
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. 1085

1937 October 2-3

**Grand Coulee & Spokane, WA & Havre, MT -
Informal remarks**

**[Miscellaneous Speeches and Radio Addresses
1937]**

INFORMAL, EXTEMPORANEOUS REMARKS
OF THE PRESIDENT AT GRAND COULEE
DAM, OCTOBER 2, 1937.

Coming back to Grand Coulee after three years, I am made very happy by the wonderful progress that I have seen. And I cannot help feeling that everybody who has had anything to do with the building of this great dam is going to be made happy all the rest of their lives. Some day we will have a "Grand Coulee Association" for those people who had something to do with this construction, and membership in that Association will be like a badge of honor because we are building here something that is going to do a great amount of good for this Nation through all the years to come.

My head is full of figures and the easiest way to describe those figures is to say that this is the largest structure, so far as anybody knows, that has ever been undertaken by man in one place. Superlatives do not count for anything because it is so much bigger than anything ever tried before that there is no comparison.

We look forward not only to the great good this will do in the development of power but also in the development of thousands of homes, the bringing in of millions of acres of new land for future Americans.

I think in the State of Washington there is a splendid understanding of one of the objectives in the development of these acres that are going to be irrigated. There are thousands of families in this country in the Middle West, in the Plains area, who are not making good because they are trying to farm on poor land. I look forward to the day when this valley, this basin, is opened up, giving the first opportunity to these American families who need some good farm land in place of their present farms. They are a splendid crowd of people and it is up to us, as a Nation, to help them to live better than they are living now.

There is another phase that I was thinking about this morning. When the dam is completed and the pool is filled, we will have a lake 155 miles long running all the way to Canada. You young people especially are going to live to see the day when thousands and thousands of people are going to use this great lake both for transportation purposes and for pleasure purposes. There will be sail boats and motor boats and steamship lines running from here to the northern border of the United States and into Canada.

It is a great project -- something that appeals to the imagination of the whole country. There is just one other word that is worth saying from the national point of view: We think of this as something that is benefitting this part of the country primarily, giving employment to a great many people in this neighborhood. But we must also remember that one half of the total cost of this dam is paid to the factories east of the Mississippi River. In other words, it is putting to work in the steel centers and other great manufacturing centers of the east thousands of people in making the materials that go into the dam. So, in a very correct sense, it is a national undertaking and doing a national good.

I am always glad to see a project in the construction stage because when it is finished very few people will realize -- they won't be able to visualize -- all the difficult work in the actual construction. I hope to come back here in another two or three years and see this dam pretty nearly completed. When that time comes, I think we had better, all of us, have a reunion of rejoicing.

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We look forward not only to the great good this will do in the development of power but also in the development of thousands of homes, the bringing in of millions of acres of new land for future Americans.

I think in the State of Washington there is a splendid understanding of one of the objectives in the development of these acres that are going to be irrigated. There are thousands of families in this country in the Middle West, in the Plains area, who are not making good because they are trying to farm on poor land. I look forward to the day when this valley, this basin, is opened up, giving the first opportunity to these American families who need some good farm land in place of their present farms. They are a splendid crowd of people and it is up to us, as a Nation, to help them to live better than they are living now.

There is another phase that I was thinking about this morning. When the dam is completed and the pool is filled, we will have a lake 150 miles long running all the way to Canada. You young people especially are going to live to see the day when thousands and thousands of people are going to use this great lake both for transportation purposes and for pleasure purposes. There will be sail boats and motor boats and steamship lines running from here to the northern border of the United States and into Canada.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

M. H. McIntyre,
Secretary to the President.

Informal, Extemporaneous remarks
of the President, Spokane, Wash-
ington, October 3, 1937.

My friends, I am sold on the State of Washington. I have had a wonderful few days and I wish very much that I could spend weeks instead of days seeing more of the State because I am certain about the future of the Northwest. I am very certain of the contribution it is going to make to our Nation in the days to come, not only in the building up of population but in the building up of the right kind of population, the right kind of people, by using the resources of this great region for the benefit of mankind.

Today I have seen the largest structure that any human beings, so far as history records, have ever undertaken, the Grand Coulee Dam. I am thrilled by it, as all of you are.

I want to leave with you just one suggestion:

There are parts of this Nation that are not as favored as the Northwest. Mistakes have been made. They have cut off their timber. Their land is played out, or they plowed up prairie land which is now blowing away. I am thinking about those people as well as you people. You have got room for them here in the Northwest where they can make homes, where they can live happily and prosperously.

I am asking your cooperation in helping your fellow-Americans, who are less favored than you are, to make a new start in life. I know what your response, what your hospitality, is going to be.

Although I leave the State very soon, I am not leaving for good by any means because, as you know, part of my family lives in this State.

I am going to come back again in the next three years and take a "look-see" once more.

In the meantime, remember that you are in my thoughts, that we people in Washington - I mean Washington, D. C. - though it is a long way off, are remembering the Northwest, remembering its great possibilities, remembering, incidentally, the fine representatives in the House and in the Senate, that you have sent to us.

And so this is Au revoir, it is not good-bye. I will be back to see you soon.

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Spokane, Washington

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STATEMENTS FILE

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INFORMAL, EXTEMPORENEOUS REMARKS
OF THE PRESIDENT, HAVRE, MONTANA,
OCTOBER 3, 1937.

Good morning.

I am glad to be back in Montana after an absence of one week.

I am particularly interested in seeing this part of the country because I have got to plan ahead and you have got to plan ahead and the Congress has got to plan ahead for the use of more water.

I was talking last night with Jim Murray about that problem of water and we agreed that in a drought area like eastern Montana probably the time has come -- and that applies to big sections of other states as well -- the time has come to use our WPA work, not in building any more armories or school stadiums or streets but to put it into the building of dams.

This morning I sailed all the way through breakfast because I happened to see an editorial, not in a paper here but in a Great Falls paper, that talked about "balancing the budget of our resources." That is something that is well worth thinking about. It said that because we have made money in rusting and eroding large human resources and piled up nominal wealth in securities and bank balances, we have lost sight of the fact that the natural resources of our land - our permanent capital - are being converted into those nominal evidences of wealth at a faster rate than our real wealth is being replaced.

That is well worth thinking about. That is the unbalanced budget that is most serious and it is to balance that budget that the great program of conservation and useful public works is being carried out. The success of that form of budget balancing is just as important to the future of America as that of the Treasury, important as that may be.

As a matter of fact, the Treasury is all right and we are balancing that budget -- you needn't worry -- but, in addition to it, we are going to use every effort to balance the budget of our human and our natural resources.

I have had a very wonderful trip. I have seen a lot and I have learned a lot. I wish a whole lot of other people from back East and from Washington, D. C., could take trips like this.

I am going on down to Fort Peck to see the largest earthdam in the world. Yesterday I saw the largest concrete dam in the world. All of them are intended to do just what I have been talking about -- to give people a better chance -- and I believe that is what the American people want and are going to get.

It has been good to see you all this morning. I wish I could stop off longer and see this country. I have been here before, you know. I wish I could go up to Glacier. I wish I could drive in an automobile because I can see more that way than from the rear platform of a train.

I hope to come back and see you again soon.

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Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the 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.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

etc.

Informal Extraneous Remarks of the President

Havre, Montana, October 3, 1937.

Good morning.

I am glad to be back in Montana after an absence of one week.

I am particularly interested in seeing this part of the country because I have got to plan ahead and you have got to plan ahead and the Congress has got to plan ahead for the use of more water.

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This morning I sailed all the way through breakfast because I happened to see an editorial, not in a paper here but in a Great Falls paper, that talked about balancing the budget of our resources.

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End

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M. H. MCINTYRE
SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT.

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