

June 12, 1936

[Adolphus Hotel, Dallas, Texas]

FDR Speech File

INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE LUNCHEON GIVEN IN HONOR OF THE PRESIDENT AND HIS PARTY
ADOLPHUS HOTEL, DALLAS, TEXAS
June 12, 1936

It has been a wonderful day. I always regret the fact that I seem to be getting off a train and getting on a train, not having time to stay and visit, as we used to say back home. The little, short glimpse that I got today of the Exposition thrilled me and I wish I could have seen all of the buildings and, incidentally, the Midway as well.

(Applause)

I spoke this morning about getting to know the people. I got that idea from another President of the United States away back about the year 1905. A young lady that I was engaged to, also a member of the family, and I were stopping in the White House, and the then President Roosevelt, this was after supper, was visibly perturbed and was stamping up and down in front of the fireplace in the Oval Room upstairs. The various members of the family did not know what was the matter with T. R. and finally somebody said, "What is the trouble tonight?" "Oh," he said, "you know that bill for the creation of a large number of national parks? I am not going to be able to get

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. Underlines indicate 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.

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(Applause)

I spoke this morning about getting to know the
people. I got that idea from another President of the
United States many years ago. I got it from a young lady
that I was engaged to, also a member of the family, and
was stopping in the White House, and she then explained
necessity. This was after supper, and shortly afterwards
and was standing up and seen in front of the fireplace in
The Oval Room upstairs. The various members of the family
did not know that was the matter with F. D. and finally
somebody said, "What is the trouble tonight?" "Oh," she
said, "you know how Bill got the operation of a large sum
part of national party? I am not going to be able to get

it through this session because there are a lot of people up there that cannot think beyond the borders of their own states." And then he clenched his fist and said, "Sometimes I wish I could be President and Congress too."

(Laughter)

Well, I suppose if the truth were told, he is not the only President that had that idea. (Laughter)

And somebody said, "What would you do if you could be President and Congress too for just a few minutes?" He said, "I would pass a law or a Constitutional Amendment" -- and T. R. was always a little bit vague about the difference between laws and Constitutional revisions (laughter) -- "I would pass something making it obligatory for every member of the House, candidate for the House, candidate for the Senate," Hatton (Sumners) and Morris (Sheppard), you remember this, "to file a certificate before they can be elected certifying that they had visited in every State of the Union." (Applause) And he said, "That same thing should apply to every high public official in Washington."

Well, the more I come to study government, state government for a good many years and national government for a good many years, the sounder I think that general

theory is. Perhaps not just that kind of practice of it. But when I think back, even to the days when I was a boy, one of the first things that I can remember was the weeklies of the period, the headlines of the papers telling about the opening of the Cherokee Strip in Oklahoma. I can remember the first time that I crossed the Continent. And when I see today the enormous changes that have taken place in my lifetime -- and I am not an octogenarian yet -- I am amazed by the fact that this country, in its expansion, has acquired a greater unity with every passing year. When people from the Southwest came East thirty or forty years ago they were regarded as sort of strange people. They did not talk the same language. Their problems were different. And yet today, as you and I well know, you can go into any city, North, East, South or West, and you will find the same kind of people with largely the same kind of problems in their lives and in their businesses.

For a country of this size, three thousand miles one way and nearly two thousand the other, the fact of our unity is one of the things that amazes foreigners more than any other thing. Of course, in Washington, I see a great many people who come there from Europe. They are men in

public life, newspaper editors, economists, business men, and so forth, and the first question that I always put to them is, "How long have you been here?" And they will say, perhaps, "A week."

"Where have you been?" "New York City."

"Where are you going?" "Back home again."

And then I say, "I suppose you are going to write a book about America when you get back." (Laughter)

Lack of information about the United States on the part of our European friends is one of the most amazing things in the history of the present world. I don't suppose it is any exaggeration to say that in the small towns in the United States, especially since the World War and the custom that the papers have fallen into of printing a great deal of foreign news, that the average American citizen, not only in the big places but in the small places, knows more about world affairs and is more interested in world affairs than the people in the big towns and small towns of any other nation in the world. We have become not only Nation-minded, but we have become world-minded. That is one reason why we are trying to work so hard in the cause of peace.

I am, of course, and a great many people are worried about the dangers that beset the world. Things are not going as well in the European Continent and in the Asiatic Continent as they are going in the American Hemisphere. That has been the reason why I have tried to keep the feet of this country on the ground, hoping that by our example, our example of unity, our example of world unselfishness, our example of trying to build up trade between all the nations, that that example might have some effect on the rest of the world that is thinking too much of armaments and war. And the response in this country has been magnificent.

As I have said, we seem to understand very well what the problems of the world are. We have, perhaps, a kind of sympathy for their problems. We want to help them all that we can, but they have understood in these latter years very well that that help is going to be confined to moral help and that we are not going to get tangled up with their troubles in the days to come. (Applause)

You gentlemen who are running this wonderful Exposition here in Dallas are performing a real service for the whole country in helping the country get to know their

country. I congratulate you on a real accomplishment.

As I said before, I wish I had time to stay here and visit with you for a good many days to come.

Thank you very much.

At the luncheon given in honor of the
President and his party -
Adolphus Hotel, Dallas, June 12, 1936,

STATEMENTS FILE
Shorthand By Kannon