

October 12, 1936

[Train Platform - Dodge City, Kansas]

FDR Speech File

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INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
FROM THE REAR PLATFORM OF HIS SPECIAL TRAIN
DODGE CITY, KANSAS

October 12, 1936, 9.15 P.M.

(There were about 30,000 people in the audience.)

My friends, I am glad to come into Kansas. (Applause)

I have been through here many, many times before and I wish that this time I could have been in this part of the State by daylight because I have wanted to see conditions with my own eyes.

I know some of the problems that you have had, especially in this drought year. I am not going to talk to you about your own local affairs or about your State affairs because you know more about them than I do.

But I do want to say a few words about what we have been trying to do all through this drought area during the past few months and what we are trying to do this Winter and next Spring.

The thing we are up against is almost nation-wide. By that I mean that while the drought area does not cover the whole nation, the effects of the drought affect people in the East and all the way out on the Pacific Coast. That is well borne out by the other side of the picture, the fact that during these past three years we have come

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The thing we are up against is almost national-wide. It is that while the drought area does not cover the whole nation, the effects of the drought affect people in the East and all the way out on the Pacific Coast. This is well shown out by the other side of the picture, the fact that during these past three years we have come

into a growing prosperity. I was saying this morning that three years ago, when I came through, there were a lot of tourists going through the West, but they were going through the West on box-cars and on the tops of trains. Now there are more tourists but they are going through in Pullmans. (Applause)

In other words, the purchasing power of the Nation is being restored and, while I recognize the fact that you had a mighty short wheat crop, it is just as well that wheat was bringing a dollar a bushel or more and not 30 cents. (Applause)

And I could go on. The fact of an increasing purchasing power means that the merchants in all of these towns are selling more goods. When they are selling more goods it means that the people in the industrial areas have more work and if they have more work, they can eat more beef and more wheat. That is what makes it a rounded picture. I think we are coming to recognize that all over the country.

And the cost of it -- yes, there has been a cost in keeping people from starvation, in keeping people from losing their farms and their homes, but it is not only money well spent but it is money coming back a thousand times over. All we have to do is to bring some of these figures with nine or twelve zeros after them down to a point where you and I can understand them. I will put it to you this way: I will put it in the form of a question: If somebody came

to you and said, "If you will borrow \$800 and by borrowing that \$800 increase your annual income by \$2200," would you borrow it or not?

(Audience: "Yes.")

Well, that is a pretty good illustration of what has happened in the past three years. The Federal Government has gone into debt a net amount of eight billion dollars, but the national income in those three years has increased over twenty-two billion dollars every year. (Applause)

I am fairly confident that if we keep things going the way they are and tackle the problems like the drought with the understanding that you people are out here and your children are going to be here and that you are going to keep on being farmers in this section, that you are going to keep on raising cattle, I am quite certain that when I come back here again during the next four years I will find things better than they are today. (Applause)

Incidentally, let me remind you out here in western Kansas that I am making the same kind of a talk out here that I am making back East. (Applause)

I wish I could visit with you a little longer. This is, as you know, a very informal talk.

I am going to ask you to excuse me for a very simple reason. I have a sort of double duty to perform at this particular time. I am a candidate for re-election (applause) and this is, I suppose, a political trip. Nevertheless,

almost every station that we come to, we are getting either documents or papers to be signed or telegrams on which we have to take action, telegrams and papers that are sent to us from the national Capital for us to work on. Only this afternoon we have had a great many things sent to us to decide on and I have to remember the fact that I am still President of the United States. (Applause)

So, my friends, I am going to ask you to excuse me because I simply have to go back to work on mail and telegrams if I am to get to bed before midnight.

I wish you all sorts of luck. Goodnight. (Applause)

(The President moved around to the side of the platform so that the people alongside the train could get a view of him. He said:)

Before I go in I want to introduce to you a neighbor and friend of yours, a man who understands agriculture throughout the United States, I think, better than any other man in the United States. That was why I made Henry Wallace of Iowa Secretary of Agriculture. Here he is. (Applause)

(Secretary Wallace then made a brief speech and was followed by Senator McGill, who introduced Mrs. Roosevelt, who said: "I think that Senator McGill should do the talking. There are times when women should talk and times when they should not. At campaign times, campaigning should be left to the men.")