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

Series 1: Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Political Ascension

File No. 568

1932 October 22

Etonah, TN - Extemporaneous remarks

INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF GOVERNOR ROOSEVELT
From the Back Platform of his Special Train
Etonah, Tennessee, October 22, 1932, 11.00 P.M.

My friends, it is mighty good of you to stay up at this hour of the night to see me. I wish we could have got down here in daylight. I was telling my neighbors up in Knoxville, I am coming down in Knoxville to fulfill the promise that I gave to my friend nearly a year ago. I also told them up in Knoxville that I only fulfilled half the promise, because I came here after dark. (Laughter) I am going to come back here, I hope, especially with the idea in mind that I want to see the -- to see at first hand the development of electric power, all the way down the Tennessee River.

As I understand it, there are a whole lot of you people interested in railroading. I have been interested in railroading a good deal from the point of view of national economics. I have been talking about a Democratic program for rehabilitating railroads. The Republican plan apparently at the present time is just to lend the poor old railroads more money. (Laughter) Well, you know, just as well as I do, that when a friend of yours or a neighbor is pretty heavily in debt and can't pay the interest that he owes, you can't bring him out right and make him solvent by just lending him more money. The practical thing to do is to put him in the

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.

INFORMAL EXTREMELY BREVITARY REMARKS OF
FROM THE BACK PLATFORM OF
STONHAM, TENNESSEE, OCTOBER 22

My friends, it is mighty good of you to stay up as late as this hour of the night to see me. I wish we could have gone down here in daylight. I was telling my neighbors up in Knoxville, I am coming down in Knoxville to fulfill the promise that I gave to my friends nearly a year ago. I also told them up in Knoxville that I only fulfilled half the promise, because I came here after dark. (Laughter) I am going to come back here, I hope, especially with the idea in mind that I want to see the -- to see at first hand the development of electric power, all the way down the Tennessee River.

As I understand it, there are a whole lot of you people interested in railroad building. I have been interested in railroad building a good deal from the point of view of national economics. I have been talking about a Democratic program for rehabilitating railroads. The Republican plan apparently at the present time is just to lend the poor old railroads more money. (Laughter) Well, you know, just as well as I do, that when a friend of yours or a neighbor is pretty heavily in debt and can't pay the interest that he owes, you can't bring him out right and make him solvent by just lending him more money. The practical thing to do is to put him in the

way of earning more money. And that is why the Democratic program in regard to the railroad is aimed at bringing them out of the red, and putting them in the black. (Applause)

Now, that means two results throughout the United States. It means, first of all, that thousands and thousands of savings banks and insurance companies and other institutions for the savings of the country are going to have payments made on the earnings of the savings of the people. And the other great point is that the railroads will be able to stabilize and maintain the labor of the two million men, and some women, who work for the railroads.

Now, as a matter of fact, our campaign, as you know, is not aimed just as a campaign of Democrats to vote for us. We are asking millions of fine upstanding Republican men and women to vote the Democratic ticket this year. Our fight is against not them, but against the Republican leadership which has done so much to bankrupt the country during this last administration. (Prolonged applause) In every State I have been in so far -- and I think it is up to around 32 or 33 States in the Union -- we have found a deep understanding of the purpose of this campaign, and that makes me believe that the Chairman of our National Committee is right when he says he won't concede a single State -- even Vermont. (Applause)

I am very confident of the result in Tennessee. I am very happy to be here, standing alongside of Senator McCullough, my old friend, and all the rest. (Applause) And here is my even older friend, Governor McMillan. (Applause)

The rest of the family have gone to bed, but I want to introduce my little boy Jimmie to you. (Applause) They are all over six feet.

Well, it is certainly fine to see you all. I appreciate your coming up. I hope to get back some time very soon. (Prolonged applause) I wish that Governor McMillan would say a few words to you. (Applause)