
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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Series 2: “ You have nothing to fear but fear itself:”
FDR and the New Deal

File No. 651

1933 October 2

Chicago, IL –
Address to the American Legion Convention

P.P.F.
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Commander Johnson, Fellow Members of the American Legion:

I am glad to come here as your guest and I am glad to have the right to come here as your comrade. I have come because I have faith in the American Legion and in all other veterans of our wars. The right which I have to come here works both ways, because as long as I am in the White House you have the right to come and see me there.

But my relationship with you is not a matter of the past six months; it dates back to the war days when I participated with you, not only in this country but also on the North Sea, and in the Channel, and on the actual fighting front in France.

I want to talk with you about the problem of government, the difficulties which you and I as Americans have faced and solved, and those which we still face. I recognize and appreciate, and the Nation recognizes and appreciates, the patience, the loyalty and the willingness to make sacrifices, shown by the overwhelming majority of the veterans of our Country during the trying period from which we are beginning successfully to emerge.

2.

I want to talk to you about national unity. Let us look at it as a living thing - not a mere theory resting in books, or otherwise apart from every day business of men. It means that we all live under a common government, trade with each other, pay common taxes, give to and receive from a common protective government. To recognize national unity, to hold it above all else, seeing that upon it depends our common welfare, is just another way to say that we have patriotism.

You and I who served in the World War know that we represented a united nation in a time of danger to world civilization. But you and I know also that national unity is as essential in time of peace as in time of war. If this Country is worth living in, if this Flag of ours is worth living under, if our social order means anything to us, then this Country of ours, is worth defending every day and every year of the life of every individual one of us. It is because I am unwilling to live myself, or to have my children or grandchildren live under an alien flag or an alien form of government, that I believe in the fundamental obligation of citizenship to don the uniform of our Country, to carry arms in its defense when our Country and the things it stands for are attacked.

3.

There are two enemies of national unity, sectionalism and class, and if the spirit of sectionalism or the spirit of class is allowed to grow strong, or to prevail, it means the end of national unity and the end of patriotism.

Some people who visit us from other lands still find it difficult to credit the fact that a Nation sprung from many sources, a Nation one hundred and thirty million strong, a Nation stretching three thousand miles from east to west, is, in all the great essentials of its civilization, a homogeneous whole; for not only do we speak one language, not only are the customs and habits of our people similar in every part of the Continent, but we have given repeated proof on many occasions, and especially in recent years, that we are willing to forego sectional advantage where such advantage can be obtained only by one part of the Country at the expense of another.

The other enemy of national unity is class distinction, and you and I are well aware of the simple fact that as every day passes, the people of this Country are less and less willing to tolerate benefits for any one group of citizens which must be paid for by others.

You have been willing to fight for the benefits of American life. You have been willing to live for American unity. You have understood that this is the very foundation of the Americanism for which you stand, in which you believe, and to which you and I swore allegiance when we became American Legionnaires.

For several years past the benefits of American life were threatened. The crisis came in the spring of this year. It was necessary to meet that crisis. Again it was necessary for all of us to go back to fundamentals. Millions were out of work, the banks were closed, the credit of the Government itself was threatened. The car was stalled. Obviously, the first objective was to get the engine running again. It is true that we succeeded in reopening the great majority of the banks, but this would not have been possible if at the same time we had not been able to restore the credit of the Government.

In speaking of national credit we are again dealing with a real thing, not a theory in books. There is such a thing as national credit. It depends upon national unity. Without it the government cannot get the money

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to give. You and I depend upon it, and in a right sense your welfare and mine rests upon it. That is not just an academic proposition. Industry cannot be restored, people cannot be put back to work, banks cannot be kept open, human suffering cannot be cared for, if the Government itself is bankrupt. We realize now that the great human values, not for you alone but for all American citizens, rest upon the unimpaired credit of the United States.

It was because of this that we undertook to take the National Treasury out of the red and put it into the black. And in the doing of it we laid down two principles which directly affected benefits to veterans - - to you, and to veterans of other wars.

The first principle, following inevitably from the obligation of citizens to bear arms, is that the Government has a responsibility for and towards those who suffered injury or contracted disease while serving in its defense.

The second principle is that no person, because he

wore a uniform, must thereafter be placed in a special class of beneficiaries over and above all other citizens. The fact of wearing a uniform does not mean that he can demand and receive from his Government a benefit which no other citizen receives. It does not mean that because a person served in the defense of his Country, performed a basic obligation of citizenship, he should receive a pension from his Government because of a disability incurred after his service had terminated, and not connected with that service.

It does mean, however, that those who were injured in or as a result of their service, are entitled to receive adequate and generous compensation for their disabilities. It does mean that generous care shall be extended to the dependents of those who died in or as a result of service to their Country.

To carry out these principles, the people of this Country can and will pay in taxes the sums which it is

necessary to raise. To carry out these principles will not bankrupt your Government nor throw its book-keeping into the red.

Every person who has made honest study knows that mistakes, many of them, have been made during the course of fifteen years. I personally know that mistakes in individual cases and inequalities affecting various groups have occurred during the past six months. But at the same time there stands out the fact which you know - - that many of these mistakes have been rectified and that we have the definite purpose of doing justice not only to the mass, but, in so far as possible, to every individual as well. Furthermore, it is my hope that in so far as justice concerns those whose disabilities are, as a matter of fact, of war service origin, the Government will be able to extend even more generous care than is now provided under existing regulations. It is to these men that our obligation exists.

To these two broad principles the time has come,

I believe, for us to add a third. There are many veterans of our wars to whom disability and sickness unconnected with war service has come. To them the Federal Government owes the application of the same rule which it has laid down for the relief of other cases of involuntary want or destitution.

In other words, if the individual affected can afford to pay for his own treatment he cannot call on any form of government aid. If he has not the wherewithal to take care of himself, it is first of all the duty of his community to take care of him and next the duty of his State. Only if under these circumstances his own community and his own State are unable, after reasonable effort, to care for him, then, and then only, should the Federal Government offer him hospitalization and care.

The young men of this Country who today, in the event of war, would bear the first brunt of national defense, think of us of the American Legion as middle-aged people. You and I are not yet ready to

admit that we have "one foot in the grave." We think of ourselves, and with some justification perhaps, as people of some experience, of some maturity of judgment, of a position in the community which carries responsibilities. We believe we have influence as individuals and we believe that as an organization the American Legion has enormous power for the good of the Country for many years to come. It is not enough that you have helped to write the history of America. It is a fact that much of the future history of America will be a history which you will help to make. Your future interests are inseparable from those of other citizens, and, granting that your interest in the disabled and dependent comrades is first upon your program, I ask in addition your cooperation in the great program of national rehabilitation in which you and I are equally engaged.

The charter of the Legion keeps it out of partisan politics. The strength and the very existence of the Legion depend on the maintenance of that principle. You are not here as Republicans or Democrats. You are here, as you should be, as Americans to work with your

Government for the good of the average citizen. I am grateful to the Legion for the splendid stand it has taken - - for the "Battle Order " it has issued.

The realization of our national program cannot be attained in six months. Reemployment has proceeded only a part of the way. From week to week there will be ups and downs, but the net result is a consistent gain. The freezing of credits has been stopped and the ice is definitely melting. Farm income has been increased; it must be further increased. Industry has picked up, but an increased purchasing power must stimulate it further.

Your task and mine are similar. Each one of us must play an individual part in our own field in dealing with these many problems, but at the same time we must realize that the individual part belongs to a closely related whole - - the national unity of purpose and of action.

I ask your further and even greater efforts in our program of national recovery. You who wore the uniform, you who served, you who took the oath of allegiance to the American Legion, you who support the ideals of

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American citizenship, I have called to the Colors again.
As your Commander-in-Chief and your comrade, I am
confident that you will respond.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

— (orig. reading copy)

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT BEFORE THE AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION
CHICAGO STADIUM, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

October 2, 1933, 12.00 Noon

(The following speech of the President includes interpolations and revisions, the former indicated by underlining and omissions being indicated by parenthesis.)

Commander Johnson, Fellow Members of the American Legion:

I think I have been in this Hall before (applause) and I can almost hear that fine old friend of ours, Senator Walsh, saying "Has the gentleman arrived?" (Applause) Well, I will tell you that the gentleman arrived.

I am glad to come here again and (I am glad to come here as your guest and) I am glad to have the right to come here as your comrade. I have come because I have faith in the American Legion and in all (other) veterans in all our wars. And, incidentally, the right which I have to come here works both ways because just as long as I am in the White House you have the right to come and see me there. (Applause)

You know my relationship with you is not a matter of the past six months; it dates back to the war days, it dates back to the time when I participated with you, not only in this country but also on the North Sea, and in the Channel, and on the actual fighting front in France.

I want to talk with you very simply about the problems of government, the difficulties that you and I as Americans have faced

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.

(The following speech of the President indicates the omissions and revisions, the former indicated by underlining and omissions being indicated by parentheses.)

Commander Johnson, fellow members of the American Legion

I think I have been in this Hall before (appliance) and I can
almost hear that like old friend of mine, Senator Walter, saying
"This the real American spirit?" (appliance) Well, I will tell you
that the American spirit

I am glad to come here today and I am glad to come here as
your guest and I am glad to have the right to come here as your
comrade. I have come because I have faith in the American Legion
and in all (other) veterans in all our wars. And, incidentally,
the night which I have to come here which I have to come here
as long as I am in the White House I have the right to come and
see you there. (appliance)

You know my relationship with you is not a matter of the past
six months; it dates back to the war days. It dates back to the time
when I participated with you, not only in this country but also
on the North Sea, and in the Channel, and on the Atlantic
from in France.

I want to tell you very simply about the problem of
government, the difficulties that you and I as Americans have faced

and solved and the difficulties which we still face and are going to solve. I recognize and appreciate, and the Nation recognizes and appreciates, the patience, the loyalty, the willingness to make sacrifices, shown by the overwhelming majority of the veterans of our Country during the trying period from which we are beginning successfully to emerge.

I want to talk to you about national unity. Let us look at it as a living thing -- not a mere theory resting in books, or otherwise apart from everyday business of men and women. It means that we all live under a common government, that we trade with each other, pay common taxes, many of them too high. (Applause) It means that we give to and receive from a common protective government of which we are part. So to recognize national unity, to hold it above all else, seeing that upon it depends our common welfare, is just another way to say that we have patriotism.

You and I who served in the World War know that we represented a united nation in a time of danger to world civilization. But you and I know also that national unity is as essential in time of peace as in time of war. If this Country is worth living in, if this Flag of ours is worth living under, if our social order means anything to us, then this Country of ours is worth defending every day and every year of the life of every individual one of us. It is because I am unwilling to live myself, or to have my children or grandchildren live, under an

alien flag or an alien form of government, that I believe in the fundamental obligation of citizenship, men and women, to don the uniform of our Country, to carry arms and work in its defense when our Country and the things it stands for are attacked. (Applause)

But there are two enemies of national unity, sectionalism and class, and if the spirit of sectionalism or the spirit of class is allowed to grow strong, or to prevail, that would mean the end of national unity and the end of patriotism.

Some people who visit us from other lands across the seas still find it difficult to credit the fact that a Nation sprung from many sources, a Nation one hundred and thirty million strong, a Nation stretching three thousand miles from east to west, is, in all the great essentials of its civilization, a homogeneous whole; for not only do we speak one language, not only are the customs and habits of our people essentially similar in every part of the (Continent) Country, but we have given repeated proof on many occasions, and especially in these recent years, that we are willing to forego sectional advantage where such advantage can be obtained only by one part of the Country at the expense of the Country as a whole.

The other enemy of national unity is class distinction, and you and I are well aware of the simple fact that as every day passes, the people of (this Country) the United States

are less and less willing to tolerate benefits for any one group of citizens that have to be paid for by others. (Applause)

You men of the Legion have been willing to fight for the benefits of American life. You have been willing to live for American unity. You have understood that this is the very foundation of the Americanism for which you stand, in which you believe, and to which you and I swore allegiance when we became American Legionnaires. (Applause)

But my friends, for several years past the benefits of American life were threatened. The crisis came in the Spring of this year. It was necessary to meet that crisis. Again it was necessary for all of us to go back to fundamentals. Millions of people were out of work, the banks were closed, the credit of the Government itself was threatened. The car was stalled. Obviously, the first objective was to get the engine running again. (Applause) It is true that we succeeded in reopening the great majority of the banks, and we are going to open a lot more of them, but this would have been impossible if at the same time we had not been able to restore the credit of the Government.

In speaking of national credit we are again dealing with a real thing, not a mere theory in books. There is such a thing as national credit. It depends on national unity. Without it the government cannot get money to carry on the great work of rehabilitation. You and I depend upon it, and in the

right sense your welfare and mine rests upon it.

That is not just an academic proposition. Industry cannot be restored, people cannot be put back to work, banks cannot be kept open, human suffering cannot be cared for, if the Government itself is bankrupt. We realize now that the great human values, not for you alone but for all American citizens, rest upon the unimpaired credit of the United States. (Applause)

It was because of that that we undertook to take the National Treasury out of the red and put it in the black -- and we have done it. (Applause) And in the doing of it we laid down two principles which directly affected benefits to veterans -- benefits to you, benefits to veterans of other wars.

The first principle, following inevitably from the obligation of citizens to bear arms, is that the Government has a responsibility for and towards those who suffered injury or contracted disease while serving in its defense. (Applause)

The second principle is that no person, because he wore a uniform must thereafter be placed in a special class of beneficiaries over and above all other citizens. (Applause) The fact of wearing a uniform does not mean that he can demand and receive from his Government a benefit which no other citizen receives. (Applause) It does not mean that because a person served in the defense of his Country, performed a basic

obligation of citizenship, he should receive a pension from his Government because of a disability incurred after his service had terminated, and not connected with that service. (Applause)

It does mean, however, that those who were injured in and as a result of their service, are entitled to receive adequate and generous compensation for their disabilities. (Applause) It does mean that generous care shall be extended to the dependents of those who died in or as a result of service to their country. (Applause)

To carry out these principles, the people of this Country can and will pay in taxes the sums which it is necessary to raise. To carry out these principles will not bankrupt your Government nor throw its bookkeeping into the red. (Applause)

Every person who has made honest study knows that mistakes, many of them, have been made during the course of the past fifteen years. I personally know that mistakes in individual cases and inequalities affecting various groups have occurred in the past six months. And I say to you right here (applause) that at the same time there stands out the fact which you know -- that many of these mistakes have been rectified and that we have the definite purpose of doing justice not only to the mass, but, insofar as possible, to every individual as well. (Applause) Furthermore, it is my hope that insofar as justice concerns those whose disabilities are, as a matter of fact, of war origin,

the Government will be able to extend even more generous care than is now provided under existing regulations. It is to these men that our obligation (exists) lies. (Prolonged applause)

To these two broad principles the time has come, I believe, for us to add a third. There are many veterans of our wars to whom disability and sickness unconnected with war service has come. To them the Federal Government owes the application of the same broad rule or principle which it has laid down for the relief of other cases of involuntary want or destitution. (Applause)

In other words, if the individual affected can afford to pay for his own treatment he cannot call on any form of government aid. (Applause) But if he has not got the wherewithal to take care of himself, it is first of all the duty of the community in which he lives to take care of him and next it is the duty of his State in which he lives. Only if under these circumstances his own community and his own State are unable, after reasonable effort, to care for him, then, and then only, should the Federal Government offer him hospitalization and care, and the Federal Government stands ready to do that. (Prolonged applause)

My, you are a young-looking bunch. But the young men of this country, the young people of today who, in the event of war, would bear the first brunt of national defense, think of us of the American Legion as middle-aged people. (Laughter)

You and I, I have a sneaking suspicion that you and I are not yet ready to admit that we have "one foot in the grave."
(Laughter) We think of ourselves, and with some justification perhaps, as people who have had some experience, of some maturity of judgment, of a position in the community that carries with it a certain amount of responsibility. We believe we have a certain amount of influence as individuals and we believe that as an organization the American Legion has enormous power for the good of the Country for many years to come. (Applause)
It is not enough that you have helped to write the history of the United States and of the world. It is a fact that much of the future history of (America) our beloved Country will be a history which you will help to make in the years to come. Your future interests are inseparable from those of other citizens, and, granting that your interest in the disabled and dependent comrades is first upon your program, I ask in addition your cooperation in the great program of national rehabilitation in which you and I are equally engaged. (Applause)

The charter of the Legion keeps it out of partisan politics. The strength and the very existence of the Legion depend on the maintenance of that principle. You are not here as Republicans or Democrats. You are here, as you should be, as Americans to work with your Government for the good of the average citizen. (Prolonged applause) I am grateful to the Legion for the splendid stand it has taken -- I am grateful for the "Battle

Order" it has issued. (Applause)

The realization of our national program, my friends, cannot be attained in six months. Reemployment has proceeded only a part of the way. From week to week there will be ups and downs, but the net result is a consistent gain. (Applause) The freezing of credits has been stopped and the ice is definitely melting, it has not all melted yet. Farm income has been increased; but not enough, it must be increased further. Industry has picked up, but an increased purchasing power must stimulate it further and is going to. (Applause)

Your task and mine are similar. Each one of us must play an individual part in our own field in dealing with these many problems, and to help make our neighbors play their part, but at the same time we must realize that the individual part belongs to a closely related whole -- the national unity of purpose and of action.

Comrades of the Legion, I ask your further and even greater efforts in your program of national recovery. You who wore the uniform, you who served, you who took the oath of allegiance to the American Legion, you who support the ideals of American citizenship, you I have called to the Colors again. As your Commander-in-Chief and your comrade, I am confident that you will respond. (Prolonged applause).

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT BEFORE THE

145

AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION.

Chicago, Illinois

October 2, 1933.

Commander Johnson, Fellow Members of the American Legion:

I am glad to come here as your guest and I am glad to have the right to come here as your comrade. I have come because I have faith in the American Legion and in all other veterans of our wars. The right which I have to come here works both ways, because as long as I am in the White House you have the right to come and see me there.

But my relationship with you is not a matter of the past six months; it dates back to the war days when I participated with you, not only in this country but also on the North Sea, and in the Channel, and on the actual fighting front in France.

I want to talk with you about the problem of government, the difficulties which you and I as Americans have faced and solved, and those which we still face. I recognize and appreciate, and the Nation recognizes and appreciates, the patience, the loyalty and the willingness to make sacrifices, shown by the overwhelming majority of the veterans of our Country during the trying period from which we are beginning successfully to emerge.

I want to talk to you about national unity. Let us look at it as a living thing -- not a mere theory resting in books, or otherwise apart from every day business of men. It means that we all live under a common government, trade with each other, pay common taxes, give to and receive from a common protective government. To recognize national unity, to hold it above all else, seeing that upon it depends our common welfare, is just another way to say that we have patriotism.

You and I who served in the World War know that we represented a united nation in a time of danger to world civilization. But you and I know also that national unity is as essential in time of peace as in time of war. If this Country is worth living in, if this Flag of ours is worth living under, if our social order means anything to us, then this Country of ours is worth defending every day and every year of the life of every individual one of us. It is because I am unwilling to live myself, or to have my children or grandchildren live, under an alien flag or an alien form of government, that I believe in the fundamental obligation of citizenship to don the uniform of our Country, to carry arms in its defense when our Country and the things it stands for are attacked.

But there are two enemies of national unity, sectionalism and class, and if the spirit of sectionalism or the spirit of class is allowed to grow strong, or to prevail, it means the end of national unity and the end of patriotism.

Some people who visit us from other lands still find it difficult to credit the fact that a Nation sprung from many sources, a Nation one hundred and thirty million strong, a Nation stretching three thousand miles from east to west, is, in all the great essentials of its civilization, a homogeneous whole; for not only do we speak one language, not only are the customs and habits of our people similar in every part of the Continent, but we have given repeated proof on many occasions, and especially in recent years, that we are willing to forego sectional advantage where such advantage can be obtained only by one part of the Country at the expense of another.

The other enemy of national unity is class distinction, and you and I are well aware of the simple fact that as every day passes, the people of this Country are less and less willing to tolerate benefits for any one group of citizens which must be paid for by others.

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In speaking of national credit we are again dealing with a real thing, not a theory in books. There is such a thing as national credit. It depends upon national unity. Without it the government cannot get the money to give. You and I depend upon it, and in a right sense your welfare and mine rests upon it.

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I want to talk to you about national unity. Let us look at it as a living thing -- not a mere theory resting in books, or otherwise apart from every day business of men. It means that we all live under a common government, trade with each other, pay common taxes, give to and receive from a common protective government. To recognize national unity, to hold it above all else, seeing that upon it depends our common welfare, is just another way to say that we have patriotism.

You and I who served in the World War know that we represented a united nation in a time of danger to world civilization. But you and I know also that national unity is as essential in time of peace as in time of war. If this Country is worth living in, if this Flag of ours is worth living under, if our social order means anything to us, then this Country of ours is worth defending every day and every year of the life of every individual one of us. It is because I am unwilling to live myself, or to have my children or grandchildren live, under an alien flag or an alien form of government, that I believe in the fundamental obligation of citizenship to don the uniform of our Country, to carry arms in its defense when our Country and the things it stands for are attacked.

But there are two enemies of national unity, sectionalism and class, and if the spirit of sectionalism or the spirit of class is allowed to grow strong, or to prevail, it means the end of national unity and the end of patriotism.

Some people who visit us from other lands still find it difficult to credit the fact that a Nation sprung from many sources, a Nation one hundred and thirty million strong, a Nation stretching three thousand miles from east to west, is, in all the great essentials of its civilization, a homogeneous whole; for not only do we speak one language, not only are the customs and habits of our people similar in every part of the Continent, but we have given repeated proof on many occasions, and especially in recent years, that we are willing to forego sectional advantage where such advantage can be obtained only by one part of the Country at the expense of another.

The other enemy of national unity is class distinction, and you and I are well aware of the simple fact that as every day passes, the people of this Country are less and less willing to tolerate benefits for any one group of citizens which must be paid for by others.

You have been willing to fight for the benefits of American life. You have been willing to live for American unity. You have understood that this is the very foundation of the Americanism for which you stand, in which you believe, and to which you and I swore allegiance when we became American Legionnaires.

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In speaking of national credit we are again dealing with a real thing, not a theory in books. There is such a thing as national credit. It depends upon national unity. Without it the government cannot get the money to give. You and I depend upon it, and in a right sense your welfare and mine rests upon it.

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It does mean, however, that those who were injured in or as a result of their service, are entitled to receive adequate and generous compensation for their disabilities. It does mean that generous care shall be extended to the dependents of those who died in or as a result of service to their Country.

To carry out these principles, the people of this Country can and will pay in taxes the sums which it is necessary to raise. To carry out these principles will not bankrupt your Government nor throw its bookkeeping into the red.

Every person who has made honest study knows that mistakes, many of them, have been made during the course of fifteen years. I personally know that mistakes in individual cases and inequalities affecting various groups have occurred during the past six months. But at the same time there stands out the fact which you know -- that many of these mistakes have been rectified and that we have the definite purpose of doing justice not only to the mass, but, insofar as possible, to every individual as well. Furthermore, it is my hope that insofar as justice concerns those whose disabilities are, as a matter of fact, of war service origin, the Government will be able to extend even more generous care than is now provided under existing regulations. It is to these men that our obligation exists.

To these two broad principles the time has come, I believe, for us to add a third. There are many veterans of our wars to whom disability and sickness unconnected with war service has come. To them the Federal Government owes the application of the same rule which it has laid down for the relief of other cases of involuntary want or destitution.

In other words, if the individual affected can afford to pay for his own treatment he cannot call on any form of government aid. If he has not the wherewithal to take care of himself, it is first of all the duty of his community to take care of him and next the duty of his State. Only if under these circumstances his own community and his own State are unable, after reasonable effort, to care for him, then, and then only, should the Federal Government offer him hospitalization and care.

The young men of this country who today, in the event of war, would bear the first brunt of national defense, think of us of the American Legion as middle-aged people. You and I are not yet ready to admit that we have "one foot in the grave." We think of ourselves, and with some justification perhaps, as people of some experience, of some maturity of judgment, of a position in the community which carries responsibilities. We believe we have influence as individuals and we believe that as an organization the American Legion has enormous power for the good of the Country for many years to come. It is not enough that you have helped to write the history of America. It is a fact that much of the future history of America will be a history which you will help to make. Your future interests are inseparable from those of other citizens, and, granting that your interest in the disabled and dependent comrades is first upon your program, I ask in addition your cooperation in the great program of national rehabilitation in which you and I are equally engaged.

The charter of the Legion keeps it out of partisan politics. The strength and the very existence of the Legion depend on the maintenance of that principle. You are not here as Republicans or Democrats. You are here, as you should be, as Americans to work with your Government for the good of the average citizen. I am grateful to the Legion for the splendid stand it has taken --- for the "Battle Order" it has issued.

STATEMENTS FILE
Shorthand By Kannee

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT BEFORE THE

AMERICAN LEGION CONVENTION.

Chicago, Illinois

October 2, 1933.

CONFIDENTIAL UNTIL RELEASED.

CAUTION: The following address of the President must be held in strict confidence until released. RELEASE ONLY WHEN DELIVERY HAS ACTUALLY COMMENCED.

STEPHEN EARLY
Assistant Secretary
to the President.

Commander Johnson, Fellow Members of the American Legion:

I am glad to come here as your guest and I am glad to have the right to come here as your comrade. I have come because I have faith in the American Legion and in all other veterans of our wars. The right which I have to come here works both ways, because as long as I am in the White House you have the right to come and see me there.

But my relationship with you is not a matter of the past six months; it dates back to the war days when I participated with you, not only in this country but also on the North Sea, and in the Channel, and on the actual fighting front in France.

I want to talk with you about the problems of government, the difficulties which you and I as Americans have faced and solved, and those which we still face. I recognize and appreciate, and the Nation recognizes and appreciates, the patience, the loyalty and the willingness to make sacrifices, shown by the overwhelming majority of the veterans of our Country during the trying period from which we are beginning successfully to emerge.

I want to talk to you about national unity. Let us look at it as a living thing -- not a mere theory resting in books, or otherwise apart from every day business of men. It means that we all live under a common government, trade with each other, pay common taxes, give to and receive from a common protective government. To recognize national unity, to hold it above all else, seeing that upon it depends our common welfare, is just another way to say that we have patriotism.

You and I who served in the World War know that we represented a united nation in a time of danger to world civilization. But you and I know also that national unity is as essential in time of peace as in time of war. If this Country is worth living in, if this Flag of ours is worth living under, if our social order means anything to us, then this Country of ours is worth defending every day and every year of the life of every individual one of us. It is because I am unwilling to live myself, or to have my children or grandchildren live, under an alien flag or an alien form of government, that I believe in the fundamental obligation of citizenship to don the uniform of our Country, to carry arms in its defense when our Country and the things it stands for are attacked.

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In speaking of national credit we are again dealing with a real thing, not a theory in books. There is such a thing as national credit. It depends upon national unity. Without it the government cannot get the money to give. You and I depend upon it, and in a right sense your welfare and mine rests upon it.

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I ask your further and even greater efforts in your program of national recovery. You who wore the uniform, you who served, you who took the oath of allegiance to the American Legion, you who support the ideals of American citizenship. I have called to the Colors again. As your Commander-in-Chief and your comrade, I am confident that you will respond. (C) (C) (C)

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Commander Johnson, fellow-members of the American Legion:

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But national unity can be attacked in time of peace by two insidious enemies -- the enemy of sectionalism and the enemy of class distinctions.

People who visit us from other lands find it difficult to credit the fact that a Nation sprung from many sources, a Nation one hundred and thirty million strong, a Nation stretching three thousand miles from east to west, is, in all the great essentials of its civilization, a homogeneous whole;

for not only do we speak one language, not only are the customs and habits of our people similar in every part of the Continent, but we have given repeated proof on many occasions, and especially in recent years, that we are willing to forego sectional advantage where such advantage can be obtained only by one part of the Country at the expense of another.

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Your task and mine are similar. Each one of us must play an individual part in our own field in dealing with these many problems, but at the same time we must realize that the individual part belongs to a closely related whole -- the national unity of purpose and of action. I ask your reenlistment for a further and greater effort in our program of national recovery. You who wore the uniform, you who served the flag, you who took the oath of allegiance to the American Legion, you who support the ideals of American citizenship, are called to the colors again. As your Commander-in-Chief and your comrade, I am confident that you will respond.

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