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

Series 2: “You have nothing to fear but fear itself:” FDR and the New Deal

File No. 738

1934 September 27

Radio Address to the 4th Annual Conference on Human Problems
I wish that I could have attended in person all of the sessions of the Conference on Current Problems because of the wide field of human endeavor which it has covered and because of the distinguished group of speakers to whom you have listened. The world as a whole is making progress in meeting current problems, because the world as a whole realizes that the problems are new and, as such, must be met with new answers.

If you were to ask me, I would tell you frankly that the greatest achievement of the past two years in the United States has been the fact that the American people have taken, and are taking, a greater interest in, and have acquired a better understanding of, current problems affecting their welfare and the world's welfare than at any time at least during the present generation. That is a very heartening thought to all of us who believe in the republican form of government as carried into effect by majority rule.
In every walk of life in every part of the country, it has become a normal and an interesting thing when two or more persons are gathered together for them to talk over methods of improving the economic and social lot of our citizenry.

More and more people are doing their own thinking. The number of poll parrots in our midst is steadily declining — for which we must be very thankful. More and more men and women are looking up their own facts and forming their own opinions.

We are learning to discriminate between news and rumor. As a people we put our tongues in our cheeks when a fact or a series of facts are distorted, no matter what motive is the cause of that distortion.

We as a people are less inclined to believe those who would create fear or encourage panic. We as a people pay small attention to those gossip-mongers who invent tales, generally with a
Fortunately the overwhelming mass of the American people pay no more attention to this kind of rumor than I do. Today's story happens to be wholly untrue, but I assume you that I have not taken the trouble to scan rumors, because I have contributing faith. It is with a very definite sense of gratification and thanks that I tell you of my conviction that our people have both feet on the ground; that they are increasingly interested in the truth and increasingly interested in arriving at sound conclusions regarding our national progress in meeting current problems.

For that reason I am glad to have this opportunity of sending my greetings to a gathering of intelligent men and women, who know how to discriminate in making up their minds about the current problems of American life. Keep up the good work.
RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

to the
Fourth Annual Women's Conference on Current Problems
September 27, 1934, 10.00 P.M.

I wish that I could have attended in person all of the sessions of the Conference on Current Problems because of the wide field of human endeavor which it has covered and because of the distinguished group of speakers to whom you have listened. The world as a whole is making progress in meeting current problems, because the world as a whole realizes that the problems are new and, as such, must be met with new answers.

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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.

The transcript is not a transcript of the actual speech delivered, but a record of the speech as it was taken in shorthand notes and transcribed by the stenographer. The transcript is intended to give an accurate representation of the speech as it was delivered.
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You and I as sensible Americans know of daily instances which mar rather than help our efforts for calm discussion of current problems. Just for example, I cite one which occurred this very day; a rumor which started in Wall Street, spread to Chicago, and came back to Washington for verification. The rumor was the immediate retirement of three members of my Cabinet -- the Secretary of Agriculture and his Undersecretary, the Secretary of Labor and the
Secretary of the Treasury. It even went to the extent of announcing the name of a new Secretary of the Treasury.

The origin of the report comes from what is politely called "an anonymous source". I urge that every one of you consider and analyze the source and motive back of every report you read.

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For that reason I am glad to have this opportunity of sending my greetings to a gathering of intelligent men and women, who know how to discriminate in making up their minds about the current problems of American life.
The following radio address of the President to the Fourth Annual Women's Conference on Current Problems, meeting in New York City, is released for publication in editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets NOT EARLIER THAN 10:00 P.M., Eastern Standard Time, today, September 27, 1934.

I wish that I could have attended in person all of the sessions of the Conference on Current Problems because of the wide field of human endeavor which it has covered and because of the distinguished group of speakers to whom you have listened. The world as a whole is making progress in meeting current problems, because the world as a whole realizes that the problems are new and, as such, must be met with new answers.

If you were to ask me, I would tell you frankly that the greatest achievement of the past two years in the United States has been the fact that the American people have taken, and are taking, a greater interest in, and have acquired a better understanding of, current problems affecting their welfare and the world's welfare than at any time at least during the present generation. That is a very heartening thought to all of us who believe in the republican form of government as carried into effect by majority rule.

In every walk of life in every part of the country, it has become a normal and an interesting thing when two or more persons are gathered together for them to talk over methods of improving the economic and social lot of our citizenry.

More and more people are doing their own thinking. The number of poll-parrots in our midst is steadily declining -- for which we must be very thankful. More and more men and women are looking up their own facts and forming their own opinions.

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You and I as sensible Americans know of daily instances which are rather than help our efforts for calm discussion of current problems. Just for example, I cite one which occurred this very day. A rumor which started in Vail Street, spread to Chicago, and came back to Washington for verification. The rumor was the immediate retirement of three members of my Cabinet -- the Secretary of Agriculture and his Undersecretary, the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of the Treasury. It even went to the extent of announcing the name of a new Secretary of the Treasury.

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More and more people are doing their own thinking. The number of parrots in our midst is steadily declining — for which we must be very thankful. More and more men and women are looking up their own facts and forming their own opinions.

We are learning to discriminate between news and rumor. As a people we put our tongues in our cheeks when a fact or a series of facts are distorted, no matter what motive is the cause of whether that distortion is the result of merely partisan political motives or by the desire of some special group to gain selfish ends or by some individual to obtain notoriety.

We as a people are less inclined to believe those who would create fear or encourage panic. We as a people pay small attention to those gossip-mongers who invent silly tales, generally with a selfish objective behind the tales.

You and I as sensible Americans know of daily instances which mar rather than help our efforts
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The origin of the report comes from what is politely called "an anonymous source," I am told that on this anonymous report the general stock market list advanced, except in the case of mining shares which broke. [Illegible text]

Fortunately the overwhelming mass of the American people pay no more attention to this kind of rumor than I do. Today's story happens to be wholly untrue, at least half a dozen stories, most of which appear in print which I read every day of my life.

It is with a very definite sense of gratification and thanks that I tell you of my conviction that our feet are both on the ground; increasingly interested in the truth and increasingly interested in arriving at sound conclusions regarding our national progress in meeting current problems.
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