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. 839

1936 January 19

New York City, NY - Dedication of New York State Roosevelt Memorial
MR. CHAIRMAN, GOVERNOR LEHMAN, MAYOR LA GUARDIA,
TRUSTEES OF THE NEW YORK STATE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL,
TRUSTEES OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

This memorial, the corner stone of which I laid, and in the dedication of which I am privileged to participate this afternoon, is typical of Theodore Roosevelt. It reflects the universality of his mind and of his interests. Its decorations -- in place or in planning -- tell part of the story of his life, his work and his play; they depict the construction of the Panama Canal in which he was the dominating spirit; the Treaty of Portsmouth, which ended the Russo-Japanese War; the quest for scientific knowledge which carried him into the African jungle; symbolic figures of Fauna and Flora to tell generations to come of his interest in nature and in conservation -- all these bear witness to his intense vitality and to his varied contributions to our national culture. The Roosevelt Memorial Commission has been
faithful in executing its trust.

The quotations on these walls, too, bring us their message out of the rich storehouse of his written words.

"Conservation means development as much as it does protection" — a text which ought to be emblazoned in every treatise on the care and perpetuation of our national resources.

Or this: "The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value".

From his writings in the realm of statecraft we find this: "A great democracy must be progressive or it will soon cease to be great or a democracy". It is his warning to us of this day and generation that eternal progress is still the price of liberty.
There was an intimate quality about Theodore Roosevelt which all of us who knew him recall at this hour. We think of him not as an abstract being dwelling apart on the heights but rather as a friendly soul pervading this very hall which we are dedicating in his memory.

Theodore Roosevelt possessed talents and abilities unusual even among leaders of men. Whatever he did, he did with all of his might.

With this spirit of vital activity, be it also remembered that he received the Nobel Peace Prize. In him was combined a passion for righteousness and that strong sense of justice which found expression in the "Square Deal". Race, creed, color were not determining factors with him. He took a man for what he was.

"A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his
country", said he at Springfield, Illinois, on a fourth of July, "is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards. More than that no man is entitled to, and less than that no man shall have."

In his first Message to Congress he had written:

"The most vital problem with which this country, and, for that matter, the whole civilized world, has to deal, is the problem which has for one side the betterment of social conditions, moral and physical, in large cities, and for another side the effort to deal with that tangle of far-reaching questions which we group together when we speak of "labor."

This creed for social justice may be found in these quotations from later messages:

"In the vast and complicated mechanism of our modern civilized life, the dominant note is the note of
industrialism, and the relations of capital and labor, and especially of organized capital and organized labor, to each other, and to the public at large, come second in importance only to the intimate questions of family life."

"The corporation has come to stay, just as the trade union has come to stay. Each can do and has done great good. Each should be favored as long as it does good, but each should be sharply checked where it acts against law and justice."

We still remember how those whom he denounced with righteous wrath winced under the stigma of such flashing epithets as "malefactors of great wealth", "the wealthy criminal class" and the "lunatic fringe". He had a gift for pungent phrases and boiled down his whole political philosophy into such a homely and popular maxim as "speak softly but carry a big stick". No wonder that John Morley said in 1904: "The two things in America which seem to me most extraordinary
are Niagara Falls and President Roosevelt."

With clearness of vision, of energy, of unfaltering faith, he labored through his entire strenuous career to transform politics from a corrupt traffic to a public service. With a very passion for justice and equality before the law he sought with voice and pen, with every resource at his command, to obtain for men everywhere their constitutional guarantee of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I have purposely emphasized the many-sidedness of his character. That extraordinary range of interests makes difficult the task of any one who would adequately summarize his career and achievements. Varied as were his political activities, the scope of his literary interests was no less extended. His volumes on American history, on current problems, and on his own experiences as hunter and explorer, captured the interest of the American people.
We know how he loved the great outdoors. He loved the life of the boundless plains which he had known as a rancher in the West. He found strength in the wilderness. He knew the birds and animals and trees and plants and flowers.

And so he worked and wrought and wrote. His familiarity with all literature, with history and biography was reflected alike in his private writings and in his public utterances. Who but he could have given Bunyan's "Man-with-the-Muckrake" an emphasis which he gave it thirty years ago so that the term "muckraker" passed into the language and is current with us to this day"

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infused action and life and color into what before his time had been a somewhat dull and drab statecraft.

Everything about him was big, vital, national. He was able to see great problems in their true perspective because he looked at the Nation as a whole. There was nothing narrow or local or sectional about him. It is not for me here today to speak of the final place which history will accord Theodore Roosevelt; but we know and the Nation knows and the world knows that Theodore Roosevelt was a great patriot and a great soul.

When he died the Secretary of his Class at Harvard in sending to his classmates a notice of his passing, added this quotation from "Pilgrim's Progress":

"After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was taken with a summons by the same post as the other, and had this for a token
that the summons was true; 'That his pitcher
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Then he said, "I am going to my Father's, and
though with great difficulty I have got hither,
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The quotations on the walls immediately, too, bring us their message out of the rich storehouse of his written words.

"Conservation means development as much as it does protection" — a text which ought to be emblazoned in every treatise on the care and perpetuation of our national resources.

Or this: "The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value*.

*From his writings in the realm of statescraft we find this:

"A great democracy must be progressive or it will soon cease to be great or a democracy," as his warning to us of this day and generation that eternal vigilance is still the price of liberty.

It is indeed fitting that this memorial perpetuating the life and work of one who did such great things in the field of natural history should itself be an adjunct of the American Museum of Natural History, in which Theodore Roosevelt had such deep and active interest.

The late Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, so long the head of this noble institution for the increase and diffusion of scientific knowledge, and for many years a devoted friend of him in whose honor we are gathered today, advocated this memorial soon after Theodore Roosevelt's death.

Each and everyone of us feels sorry today that Professor Osborn could not have lived to take part in this, the culmination of his great desire; we know that his spirit is with us.

Professor Osborn's own untimely death occurred before its completion.

This memorial, of such noble architectural proportions, is withal intimate and vital above all things priceless. There was an intimate
ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE DEDICATION CEREMONIES, THEODORE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL
AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, NEW YORK, N. Y.
Sunday, January 19, 1936, 2 P.M.

Mr. Chairman, Governor Lehman, Mayor LaGuardia,
Trustees of the New York State Roosevelt Memorial, Trustees of the American Museum of Natural History, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This memorial, the corner stone of which I laid some years ago, and in the dedication of which I am privileged to participate this afternoon, is typical of Theodore Roosevelt. It reflects the universality of his mind and of his interests. Its decorations -- in place or in planning -- tell part of the story of his life, the story of his work, and the story of his play; they depict the construction of the Panama Canal in which he was the dominating spirit; the Treaty of Portsmouth, which ended the Russo-Japanese War; the quest for scientific knowledge which carried him into the African jungle; symbolic figures of Fauna and Flora to tell generations to come of his interest in nature and in conservation -- all these bear witness to his intense vitality and to his varied contributions to our national culture. The Roosevelt
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 REPORT OF THE COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE 1933 FLOODS

I am happy to introduce the members of the commission, who have just completed the work of the investigation of the flood of 1933. The commission has been given the power to study, in all the regions of the nation, the causes of the floods, and to make recommendations for the prevention of similar floods in the future.

The commission has been directed to make a complete report of its findings to the Congress, which will be published in a separate volume. The report will contain a detailed analysis of the causes of the flood, as well as recommendations for the prevention of similar floods in the future.

The commission has been given the power to issue the report as soon as it is completed, and it is expected that the report will be available for public examination shortly after the commission completes its work.

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Memorial Commission has been faithful in executing its high trust.

The quotations on these walls, they too, bring us their message out of the rich storehouse of his written words.

"Conservation means development as much as it does protection" -- a text which ought to be emblazoned in every treatise on the care and perpetuation of (our) America's national resources.

Or this: "The nation behaves well if it treats the natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value."

From his writings in the realm of statecraft we find this: "A great democracy must be progressive or it will soon cease to be great or a democracy." It is his warning to us of this day, (and) to us of this generation that eternal progress is still the price of liberty.

It is, I think, fitting that this memorial perpetuating the life and work of one who stirred such great interest in the field of natural history should itself be an adjunct of the American Museum of Natural History. And
may I say that I am very proud of the fact that for forty years I have been a member of this Museum. (Applause)

My friend, and your friend, the late Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, so long the head of this noble institution for the increase and diffusion of scientific knowledge, and for many years a devoted colleague of him in whose honor we are gathered today, advocated this memorial soon after Theodore Roosevelt's death.

Each and every one of us feels (sorry) a sadness today that Professor Osborn could not have lived to take part in this, the culmination of his great desire; we know that his spirit is with us.

This memorial of such noble architectural proportions is withal intimate and vital. Above all things it is useful. There was an intimate quality about Theodore Roosevelt which all of us who knew him recall at this hour. We think of him not as an abstract being dwelling apart on the heights, but rather as a friendly (soul) and pervading soul, pervading this very hall which we are dedicating (in) to his memory.

Theodore Roosevelt possessed talents and abilities which we know today were unusual even among leaders
of men. Whatever he did, he did with all of his might.

With (this) that spirit of vital activity, be it also remembered that he also received the Nobel Peace Award. In him was combined a passion for righteousness and for that strong sense of justice which found expression in the "Square Deal." Race, creed, color were not determining factors with him. He took a man for what he was.

"A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country", said he at Springfield, Illinois on a fourth of July, "is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards. More than that no man is entitled to, and less than that no man shall have."

In his first Message to Congress he had written:

"The most vital problem with which this country, and, for that matter, the whole civilized world, has to deal, is the problem which has for one side the betterment of social conditions, moral and physical, in large cities, and for another side the effort to deal with that tangle of far-reaching questions which we group together when we speak of 'labor'.'"

Yes, this creed for social justice may be found in (these) many quotations from later messages. He said:
"In the vast and complicated mechanism of our modern civilized life, the dominant note is the note of industrialism, and the relations of capital and labor, and especially of organized capital and organized labor, to each other, and to the public at large, come second in importance only to the intimate questions of family life."

"The corporation has come to stay, just as the trade union has come to stay. Each can do and has done great good. Each should be favored as long as it does good, but each should be sharply checked where it acts against law and justice."

(We) You and I still remember how those whom he denounced with righteous wrath winced under the stigma of such ( flashing) fighting epithets as "malefactors of great wealth", "the wealthy criminal class" and the "lunatic fringe". He had a gift for pungent phrase(s), (and boiled) boiling down his whole political philosophy into (such a) homely and popular maxims as "speak softly but carry a big stick". And it is no wonder that John Morley said in 1904: "The two things in America which seem to me most extraordinary are Niagara Falls and President Roosevelt." (Applause)
With clearness of vision, of energy, of unaltering faith, he labored through his entire (strenuous) career to transform politics from a corrupt traffic to a public service. With a very passion for justice and equality before the law he sought with voice, (and) with pen, with every resource at his command, to obtain for men everywhere their constitutional guarantee of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I have purposely emphasized the many-sidedness of his character. That extraordinary range of interest(s) makes difficult the task of any (one) man who would adequately summarize his career, (and) his achievements. Varied as were his political activities, the scope of his literary interests was no less extended. His volumes on American history, on current problems, and on his own experiences as hunter and explorer, captured, as we know, and retained the interest of the American people.

We know how he loved the great outdoors. He loved the life of the (boundless) plains which he had known as a rancher in the West. He found strength in the wilderness. He knew the birds and animals and trees and plants and flowers.
And so he worked, (and) so he wrought and so he wrote. His familiarity with all literature, with history, (and) with biography, was reflected alike in his private writings and in his public utterances. Who but he could have given Bunyan's "Man-with-the-Muckrake" an emphasis which he gave it thirty years ago so that the term "muckraker" passed into the language and is current with us even to this day?

He enriched, (and) he enlarged and extended our American cultural horizon. Out of (the) his rich experience(s) he had known, his mind received a cast which later was reflected when he infused action and life and color into what before his time had been a somewhat dull and drab statecraft.

Everything about him was big and vital and, above that, national. He was able to see great problems in their true perspective because he looked at the Nation as a whole. There was nothing narrow or local or sectional about him. It is not for me here today to speak of the final place which history will accord to Theodore Roosevelt; but we know and the Nation knows, (and) yes, the world knows, that Theodore Roosevelt was a great patriot and a great soul.

(Applause)
When he died, the Secretary of his Class at Harvard in sending to his classmates a notice of his passing, added at the end this quotation from "Pilgrim's Progress":

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(Prolonged applause)
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This address of the President, to be delivered at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial dedication ceremonies, American Museum of Natural History, New York City, on Sunday, January nineteenth, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

Release upon delivery, expected about 2:00 P. M., Eastern Standard Time.

CAUTION: Please safeguard against premature release.

STEPHEN EARLY
Assistant Secretary to the President

J. CHAIRMAN, GOVERNOR LEHMAN, MAYOR LA GUARDIA, TRUSTEES OF THE NEW YORK STATE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL, TRUSTEES OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

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Then he died, the Secretary of his Class at Harvard in sending to his classmates a notice of his passing, added this quotation from "Pilgrim's Progress":

"After this it was noise abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth was taken with a surmise by the same post as the other, and had this for a token that the surmise was true, 'That his pitcher was broken at the fountain.' Then he understood it, he called for his friends and told them of it. Then he said, 'I am going to my father's, and though with great difficulty I have got hither, yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to arrive here where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it. My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I have fought His battles who now will be my reward.'"
This address of the President, to be delivered at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial dedication ceremonies, American Museum of Natural History; New York City, on Sunday, January nineteenth, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

Release upon delivery, expected about 2:00 P. M., Eastern Standard Time.

MR. CHAIRMAN, GOVERNOR LEHMAN, MAYOR LA GUARDIA, TRUSTEES OF THE NEW YORK STATE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL, TRUSTEES OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

This memorial, the corner stone of which I laid, and in the dedication of which I am privileged to participate this afternoon, is typical of Theodore Roosevelt. It reflects the universality of his mind and of his interests. Its decorations -- in place or in planning -- tell part of the story of his life, his work and his play: they depict the construction of the Panama Canal in which he was the dominating spirit; the Treaty of Portsmouth, which ended the Russo-Japanese War; the quest for scientific knowledge which carried him into the African jungle; symbolic figures of Fauna and Flora to tell generations to come of his interest in nature and in conservation -- all these bear witness to his intense vitality and to his varied contributions to our national culture. The Roosevelt Memorial Commission has been faithful in executing its trust.

The quotations on these walls, too, bring us their message out of the rich storehouse of his written words.

"Conservation means development as much as it does protection" -- a text which ought to be emblazoned in every treatise on the care and perpetuation of our national resources.

Or this: "The nation behaves well if it treats its natural resources as assets which it must turn over to the next generation increased, and not impaired, in value".

From his writings in the realm of statecraft we find this: "A great democracy must be progressive or it will cease to be great or a democracy. It is his warning to us of this day and generation that eternal progress is still the price of liberty.

It is fitting that this memorial perpetuating the life and work of one who stirred such great interest in the field of natural history should itself be an adjunct of the American Museum of Natural History. My friend, the late Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn, so long the head of this noble institution for the increase and diffusion of scientific knowledge, and for many years a devoted colleague of him in whose honor we are gathered today, advocated this memorial soon after Theodore Roosevelt's death.
Each and everyone of us feels sorry today that Professor Osborn could not have lived to take part in this, the culmination of his great desire; we know that his spirit is with us.

This memorial of such noble architectural proportions, is vital, intimate and vital. Above all things it is useful. There was an intame quality about Theodore Roosevelt which all of us who knew him recall at this hour. We think of him not as an abstract being dwelling apart on the heights but rather as a friendly soul pervading this very hall which we are dedicating in his memory.

Theodore Roosevelt possessed talents and abilities unusual even among leaders of men. Whatever he did, he did with all of his might.

With this spirit of vital activity, be it also remembered that he received the Nobel Peace Prize. In him was combined a passion for righteousness and that strong sense of justice which found expression in the "Square Deal", race, creed, color were not determining factors with him. He took a man for what he was.

"A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country", said he at Springfield, Illinois on a fourth of July, "is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards. More than that no man is entitled to, and less than that no man shall have."

In his first message to Congress he had written: "The most vital problem with which this country, and, for that matter, the whole civilized world, has to deal, is the problem which has for one side the betterment of social conditions, moral and physical, in large cities, and for another side the effort to deal with that tangle of far-reaching questions which we group together when we speak of 'labor'."

This creed for social justice may be found in these quotations from later messages:

"In the vast and complicated mechanism of our modern civilized life, the dominant note is the note of industrialism, and the relations of capital and labor, and especially of organized capital and organized labor, to each other, and to the public at large, come second in importance only to the intimate questions of family life."

"The corporation has come to stay, just as the trade union has come to stay. Each can do and has done great good. Each should be favored as long as it does good, but each should be sharply checked where it acts against law and justice."

We still remember how those whom he denounced with righteous wrath winced under the stigmata of such flashing epithets as "malfeactors of great wealth", "the wealthy criminal class" and the "lunatic fringe". He had a gift for pungent phrases and boiled down his whole political philosophy into such a homely and popular maxim as "speak softly but carry a big stick". No wonder that John Morley said in 1904: "The two things in America which seem to me most extraordinary are Niagara Falls and President Roosevelt."

With clearness of vision, of energy, of unaltering faith, he labored through his entire strenuous career to transform politics from a corrupt traffic to a public service, with a very passion for justice and equality before the law he sought with voice and pen, with every resource at his command, to obtain for men everywhere their constitutional guarantee of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.
I have purposely emphasized the many-sidedness of his character. That extraordinary range of interests makes difficult the task of any one who would adequately summarize his career and achievements. Varied as were his political activities, the scope of his literary interests was no less extended. His volumes on American history, on current problems, and on his own experiences as hunter and explorer, captured the interest of the American people.

We know he loved the great outdoors. He loved the life of the boundless plains which he had known as a rancher in the West. He found strength in the wilderness. He knew the birds and animals and trees and plants and flowers.

And so he worked and wrought and wrote. His familiarity with literature, with history and biography, was reflected alike in his private writings and in his public utterances. he but he could have given Bunyan’s "Thump-the-hurdle" an emphasis which he gave it thirty years ago so that the term "hardknock" passed into the language and is current with us to this day?

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