

February 2, 1934

[National Emergency Council]

FDR Speech File

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
to the 48 State Directors of the
National Emergency Council
February 2, 1934

I am glad you have undertaken this very great task.

We have felt, as you know, for a long time that it was necessary to tie in, in some way, the entire emergency program which, in its many ramifications, we have been undertaking from time to time. We feel also that this work of disseminating information and preventing the crossing of wires, had to be done through decentralization, and that is why you are here. You are the great decentralizers for the Federal Government and, in a sense, also, you are the coordinators between the Federal Government, the state and the local governments. That being so, I think probably that the future success of this program is more in your hands than in the hands of any other group.

Frank Walker, as National Director, has explained to you the various responsibilities you have. If you don't mind, I want to give you a few personal observations, based on certain experiences -- four years in Albany, war work here during the Wilson Administration, and a certain amount of experience in the last few months. They are:

One of the most difficult tasks that I know anything

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.

I am glad you have undertaken this very great task. We have felt, as you know, for a long time that it was necessary to do this in the same way. The entire emergency program which, in the many ramifications, we have been undertaking from time to time. We feel also that this work of disseminating information and preventing the crossing of wires, had to be done through decentralization, and that is why you are here. You are the great decentralization for the Federal Government and, in a sense, also, you are the coordination between the Federal Government, the state and the local governments. That being so, I think probably that the future success of this program is more in your hands than in the hands of any other group.

Frank Walker, as National Director, has explained to you the various responsibilities you have. If you don't mind, I want to give you a few personal observations, based on certain experiences -- four years in Albany, way back here during the Wilson Administration, and a certain amount of experience in the last few months. They are:

One of the most difficult tasks that I know anything

about is to get around and avoid the results of certain perfectly normal and natural human impulses -- impulses based on selfishness and which take certain forms well known to most of us, either the purely personal form of trying to get special authority or special credit for individual applause or aggrandizement. Another thing we run into is the idea, the thought on the part of some people, of trying to make political capital out of relief work, out of the building up of what is in many ways a new theory of the relationship not only of government to citizen but also the relationship between employer and employee -- the problem of taking care of human needs. Where we have fallen down in these past months I would say in about 90% of the cases, the falling down has been caused quite frankly, by individuals who try to get either personal or political credit out of something that ought not to have either of those factors in the work in any shape, manner or form.

This work has nothing to do with partisan politics -- nothing at all. A great many of you are Republicans, a good many are Democrats -- quite a number do not belong regularly to one party or the other. We are not the least bit interested in the partisan side of this picture.

We do want you to be absolutely hard-boiled if you

find any local person within your own states who is trying to get political advantage out of the relief of human needs and you will have the backing of this Administration 1000%, even if you hit the biggest political boss in the United States on the head, in carrying out this general program. I think it is awfully important for the country to realize that relief -- the carrying out of the principles behind the National Recovery Act, the carrying out of public works and all of the other ramifications -- is based on a conception that is far beyond local politics or the local building up either of a political machine or a party or personal machine.

So that is one of the things you will have a hard time in fighting. I think you will be able to get the help and enthusiastic support of at least 90% of the people within your own states if that idea can be thoroughly and completely gotten across at the very inception of your work.

People are going to rush to you with all their troubles. That will relieve us in Washington very greatly.

You will require extraordinary patience and long hours -- a smile at all times -- and the carrying out of the policy of not just the Administration in a narrow sense, but the policy of what I think is the overwhelming majority of the American people today. We are all behind, with few

exceptions, this broad program. We think it has done good. We believe we are on our way. We believe it is working out pretty well in all sections of the country.

I was interested in talking yesterday to the President of one of the greatest railroads of this country. I asked him how his road was doing. His reply was that while his road was carrying more freight and more passengers, the important fact was that the freight they were carrying revealed increases in every single classification of freight. That is the best illustration of the fact that we are building up economically in every section of the country, including practically all industries.

We know the human factor which enters so largely into this picture. We are trying to apply it to all groups needing aid and assistance and not merely just a few scattered or favored groups. That is why we want from you the kind of information and kind of reports that will keep us in touch with the broad picture -- in every one of the 48 states.

I wish I could sit in with you in all the meetings you are having. When you return to your home states, you carry my very definite and distinct blessing. I hope you will not only keep Frank Walker informed, but through him, you will keep me in touch with the problems as you find

them. Let us also have any suggestions you may have to make so we can give additional help from this end whenever necessary.

It has been fine to see you. Perhaps later in the Spring, after you have been at work five or six months, we shall have another meeting in Washington.

February 2, 1934.

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The following is the stenographic report of the President's remarks to the forty eight State Directors of the National Emergency Council:

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the Country to realize that relief -- the carrying out of the principles behind the National Recovery Act, the carrying out of public works and all of the other ramifications -- is based on a conception that is far beyond local politics or the local building-up either of a political machine or a party or personal machine.

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FEBRUARY 2, 1934

FOR THE PRESS

The following is the stenographic report of the President's
remarks to the forty eight State Directors of the National
Emergency Council.

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STATEMENTS FILE

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REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT TO 48 STATE DIRECTORS OF NATIONAL
EMERGENCY COUNCIL, EXECUTIVE OFFICES, FEB. 2, 1934,
4:15 P. M.

(2)


Following introduction of all Directors to the President, the President said:

~~I don't know why I should make a speech to you, because I think by the time you get through you will have had more speeches than any other group I ever received in Washington, (laughter) and also a great deal more information about the general problem and program of relief than even I have got, and I think I am supposed to have as good a cross section of it as anybody else.~~

I am ~~sure~~ glad you have undertaken this very great task. We have felt, as you know, for a long time ~~the last in the~~ *entire* that it was necessary to tie-in, in some way, ~~and~~ the emergency program which, in its many ramifications, we have been undertaking from time to time, ~~and~~ *we* feel also that this work of disseminating information and ~~tying things in together and~~ preventing the crossing

(3)

of wires, had to be done through decentralization, and that is why you are here. You are the great decentralizers for the Federal Government and, in a sense, also, you are the coordinators between the Federal Government, ~~and~~ the State ~~Governments~~ *and* the Local Governments. ~~and~~ *T*hat being so, I think probably that the future success of this program is more in your hands than in the hands of any other group.



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give you a few personal observations, based on certain experiences --
four years in Albany, war work ~~and~~ here during the Wilson Administra-
tion, and a certain amount of experience in the last few months. ~~They are:~~

~~and that this~~ *They are:* ~~the~~ ~~one of~~ ~~the~~ most difficult tasks ~~is almost impossible~~
~~of the country~~ that I know anything about is to get around and avoid
the results of certain perfectly normal and natural human impulses --
impulses ~~which~~ based on selfishness and which take certain forms
well known to most of us, either the purely personal form of trying to
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relationship between employer and employee--the problem of taking care of

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I ~~RE~~ T this work has nothing to do with partisan politics — nothing at all.


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~~who is going to~~ relieve us ~~very greatly~~ in Washington, ~~(Washington)~~

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you will ~~not~~ not only Frank Walker informed, but through him, you

will keep me in touch with the problems as you find them, ~~and also~~ let us ^{also}

have any suggestions ~~that~~ you may have to make ^{so} ~~which~~ we can

give additional help from this end ^{whenever necessary}

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It has been fine to see you and I don't know how your ~~work~~ ^{Perhaps later} ~~but it is my thought that sometime later on~~ in the Spring, after you

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have been at work ~~on this job for 4 or 5~~ or 6 months we shall have another

meeting in Washington and take steps ~~which will~~ help us in the task we

~~have entered upon. (Applause) That's fine Frank, go to it.~~

~~10~~