For Immediate Release  September 24, 1937.

W. H. McIntyre
Secretary to the President.

Informal, extemporaneous remarks of
the President,
Cheyenne, Wyoming
September 24, 1937
10:00 A. M.

Some people wonder why I am here. Last January a good friend of mine came to me and said, "Why, during the next four years, don't you take it easy? Why don't you coast? You climbed up a long, steep grade over the past four years and now, during the next four years you might as well have a good time."

I said to him that I was going to continue during these four years the practice of the last four years and that, incidentally, in so doing I would have a good time.

I don't want to coast and the Nation doesn't want me to coast with my feet up on the front wheels.

I have thought that it was part of the duty of the Presidency to keep in touch, personal touch, with the Nation. And so, this year, since January, I have already made one trip through a number of the Southern states on my way back from catching some fish and now I am going out to the Coast for the third time since I have been President - not counting campaign trips - going out to take a "look-see" - to try to tie together in my own mind the problems of the Nation in order that I may, at first hand, know as much about the questions that affect all the forty-eight states as possible.

As you know, the greater part of the emergency is over - not all of it because there are still a great many difficult problems and I want to talk to you, very briefly, about some of the things that the national government has done and is doing.

For example, during the past three or four years we have spent in every part of the country a great deal of Federal money in putting people to work. That was the primary objective, but at the same time we have tried our utmost to accomplish useful things and there is not a State - there are very few communities in the whole nation that have not benefited by these Federal expenditures, not in a temporary way but in a permanent way.

I was thinking this morning of the question of airports and I don't know whether it is thoroughly realized by you here on one of the stations on one of the main transcontinental air lines that the Federal Government has assisted in the building, not of several dozen new airports in the country, not of several hundred, but of many thousands, with the result today that the United States is checker-boarded with airports in every state. That is an accomplishment of the past three or four years.

In the same way, not dozens or hundreds but thousands of schools have been built or renovated with a combination of State, local and Federal funds.

We have to come, someday, to an end of the greater part of that program and just the other day, in Washington, we allocated the last of the Federal money for Public Works projects. This consisted of more schools, more sewer systems, more waterworks and things of that kind where there was a very clear need for replacement or where the states or the localities had already voted the funds.
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.
I will tell you one amusing story of the allocation for school projects. Congress told me to confine them to those schools where the schools had been burned down or where a new school had to be built to replace a building that was about to tumble down. There came a project from one of the Southern states for the building of a new school building and a new library. The school building was to replace one that was about to fall down and we granted that project. But, in the case of the library they apparently did not have a library and it was therefore not a replacement project. With great regret we rejected the application.

The head of the school came to Washington to see me. I told him how sorry I was that we could not spend Federal funds for new buildings no matter how much they were needed, unless they were to replace one that had burned or tumbled down. And he said, "But, Mr. President, our library did burn down." I said, "That's funny, because there is nothing said about that in the application. When was it burned down?"

And he replied, "Mr. President, our library was burned in 1864 by General Sherman."

On this trip I am looking at many types of projects. I am always eager, when I come west, to get more people out of the East to come West and see things with their own eyes.

The other day I read in a big newspaper of the Middle West an editorial which took as its text the fact that one of the WPA dams in Kansas had in part been washed out. It meant undoubtedly the loss of a good deal of money. And the editorial pointed out that this was the way the Federal Government was wasting its funds.

Well, I believe that engineers are human just like I am and that they do not make a home-run every time they come to the bat.

But the editorial went on, taking that dam as a text, and pointed out from their point of view, which I do not believe is the point of view of the nation, that in the construction of great dams by the Federal Government we are creating millions of kilowatts of power which will never be used by the people.

I think that you and I and most people realize that when you do create power the public finds some useful way to use it.

In the same way they went on to say that all of these reclamation projects mean a pure waste of money, that to build a project like Casper-Alcova, or Grand Coulee we would make available unnecessary farm lands, and that there are enough good farms in the United States to take care of all the people who need them for fifty years to come.

You and I know that that is not so. You, here on this great central highway know of the number of people - families - who have had to leave their homes on their farms in the drought area, some of them from the eastern part of this state, from the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, people who could not make a go of it on the poor land - families forced to leave their homes to avoid starvation. Those people have come further west, looking for a chance to earn their livelihood, looking for good land and not being able to find it.

So, in the same way, there are thousands of families in the East who are unable to make good on the land they are tilling now for very obvious reasons. It is land that ought not to be under the plow. So, for all these families, I believe that it is the duty of the Federal Government and the State Governments to provide them with land where it is possible to do it, where they can make a living.
Visit inventory 1924-5-6

P.W.D.
Schools
Corrnotes

Relief
C.C.A.

Ohio Tides

Reclamation

Pawson

$50,000,000
Roads - Pub. Edg.

10 - 1.

W.P.A. dam caused in
no market power
for generations to

come.

Good farm 50 years
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The head of the school came to Washington to see me. I told him how sorry I was that we could not spend Federal funds for new buildings no matter how much they were needed, unless they were to replace that had burned down. And he said, "But, Mr. President, our library did burn down." I said, "That's funny, because
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I could go on talking about WPA and FWA and Soil Erosion and the CCC camps. As a matter of fact, all served a very useful purpose. It is a better country for having spent, for a few years, more than we were taking in in taxes, don't let anybody deceive you - the Government of the United States is not going broke.

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So here I am, trying in this short trip — for it must be short — to get a cross-section point of view, the point of view especially of the rank and file of the American people in this western country. Yes, it is part of the duty of the Presidency to represent, insofar as possible, all the people, not just Democrats but Republicans as well, not just rich people, but poor people as well. And I have been trying, very simply, to do the most good for the greatest number.

Out here in the cattle country and the sugar beet country, of course, I am interested in the prosperity of the raisers of cattle and the growers of beets.

Perhaps somewhere down in my heart, I am a little bit more interested in the ten men who have a hundred head of cattle apiece, than I am in the one man who has a thousand head of cattle. And perhaps I am a little more interested in the ten men who have a hundred acres of beets than I am in the one man who has a thousand acres of beets.

It seems to me that is one of the orders — one of the necessary things that goes with the Presidency.

In these next few years — four years, eight years, twelve years, twenty years — I am very firmly convinced that the people of the Nation have, more and more, a national point of view.

You people out here realize far better than you did four years ago that your prosperity is tied up very intimately with the prosperity of the cotton growers of the South and with that of the industrial workers of the East. And, in the same way, those people in the great factories of the East and Middle West, and on the cotton farms of the South, in the corn belt and in the wheat belt, know that their prosperity is affected by your prosperity out here.
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INFORMAL EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
MARSHALLTOWN, IOWA
September 23, 1937

I am glad to come back to Iowa after an absence of nearly a year. As you know, this is not a campaign trip but it is merely doing what I think every President ought to do and that is, once a year, to try to see something of the country at first hand.

I believe that on this trip so far things are a good deal better than they were in 1936.

At this particular moment I have to be very careful of what I say because, up on the front platform of this car, they are making a record on a disc, and, also, the newspapermen in the club car, who are connected with this back platform by this instrument, (indicating microphone) are taking everything down, trying to get a real story that will appear in the headlines. So I have got to disappoint them once more.

As a matter of fact, I know a lot of you good people here are interested in one of the objectives of government — the stability of crop prices. It is one of the big things that we have got to solve this year, and we know what happens to the country when corn and cotton and wheat and other major crops fluctuate up and down the scale and people haven't got any idea, when they plant their crops, what they are going to get for them when they reap them.

That is something, I believe, that modern civilization must solve and can solve — and I am not speaking in a party spirit, as you know. I think the time has come when the government can devise ways and means which will stabilize prices that farmers get for what they grow. And I believe, too, that that can be done without bankrupting the government.

On this trip I am talking to many people about methods to be used in obtaining those ends. You know, a lot of people mix up objectives with methods and, sometimes, when they don't like the objectives, they say, "Oh, yes, we do like the objectives, but we don't like the methods proposed by this particular fellow." Well, I am not in love with any particular method but I am in love with the particular objectives which the people are after and I am after.

That is why tomorrow, when I will be in the best sugar area and cattle area, I will be trying to get at first hand what the people are thinking about; and trying to get at first hand the methods to be used in gaining the objectives, because I am certain that we are together as to what those objectives are.

I said I was not going to make a speech but I seem to have made one.

I suppose that in the last twenty-five years I have seen a good deal more of the United States than almost anybody in public life except Jim Farley. I am keen to see more of it and I propose to keep on traveling.

Many thanks.
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM BY THE PRESIDENT

September 24, 1937.

This was basis of Cheyenne speech September 24, 1937.
TOPHEAVY PUBLIC WORKS

In Wyandotte county, Kan., a 900-foot section of a new dam recently completed was about 1,000 feet long. Its cost was $1,850,000. It was built under WPA auspices. H. L. Repeart, chief engineer of the WPA in Kansas, said the collapse seemed to have resulted from "just too much weight for the base underlying the dam."

The prime object of the government's projects was not to build strongly, but to spend money in the depressed districts as rapidly as it could be appropriated for that purpose. Large engineering works cannot be improvised overnight. In ordinary practice, study of the merits of a proposition, determination of the places for the drawing of plans and the checking and rechecking of the plans and specifications, and making purchase requisite at least as much time as the construction itself. Man cannot change the face of nature, but only the footworks without going through the painstaking preliminaries which experience has proved essential to economy and safety.

Probably there will be many dramatic failures such as took place in Wyandotte county, but the engineering profession as a whole can be counted upon to build safely even under the adverse conditions now existing. Mr. Repeart's words are taken figuratively as well as literally they apply to other items in the project. The engineer who has done the collapse from "just too much weight for the base underlying the dam."

That is notably true of the irrigation and power projects which Mr. Roosevelt intends to visit on his coming western tour. He proposes to inspect the Casper-Allen, the Doylyville, Grand Coulee, and Fort Peck dams. Adequate information regarding the Owyhee project is not available. The is slight indication that each of the others is costing more than the original estimate, but the government expected of it can justify. In that sense each of those dams is a "fulfillment of the promise from just too much weight for the base underlying the dam." But taxpayers, needless to say, are at the bottom of the problem.

The government's own engineers had reported adversely on most of the projects which Mr. Roosevelt will visit. Under pressure, the army of engineers and reclamation engineers altered their verdicts, but there never was any doubt what they really thought. With the enactment of the 1936 act the Fort Peck projects are intended primarily to provide irrigation water and power. There is no market now for the power like the dam, which can be produced in the regions where it will be produced and little likelihood that there will be such a market for generations to come. Likewise, there is no shortage in this country today of desirable farm lands and so likelihood that a shortage will develop for at least a hundred years. Then, assuming a continued increase in population, it will be necessary. If lands and irrigation centers will be worth what it will cost to irrigate them. Meanwhile the existence of these projects is to be expected to be of much help to the farm lands and crops in other sections of the country.

The Fort Peck dam, near Glasgow, Mont., should probably be particularly enjoyed by the President and his party. Here is what is said to be the largest earth dam in the world. It is as high as any church steeple, and is made of 47 million cubic yards of earth and gravel. The photo call for the production of only minor amounts of electricity and the uses of the dam are irrigation and navigation.

The grand and, practically speaking, the only use for this gigantic structure is to impound water under the Missoula-Flathead canal. Now the dam, in the river not much more than the average of the surrounding agricultural area. To achieve this end a dam which will cost according to preliminary estimates about $10 million will be spent on the dam and it will be necessary to spend millions must be spent each year to keep the channel dredged.

The difference of a million and a half dollars was wasted when the dam was completed. The waste at Fort Peck is at least fifty times as large. The water in the Columbia basin is worth at least a hundred times as large. In that sense the dams which Mr. Roosevelt will inspect are as topheavy as the one in Wyandotte county.

PRISONS AND POLITICS.

The state superintendent of prisons, Joseph J. Repeart, has announced that under the new system will not control appointments and promotions at the penal institutions of Illinois. It is exactly what the legislature intended.

When wardens and guards are chosen for their
The grand and, practically speaking, the only use for this gigantic structure is to impound water to render the Missouri river navigable about as far up as Yankton, S. D.; that is to say, the dam will increase the navigable stretch of the river by a few hundred miles in a sparsely settled agricultural area. To achieve this end a dam which will cost (according to preliminary estimates, no doubt since exceeded) about $85 million dollars is being built, and even then the expenditure will be of no value unless another $60 million dollars is spent in dredging the channel. Other millions must be spent each year to keep the channel dredged.

Out in Kansas a million and a half dollars was wasted when the dam caved in. The waste at Fort Peck is at least fifty times as large. The waste on the Columbia river is at least a hundred times as large. In that sense the dams which Mr. Roosevelt will inspect are as topheavy as the Wyandotte dam.

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The state superintendent of prisons, Joseph E. Ragen, has announced that hereafter the spoils system will not control appointments and promotions at the penal institutions of Illinois. It is to be hoped that this policy will be adhered to. When wardens and guards are chosen for their vote-getting powers, lax discipline, contract graft and other abuses follow. The test will come on the eve of elections when the political machine is under temptation to load the public services with party men. If the temptation can be resisted at that time, Illinois will know that the prisons are no longer in politics.

Editorial of the Day

"IGNORE HISTORY."
[Tedco, Statesman, Boise.]

The Kansas City Star cites the case of the young French correspondent who, when introduced to a distinguished editor of a London newspaper, sought to make apology for the fact that he was not as well versed in history and international politics as he should be.

It was almost immediately after the world war and the famous editor saw fit to brush aside the apology with the declaration, "Young man, your ignorance of history is an advantage. The world has entered a new era. The past is no longer a guide. A knowledge of history would only mislead you."

The editor's words were full of folly, as was demonstrated in less than a year, when the nations again were following their old paths and a working knowledge of history and international politics of former years was absolutely essential to any one seeking intelligently to report what was going on in the world.

When the New Deal came into power all the older books on economics went into the discard. If we don't search them out and apply their teachings again we will ride straight to catastrophe.

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I said to him that I was going to continue during these four years the practice of the last four years and that, incidentally, in so doing I would have a good time.

I don't want to coast and the Nation doesn't want me to coast with my feet up on the front wheels.

I have thought that it was part of the duty of the Presidency to keep in touch, personal touch, with the Nation. And so, this year, since January, I have already made one trip through a number of the Southern states on my way back from catching some fish and now I am going out to the West for the third time since I have been President - not counting campaign trips - going out to take a "look-see" - to try to tie together in my own mind the problems of the Nation in order that I may, at first hand, know as much about the questions that affect all the forty-eight states as possible.

As you know, the greater part of the emergency is over - not all of it because there are still a great many difficult problems and I want to talk to you, very briefly, about some of the things that the national government has done and is doing.

For example, during the past three or four years we have spent in every part of the country a great deal of Federal money in putting people to work. That was the primary objective, but at the same time we have tried our utmost to accomplish useful things and there is not a State - there are very few communities in the whole nation that have not benefited by these Federal expenditures, not in a temporary way but in a permanent way.

I was thinking this morning of the question of airports and I don't know whether it is thoroughly realized by you here on one of these stations on one of the main transcontinental air lines that the Federal Government has assisted in the building, not of several dozen new airports in the country, not of several hundred, but of many thousands, with the result today that the United States is checkerboarded with airports in every state. That is an accomplishment of the past three or four years.

In the same way, not dozens or hundreds but thousands of schools have been built or renovated with a combination of State, local and Federal funds.

We have to come, someday, to an end of the greater part of that program and just the other day, in Washington, we allocated the last of the Federal money for Public Works projects. This consisted of more schools, more sewer systems, more waterworks, and things of that kind where there was a very clear need for replacement or where the states or the localities had already voted the funds.
I will tell you one amusing story of the allocation for school projects. Congress told me to confine them to those schools where the schools had been burned down or where a new school had to be built to replace a building that was about to tumble down. There came a project from one of the Southern states for the building of a new school building and a new library. The school building was to replace one that was about to fall down and we granted that project. But, in the case of the library they apparently did not have a library and it was therefore not a replacement project. With great regret we rejected the application.

The head of the school came to Washington to see me. I told him how sorry I was that we could not spend Federal funds for new buildings no matter how much they were needed, unless they were to replace one that had burned or tumbled down. And he said, "But, Mr. President, our library did burn down." I said, "That’s funny, because there is nothing said about that in the application. When was it burned down?"

And he replied, "Mr. President, our library was burned in 1864 by General Sherman."

On this trip I am looking at many types of projects. I am always eager, when I come west, to get more people out of the East to come West and see things with their own eyes.

The other day I read in a big newspaper of the Middlewest an editorial which took as its text the fact that one of the WPA dams in Kansas had in part been washed out. It meant undoubtedly the loss of a good deal of money. And the editorial pointed out that this was the way the Federal Government was wasting its funds.

Well, I believe that engineers are human just like I am and that they do not make a hobo-run every time they come to the bat.

But the editorial went on, taking that dam as a text, and pointed out from their point of view, which I do not believe is the point of view of the nation, that in the construction of most dams by the Federal Government we are creating millions of kilowatts of power which will never be used by the people.

I think that you and I and most people realize that when you do create power the public finds some useful way to use it.

In the same way they went on to say that all of these reclamation projects meant a pure waste of money, that to build a project like Casper-Alcova, or Grand Coulee we would make available unnecessary farm lands, and that there are enough good farms in the United States to take care of all the people who need them for fifty years to come.

You and I know that that is not so. You, here on this great central highway know of the number of people — families — who have had to leave their homes on their farms in the drought area, some of them from the eastern part of this state, from the Dakotas, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas, people who could not make a go of it on the poor land — families forced to leave their homes to avoid starvation. Those people have gone further west, looking for a chance to earn their livelihood, looking for good land and not being able to find it.

So, in the same way, there are thousands of families in the East who are unable to make good on the land they are tilling now for very obvious reasons. It is land that ought not to be under the plow. So, for all these families, I believe that it is the duty of the Federal Government and the State Governments to provide them with land where it is possible to do it, where they can make a living.
I could go on talking about WPA and FWA and Soil Erosion and the CCC camps. As a matter of fact they have all served a useful purpose. It is a better country for having spent, for a few years, more than we were taking in in taxes, but don't let anybody deceive you - the Government of the United States is not going broke.

So here I am, trying in this short trip - for it must be short -- to get a cross-section point of view, the point of view especially of the rank and file of the American people in this western country. Yes, it is part of the duty of the Presidency to represent, insofar as possible, all the people, not just Democrats, but Republicans and others as well, not just rich people, but poor people as well. And I have been trying, very simply, to do the most good for the greatest number.

Out here in the cattle country and the sugar beet country, of course, I am interested in the prosperity of the raisers of cattle and the growers of beets.

Perhaps somewhere down in my heart, I am a little bit more interested in the ten men who have a hundred head of cattle each, than I am in the one man who has a thousand head of cattle. And perhaps I am a little more interested in the ten men who have a hundred acres of beets than I am in the one man who has a thousand acres of beets.

It seems to me that is one of the orders -- one of the necessary things that goes with the Presidency.

In these next few years — four years, eight years, twelve years, twenty years — I am very firmly convinced that the people of the Nation will have, more and more, a national point of view.

You people out here realize far better than you did four years ago that your prosperity is tied up very intimately with the prosperity of the cotton growers of the South and with that of the industrial workers of the East. And, in the same way, those people in the great factories of the East and Middle West, and on the cotton farms of the South, in the corn belt and in the wheat belt, know that their prosperity is affected by your prosperity out here.

That, I believe, will be written in history as the great accomplishment of these years that we are living in now, the welding together of the people of the United States.

So, my friends, I am glad to have been able to come out here on this annual trip, and I hope and expect to come out again during the next three years.

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