INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS VISIT TO TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI

November 18, 1934

Senator Harrison, Governor Conner, Mr. Mayor, my friends:

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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.

I want not to make a speech to you, but to face you as your President and Commander in Chief, and as a citizen of the greatest nation in the world, an American, and as one who has helped to shape your present opportunity to serve.

I face you to-day as the President of the American Republic, and as the leader of the people of this country.

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I suppose that you good people know a great deal more of the efforts that we have been making in regard to the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority than I do because you have seen its application in your own counties and your own towns and your own homes and, therefore, it will be like carrying coals to Newcastle for me to tell you about what has been done.

But perhaps in referring to it I can use you as a text -- a text that may be useful to many other parts of the Nation, because people's eyes are upon you and because what you are doing here is going to be copied in every state of the Union before we get through.

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I talk about those figures first because it has been so often wrongly alleged that this yardstick which we are using could not be applied to private businesses because a government yardstick receives so many favors; that it is let off from paying this and paying that and paying the other thing. Well, we are proving in this Tennessee Valley that by using good business methods we can instruct a good many business men in the country.

And there is another side of it. I have forgotten the exact figures and I can't find them in this voluminous report at this moment, but the number of new refrigerators that have been put in -- that means something besides just plain dollars and cents. That means a greater human happiness. Electric cookstoves and all the other dozens of things which, when I was in the Navy, we used to call "gadgets" -- we are making it possible, all of us working together, to improve human life through the introduction of things that aren't especially new so
far as invention is concerned, but things which are becoming more and more necessities in our American life in every part of the country.

And I have been interested this morning in seeing these new homesteads -- not just the buildings, not just the land that they are on, not just the excellent landscaping of the trees among which those homes have been set, but especially the opportunities that those homes are giving to families to improve the standard of living.

And finally, my friends, there is one thing about all that you are doing here in Tupelo, that they are doing in Corinth, that they are doing in Athens and Norris, and the various other places where accomplishment can be seen today -- aye, the most important thing of all I think is that it is being done by the communities themselves. This is not coming from Washington -- it is coming from you. You are not being Federalized. We still believe in the community; and things are going to advance in this country exactly in proportion to the community effort. This is not regimentation -- it is community rugged individualism. It means no longer the kind of rugged individualism that allows an individual to do this, that or the other thing that will hurt his neighbors. He is forbidden to do that from now on -- and it is a mighty good thing. But he is going to be encouraged in every known way from the National Capitol and the state
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Yes, I have been thrilled by these three days -- thrilled in the knowledge not only of practical accomplishment but thrilled also in the belief -- the deep-seated belief on my part that the people of this Nation understand what we are trying to do, are cooperating with what we are trying to do and have made up their minds that we are going to do it.

And so, in saying "Goodbye" to you for a short time -- because I am coming back -- I ask all of you, throughout the length and breadth of the Tennessee Valley and those areas which form an economic portion of that Valley -- I ask you all to remember that the responsibility for success lies very largely with you, that the eyes of the nation are upon you and that I, for one, am confident that you are going to give to the Nation an example which will be a benefit not only to yourselves but to the whole one hundred and thirty millions of Americans in every part of the land.
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stenographic Report of the
ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
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trips -- what I saw of human beings, made the tears come to my eyes. The great outstanding thing to me for these past three days has been the change in the looks on people's faces. It has not been only a physical thing. It has not been the contrast between what was actually a scarcity of raiment two years ago or a lack of food two years ago -- the contrast between that and better clothing and more food today -- but it is a something in people's faces and I think you know what I mean. There wasn't much hope in those days. People were wondering what was going to come to this country. And yet today I see not only hope but I see determination -- knowledge that all is well with the country and that we are coming back.

I suppose that you good people know a great deal more of the efforts that we have been making in regard to the work of the Tennessee Valley Authority than I do because you have seen its application in your own counties and your own towns and your own homes and, therefore, it will be like carrying coals to Newcastle for me to tell you about what has been done.

But perhaps in referring to it I can use you as a text -- a text that may be useful to many other parts of the Nation, because people's eyes are upon you and because what you are doing here is going to be copied in every state of the Union before we get through.
We recognize that there will be a certain amount of -- what shall I say? -- rugged opposition to this development, but I think we recognize also that the opposition is fading as the weeks and the months go by, fading into the light of practical experience.

I cite certain figures for the benefit of the gentlemen of the press, who have come hither from many climes. I am told that from March of this year, when you started using TVA power, the consumption of power for residential purposes has risen from 41,000 kilowatts to 89,000 kilowatts -- an increase of 126%. I understand that from the financial point of view, in spite of various fairy tales that have been spread in other parts of the country, your power system is still paying taxes to the municipality. That is worth remembering. Furthermore, that as a whole it is a remarkable business (PP) success. I talk about those figures first because it has been so often alleged that this yardstick which we are using could not be applied to private businesses because a government yardstick receives so many favors; it is let off from paying this and paying that and paying the other thing. Well, we are proving in this Tennessee Valley that by using good business methods we can instruct a good many business men in the country.
And there is another side of it. I have forgotten the exact figures and I can't find them in this voluminous report at this moment, but the number of new refrigerators that have been put in -- that means something besides just plain dollars and cents. That means a greater human happiness. Electric cookstoves and all the other dozens of things which, when I was in the Navy, we used to call "gadgets" -- we are making it possible, all of us working together, to improve human life through the introduction of things that aren't especially new so far as invention is concerned, but things which are becoming more and more necessities in our American life in every part of the country.

And I have been interested this morning in seeing these new homesteads -- not just the buildings, not just the land that they are on, not just the excellent landscaping of the trees among which those homes have been set, but especially the opportunities that those homes are giving to families to improve the standard of living.

And finally, my friends, there is one thing about all that you are doing here in Tupelo, that they are doing in Corinth, that they are doing in Athens and Norris and the various other places where accomplishment can be seen today -- aye, the most important thing of all I think is that it is being done by the communities themselves. This is not coming from Washington -- it is coming from you.
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