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. 1030

1937 January 20

Inaugural Address
MY FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN:

When four years ago we met to inaugurate a President, the Republic, single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. We dedicated ourselves to the fulfillment of a vision -- to speed the time when there would be for all the people that security and peace essential to the pursuit of happiness. We of the Republic pledged ourselves to drive from the temple of our ancient faith those who had profaned it; to end by action, tireless and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day.

We did those first things first.

Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need -- the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Repeated attempts at their solution without the aid of government had left us baffled and bewildered.
For, without that aid, we had been unable to create those moral controls over the services of science which are necessary to make science a useful servant instead of a ruthless master of mankind. To do this we knew that we must find practical controls over blind economic forces and blindly selfish men.

We of the Republic sensed the truth that democratic government has innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable -- to solve problems once considered unsolvable. We would not admit that we could not find a way to master economic epidemics just as, after centuries of fatalistic suffering, we had found a way to master epidemics of disease. We refused to leave the problems of our common welfare to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster.

In this we Americans were discovering no wholly new truth; we were writing a new chapter in our book of self-government.
This year marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Constitutional Convention which made us a nation. At that Convention our forefathers found the way out of the chaos which followed the Revolutionary War; they created a strong government with powers of united action sufficient then and now to solve problems utterly beyond individual or local solution. A century and a half ago they established the Federal Government in order to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to the American people.

Today we invoke those same powers of government to achieve the same objectives.

Four years of new experience have not belied our historic instinct. They hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within the separate states, and government of the United States can do the things the times require, without yielding its democracy. Our tasks in the last four years did not force democracy to take a holiday.
Nearly all of us recognize that as intricacies of human relationships increase, so power to govern them also must increase -- power to stop evil; power to do good. The essential democracy of our nation and the safety of our people depend not upon the absence of power but upon lodging it with those whom the people can change or continue at stated intervals through an honest and free system of elections. The Constitution of 1787 did not make our democracy impotent.

In fact, in these last four years, we have made the exercise of all power more democratic; for we have begun to bring private autocratic powers into their proper subordination to the public's government. The legend that they were invincible -- above and beyond the processes of a democracy -- has been shattered. They have been challenged and beaten. (Pause)

Our progress out of the depression is obvious.
But that is not all that you and I mean by the new order of things. Our pledge was not merely to do a patch-work job with second-hand materials. By using the new materials of social justice we have undertaken to erect on the old foundations a more enduring structure for the better use of future generations.

In that purpose we have been helped by achievements of mind and spirit. Old truths have been relearned; untruths have been unlearned. We have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we know now that it is bad economics. Out of the collapse of a prosperity whose builders boasted their practicality has come the conviction that in the long run economic morality pays. We are beginning to wipe out the line that divides the practical from the ideal; and in so doing we are fashioning an instrument of unimagined power for the establishment of a morally better world.

This new understanding undermines the old admiration of worldly success as such. We are beginning to abandon our tolerance of the abuse of power by those who betray for profit the elementary decencies of life.
In this process evil things formerly accepted will not be so easily condoned. Hard-headedness will not so easily excuse hard-heartedness. We are moving toward an era of good feeling. But we realize that there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will.

For these reasons I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

Among men of good-will science and democracy together offer an ever richer life and ever-larger satisfactions to the individual. With this change in our moral climate and our re-discovered ability to improve our economic order, we have set our feet upon the road of enduring progress.

Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead? Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way? For "each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth."
Many voices are heard as we face a great decision. Comfort says "tarry a while." Opportunism says "this is a good spot." Timidity asks "how difficult is the road ahead?"

True, we have come far from the days of stagnation and despair. Vitality has been preserved. Courage and confidence have been restored. Mental and moral horizons have been extended.

But our present gains were won under the pressure of more than ordinary circumstance. Advance became imperative under the goad of fear and suffering. The times were on the side of progress.

To hold to progress today, however, is more difficult. Dulled conscience, irresponsibility and ruthless self-interest already reappear. Such symptoms of prosperity may become portents of disaster! Prosperity already tests the persistence of our progressive purpose.

Let us ask again: have we reached the goal of our vision of that fourth day of March, 1933? Have we found our happy valley?
I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. Its hundred and thirty million people are at peace among themselves; they are making their country a good neighbor among the nations. I see a United States which can demonstrate that, under democratic methods of government, national wealth can be translated into a spreading volume of human comforts hitherto unknown -- and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But here is the challenge to our democracy! In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens -- a substantial part of its whole population -- who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day.
I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labelled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

It is not in despair that I paint you that picture. I paint it for you in hope — because the nation, seeing and understanding the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country’s interest and concern; and we will never regard any faithful law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous.

The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.
If I know aught of the spirit and purpose of our nation, we will not listen to Comfort, Opportunism and Timidity. We will carry on.

Overwhelmingly, we of the Republic are men and women of good will -- men and women who have more than warm hearts of dedication -- men and women who have cool heads and willing hands of practical purpose as well. They will insist that every agency of popular government use effective instruments to carry out their will.

Government is competent when all who compose it work as trustees for the whole people. It can make constant progress when it keeps abreast of all the facts. It can obtain justified support and legitimate criticism when the people receive true information of all that government does.

If I know aught of the will of our people, they will demand that these conditions of effective government shall be created and maintained. They will demand a nation uncorrupted by cancers of injustice and, therefore, strong among the nations in its example of the will to peace.
Today we reconsecrate our country to long cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. In every land there are always at work forces that drive men apart and forces that draw men together. In our personal ambitions we are individualists. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up — or else we all go down — as one people.

To maintain a democracy of effort requires a vast amount of patience in dealing with differing methods, a vast amount of humility. But out of the confusion of many voices rises an understanding of dominant public need. Then political leadership can voice common ideals, and aid in their realization.

In taking again the oath of office as President of the United States, I assume the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance.

While this duty rests upon me I shall do my utmost to speak their purpose and to do their will, seeking Divine Guidance to help us each and every one to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
FROM THE STEPS OF THE CAPITOL

January 20, 1937

MY FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN:

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We did those first things first.

Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need -- the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Repeated attempts at their solution without the aid of government had left us baffled and bewildered. For, without that aid, we had been unable to create those moral controls over the services of science which are necessary to make science a useful servant instead of a ruthless
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.
master of mankind. To do this we knew that we must find practical controls over blind economic forces and blindly selfish men.

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of liberty to the American people.

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Four years of new experience have not belied our historic instinct. They hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within the separate states, and government of the United States can do the things the times require, without yielding its democracy. Our tasks in the last four years did not force democracy to take a holiday.

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(and) they have been beaten.

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In that purpose we have been helped by achievements of mind and spirit. Old truths have been relearned; untruths have been unlearned. We have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we know now that it is bad economics. Out of the collapse of a prosperity whose builders boasted their practicality has come the conviction that in the long run economic morality pays. We are beginning to wipe out the line that divides the practical from the ideal; and in so doing we are fashioning an instrument of unimagined power for the establishment of a morally better world.

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To hold to progress today (however) is more difficult. Dulled conscience, irresponsibility, (and) ruthless self-interest already reappear. Such symptoms of prosperity may become the portents of disaster! Prosperity already tests the persistence of our progressive purpose.

So, let us ask again: Have we reached the goal of our vision of that fourth day of March, 1933? Have we found our happy valley?

I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. Its hundred and thirty million people are at peace among themselves; they are making their country a good neighbor among the nations. I see a United States which can demonstrate that, under democratic methods of government, national wealth can be translated into a spreading volume of human comforts hitherto unknown -- and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But here is the challenge to our democracy: In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens -- a substantial part of its whole population -- who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.
I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day.

I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labelled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation and the opportunity to better (their) the lot of themselves and (the lot of) their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

But it is not in despair that I paint (you) that picture for you. I paint it for you in hope -- because the nation, seeing and understanding the injustice (in) of it, proposes to paint it out. (Applause) We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country's interest and concern; and we will never regard any faithful law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little. (Applause)
If I know aught of the spirit and purpose of our nation, we will not listen to Comfort, Opportunism and Timidity. We will carry on. (Applause)

Overwhelmingly, we of the Republic are men and women of good-will -- men and women who have more than warm hearts of dedication -- men and women who have cool heads and willing hands of practical purpose as well. They will insist that every agency of popular government use effective instruments to carry out their will.

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Today we consecrate our country to long cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. In every land there are always at work forces that drive men apart and forces that draw men together. In our personal ambitions we are individualists. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up -- or else
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To maintain a democracy of effort requires a vast amount of patience in dealing with differing methods and a vast amount of humility. But out of the confusion of many voices rises an understanding of dominant public need. Then political leadership can voice common, humane ideals, and aid in their realization. (Applause)

In taking again the oath of office as President of the United States, I assume the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance. (Applause)

While this duty rests upon me I shall do my utmost to speak their purpose and to do their will, seeking Divine Guidance to help us each and every one to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace. (Prolonged applause)
FOR THE PRESS

JANUARY 20, 1937

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Assistant Secretary to the President

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Four years of new experience have not belied our historic instinct. They hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within the separate states, and government of the United States can do the things the times require, without yielding its democracy. Our tasks in the last four years did not force democracy to take a holiday.

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"In this process evil things formerly accepted will not be so easily condoned. Hard-heartedness will not so easily excuse hard-heartedness. We are moving toward an era of good feeling. But we realize that there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will."
For these reasons I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

Among men of good-will science and democracy together offer an ever-richer life and ever-larger satisfaction to the individual. With this change in our moral climate and our re-discovered ability to improve our economic order, we have set our feet upon the road of enduring progress.

Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead? Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way? For "each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth."

Many voices are heard as we face a great decision. Comfort says "tarry a while." Opportunity says "this is a good spot." Tidiness asks "how difficult is the road ahead?"

True, we have come far from the days of stagnation and despair. Vitality has been preserved. Courage and confidence have been restored. Mental and moral horizons have been extended.

But our present gains were won under the pressure of more than ordinary circumstance. Advance became imperative under the good of fear and suffering. The times were on the side of progress.

To hold to progress today, however, is more difficult. Dulled conscience, irresponsibility and ruthless self-interest already reappear. Such symptoms of prosperity may become the portents of disaster. Prosperity already tests the persistence of our progressive purpose.

Let us ask again: have we reached the goal of our vision of that fourth day of March, 1933? Have we found our happy valley?

I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. Millions of people are at peace among themselves; they are making their country a good neighbor among the nations. I see a United States which can demonstrate that, under democratic methods of government, national wealth can be translated into a spreading volume of human comforts hitherto unknown — and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But here is the challenge to our democracy: in this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens — a substantial part of its whole population — who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pull of family disaster hangs over them day by day.
I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labelled indelicate by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation and the opportunity to better the lot and the lot of their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

"It is not in despair that I paint you that picture; I paint it for you in hope -- because the nation, seeing and understanding the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country's interest and concern; and we will never regard any faithful law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

If I know aught of the spirit and purpose of our nation, we will not listen to Comfort, Opportunity and Timidity. We will carry on.

Overwhelmingly, we of the Republic are men and women of good will -- men and women who have more than warm hearts of dedication -- men and women who have cool heads and willing hearts of practical purpose as well. They will insist that every agency of popular government use effective instruments to carry out their will.

Government is competent when all who compose it work as trustees for the whole people. It can make constant progress when it keeps abreast of all the facts. It can obtain justified support and legitimate criticism when the people receive true information of all that government does.

If I know aught of the will of our people, they will demand that these conditions of effective government shall be created and maintained. They will demand a nation uncorrupted by cancers of injustice and, therefore, strong among the nations in its example of the will to peace.

Today we consecrate our country to long cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. In every land there are always at work forces that drive men apart and forces that draw men together. In our personal ambitions we are individualists. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up -- or else we all go down -- as one people.

To maintain a democracy of effort requires a vast amount of patience in dealing with differing methods, a vast amount of humility. But out of the confusion of many voices rises an understanding of dominant public need. Then political leadership can voice common ideals, and aid in their realization.

In taking again the oath of office as President of the United States, I assume the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance.

While this duty rests upon me I shall do my utmost to speak their purpose and to do their will, seeking Divine Guidance to help us each and every one to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
At the last Inauguration of a President the Republic stood in spirit at this spot. On that day it dedicated itself to the fulfillment of a vision — to the furtherance of the time that its people, in the certainty of security and happiness, and peace, could bid farewell to fear. We of the Republic promised ourselves to rid the temple of our ancient truth of those who had profaned it; to lift our action, untiring and unafraid, the despair of that day. Those first things we have done.

Our covenant with ourselves did not end there.

We were thinking beyond the stopping of evil, beyond the starting of the wheels of our industries, the plows of our farms and the operations of our banks.

Even though we did not greatly express the thought, nevertheless we sensed the truth that a government of democratic form has an innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable — to solve problems once considered unsolvable. We could not admit that human behavior [traditions] and economic [laws] were so inexorable that [plagues must recur until enough human beings have been] devoured to satisfy the jealous gods of the things of the past.
Four years ago we dedicated ourselves to believe and to practice the first truth of American democracy — that this nation exists to bring security and happiness into the life of the average man. Solemnly we promised ourselves to keep the temple of that ancient truth forever free of those who had profaned it.

From the stagnation and despair of the day of that promise, action — untiring, unafraid — had brought us a long way.

First things were, we have done. Men, women and children have been physically protected in their lives and their vitality. The constituent parts of our society have been saved from the mistakes of society. That protection has been given, not as a matter of sentimental duty, not as a matter of pity, but as a matter of enlightened self-interest and of democratic justice.

And all this has come about not by incantations or slogans, not by the happenings of chance, not by the devisings of any one man. It is the honest sum of the effort and suffering and faith of millions of men and women. They gave everything, asking nothing but
to live their lives in simple fortitude. All any American
has today he holds by gift from their patience —by grace from
their forbearance, to solve a problem which every sane man
knows they possessed. Today, as throughout history, the quiet
millions of men and women of good will are the ultimate heroes
of society.

This physical recovery they won for themselves —
won it in the face of the conspicuous failure of those whom
they had paid handsome fees for leadership. And lately they have
proved that neither propaganda nor intimidation can shake
their recognition of who failed them, or their knowledge that
what they have won is their own victory.

The concrete achievements of these four years are
plain for all to see. But far more significant for the
future are the unseen achievements in mind and spirit [which
have been wrought in us as we did these concrete things] —
achievements which will be first cause of things in days to
come.

We have learned two fundamental truths in these
four years.

First: That in a properly functioning democracy,
Government has a hitherto unsuspected capacity to protect its
people against economic disasters once considered inevitable —
to solve problems once considered unsolvable. Not so many
generations ago, epidemics of disease were regarded as
unpreventable Acts of God—sacred plagues. After centuries
of conviction that they were impossible, medical science
found a way of preventing them. Similarly up to four years
ago certain economic epidemics were also looked upon as equally
inevitable and unpreventable. But in the last four years we have learned for the first time that the science of Government
has advanced to a point where many of them can be prevented.

Four years of the willing use of government have
demonstrated that man can order his world — that nature does not
have to take its course — that no inexorable economic laws
must be let rage among us like the sacred plagues of the East
until enough human beings have been devoured to satisfy the
gods. We have refused to be mediaevalists, afraid to appeal
to new experience from old authority. And our success has
broken, for once and for all, the modern schoolman's tyranny
of economic theorizing with other people's lives.

And with the recognition of that new truth has
come the destruction of that old myth — that Government is an
dangerous institution, incompe tent to be used as sparingly as possible —
The first great lesson we have learned is that the aggregation of economic power is not invincible against the processes of democracy seeking to protect itself. Again and again they have been challenged and beaten. National and local government alike can regard them without fear or favor. We are now sure that we do not have to tolerate independent principalities of power within our nation.

And that truth has given us courage to speak out against the seeming unholy alliance between unscrupulous
So say those who make it difficult for public service to attract the best citizens because they are constantly scaring them by a mental or outspoken classification of public servants with crooks and thieves.

By classifying public servants as miscellaneous or sometimes even dishonest.
FIRST DRAFT

Whether it be in the far-flung empires of economic wealth or in those who by virtue of financial leadership have positions as able to control the thought and action of a large proportion of the financial and business community throughout the country, a long standing reputation for acumen and thorough.
material success and moral righteousness. We have had proof in dollars and cents that over a lifetime cheaters cheat themselves. And that proof has undermined beyond repair the secret admiration and awe of ruthless worldliness, the secret fatalism toward abuse of power—which have been the cause of our social tolerance of betrayals—for profit—of the elementary decencies of life.

In the hearts of that great majority who finally always have their will, the moral climate of twentieth century America now changed.

"Devil take the hindmost" has always seemed bad morals. Now it is known to be bad economics. Out of the collapse of a prosperity whose builders boasted their practicability, has risen a fact, beyond all argument, that the best economic morality makes the soundest economic sense.

And that knowledge will be an instrument of unimagined power in the fashioning of a morally better world.

Good things once vainly sought for will not require such struggle to attain. Evil things tolerated will not be so easily condoned. Hard-headedness will not serve as much as conclusive excuse for hard-heartedness.
A new knowledge is undermining the old secret admiration of worldly success as such, and the fatalistic tolerance of abuse of power, toward those who betrayed - for profit - the elementary decencies of life.
There can be no era of good feeling — except for men of good will. A genuine era of good will depends upon acceptance of the authorized rather than the advertised version of our national traditions and acceptance of the authorized version.

In the lives of the great men of our past — in the hearts of the plain people of our present — those are the original sources from which we learn for ourselves about America and Americans. It is from those original sources that we have been learning during these last four years. From them we have learned that the unlovely standards of plutocracy which have been painted over America, are not American. From them we have learned that the vindication of the moral dignity of the average man — which self-seekers have called alien — we have discovered to be our American birthright.

The objectives of these last years appear as the original objectives of the men who made America because they constitute a modern effort to fulfill the original ideal for which America was made.

Never again will patriotism be a cloak for reaction. Never again will the names of the founding fathers be invoked against a modern application of the founding fathers' faith.
As the years pass we see the great men of our history in better perspective. In the light of this restudy we rejoice that our present objectives merge with and, indeed, are identical with, the original objectives of the men who were fulfilling the original ideal for which America was made.
During these four years, therefore, we have done
more than meet physical needs. We have cleared our minds.
We have purified our hearts. The test for the future is
whether with this renewed physical vigor and with these new
mental outlooks, we shall go forward with the next logical
steps. For men, like individuals, can never stand still. Everything flows. We must go forward or we shall slide
daily, science changes the material universe and
the relations of men to machines. Daily, government strives
to devise instruments of moral control over the achievements
of science to make them serve rather than destroy the
aspirations of mankind. Daily, enemies of democracy strive
for selfish ends to exploit those achievements before men of
good will can devise the instruments of moral control.

That task, those enemies, make demands upon our
wisdom and tenacity today even more heavily than the four years
past made demands upon our fortitude and patience.

We shall need wisdom and bravery
to-day, and more than in the
day of depression we need
fortitude and patience.
Every day brings new appreciation of the fighting strength of those who intend to permit no democratic interference with oligarchal privilege and who will pay any price for victory.

Now as always progress will have to be forced — forced over an opposition which, by means legal or illegal, will fight to the very end.

Four years ago many of us were eager to believe that to rout that opposition, we needed only a single energetic thrust at well-defined and easily discernible objectives. But as we have gone forward we have discovered that the abuses which we sought to ban were deeper and more subtle than we realized. And democracy, if it is to survive, must persist against the abuses it banishes, no matter what form they take, until victory is complete.

We must not be lulled into security by our victories [of the last four years]. For they were won under the pressure of more than ordinary circumstance. The times were on the side of progress. Selfish men were afraid; they were, therefore, less selfish. Thoughtless men were in peril; they were, therefore, more thoughtful. Indifferent men and women who would otherwise be indifferent were suffering and in despair; they were, therefore, [not for the time not longer] indifferent. Under the spur of an emergency the nation
surmounted divisions of 
and of geography and found a 
national unity which was intent on survival. 

But to consolidate and expand the gains 

depression is a problem different in kind. 

In depression our task was only the elemental 
one to keep our courage high in the face of danger, our faith 
intact in the midst of suffering. In prosperity our task is 
the highly complicated one — to keep our wits sharp in the 
face of ease and our conscience alert in the midst of plenty. 

Already the symptoms of prosperity — dulled 
conscience, irresponsibility, recklessness — have begun to 
reappear. We have already begun to forget that these are not 
merely symptoms of prosperity, but possible portents of 
disaster. Prosperity will test the persistence and far-
sightedness of our wisdom, as depression tested the common 
will of our society to survive.

And for that test, men of good will must have 
more than warm hearts of dedication. They must have the cool 
heads and the willing hands of practical purpose as well. 

Like our greatest builders, the Puritans, they must implement 
the moral grandeur of their conception of government with 
the instruments of detail through which government actually 
works.
The first instrument is competent and permanent personnel. We must have resources of brains and energy and the nation's service reasonably adequate to meet the competition of the brains and the energy its enemies can buy.

We are past the point where government must give its enemies a handicap. The welfare of one hundred and twenty million people is not the moral equivalent of a foxhunt. It is not a sporting proposition.

The second instrument is a workable organization of the resources available to government. This includes cooperation between the three branches of government, and also efficient organization within each branch. Big wheels, little wheels — all must mesh together.

The third instrument is constant government inquiry to learn the facts we need to know intelligently to govern. We must have judgment as a basis for government. We must have facts as a basis for judgment. The danger of concealment from the public of the kind of facts which have been recently revealed by government inquiries is obvious. The government must be firm and the people must be firm in the support of government demanding to know facts which concern the public.
A fourth instrument we must have is the
adequate means, after the facts are found, by which
the general public can be quickly, constantly and
fairly informed of them.
It is essential that these
be available to government
unbiased channels for
approach to the people.
The strictest and uninvolved
manner of the press too have
honesty, then, makes this it
particularly important
that although control be
free, facts be kept sacred.
A fourth instrument we must have is adequate dissemination to the public, the action government takes and the facts government finds. The second inaugural of Jefferson discussed the interference with this dissemination of facts by a press no longer free. If in this generation modern conditions of concentrated ownership have again brought the press to a condition where it no longer can be free, the government in defense of an informed democracy must find other channels for discriminating facts. "Comment is free; facts are sacred."

And finally we must have real participation in self-government by those who wish to be free from the competitive standards of a ruthless few in so far as self-government can be made effective. But a way must be found to deal with these few as effectively and, if necessary, as ruthlessly as they themselves deal with the rest of society when self-government has failed. Experience and sound principle agree that a time always comes when self-organized private groups reach an impasse beyond which they cannot go alone. When [passing resolutions against an unsocial minority has failed] and it becomes necessary for government to step in to curb the evil practices of the few, then government should have the militant cooperation and help of the
overwhelming majority whom it is trying to protect.
single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. On that day we
were
opposed
against the time
dedicated ourselves to the fulfillment of a vision — to bring about a day when
men would be for all the people that
sustained to the
people, needs: security and peace in the pursuit of happiness,
could be in common. We of the Republic pledged ourselves to rid the

temple of our ancient faith of those who had profaned it; to end by action,
tireless and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day. We did those

first things first.

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Our answer to this does not stop here.

We instinctively we recognize a deeper need — the need to

find the government as the instrument of our united power and purpose

to solve for the individual the over-riding problems of a complex civilization.

attacked at their individual solutions, and lift as more and more

been, had been found baffled and bewildered, all attempts to individual solve

individually.

For, because we had been unable to create those moral controls over

the utilitarianism of science necessary to make them useful servants

instead of ruthless masters of mankind. We knew that we must find new

and practical controls over blind economic forces and blindly selfish men.

of the Republic.

We sensed the truth that democratic government has innate capacity to

protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable — to solve

problems once considered unsolvable. We would not admit that there were laws

of human behavior and economics so inexorable that we could not find a way to

master economic epidemics just as, after centuries of fatalism, we had found a

way to master epidemics of disease.
In this we Americans were discovering no wholly new truth; we were but seeking to write a new chapter in the book of our self-government, to the story of our genius for organization to meet problems beyond individual mastery.

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the Constitutional Convention which made us a nation. In that Convention our forefathers found the way out of the chaos following the Revolutionary War by creating in a strong government that possesses the power of united action which can properly solve problems utterly beyond individual or local solution. Today we invoke those same powers of government to achieve the same objectives recognized by those who wrote the Federal Constitution to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to the American people.

Our new experience has not belied our old instinct. Four years of new experience hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within states, and government of the United States are capable of power to do good. The essential democracy of our nation and the safety of our people depend not upon the absence of power but upon its being lodged with those whom the people can change at stated intervals through an honest and free system of elections. The Constitution of 1787 did not make democracy impotent. The events of the last four years have not forced democracy to take a holiday.
Indeed we have democratized the sum total of economic powers to the more democratic classes in these last four years. For we have become a private autocratic power into their proper subordination to the necessary powers of government. The legend that economic power was invincible to the processes of a democracy has been shattered. We have challenged and beaten economic powers.

Out of struggles we have become two great truths.

First, we have learned that private economic power, uncontrolled by public obligations, can not be relied upon to meet common needs and to preserve the general welfare. It makes little difference whether an economic system, required to produce and distribute the necessities of life, breaks down because of greed or incompetence or fundamental incapacity, to combat destructive forces. We must build a system which will not break down. We must find the way to do that thing using whatever powers of government are necessary to that end.

And, in the last four years we have learned the second great truth — that the democratic government is the appropriate and effective instrument for the solution of those problems which concern us all and which private economic powers have to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster.

Thus, with our obvious material gains we are making unseen achievements in mind and spirit. Knowledge that a democratic government of good will can find solutions where private power and private selfishness have often been unable even to save themselves has given us courage to challenge the seeming unholy alliance, often unmitting, between unscrupulous material success and
supposed moral righteousness. This new knowledge undermines the old secret 
admiration of worldly success as much. We begin to abandon the fatalistic 
tolerance of the abuse of power by those who betray it for profit in the 
elementary decency of life. I hope I am justified in believing that the 
greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

We have always known that uncurbed self-interest was bad morals; now we 
know that it is bad economics. Out of the collapse of a prosperity whose 
buiilders boasted the practicality has come the knowledge that in the long 
run economic morality pays. We are beginning to wipe out the line that divides 
the practical from the ideal; and in so doing we are fashioning an instrument 
of unimagined power toward the establishment of a morally better world.

In the process, evil things formerly tolerated, will not be so easily 
condoned. Hard-heartedness will not so easily excuse hard-heartedness. And 
while we move toward an era of good feeling, there can be no weak are except 
men of good will.

With this change in our moral climate and our rediscovered ability through 
government to improve our economic order, we have set our feet upon the road 
of enduring progress in a world where science and democracy offer increasing 
enrichment of the individual life and ever-larger satisfactions of individual 
 aspirations.

Shall we pause and turn our backs upon the road that lies ahead? 
A shall we call this the promised land? Or shall we continue on our way? True we
have come a long way from the days of stagnation and despair. The physical
vitality of the men, women and children of America has been preserved. Their
courage and confidence in themselves have been restored. Their mental and
moral horizons have been extended.

[Some people may be lulled into security by the victories behind us.] But
they should realize that these were victories won under the pressure of more
than ordinary circumstance. Our devotion to what is called the great goal
of the United States — "The New Order of Things" became effective under the
stimulus of suffering and of fear. Selfish men were afraid; thoughtless men
were in peril. For the moment they ceased to obstruct; for the moment they
were not indifferent. The times were on the side of progress.

However, today more difficult. Already dulled conscience,
irresponsible and ruthless self-interest have begun to reappear. Symptoms
of prosperity may become portents of disaster! Even so depression
tested the common will of our society to survive, so prosperity will test the
persistence of our progressive purpose. Many voices are heard as we face a
great decision. Comfort says "tarry a while"; Opportunism says "this is a
good spot"; Timidity asks "how difficult is the road ahead?" But as we listen
let us ask: Have we reached the goal of our vision of that fourth day of
March, 1933? Have we found the same heaven we sought when we banished fear?

I see a great nation upon a great continent blessed with a great wealth
of natural resources. Its hundred and twenty-five million people are at peace
among themselves; and make their country a good neighbor among the nations.

Other nations may well look to the United States and demonstrate that under democratic methods of government, the minds of science and the energies of a free people can transform national wealth into a volume of human comforts hitherto unknown — and the lowest standard of living in the world can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But in this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens — a substantial part of its whole population — who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the lowest standards of today are termed the necessities of life. I see twenty-five million people trying to live on family incomes of less than 600 per month. Their current resources are so meager that the pall of disaster on the narrow houses over them is daily. And there is no end in sight.

I see millions who live their daily lives in city and on farm amidst conditions, marred by so-called polite society half a century ago. I see conditions where these millions are denied education and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children. I see millions lacking the economic power to consume the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying economic work and productivity to many other millions.

It is not in despair that I paint you that picture. For I know that only recently have our nation as a whole — been able to see that picture as a whole. Accordingly I can paint it for you in hope.
Because we share our determination that within our borders there shall be no subversive alien race and no superfluous groups.

To make every American citizen the subject of his country's interest and concern, and so we will never that any faithful law-abiding group within our borders be superfluous.
But we cannot point out that injustice—we cannot paint a new picture
true to a new life—if we sit down now by the side of the road—if we
listen to Comfort and Opportunity and Timidity, and [underline] and carry on.

If I know ought of the spirit and purpose of our nation, it is determined
to carry on. Seven years have proved that we greatly overestimated the numbers
of the disinterested and the self-seekers. Overwhelmingly, we of the Republic are
men and women of good will—men and women of good will who have more than
warm hearts of dedication—who have cool heads and willing hands of practical
purpose as well. They will insist that elective government of every form
use effective instruments to carry out their will.

Government can be competent in the sense of trustees who compose it work
as trustees for the whole population. It can make constant progress if it
keeps abreast of [underline] facts. It can intercede support and legitimate
[underline] criticism if the people of the nation receive information of all that
government does. It can hasten the removal of the evils which beset the
millions of our underprivileged if self-organized private groups work with
government and not against it.

If I know ought of the will of our people, I am confident that they will
demand that those conditions of effective government shall be created and
maintained.
Today we are reconsecrating our country to the maintenance of long cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. We estimate the difficulties and work.

In every land and in every time there are working hard even other forces that drew men together and the forces that drive them apart. In our national ambitions we are individualists. In our ideals of a well-spaced life we carry forward individually the traditions of many different races, nations and creeds. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up and down together. We are one people.

To maintain a democracy of effort requires a vast amount of tolerance of differing opinions, a vast amount of humility. No one man, no group of men, can presume to think for a multitude. Political leadership can only voice common ideals and aid in their realization. So, in the days ahead, the program of the nation administration must be an expression of the will of the American people. In its objectives and in its details there should be nothing of individual self-seeking, nothing of clean consciousness or partisan prejudice, no outcroppings of private hostilities.

As I assume the oath of office as President of the United States, I have undertaken the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance. While this duty rests upon me I shall do my utmost to speak their purpose and to accomplish their will, praying ever for that divine guidance under which we may help to give
light to them that sit in darkness, and guide

their feet into the way of peace."
When four years ago we met to inaugurate a President, the Republic, single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. On that day we dedicated ourselves to the fulfillment of a vision — to speed the time when there would be for all the people that security and peace essential to the pursuit of happiness. We of the Republic pledged ourselves to the temple of our ancient faith — those who had profaned it; to end by action, tireless and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day.

We did those first things first.

Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need — the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Attempts at their individual solution had left us more and more baffled and bewildered. For, individually, we had been unable to create those moral controls over the utilization of science necessary to make science a useful servant instead of a ruthless master of mankind. To do this we knew that we must find practical controls over blind economic forces and blindly selfish men.
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We refused to leave the problems of our common welfare to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster.
We of the Republic sensed the truth that democratic government has innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once considered inevitable — to solve problems once considered unsolvable. We would not admit that there were laws of human behavior and economics so ineradicable that we could not find a way to master economic epidemics just as, after centuries of suffering, we had found a way to master epidemics of disease.

In this we Americans were discovering no wholly new truth; we were but seeking to write a new chapter in the book of our self-government. This year marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Constitutional Convention which made us a nation. Our forefathers found the way out of the chaos which followed the Revolutionary War: they created a strong government whose powers of united action sufficient then and now to solve problems utterly beyond individual or local solution. Today we invoke those same powers of government to achieve the same objectives, recognized by those who, a century and a half ago, established the Federal Government in order to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to the American people.
Four years of new experience have not belied our instinct. They hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within the separate states, and government of the United States can achieve, while at the same time, yielding its democracy. What we had to do in the last four years did not force democracy to take a holiday.

Nearly all of us recognize that as intricacies of human relationships increase, so power to govern them must increase — power to stop evil; power to do good. The essential democracy of our nation and the safety of our people depend not upon the absence of power but upon lodging it with those whom the people can change or continue at stated intervals through an honest and free system of elections. The Constitution of 1787 did not make democracy impotent.

In fact, indeed we have made the exercise of all power more democratic in these last four years. For we have begun to bring private autocratic powers into their proper subordination to the necessary power of the public through government. The legend that private power was invincible — above and beyond the processes of a democracy — has been shattered.
We have decided as a people that we must work together to meet common needs and preserve the general welfare; and that we cannot leave the problems which concern us all to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster.

Our material gains are obvious. But that is not all that you and I mean by the new order of things. We make unseen achievements in mind and spirit. I hope I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

Old truths have been re-learned and untruths have been unlearned. This new knowledge undermines the old secret admiration of worldly success as such. We begin to abandon our fatalistic tolerance of the abuse of power by those who betray for profit the elementary decencies of life.

We have always known that unscrupled self-interest was bad morals; now we know that it is bad economics. Out of the collapse of a prosperity whose builders boasted their practicality has come conviction that in the long run economic morality pays. We are beginning to wipe out the line that divides the practical from the ideal; and in so doing we are fashioning an instrument of unimagined power toward the
By using the materials of social justice we have undertaken to erect on the old foundations a more enduring structure for the better use of future generations.
Our material gains are obvious.

But that is not all that you and I mean by the new order of things. Our pledge was not merely to do a patchwork job on a structure that had fallen in on us. We dared to dream of a new structure founded on social justice.

In that purpose we have helped each other. We are making new achievements in mind and spirit. Old truths have been relearned; and untruths have been unlearned. We have always known that unbridled self interest was bad morals; we know now that it is bad economics. Out of a collapse of a prosperity whose builders boasted their practicality has come the conviction that in the long run economic morality pays. We are beginning to wipe out the line that divides the practical from the ideal; and in so doing we are fashioning an instrument of unimagined power for the establishment of a morally better world.

This new knowledge undermines the old admiration of worldly success as such. We are beginning to abandon our fatalistic tolerance of the abuse of power by those who betray for profit the elementary decencies of life.
In the process evil things formerly accepted will not be so easily condoned. Hard headedness will not so easily excuse hard-heartedness. We move toward an era of good feeling. But there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will.

[—I hope] I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.
Among men of good-will science and democracy
together offer an ever-richer life and ever larger
satisfactions to the individual.
establishment of a morally better world.

In the process, evil things formerly accepted, will not be so easily condoned. Hard-headedness will not so easily excuse hard-heartedness. We move toward an era of good feeling. But there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will.

With this change in our moral climate and our re-discovered ability through government to improve our economic order, we have set our feet upon the road of enduring progress, in a world where science and democracy offer increasing enrichment of the individual life and ever-larger satisfactions of individual aspirations.

Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead? Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way? True, we have come a long way from the days of stagnation and despair. Vitality has been preserved, courage and confidence have been restored. Mental and moral horizons have been extended.

But our present gains were won under the pressure of more than ordinary circumstance. Selfish men were afraid; thoughtless men were in peril. For the moment they ceased to obstruct; for the moment they were not indifferent. The times were on the side of progress.
Many voices are heard as we face a great decision.

Comfort says "tarry a while". Opportunism says "this is a good spot". Timidity asks "how difficult is the road ahead?"
To hold to progress today, however, is more difficult. Called conscience, irresponsibility and ruthless self-interest reappear. Such symptoms of prosperity may become portents of disaster! Prosperity already tests the persistence of our progressive purpose.

Many voices are heard as we face a great decision. Comfort says "carry a smile." Oppositism says "this is a good spot." Tired asks how difficult is the road ahead! But as we listen, let us ask again: Have we reached the goal of our vision of that fourth day of March, 1933? Have we found that happy valley? We sought when we banished fear?

I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. Its hundred and thirty million people are at peace among themselves; they are making their country a good neighbor among the nations. The United States can demonstrate that, under democratic methods of government, national wealth can be translated into a volume of human comforts hitherto unknown, and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But this is the challenge to our democracy, in this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens — a substantial part of its whole population — who at this very moment
are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of
today call the necessities of life. I see six million families --
twenty-five million people -- trying to live on family incomes of
less than $25.00 a week. Their current resources are so meager
that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day,

I see millions who live their daily lives in city
and on farm under conditions labelled indecent by a so-called
polite society half a century ago. I see millions denied
education, recreation and even the opportunity to better their
lot and the lot of their children. I see millions lacking the
means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their
poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

It is not in despair that I paint you that picture,

I paint it for you in hope -- see the nation, seeing and under-
standing the injustice in it and proposes to paint it out. We show
our determination to make every American citizen the subject
of his country's interest and concern; and we will never regard
any faithful law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous.

We will not listen to Comfort, and Opportunity
and Timidity... We will carry on.
He will not be turned aside by what we see on
the surface. We have a better standard by which to judge
what we have done and what remains for us to do. The
measure of our progress is not what we add to the
abundance of those who have much; but whether we provide
enough for those who have too little.
If I know aught of the spirit and purpose of our nation, we will stick to comfort and efficiency and finitude. We will it be determined to carry on. Overwhelmingly, we of the Republic are men and women of good will -- men and women who have more than warm hearts of dedication -- who have cool heads and willing hands of practical purpose as well. They will insist that government of every form use effective instruments to carry out their will.

Government is competent when all who compose it work as trustees for the whole people. It can make constant progress if it keeps abreast of all the facts. It can obtain justified support and legitimate criticism if the people of the nation receive true information of all that government does. Let us hasten the removal of the evil which beset the millions of our underprivileged if self-organized private groups work with government and not against it.

If I know aught of the will of our people, they will demand that these conditions of effective government shall be created and maintained.

Today we reconsecrate our country to long cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. In every land and there are always at work forces that men together and
THIRD DRAFT (F. D. R.)

forces that demand men united. In our personal ambitions we are individualists. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up and down together. We are one people.

To maintain a democracy of effort requires a vast amount of tolerance of differing opinions, a vast amount of A But out of the confusion of many voices rises an understanding of humility. A political leadership can only voice common ideals and aid in their realization. In taking again the oath of office as President of the United States, I assume the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance.

While this duty rests upon me I shall do my utmost to speak their purpose and to do their will, seeking divine guidance to help us each and every one to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

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In this we Americans were discovering no wholly new truth; we were but seeking to write a new chapter in the book of self-government. In older days a simpler government had met the simpler problems of a smaller nation. In later days we had witnessed the admission that private enterprise alone could no longer cope with greater problems in a greater land.

Four years of new experience hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within sovereign states, and government of the Federation of States has, or can have, the competency to achieve, while, at the same time, it does not cease to be democratic. For nearly all of us today recognize that somewhere there must be power to govern; power to prevent evil and power to do good. The essential democracy of our nation and the safety of our people depend not upon the absence of power but upon its being in the hands of those whom the people can choose at stated intervals through an honest and free system of elections. Democracy in the United States has not been compelled to take a holiday.

So, too, we have learned in these years that private economic power is not invincible against the processes of a democracy which seeks to protect itself or desires to extend itself. Economic power vested in a limited group which
believe, often honestly, that it could best rule the nation, has been challenged where it failed. Its place in society is reverting today to its proper proportion as viewed in the perspective of the democratic ideal.

Thus, with our material gains, we make unseen achievements in mind and spirit. Truths learned and untruths unlearned. A new knowledge undermines the old secret admiration of worldly success as such. We begin to abandon the fatalistic tolerance of the abuse of power by those who betrayed -- for profit -- the elementary decencies of life. I hope I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

We have always known that uncurbed self-interest was bad morals; Now we know that it is bad economics. Out of the collapse of a prosperity whose builders boasted their practicality has come the knowledge that in the long run economic morality pays. We are beginning to wipe out the line that divides the practical from the ideal, and in so doing we are fashioning an instrument of unimagined power toward the establishment of a morally better world.
In the process, evil things formerly tolerated, will not be so easily condoned. Hard-headedness will not so easily excuse hard-heartedness. And while we move toward a era of good feeling, there can be no such era except for men of good will.

Thus far we have come. Do we pause to rest, to sit by the roadside, to take stock of our journey — or are we on our way?

True, our physical vigor is renewed, our mental freedom is more free. Some of us may have believed that a single energetic thrust alone was needed to rout abuses and attain easily discernible objectives.

Some of us may be lulled into security by the victories behind us, but they were victories won under the pressure of more than ordinary circumstance. Our devotion to what is engraved on the great seal of the United States — "The New Order of Things" became effective under the stimulus of suffering and of fear. Selfish men were afraid; thoughtless men were in peril. For the moment they were not indifferent. The times were on the side of progress.
But to hold to progress is today more difficult.

Already [symptoms of] dulled conscience, [of irresponsibility, and]
[unhinged selfishness] symptoms of prosperity. But they may become
[the persistence of our program's purpose.]
tested the common will of our society to survive (and improve
its lot) so prosperity will test our perseverance in moving
forward.

Many voices are heard as

"tarry a while"; opportunism says "this is a good spot";

"how difficult it was in the past" let us ask!

"timidity says what of the road ahead?" was this the goal

How we reached the goal of our nation in, was the found

of that fourth day of March, 1933? (Was this) the safe haven

we sought when we banished fear?

[I see] a great nation upon a great continent. Its

hundred and twenty-five million men and women and children

are at peace among themselves and among their neighbors.

Other nations of the world believe that these people seek to

be good neighbors and look to them to (give impetus to the)

successful application of democratic forms of government to

the most rapid changes in the mechanics and the demands of

civilization there have ever occurred in the whole known

history of the world. In this nation I see tens of millions

of its citizens — a respectable proportion of its whole

population — who at this very moment are denied the greater
part of what, by the lowest standards of today, are termed the necessities of life. I see millions whose current resources are so meager that the pall of disaster on the morrow hangs over them today. I see millions who live their daily lives in city and on farm amid conditions outlawed by a so-called polite society half a century ago. I see conditions where those millions are denied the education and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children. I see millions, who, because they have not the economic power to consume the products of farm and factory, are denying work and productiveness to many other millions. That is not a picture of despair, for it is only within our immediate past that we as a nation have seen it. It is rather a picture of hope because we have seen it and because most of us propose to paint it out.

We cannot paint out the injustice of it. We cannot create a new painting — true to a new life — if we sit by the road.

If I know aught of the purpose of our nation, it is determined to carry on. Overwhelmingly (this nation is composed of men of good will — men of good will who have
more than warm hearts of dedication — [men] who have cool heads and willing hands of practical purpose as well. And so they will succeed.

(If I know aught of this nation, it asks that elective government of every form use effective instruments to carry out their will.

Government can be competent if the tens of thousands who compose it work as trustees for the whole population. (It can be efficient if the efficiency of its machinery is at all times maintained.) It can make constant progress if it keeps abreast of every fact. It can maintain adequate support and legitimate criticism if the people of the nation receive full information from the great agencies which disseminate information. It can hasten the removal of the evils which beset the millions of our underprivileged if self-organized private groups work with government and not against it.

(So much remains to be done that the good people of the country who still believe in America, as their ancestors did, are giving one answer. Four years have proved that we greatly overestimated the numbers of the cowards and the self-seekers. The majority who ask that we continue on our way is overwhelming.)
It is not enough for us to say that we have made progress, for that is the counsel of those whom progress makes afraid. What we have done is not an argument for doing nothing; we recognize it as a precedent and a stimulus to do more.

This nation, so well supplied with the means to produce the goods of life, has turned its thought and purpose to a wider production and a fairer distribution of the good things of life. In the doing of the work, we gladly encourage the reasonable private profit of the individual. In so saying we do not threaten that freedom when we insist that private profit shall bring social profit as well.
INAUGURAL ADDRESS
OF
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

WASHINGTON, D. C.
JANUARY 20, 1937
ADDRESS OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

Washington, D. C.
January 20, 1937

WHEN four years ago we met to inaugurate a President, the Republic, single-minded in anxiety, stood in spirit here. We dedicated ourselves to the fulfillment of a vision—to speed the time when there would be for all the people that security and peace essential to the pursuit of happiness. We of the Republic pledged ourselves to drive from the temple of our ancient faith those who had profaned it; to end by action, tireless and unafraid, the stagnation and despair of that day. We did those first things first.

Our covenant with ourselves did not stop there. Instinctively we recognized a deeper need—the need to find through government the instrument of our united purpose to solve for the individual the ever-rising problems of a complex civilization. Repeated attempts at their solution without the aid of government had left us baffled and bewildered. For, without that aid, we had been unable to create those moral controls over the services of science which are necessary to make science a useful servant instead of a ruthless master of mankind. To do this we knew that we must find practical controls over blind economic forces and blindly selfish men.

We of the Republic sensed the truth that democratic government has innate capacity to protect its people against disasters once con-
sidered inevitable, to solve problems once considered unsolvable. We would not admit that we could not find a way to master economic epidemics just as, after centuries of fatalistic suffering, we had found a way to master epidemics of disease. We refused to leave the problems of our common welfare to be solved by the winds of chance and the hurricanes of disaster.

In this we Americans were discovering no wholly new truth; we were writing a new chapter in our book of self-government.

This year marks the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Constitutional Convention which made us a nation. At that Convention our forefathers found the way out of the chaos which followed the Revolutionary War; they created a strong government with powers of united action sufficient then and now to solve problems utterly beyond individual or local solution. A century and a half ago they established the Federal Government in order to promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty to the American people.

Today we invoke those same powers of government to achieve the same objectives.

Four years of new experience have not belied our historic instinct. They hold out the clear hope that government within communities, government within the separate States, and government of the United States can do the things the times require, without yielding its democracy. Our tasks in the last four years did not force democracy to take a holiday.

Nearly all of us recognize that as intricacies of human relationships increase, so power to govern them also must increase—power to stop evil; power to do good. The essential democracy of our Nation and the safety of our people depend not upon the absence of power, but upon lodging it with those whom the people can change or continue at stated intervals through an honest and free system of elections. The Constitution of 1787 did not make our democracy impotent.

In fact, in these last four years, we have made the exercise of all power more democratic; for we have begun to bring private autocratic powers into their proper subordination to the public’s government. The legend that they were invincible—above and beyond the processes of a democracy—has been shattered. They have been challenged and beaten.

Our progress out of the depression is obvious. But that is not all that you and I mean by the new order of things. Our pledge was not merely to do a patchwork job with secondhand materials. By using the new materials of social justice we have undertaken to erect on the old foundations a more enduring structure for the better use of future generations.

In that purpose we have been helped by achievements of mind and spirit. Old truths have been relearned; untruths have been unlearned. We have always known that heedless self-interest was bad morals; we know now that it is bad economics. Out of the collapse of a prosperity whose builders boasted their practicability has come the conviction that in the long run economic morality pays. We are beginning to wipe out the line that divides the practical from the ideal; and in so doing we are fashioning an instrument of imagined power for the establishment of a morally better world.

This new understanding undermines the old admiration of worldly success as such. We are beginning to abandon our tolerance of the abuse of power by those who betray the democratic decencies of life.

In this process evil things formerly accepted will not be so easily condoned. Hard-heartedness will not so easily excuse hard-heartedness. We are moving toward an era of good feeling. But we realize that there can be no era of good feeling save among men of good will.
For these reasons I am justified in believing that the greatest change we have witnessed has been the change in the moral climate of America.

Among men of good will, science and democracy together offer an ever richer life and ever larger satisfaction to the individual. With this change in our moral climate and our rediscovered ability to improve our economic order, we have set our feet upon the road of enduring progress.

Shall we pause now and turn our back upon the road that lies ahead? Shall we call this the promised land? Or, shall we continue on our way? For “each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth.”

Many voices are heard as we face a great decision. Comfort says, “Tarry a while.” Opportunity says, “This is a good spot.” Timidity asks, “How difficult is the road ahead?”

True, we have come far from the days of stagnation and despair. Vitality has been preserved. Courage and confidence have been restored. Mental and moral horizons have been extended.

But our present gains were won under the pressure of more than ordinary circumstance. Advance became imperative under the goal of fear and suffering. The times were on the side of progress.

To hold to progress today, however, is more difficult. Dulled conscience, irresponsibility, and ruthless self-interest already reappear. Such symptoms of prosperity may become portents of disaster! Prosperity already tests the persistence of our progressive purpose.

Let us ask again: Have we reached the goal of our vision of that fourth day of March 1933? Have we found our happy valley?

I see a great nation, upon a great continent, blessed with a great wealth of natural resources. Its hundred and thirty million people are at peace among themselves; they are making their country a good neighbor among the nations. I see a United States which can demonstrate that, under democratic methods of government, national wealth can be translated into a spreading volume of human comforts hitherto unknown, and the lowest standard of living can be raised far above the level of mere subsistence.

But here is the challenge to our democracy: In this nation I see tens of millions of its citizens—a substantial part of its whole population—who at this very moment are denied the greater part of what the very lowest standards of today call the necessities of life.

I see millions of families trying to live on incomes so meager that the pall of family disaster hangs over them day by day.

I see millions whose daily lives in city and on farm continue under conditions labeled indecent by a so-called polite society half a century ago.

I see millions denied education, recreation, and the opportunity to better their lot and the lot of their children.

I see millions lacking the means to buy the products of farm and factory and by their poverty denying work and productiveness to many other millions.

I see one-third of a nation ill-housed, ill-clad, ill-nourished.

It is not in despair that I paint you that picture. I paint it for you in hope—because the Nation, seeing and understanding the injustice in it, proposes to paint it out. We are determined to make every American citizen the subject of his country’s interest and concern; and we will never regard any faithful law-abiding group within our borders as superfluous. The test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little.

If I know aught of the spirit and purpose of our Nation, we will not listen to Comfort, Opportunity, and Timidity. We will carry on.
Overwhelmingly, we of the Republic are men and women of good will; men and women who have more than warm hearts of dedication; men and women who have cool heads and willing hands of practical purpose as well. They will insist that every agency of popular government use effective instruments to carry out their will.

Government is competent when all who compose it work as trustees for the whole people. It can make constant progress when it keeps abreast of all the facts. It can obtain justified support and legitimate criticism when the people receive true information of all that government does.

If I know aught of the will of our people, they will demand that these conditions of effective government shall be created and maintained. They will demand a nation uncorrupted by cancers of injustice and, therefore, strong among the nations in its example of the will to peace.

Today we reconsecrate our country to long-cherished ideals in a suddenly changed civilization. In every land there are always at work forces that drive men apart and forces that draw men together. In our personal ambitions we are individualists. But in our seeking for economic and political progress as a nation, we all go up, or else we all go down, as one people.

To maintain a democracy of effort requires a vast amount of patience in dealing with differing methods, a vast amount of humility. But out of the confusion of many voices rises an understanding of dominant public need. Then political leadership can voice common ideals, and aid in their realization.

In taking again the oath of office as President of the United States, I assume the solemn obligation of leading the American people forward along the road over which they have chosen to advance.

While this duty rests upon me I shall do my utmost to speak their purpose and to do their will, seeking Divine guidance to help us each and every one to give light to them that sit in darkness and to guide our feet into the way of peace.
From the Papers of
President Franklin D. Roosevelt
Speech of January 20, 1937

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