind because the White House, so far as prohibition was concerned, fell into a deep silence. As the Republican Convention approached, according to the newspapers of the time, appeal after appeal was made to him and innumerable drafts of a prohibition plank were submitted to him. Out of it all

came the incoherent utterance of the Chicago Oracle to which I have alluded.

At last, on the eleventh day of August, the President spoke to the people. To anyone who will read the prohibition plank in the Republican platform and the remarks of the President on this question in his acceptance speech, the difficulty under which the President labors will become obvious and the reason for his use of meaningless words will become clear. It is the difficulty that always attends sacrificing principles for votes, and attempting to conceal that fact by the use of pussy-cat words. That statement can be no better substantiated than by the President's own statement that "I have always sympathized with the high purpose of the eighteenth amendment." Does that spell out a prohibitionist attempting to retain the support of the drys?

But the President has at last learned what the facts have shown these many years--that laws opposed by majority sentiments "create resentment which undermines enforcement and in the end produces degeneration and crime."

This seems to mean State Home Rule. But apparently the President does not really believe in State Home Rule, if by the use of force there can be effective Federal control. He is willing to believe in the principle of State control only when the federal government cannot get away with the destruction of State control.

His statement proceeds deliberately to misrepresent the position of the Democratic party. He says: "Our opponents pledge the members of their party to destroy every vestige of constitutional and effective federal control of the traffic."

I have the right to assume that the President read the Democratic platform and on that assumption I charge that this statement was made to mislead the people of this country and I assert that a mere reading of the plain, unequivocal provisions of the Democratic platform will sustain that charge. So that there can be no possible misunderstanding, let me read the provisions of the Democratic platform on this point. It begins:

"We advocate the repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment. To effect such repeal we demand that the Congress immediately propose a Constitutional Amendment to truly representative conventions in the states called to act solely on that proposal."

So much for repeal. Now what does it tell the states to do:

"We urge the enactment of such measures by the several states as will actually promote temperance, effectively prevent the return of the saloon and bring the liquor traffic into the open under supervision and control by the states."

It then clearly states what the President either accidentally overlooked or deliberately misrepresented:

"We demand that the Federal Government effectively exercise its power to enable the states to protect themselves against importation of intoxicating liquors in violation of their laws."

It then goes on to speak of the Volstead Law:

"Pending repeal, we favor immediate modification of the Volstead Act to legalize the manufacture and sale of beer and

other beverages of such alcoholic content as is permissible under the Constitution and to provide therefrom a proper and needed revenue."

Thus the Democratic platform expressly and unequivocally opposes the return of the saloon and with equal emphasis it demands that there be federal control of the liquor traffic to protect dry states. Only on the theory of seeking to return to power by the mere use of words can such statements of the President of these United States be explained.

But meanwhile, another high priest has been heard from. In the period following August eleventh, the anti-repealists in the Republican party raised their voices in lamentation, like Jeremiah of old.

The Republican candidate for Vice-President heard this wailing. He hastened to avow his devotion to the Republican platform but he found in the words of the Oracle full justification for the belief that the eighteenth amendment should not be repealed. And so, in the true spirit of those who in ancient times controlled the Oracle for their own ends, provision is made for all possible contingencies.

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Repeal of the Eighteenth Amendment, at Seagirt, New Jersey,
August 27, 1932

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This year the Republican national leaders have tried the same circus stunt. The answer of the voters throughout the Nation will be precisely the same.

In the last analysis, my friends, the prohibition issue comes down to a question of faith and confidence in leadership and in the words of leaders.

However people may differ as to the principle of prohibition, national or state, they all will agree that a temporizing and insincere policy is disastrous not only to the cause of prohibition but to that of temperance as well. The present leadership stands convicted of attempting to evade and confuse this issue. The honest dry will, I know, honor more the honest wet than the shifty dry; and the anti-prohibitionist prefers, I know, the four-square dry to the uncertain wet. All will join in condemning a fearful and timid practice of evasion.

Here as before I emphasize that the deep question in this campaign is one of confidence in leadership—in leaders. The measure of the truth of what they say is what they have said; the measure of what will do is what they have done.