

October 17, 1936

[Rochester, NY]

FOR Speech File

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READING COPY

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK,  
OCTOBER 17, 1936.

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It was a very nice thought on the part of you good people of Rochester to give me this testimonial in this place. It is not only the spot where I was nominated for the Governorship of this great State in 1928, but it is also the spot where I attended my first political convention in 1910.

I remember that meeting of twenty-six years ago chiefly because of the fact that the city was so crowded that twelve of us from the Hudson River counties had to sleep in one room, and ten of us fought all night against the other two who wanted the single window kept closed. Those in favor of fresh air won the day. Perhaps there is a parable in this, because I have been fighting ever since in behalf of fresh air and fresh opportunity for the people of this country.

Since the Rochester convention of 1928 much has happened. That year we were in the midst of the great jazz era - socially, politically, economically and financially. We were even then a sick Nation though we had not yet begun to feel the pain --

the headaches and the heart aches.

It was a lop-sided economy we were living in. The wealth of the Nation was being concentrated quickly and steadily into the hands of a few individuals who were not only running the major part of our commerce and industry, but were actually running the processes of the National Government itself. It is an unfortunate fact that they were interested in their own welfare instead of in the welfare of the great majority of the people who were engaged in business, industry and agriculture.

The process of gobbling up more and more independent businesses by merger, by purchase or by reorganization was going on apace.

It was not long after I became Governor that the skies fell, and it is perhaps worth noting that when that happened your State government undertook many policies which were ultimately the basis of the national legislation of the past three and a half years.

From 1929 to the spring of 1933, your State government had to fight the depression alone. Yet it is a fact that this State was the first to undertake in a major way the care of its

needy unemployed. It was, I think, the first State to tie in the success of its farming population with the prosperity of its industrial population -- for it was in those years that we undertook to remove submarginal land from cultivation, to extend our forestry and our parks, our farm-to-market roads, and our cooperation with the farm organizations and the farmers themselves.

In those years also we started the splendid system of relief for the aged; we worked for the development of water power and for the reduction of rates for electricity, and we greatly strengthened the laws for the protection of labor.

It is also true that in the same period the opposition to social and economic legislation of this kind came from the same sources in this state which have opposed, and are opposing, the same type of forward looking legislation and administration in the National Capital.

I am happy indeed that during these past three and a half years the State of New York has continued and strengthened liberal government under the wise and conscientious leadership of our great Governor, Herbert H. Lehman. His has been a task of great magnitude, but he has met each problem with successful action. He and I are happy today that the worst of the crisis is over. He and I are fighting today against the return of former conditions and former schools of thought.

I am happy to be back in my own home State, for I am proud of it. Deep down in my heart I am confident that government which thinks in terms of humanity will continue in Albany and in Washington in the days to come.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
ROCHESTER, N. Y.  
October 17, 1936

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Mayor, you my old friends of Rochester:

It was a very (nice) delightful thought on (the) your part (of you good people of Rochester) to give me this testimonial in this place. It is not only the spot where I was nominated for the Governorship of this great State in 1928, but it is also the spot where I attended my first political convention (in 1910) twenty-six years ago.

I remember that (meeting of twenty-six years ago) particular convention in 1910 chiefly because of the fact that the city of Rochester was so crowded that twelve of us from the Hudson River (counties) Valley had to sleep in one room, and ten of us fought all night against the other two (who wanted) in order to keep the single window (kept closed) open. Those in favor of fresh air won the day. Perhaps there is a parable in this, because I have been fighting ever since in behalf of fresh air and fresh opportunity for the people of this country.

Since the Rochester convention of 1928 (much has) many things have happened. That year we were in the midst of the great jazz era -- socially, politically (economically and financially) and every other way. We were even then a sick Nation though we had not yet begun to feel the pain (the headaches and the heartaches).

It was a lop-sided economy we were living in. The wealth of the Nation was being concentrated quickly and steadily into the hands of a few individuals who were not only running the major part of our commerce and industry, but were actually running (the processes of the National) Government itself. It is an unfortunate fact that they were interested in their own welfare instead of in the welfare of the great majority of the people who were engaged in business, industry and agriculture.

(The process of gobbling up more and more independent businesses by merger, by purchase or by reorganization was going on apace.)

It was not long after I became Governor that the skies fell, the crash came, and it is perhaps worth noting that when that happened your State Government

undertook many policies which were ultimately (the basis of the) to be recommended in national legislation in the past three and a half years. We in New York started the ball rolling.

From 1929 to the spring of 1933, your State Government had to fight the depression alone. Yet it is a fact that this State was the first to undertake in a major way the care of its needy unemployed. It was, I think, the first State to tie in the success of its farming population with the prosperity of its industrial population -- for it was in those years that we undertook to remove some submarginal land from cultivation, to extend our forestry and our parks, our farm-to-market roads, and our cooperation with the farm organizations and the farmers themselves.

In those years also we started the splendid system of relief for the aged; we worked for the development of water power and for the reduction of rates for electricity, and we greatly strengthened the laws for the protection of labor.

It is also true that in the same period, 1929 to 1933, and you might say down to this day, the opposition to social and economic legislation of this kind came from

the same sources in this State which have opposed, and are still opposing, the same type of forward-looking legislation and administration in the National Capital in Washington.

I am very happy (indeed) that during these past three and a half years the State of New York has continued and strengthened liberal government under the wise and conscientious leadership of our great Governor, Herbert H. Lehman. (Applause) His has been a task of great magnitude, but he has met each problem with successful action. He and I are happy today that the worst of the crisis is over. He and I are fighting today against the return of former conditions and former schools of thought.

So, my friends, thank you for this welcome.  
Thank you for coming out in this rain. I am glad to  
stand here without a hat in the rain because they tell  
me it is good for thin hair.

I am happy to be back in my own home State. (for) I am proud of (it) my home State. Deep down in my heart I am confident that Government which thinks in terms of humanity will continue in Albany and Washington in the days to come. (Prolonged applause)

STATEMENTS FILE

SPECH OF THE PRESIDENT  
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK,  
OCTOBER 17, 1936.

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I remember that meeting of twenty-six years ago chiefly because of the fact that the city was so crowded that twelve of us from the Hudson River counties had to sleep in one room, and ten of us fought all night against the other two who wanted the single window kept closed. Those in favor of fresh air won the day. Perhaps there is a parable in this, because I have been fighting evrysince in behalf of fresh air and fresh opportunity for the people of this country.

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the headaches and the heart aches.

It was a lop-sided economy we were living in. The wealth of the Nation was being concentrated quickly and steadily into the hands of a few individuals who were not only running the major part of our commerce and industry, but were actually running the processes of the National Government itself. It is an unfortunate fact that they were interested in their own welfare instead of in the welfare of the great majority of the people who were engaged in business, industry and agriculture.

The process of gobbling up more and more independent businesses by merger, by purchase or by reorganization was going on apace.

It was not long after I became Governor that the skies fell, and it is perhaps worth noting that when that happened your State government undertook many policies which were ultimately the basis of the national legislation of the past three and a half years.

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In those years also we started the splendid system of relief for the aged; we worked for the development of water power and for the reduction of rates for electricity, and we greatly strengthened the laws for the protection of labor.

It is also true that in the same period the opposition to social and economic legislation of this kind came from the same sources in this state which had opposed, and are opposing, the same type of forward looking legislation and administration in the National Capital.

I am happy indeed that during these past three and a half years the State of New York has continued and strengthened liberal government under the wise and conscientious leadership of our great Governor, Herbert H. Lehman. His has been a task of great magnitude, but he has met each problem with successful action. He and I are happy today that the worst of the crisis is over. He and I are fighting today against the return of former conditions and former schools of thought.

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STATEMENTS FILE

Shorthand by Kanner

FOR INFORMATION OF THE PRESS

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT AT ROCHESTER,  
N. Y., OCTOBER 17, 1936.

M. H. McIntyre  
Assistant Secretary to the President

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Government which thinks in terms of humanity will continue  
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