
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Raton, NM - Extemporaneous remarks

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INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT
From the Back Platform of his Special Train
Ratoon, Colorado, September 27, 1932, 3.00 P.M.

My friends, I am glad to get back here. I haven't been here for about twelve years. I was here on several occasions before that.

We have had a perfectly wonderful trip through New Mexico. Great crowds turned out. Apparently most of the Democratic politicians came down to Lamy to meet us. They adjourned the Convention in order to see us at the train.

As you know, I am not making many political speeches on this trip. That is not the object of it. The real reason why I took the trip was to try to find out at first hand the conditions that exist in different parts or sections of the country. That is why I am not calling it a political trip, but rather an educational trip -- for the education of myself.

I know one thing, and that is, when I started out I hoped that the farther West I got, the less economic troubles I would find. Unfortunately that has not been true. This depression, without any question, has affected every single state in this Union, and it has affected not only industry, as we know it, but agriculture and mining as well.

I was just told that the miners are only running one day a week. That is tough luck!

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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.

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state in this Union, and it has affected not only industry,

as we know it, but agriculture and mining as well.

I was just told that the clouds are only passing on

for a week. That is tough luck!

There is one thing I want to do, when we start to restore prosperity, and that is to bring prosperity back, not in a spotty way, nor not just to cover one section, or one class, but bring it back, and make it apply to every class and every section of the United States. (Applause)

I think that we are going to get somewhere with a progressive government in Washington. The Lord only knows we need it.

Just as one example of what I might call the difference in attitude between the two parties -- that which relates to the railroad situation. A lot of you people at this particular point are engaged in railroading, I take it. The Republican policy seems to be merely to lend more money to the railroads of the United States, so that they can buy more equipment and spend more on their maintenance of way. Well, that is all very well; but, as you and I know, one of the chief troubles with the railroads now, that makes them run in the red every month, is the fact that their debts are a great deal heavier than they ought to be.

Now, if a fellow owes you money, the first thing, instead of lending him more money to pay you the interest on the debts, is to put him on his feet, so that he will be earning enough to pay you back. (Hurrah! Prolonged applause)

And that is why our policy -- although we are trying to prevent railroad receivership -- our main policy is to try by a series of practical measures to bring the railroads out of the red, and put them into the black.

That will have the effect, if we can do it -- and I think we can -- of making secure a great many railroad bonds, which are the backbone of our savings banks and insurance companies and trust funds and charities, and so forth.

The other effect will be to make railroad employment -- the two million Americans who work on the railroad -- to make employment more certain and more secure, through all the years to come. (Applause)

We have had a good many delightful experiences on this trip, especially in the middle of the night. At one point, up at the north end of Colorado, when we were going across to Cheyenne, about three o'clock in the morning, I heard a crowd outside saying: "Come on out, Governor." And I opened one eye half-way, and then rolled over. That didn't seem to do much good, because a minute later I heard them shout: "Come on out, Governor. If you don't, we will vote for Hoover." (Laughter, applause)

Well, you know, I didn't believe it, and so I went to sleep.

It is fine to see you all. I want to present a couple of members of my family who are here. Here is Mrs. Roosevelt! (Applause) Here is my daughter-in-law, Betsy. (Applause) And here is my boy, Jimmie. Here is my daughter, Anna.

I also want to present to you a very old friend of mine, the Senior Senator from Montana, Senator Walsh. (Prolonged applause)