
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”

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Pocatello, UT - Extemporaneous remarks

INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT
From the Back Platform of his Special Train
Pocatello, Idaho, September 18, 1932, 9.30 P.M.

Good evening, my friends. I am mighty glad to be here, and be the guest of my friend, Governor Ross -- Ben Ross. You notice that I call him "Ben" already. So it is all right! (Applause)

I have come out here, not to talk to people. I have come out here to "get educated". I come out here to learn about the different sections of the country, and what their needs are, because I don't believe that a fellow should go down to Washington -- and I'm going on the 4th of March -- (hurrah! applause) without knowing something at first-hand of the needs and the conditions in every part of the country.

I have not been making very many political speeches. But I have had a good many problems put up to me. For instance, about three nights ago I was sound asleep; just before daybreak somewhere near the Colorado-Wyoming line -- and we pulled into a station, and I heard voices outside of the "stateroom" door, saying, "Come on out!" They just begged me to come out. I didn't know what to do. I opened one eye half-way (laughter) and I

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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. I am tonight, my friends, Good evening,

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what to do. I opened one eye half-way (laughter) and I

was thinking about it, when the voices got louder; and here's what they said: "If you don't come out we'll vote for Hoover." So, that was one of the problems that I had to face on this trip. I got thinking about that particular problem so hard that the next thing I knew it was eight o'clock in the morning. (Laughter)

You know, as a matter of fact, you people out here are living under practically the same kind of economic conditions that we people back in upstate New York are living under.

Your farm problems are very similar to ours. We, just as you, are under the unfortunate necessity nowadays in having to use two wagon-loads of farm produce to buy exactly the same things that one wagon-load would have bought before the war. That is something that we want to correct.

In other words, one of the most important problems before the country is restoring the purchasing power of the farm dollar. We are undertaking that, and I believe that it can be done on a national scale by having all parts of the country pull together and by working for that definite end.

Last night, down in Salt Lake City, I talked

about another problem, which is of some moment to you people here in Pocatello, for the very good reason that there are a lot of railroad men here. As you know, the railroads of the country are in bad shape financially. We don't want them to have to go into the hands of receivers if we can possibly help it. Receiverships are expensive, and they don't get you very far. We want to avoid receiverships, if possible.

The distinguished gentleman who is running against me has a railroad policy, which he has summed up in a few words: "The extension of more credit to the railroads in order that they can buy more equipment and spend more money on maintenance." One reason that the railroads are threatened with receivership today is that their debt is already too heavy, and that is why I am proposing not merely the lending of more money to the railroads who are too deeply in debt, but propose a general national plan of transportation to cover the whole field of transportation.

This plan will mean, for example, putting under the Interstate Commerce Commission the great buses and trucks engaged in interstate commerce which are today using the highways, without having spent anything toward their building. (Prolonged applause)

Furthermore, we believe that the railroads themselves can accomplish much by being allowed to eliminate some of the mileage which today is causing them to run in the red every month, instead of coming out in the black -- especially many lines that are serving territory which is equally well served by buses and trucks.

There are a great many other ways in which a national railroad plan can, we believe, make the railroads solvent, and at the same time keep up the standard of living of the men and women -- nearly two millions of them in the country -- who are the employees of the railway systems of the country. We want to do everything we can to keep up that standard of living, and to insure to the railroad employees permanent employment during the rest of their lives. (Applause)

There are a lot of other things that I could talk to you about for a long, long time; but time will not permit. I have never been in this part of your State before -- one of the few sections of the country that I have not yet visited. My only sorrow is that I come here after dark, and that I have not had the chance to see your wonderful scenery.

I brought some of the family along, and with your permission I will introduce them to you. The first

member of the family -- and a very close member -- is the Chairman of the Democratic National Committee, Jim Farley. (Hurrah! Applause)

Then comes my daughter, Anna. (Applause) And then, right here is my daughter-in-law, Betsy. And, right over here, my "little boy, Jimmie". He's one of the shorter members of the family. He is only six foot three. (Laughter, applause)

A VOICE: He'll grow yet!

GOVERNOR: That's right! (Laughter)

Well, it's been fine to see you all. Before I leave here I want to have a little further chat with Governor Ross, to find out whether the majority is going to be 25,000 or 50,000 in the State of Idaho this Fall.

(Hurrah! Applause)

And now, Jim, you come out here and say something. (Applause)

MR. FARLEY: I want to say that I am very grateful to the Democrats of the State of Idaho who made possible, and instructed the delegation for Governor Roosevelt, which voted with Governor Roosevelt on every ballot in Chicago. We are grateful to each and every one who was responsible for that deal. I am sure that the efforts

that they put forth then will be continued to be put forth from now until the polls close, and that Idaho will go more strongly Democratic than ever before in its history -- from top to bottom. Thank you very, very much. (Prolonged applause)

GOVERNOR: I might say that this is the biggest crowd we have had at any station in all the states we have come through this week. (Prolonged applause) Good night! And many thanks! (Applause)