

October 17, 1936

[Buffalo, NY]

FDR Speech File

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SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT

BUFFALO, NEW YORK,

OCTOBER 17, 1936

I am proud to be at the dedication of this grand structure which the Federal Government has erected in this city. It is a part of the Federal spending program. It was a program designed first and foremost to give work to the unemployed. It was what we Americans had decided was an American substitute for the dole.

And all through the Nation there have been projects like these, smaller of course, but all designed with this primary objective.

But the secondary objective which was a part of this spending program was to provide useful public works, each of which would serve a need in every community. From coast to coast you will find a series of projects devoted to recreation or transportation or sanitation ^{and many other purposes} all of which we initiated on the recommendation of the local communities themselves.

All of the money which the Government placed into these structures has started the wheels of ~~immixx~~ trade and commerce turning again in sections where they had been stagnant for so many years. The money which the workers ^{incised.}

on this building and all of the other projects throughout the United States, has done much to restore purchasing power in the hands of the worker, the shopkeeper, the manufacturer and the farmer.

We have spent money throughout the nation, not only to save many hundreds of thousands of families from destitution. A structure like this, however, is particularly economical, even so far as dollars are concerned. This building will house the Federal Departments which cover Buffalo and the surrounding territory. Up to now the government has been obliged to pay rent for these departments to private owners of real estate. It was just ordinary good business to build our own building and keep the rent in our own treasury. We in New York State, you will recall, adopted this policy many years ago. And the State Office Building in Albany and in New York City and in Buffalo, are testimonials to the foresight and good business sense of the State of New York. The amount of money which was placed in circulation by what went into this building is hard to estimate. Every dollar that was put in did its work many times over. When the worker spent the dollar in the

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farmer or other producer of ~~the~~ raw material, there was a
profit. And so each dollar as it started in the stream of
trade and commerce made new business, new profits, new
income, new purchasing power in the community. If you
multiply the dollars which went into this building by the
thousands of projects all through the United States, you
will see what we mean when we say that the spending pro-
gram of the United States served as the first shock
troops in the battle against depression, starting anew the
processes of business.

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I pointed out the difference between the way we fought the
depression and the way in which the previous Administration
fought the depression. The previous Administration used what
I call the "trickle down" theory. That means that they acted
under the mistaken impression that if they lent ~~a few~~ ^{money} dollars
to the few financial interests which dominated business in the

Nation, that enough would "trickle down" to the small independent business men, the farmers and the wage earners to start recovery. That theory sounds all right but when put into practice it was always found that there was not enough left to "trickle down" more than half way, so that the great mass of our citizens were left without any relief at all.

Our program was just the opposite. We started out with the definite objective of raising the income and purchasing power of the many millions of our citizens who formed the foundation of our economic life, and everything that we did in the way of promoting recovery was directed toward that end.

What has happened in Buffalo -- in the other cities of New York State and of the Nation? And what has happened on the farms and in the mines and in all walks of life -- increased production, increased sales, increased farm income, increased wages -- ^{all} to testify to the soundness and the practicality of that program. All America now knows that it has worked.

I have just returned to my native State from a trip which has taken me into many parts of the United States -- into areas devoted to agriculture, to mining, to cattle and sheep raising, to great manufacturing industries, and everywhere I went I saw the cheerful faces and happy voices which

told me that we had come back a long way to a real prosperity.

I need not compare the Buffalo of today with the Buffalo of 1932, which I knew so well as Governor of this State. You will recall, I am sure, that it was in 1931, ^{that} when as Governor, I called the Legislature of the State of New York into Special Session to provide relief for the distressed unemployed of the ^{New York} State. It was the first State definitely to accept the responsibility of seeing to it that so far as the State's resources could prevent it, none of its citizens who wished to work should starve. It was only after New York State had pioneered and shown the way that other States followed. You remember how year after year of the depression had made it impossible for private agencies and local communities to carry the burden. It was up to the State to do the job and New York State during my Governorship was the first to assume that job.

The Federal Government under the previous Administration lagged behind when it should have stepped in. In many States the task of taking care of the unemployed was becoming too great, but the Federal Government continued to evade ~~its~~ its full responsibility to assist the States until March 4, 1933. Thereafter in the form of direct relief and in the form of work relief, the Federal Government has carried out that responsibility, ^{and} so long as I am President will continue to carry out that responsibility.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
BUFFALO, NEW YORK
October 17, 1936

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mayor, Congressman Mead, my friends of Buffalo:

This occasion brings back memories, because it is not so very long ago that I took part in the laying of the cornerstone of this building over here on the left, the State Office Building.

And now I am proud to take part in the dedication of this very beautiful Federal Building on the right.

That building is a part of a very great program throughout the Nation. It was a program designed first and foremost to give work to the unemployed. It was what we Americans had decided was an American substitute for the dole.

All through the Nation there have been projects like these, most of them smaller, of course, but all designed with that primary objective.

But that was only the primary objective -- of course, there were others. A second purpose which was part of this program was to provide useful public works, each of which would serve a need in every community.

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. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the provisional prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the provisional reading copy text.

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All the way from Coast to Coast you will find a series of projects devoted to recreation, or transportation, or sanitation, or government service -- all of which, incidentally, were initiated on the recommendation of the local communities themselves.

All of the money that the Government placed into these structures has already started the wheels of trade and commerce turning again in sections where they had been stagnant for so many years. The money which the workers received in the erection of this building and on all the other projects throughout the United States undoubtedly was a major factor in restoring purchasing power in the hands of the worker, the shopkeeper, the manufacturer and the farmer.

A structure like this is particularly economical, even so far as dollars go. This building will house the Federal Departments which cover Buffalo and the surrounding territory. We must remember that up to now in this case and similar cases the Government was obliged to pay rent for that space, owning nothing and at the end of the rental period having nothing. So it seemed just ordinary good business to build our own building and keep the rent in our own treasury, a policy that was adopted in this

State many years ago. The State Office Building in Albany, the State Office Building in New York City and now the State Office Building here in Buffalo are testimonials to the foresight and good business sense of the State of New York.

The amount of money which was placed in circulation by what went into this building and similar buildings is hard to estimate. Every dollar that was put in did its work many times over. When the worker spent the dollar in the local shop it resulted in a profit and when the retailer spent it with the wholesaler, it resulted in a profit. When the wholesaler spent it with the manufacturer it resulted in a profit. And when the manufacturer bought his raw materials from the farmer or other producer of raw materials, again there was a profit. And so each dollar as it started in the stream of trade and commerce made new business, new profits, new income, new work and new purchasing power in the community. If you multiply the dollars which went into this building by the thousands of projects all over the United States, you will see what we mean when we say that this great program of the United States served as the first shock troops in the battle against depression, starting anew the processes of business.

I have just returned to my native State from a trip which has taken me into many parts of the United States -- into areas devoted to agriculture, to mining, to cattle and sheep raising, to great manufacturing industries. And everywhere I went I saw the cheerful faces and happy voices which told me that we had come back a long way to a real prosperity.

I need not compare the Buffalo of today with the Buffalo as I saw it the last time I was here. You will recall, I am sure, those years that I had the privilege of being the Chief Executive of this State. Already in 1930 the problem of depression and unemployment had become severe. And you will recall that it was in 1931 that I, as Governor, called the Legislature of the State of New York into Special Session to provide relief for the distressed unemployed of the State. New York was the first State in the Union definitely to accept the responsibility of seeing to it that so far as the State's resources could prevent it, none of its citizens who wished to work should starve.

You will remember in those days, not so long ago, the depression had made it impossible for private agencies and local communities to carry the burden, and

so the duty fell upon the State, and New York State was the first to accept the responsibility of carrying on with the task. But again, as the years went on, it was found impossible not only for the great and rich states, like ours, but for every other state to carry the whole of the burden of the depression, and thereafter from the fourth of March, 1933, the Federal Government in Washington undertook to carry that part of the burden which the communities themselves and the states were unable to bear. And, my friends, so long as I am President of the United States, we will continue to carry out that responsibility.

Just one word in closing. I am always glad to get back to my State. I wish for the City of Buffalo and for those communities in the western end of our State every possible success. May we grow not only in material wealth but also in the good citizenship for which we all strive.

STATEMENTS FILE

FOR INFORMATION OF THE PRESS - BUFFALO, N.Y., October 17, 1936.

M. H. McIntyre
Assistant Secretary to the President.

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STATEMENTS FILE
Sherman and Kansas

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Buffalo 111

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