
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. 1141

1938 June 30

**New York City, NY –
Address to the National Education Association**

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR GROUNDS
THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 1938

If you have followed the arguments of financial experts over the last few years, you have guessed that they have as many theories of keeping books as there are ends to serve. They do not always agree on the definition of capital and they even disagree on what is an asset and what is a liability. That is true both in private business and in government.

But whatever differences bookkeepers and financiers may have over the rules of their professions, no man or woman of common sense can forget, or allow government to forget, what are the true and ultimate assets and liabilities of a nation.

The only real capital of a nation is its natural resources and its human beings. So long as we take care of and make the most of both of them, we shall survive as a strong nation, a successful nation and a progressive nation -- whether or not the bookkeepers say other kinds of budgets are from time to time out of balance.

This capital structure -- natural resources and human beings -- has to be maintained at all times. The plant has to be kept up and new capital put in year by year to meet increasing needs. If we skimp on that capital -- if we exhaust our natural resources and weaken the capacity of our human beings, then we shall go the way of all weak nations.

Before we can think straight as a nation we have to consider -- in addition to the old kind -- a new kind of government balance sheet -- a long-range sheet which shows survival values for our population and for our democratic way of living, balanced against what we have paid for them. Judged by that test -- history's test -- I venture to say that the long-range budget of the present Administration of our government has been in the black and not in the red.

For many years I, like you, have been a pedagogue -- (of course, some people who are not strong on spelling will get that word mixed up with the word "demagogue") striving

to inculcate in the youth of America a greater knowledge of and interest in the problems which, with such force, strike the whole world in the face today. In these recent years we have taught the prudent husbandry of our national estate -- our rivers, our soil, our forests, our phosphates, our oils, our minerals and our wild life. Along these lines we have made mighty strides -- come further than in all the years before in knowledge of how to grapple with the problems of maintaining the estate that our forefathers handed down to us.

With the dissemination of this knowledge, we have taken action. Few men begrudge what that action has cost because it has been based on operations physically large and spectacular, dramatic and easy to see. I am thankful that I live in an age of building, for it is far easier to dramatize one's self to ~~sensate~~ the importance of the object if you see it while it is going up, than if you come along later and see it only in its completed stage. We are fortunate today in seeing the New York World's Fair of 1939 in the construction stage.

This glimpse will make it mean more to us when we see it completed next year.

The other half of the preservation of our national capital is likewise a problem of husbandry -- the conserving of health, energy, skill and morale of our population, and especially of that part of our population which will be the America of tomorrow.

This also is a problem of the fullest use and development of precious resources of ability which cannot be stored and will be lost if they remain unused. No nation can meet this changing world unless its people, individually and collectively, grow in ability to understand and handle the new knowledge as applied to increasingly intricate human relationships. That is why the teachers of America are the ultimate guardians of the human capital of America, the assets which must be made to pay social dividends if democracy is to survive.

We have believed wholeheartedly in investing the money of all the people on the education of the people. That conviction, backed up by taxes and dollars, is no accident, for it is the logical application of our faith in democracy.

Man's present day control of the affairs of nature is the direct result of investment in education. And the democratization of education has made it possible for outstanding ability, which would otherwise be completely lost, to make its outstanding contribution to the common weal. We cannot afford to overlook any source of human raw material. Genius flowers in most unexpected places; "it is the impetus of the undistinguished host that hurls forth a Diomed or a Hector".

No government can create the human touch and self-sacrifice which the individual teacher gives to the process of education. But what Government can do is to provide financial support and to protect from interference the freedom to learn.

No one wants the Federal Government to subsidize education any more than is absolutely necessary. It has been and will be the traditional policy of the United States to leave the actual management of schools and their curricula to state and local control.

But we know that in many places local government unfortunately cannot adequately finance either the freedom or the facilities to learn. And there the Federal Government can properly supplement local resources.

Here is where the whole problem of education ties in definitely with natural resources and the economic picture of the individual community or state. We all know that the best schools are in most cases located in those communities which can afford to spend the most money on them -- the most money for adequate teachers' salaries, for modern buildings and for modern equipment of all kinds. We know that the weakest educational link in the system lies in those communities

which have the lowest taxable values, therefore, the smallest per capita tax receipts, and, therefore, the lowest teachers' salaries and most inadequate buildings and equipment. We do not blame these latter communities. They want better educational facilities but simply have not enough money to pay the cost.

There is probably a wider divergence today in the standard of education between the richest communities and the poorest communities than there was one hundred years ago; and it is, therefore, our immediate task to seek to close that gap -- not in any way by decreasing the facilities of the richer communities but by extending aid to those less fortunate. We all know that if we do not close this gap it will continue to widen, for the best brains in the poor communities will either have no chance to develop or will migrate to those places where their ability will stand a better chance.

To continue the parallel between natural and human resources, it is well to remember that our poorest communities exist where the land is most greatly eroded, where farming

does not pay, where industries have moved out, where flood and drought have done their work, where transportation facilities are of the poorest and where cheap electricity is unavailable for the home.

All of this leads me to ask you not to demand that the Federal Government provide financial assistance to all communities. Our aid for many reasons, financial and otherwise, must be confined to lifting the level at the bottom rather than to giving assistance at the top. Today we cannot do both, and we must therefore confine ourselves to the greater need.

In line with this policy, the Federal Government during the past five years has given relatively far more assistance to the poorer communities than to the rich. We have done it through direct relief and through work relief, through the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration, the National Youth Administration and through the rehabilitation of flooded, stranded or dust-blown areas.

We have provided school houses, colleges, libraries, educational equipment and sanitation in every state of the Union. I include "sanitation" because it has always seemed to me that good health and good education must go hand in hand. We have placed many millions of dollars in the field of adult education through the Works Progress Administration, and, here again, most of the money has been expended in the poorer communities of the land.

I have spoken of the twin interlocking assets of national and human resources and of the need of developing them hand in hand. But with this goes the equally important and equally difficult problem of keeping education intellectually free. For freedom to learn is the first necessity of guaranteeing that man himself shall be self-reliant enough to be free.

Such things did not need as much emphasis a generation ago; but when the clock of civilization can be turned back by burning libraries, by exiling scientists, artists, musicians,

writers and teachers, by dispersing universities, and by censoring news and literature and art, an added burden is placed upon those countries where the torch of free thought and free learning still burns bright.

If the fires of freedom and civil liberties burn low in other lands, they must be made brighter in our own.

If in other lands the press is censored we must redouble our efforts here to keep it free.

If in other lands the eternal truths of the past are threatened by intolerance we must provide a safe place here for their perpetuation.

There may be times when men and women in the turmoil of change lose touch with the civilized gains of centuries of education: but the gains of education are never really lost. Books may be burned and cities sacked, but truth, like the yearning for freedom, lives in the hearts of humble men and women. The ultimate victory of tomorrow is with democracy, and through democracy with education, for no people can be kept eternally ignorant or eternally enslaved.

(Original reading copy)

Franklin D. Roosevelt

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
Before the Meeting of the National Education Association
World's Fair Grounds, New York, N.Y.
June 30, 1936, 3:00 P.M.

(Mrs. Roosevelt, who introduced the President, made the following introductory remarks:)

"And now it is the privilege of a presiding officer to have you make speeches in introducing each speaker. But, we are late today, and so I am not going to avail myself of that privilege. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you The President of the United States."

(Laughter - applause)

The President's Address:

DR. WOODRUFF, MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION:

I am glad to come here today to this meeting, and I am especially happy that, I think for the first time in my life, I was introduced by my wife. (Laughter - applause)

If you have followed the arguments of financial experts over the last few years, you have guessed that they have as many theories of keeping books as there are ends to serve. They do not always agree on the definition of capital, and they even disagree on what is an asset and what is a liability. And that is true both in private business and in Government.

But whatever differences bookkeepers and financiers may have over the rules of their professions, no man or woman of common sense can forget, or allow Government to forget, what are the true and ultimate assets and liabilities of a nation.

The only real capital of a nation is its natural resources

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.

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Before we can think straight as a (nation) people, we have to consider -- in addition to the old kind -- a new kind of government balance sheet -- a long-range sheet which shows survival values for our population and for our democratic way of living, balanced against what we have paid for them. Judged by that test -- which is history's test -- I venture to say that the long-range budget of the present administration of our Government has been in the black and not in the red. (Applause)

For many years I, like you, have been a pedagogue -- of course some people who are not over strong on spelling will get that word mixed with the word "demagogue" (laughter) and, as a pedagogue, I have been striving to inculcate in the youth of America a greater knowledge of and interest in the problems which, with such force, strike the whole world in the face today. In these recent years we have taught the prudent husbandry of our national estate -- our rivers, our soil, our forests, our phosphates, our oils, our minerals and our wild life. Along these lines we have

made mighty strides -- we have come further than in all the years before in knowledge of how to grapple with the problems of maintaining the estate that our forefathers handed down to us.

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The other half of the preservation of our national capital is likewise a problem of husbandry -- the conserving of health, energy, skill and morale of our population, and especially of that part of our population which will be the America of tomorrow.

This also is a problem of the fullest use (and) the full-est development of our precious resources of ability which cannot be stored and will be lost if they remain unused. No nation can meet this changing world unless its people, individually and collectively, grow in ability to understand (and) ability to handle the new knowledge as applied to increasingly intricate human relationships. And that is why the teachers of America are the ultimate guardians of the human capital of America, the assets which must be made to pay social dividends if democracy is to survive.

We have believed wholeheartedly in investing the money

of (all) the people, the money of all the people, (on) in the education of all the people. That conviction, backed (up) by taxes and backed by dollars, is no accident, for it is the logical application of our faith in democracy.

Man's present day control of the affairs of nature is the very direct result of investment in education. And the democratization of education has made it possible for outstanding ability, which would otherwise be completely lost, to make its outstanding contribution to the common weal. So we cannot afford to overlook any source of human raw material. Genius flowers in most unexpected places; "It is the impetus of the undistinguished host that hurls forth a Diomed or a Hector." (Applause)

No government can create the human touch (and) the human self-sacrifice which the individual teacher gives to the process of education. But what Government can do is to provide financial support and to protect from interference the freedom to learn. (Applause)

No one wants the Federal Government to subsidize education any more than is absolutely necessary. It has been and (will be) I take it it will continue to be the traditional policy of the United States to leave the actual management of schools and their curricula to state and local control. (Applause)

But we know that in many places local government unfortunately cannot adequately finance either the freedom or the facilities to learn. And there the Federal Government can properly supplement local resources.

Here is where the whole problem of education ties in the definitely with/natural resources (and) of the country, ties in with

the economic picture of the individual community or state. We all know that the best of schools are, in most cases, located in those communities which can afford to spend the most money on them -- the most money for adequate teachers' salaries, for modern buildings and (for) modern equipment of all kinds. And we know too that the weakest educational link in (the) our national system lies in those communities which have the lowest taxable values and, therefore, the smallest per capita tax receipts and, therefore, the lowest teachers' salaries and most inadequate buildings and equipment. We do not blame these latter communities. They want better educational facilities, but simply have not enough money to pay the cost.

There is probably a wider divergence today in the standard of education between the richest communities and the poorest communities than there was (one hundred years) a century ago; and it is, therefore, our immediate task to seek to close that gap -- (applause) not to close it in any way by decreasing the facilities of the richer communities but by extending aid to those less fortunate. We all know that if we do not close this gap it will continue to widen, for the best brains in the poorer communities will either have no chance to develop or will migrate to those places where their ability will stand a better chance.

To continue the parallel between natural and human resources, it is well to remember that our poorest communities exist where the land is most greatly eroded, where farming does not pay, where industries have moved out, where flood and drought have done their work, where transportation facilities are of the poorest and where cheap electricity is unavailable for the home.

All (of) this leads me to ask you not to demand that the Federal Government provide financial assistance to all communities. Our aid for many reasons, financial and otherwise, must be confined to lifting the level at the bottom rather than to giving assistance at the top. Today we cannot do both, and we must therefore confine ourselves to the greater need.

In line with this policy, the Federal Government during the (past) last five years has given relatively (far) more assistance and aid to the poorer communities than to the rich. We have done it through direct relief and through work relief, through the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security (Administration) program, the National Youth Administration, and through the (rehabilitation) rehabilitating of flooded or stranded or dust-blown areas. We have provided schoolhouses, colleges, libraries, educational equipment and sanitation in every state (of) in the Union. And I include "sanitation" because it has always seemed to me that good health and good education must go hand in hand. (Applause) We have placed many millions of dollars in the field of adult education through the Works Progress Administration and, here again, most of the money has been expended in the poorer communities of the land.

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If the fires of freedom and civil liberties burn low in other lands, they must be made brighter in our own.

If in other lands the press and books and literature of all kinds are (is) censored, we must redouble our efforts here to keep (it) them free.

If in other lands the eternal truths of the past are threatened by intolerance, we must provide a safe place here for their perpetuation.

Yes, there may be times when men and women in the turmoil of change lose touch with the civilized gains of centuries of education: but the gains of education are never really lost. Books may be burned and cities sacked, but truth, like the yearning for freedom, lives in the hearts of humble men and women. The ultimate victory of tomorrow is with democracy, and through democracy with education, for no people in all the world can be kept eternally ignorant or eternally enslaved. (Applause)

CAUTION: This Address of the President before the meeting of the National Education Association, to be held at the World's Fair Grounds, New York, N.Y., T. June 30, 1938, is for release upon delivery, expected about 3 o'clock P.M., Eastern Daylight Savings Time.
PLEASE GUARD AGAINST PREMATURE RELEASE.

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M. H. McINTYRE
Secretary to the President.
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This capital structure — natural resources and human beings — has to be maintained at all times. The plant has to be kept up and new capital put in year by year to meet increasing needs. If we skip on that capital, if we exhaust our natural resources and weaken the capacity of our human beings, then we shall go the way of all weak nations.

Before we can think straight as a nation we have to consider — in addition to the old kind — a new kind of government balance sheet — a long-range sheet which shows survival values for our population and for our democratic way of living, balanced against what we have paid for them. Judged by that test — history's test — I venture to say that the long-range budget of the present Administration of our government has been in the black and not in the red.

For many years I, like you, have been a pedagogue, striving to inculcate in the youth of America a greater knowledge of and interest in the problems which, with such force, strike the whole world in the face today. In these recent years we have taught the prudent husbandry of our national estate — our rivers, our soil, our forests, our phosphates, our oils, our minerals and our wild life. Along those lines we have made mighty strides — come further turn in all the years before in knowledge of how to grapple with the problems of maintaining the estate that our forefathers handed down to us.

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The other half of the preservation of our national capital is likewise a problem of husbandry — the conserving of health, energy, skill and morale of our population, and especially of that part of our population which will be the America of tomorrow.

This also is a problem of the fullest use and development of precious resources of ability which cannot be stored and will be lost if they remain unused. No nation can meet this changing world unless its people, individually and collectively, grow in ability to understand and handle the new knowledge as applied to increasingly intricate human relationships. That is why the teachers of America are the ultimate guardians of the human capital of America, the assets which must be made to pay social dividends if democracy is to survive.

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Man's present day control of the affairs of nature is the direct result of investment in education. And the democratization of education has made it possible for outstanding ability, which would otherwise be completely lost, to make its outstanding contribution to the common weal. We cannot afford to overlook any source of human raw material. Genius flowers in most unexpected places; "it is the impetus of the undistinguished host that bears forth a Bismarck or a Hitler."

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management of schools and their curricula to state and local control.

But we know, unfortunately, that in many places local government cannot adequately finance the freedom ^{within} ~~of~~ the facilities, to learn. And here the Federal Government can properly supplement ~~their~~ ^{local} resources.

Here is where the whole problem of education ties in definitely with natural resources and the economic picture of the individual community or state. We all know that the best schools are in most cases located in those communities which can afford to spend the most money on them -- the most money for adequate teachers' salaries, for modern buildings and for modern equipment of all kinds. We know that the weakest educational link in the system lies in those communities which have the lowest taxable values, therefore, the smallest per capita tax receipts, and, therefore, the lowest teachers' salaries and most inadequate buildings and equipment. We do not blame these latter communities. They want better educational facilities but simply have not enough money to pay the cost.

There is probably a wider divergence ^{trends} in the standard of education ~~today~~ between the richest communities and the poorest communities than there was one hundred years ago; and it is, therefore, our immediate task to seek to close that gap -- not in

any way by decreasing the facilities of the richer communities but by extending aid to those less fortunate. We all know that if we do not close this gap it will continue to widen, for the best brains in the poor communities will either have no chance to develop or will migrate to those places where their ability will stand a better chance.

To continue the parallel between natural and human resources, it is well to remember that our poorest communities exist where the land is most greatly eroded, where farming does not pay, where industries have moved out, where flood and drought have done their work, where transportation facilities are of the poorest and where cheap electricity is unavailable for the home.

All of this leads me to ask you not to demand that the Federal Government provide financial assistance to all communities. Our aid ~~must~~ for many reasons, financial and otherwise, be confined to lifting the level at the bottom rather than to giving assistance at the top. Today we cannot do both, and we must, therefore, confine ourselves to the greater need.

In line with this policy, the Federal Government during the past five years has given relatively far more assistance to the poorer communities than to the rich. We have done it through direct relief and through work relief, through the Resettlement Administration and the Farm Security Administration, the National Youth Administration and through the Rehabilitation of flooded, stranded or dust-blown areas. We have provided school houses, colleges, libraries, educational equipment and sanitation in every state of the Union. I include ~~the word~~ "sanitation" because it has always seemed to me that ~~xxxxx~~ good health and good education must go hand in hand. We have placed many millions of dollars in the field of adult education through the Works Progress Administration, and here again, most of the money has been expended in the poorer communities of the land.

I have spoken of the twin interlocking assets of national and human resources and of the need of developing them ~~But with this goes~~ hand in hand, ~~but also~~, ~~with it is~~ the equally important and equally difficult problem of keeping education/intelligence free, ~~For~~ freedom to learn is the first necessity of guaranteeing that man himself shall be self-reliant enough to be free.

Such things did not need as much emphasis a generation ~~or even two~~, ago; but when the clock of civilization can be turned

back by burning ~~books~~, by ~~burning~~ scientists, by ~~burning~~ anti-
writers
musicians and teachers, by dispersing universities, and by
censoring news and literature and art, and added burden is
placed upon those countries where ~~will~~ the torch of free thought
^{BB}
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^{CC}
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must ~~more~~ redouble our efforts to keep it free. ~~knowing at the-~~
~~same time that we have enough education to disseminate in our~~
^{CC}
~~reading of it.~~ If in other lands the eternal truths of the
~~threatened by~~
~~past are burned in flames of intolerance we must here~~
~~here their perpetuation.~~
provide a safe place for ~~them to be scattered~~.

There may be times when men and women in the turmoil
of change lose touch with the civilized gains of centuries of
education: But the gains of education are never really lost.
Books may be burned and cities sacked, but truth, like the yearn-
ing for freedom, lives in the hearts of humble men and women.
The ultimate victory of tomorrow is with democracy, and through
democracy with education, for no people can be kept eternally
enslaved or eternally ignorant.

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION
JUNE 30, 1938

If you have followed the arguments of financial experts over the last few years, you have guessed that they have as many theories of keeping books as there are ends to serve. They do not always agree on the definition of capital and they even disagree on what is an asset and what is a liability. That is true both in private business and in government.

But whatever differences bookkeepers and financiers may have over the ^{rules} conventions of their professions, no man or woman of common sense can forget, or allow government to forget, what are the true and ultimate assets and liabilities of a nation.

The only real capital of a nation ^{comes from} its natural resources and ~~its~~ its human beings. So long as we take care and make the most of both of them, we shall survive as a strong nation, a successful nation and a progressive nation -- whether or not the bookkeepers say other kinds of budgets are from time to time out of balance.

This capital structure -- natural resources and human beings -- has to be maintained at all times. The plant has to be kept up and new capital put in year by year to meet increasing needs. If we skimp on that capital -- if we exhaust our natural



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From the Papers of
Samuel I. Rosenman

resources and weaken the capacity of our human beings, then we shall go the way of all weak nations.

Before we can think straight as a nation we ~~need to see~~ ^{have to consider in}
addition to the old kind, ^{long range}
a new kind of government balance sheet -- a sheet which shows survival values for our population and for our democratic way of living balanced against what we have paid for them. Judged by that test -- history's test -- I venture to say that the ^{long range} budget of the present Administration of our government has been in the black and not in the red.

For many years now I, like you, have been a pedagogue ^{writing} even though some people who are not strong on spelling get that word mixed up with the word "damagogue" -- ^{we know better} striv-ing to inculcate into the youth of America a greater knowledge of and interest in the problems of which, with such force, strike the whole world in the face today. In these recent years, we have taught ~~concerning~~ the prudent husbandry of our national estate -- our rivers, our soil, our forests, our phosphates, our oils, our minerals and wild life. Along these lines we have made mighty strides -- come further than in all the years before in knowledge of ~~mixes~~ how to grapple with the problems of maintaining the estate that our forefathers handed down to us.



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1941-1945

From the Papers of
Samuel I. Rosenman

With the dissemination of this knowledge, we have taken action. Few men grudge what that action has cost because it has been based on operations physically large and spectacular, dramatic and easy to see. I am thankful that I live in an age of building, for it is far easier to dramatize to oneself the importance of the object if you see it while it is going up, than if you come along later and see it only in its completed stage. We are fortunate today in seeing the New York World's Fair of 1939 in the construction stage. This glimpse will make it mean more to us when we see it completed next year.

The other half of the preservation of our national capital is likewise a problem of husbandry -- the conserving of health, energy, skill and morale of our population, and especially of that part of our population which will be the America of tomorrow.

This also is a problem of the fullest use and development of precious resources of ability, which cannot be stored and will be lost if they remain unused. No nation can meet this changing world unless its people, individually and collectively, grow in ability to understand and handle the new knowledge and the increasing intricacy of human relationships. That is why the teachers of America are the ultimate guardians of the capital



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April

of America, the assets which must be made to pay dividends if
democracy is to survive.

We have believed wholeheartedly in investing the money of
all the people on the education of the people. That conviction,
backed up by taxes and dollars, is no accident, for it is the
logical application of our faith in democracy.

Man's present day control of the affairs of nature is the
direct result of investment in education. And the democratization
of education has made it possible for outstanding ability, which
would otherwise be completely lost, to make its outstanding con-
tribution to the commonweal. We cannot afford to overlook any
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places; it is ~~the~~ the impetus of the undistinguished host that hurls
forth a Diomed or a Hector".

No government can create the human touch and self-sacrifice

which the individual teacher gives to the process of education. *P.W.*

~~W~~ Government can only provide financial support and protect from
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No one wants the Federal Government to subsidize education
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I have spoken of the twin interlocking assets of national and human resources and of the need of developing them hand in hand, ¹⁹⁴⁴ but again, with ~~as~~ the equally important and intellectually difficult problem of keeping education/intelligence free, ~~F~~ for freedom to learn is the first necessity of guaranteeing that man himself shall be self-reliant enough to be free.

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back by burning ~~magazines~~, by banishing scientists, by exiling ~~artists~~, musicians and teachers, by dispersing universities, and by censoring news and literature and art, any added burden is placed upon those countries where ~~will~~ the torch of free thought and free learning still burns bright. If the fires of freedom and civil liberties burn low in other lands, they must be made brighter in our own. If in other lands the press is censored we must here redouble our efforts to keep it free, knowing at the same time that we have enough education to discriminate in our reading. If in other lands the eternal truths of the past are buried in the flames of intolerance we must still provide a safe place for them to be nurtured. Their perpetuation

There may be times when men and women in the turmoil of change lose touch with the civilized gains of centuries of education. But the gains of education are never really lost. Books may be burned and cities sacked, but truth, like the yearning for freedom, lives in the hearts of humble men and women. The ultimate victory of tomorrow is with democracy, and through democracy with education, for no people can be kept eternally enslaved or eternally ignorant.



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STATEMENTS FILE

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Short Hand By Koenig HOLD FOR RELEASE

CAUTION: This Address of the President before the meeting of the National Education Association, to be held at the World's Fair Grounds, New York, N.Y., June 30, 1939, is for release upon delivery, expected about 3 o'clock P.M., Eastern Daylight Savings Time.
PLEASE GUARD AGAINST PREMATURE RELEASE.

M. H. McINTRYRE
Secretary to the President.

If you have followed the arguments of financial experts over the last few years, you have guessed that they have as many theories of keeping books as there are ends to serve. They do not always agree on the definition of capital, and they even disagree on what is an asset and what is a liability. That is true both in private business and in government.

But whatever differences bookkeepers and financiers may have over the rules of their professions, no man or woman of common sense can forget, or allow government to forget, what are the true and ultimate assets and liabilities of a nation.

The only real capital of a nation is its natural resources and its human beings. So long as we take care of and make the most of both of them, we shall survive as a strong nation, a successful nation and a progressive nation — whether or not the bookkeepers say other kinds of budgets are from time to time out of balance.

This capital structure — natural resources and human beings — has to be maintained at all times. The plant has to be kept up and new capital put in year by year to meet increasing needs. If we stint on that capital, if we exhaust our natural resources and weaken the capacity of our human beings, then we shall go the way of all weak nations.

Before we can think straight as a nation we have to consider — in addition to the old kind — a new kind of government balance sheet — a long-range sheet which shows survival values for our population and for our democratic way of living, balanced against what we have paid for them. Judged by that test — history's test — I venture to say that the long-range budget of the present Administration of our government has been in the black and not in the red.

For many years I, like you, have been a pedagogue, striving to inculcate in the youth of America a greater knowledge of and interest in the problems which, with such force, strike the whole world in the face today. In these recent years we have taught the prudent husbandry of our national estate — our rivers, our soil, our forests, our phosphates, our oils, our minerals and our wild life. Along those lines we have made mighty strides — come further than in all the years before in knowledge of how to grapple with the problems of maintaining the estate that our forefathers handed down to us.

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This also is a problem of the fullest use and development of precious resources of ability which cannot be stored and will be lost if they remain unused. No nation can meet this changing world unless its people, individually and collectively, grow in ability to understand and handle the new knowledge as applied to increasingly intricate human relationships. That is why the torches of America are the ultimate guardians of the human capital of America, the assets which must be made to pay social dividends if democracy is to survive.

We have believed wholeheartedly in investing the money of the people in the education of the people. That conviction, backed by taxes and dollars, is no accident, for it is the logical application of our faith in democracy.

Man's present day control of the affairs of nature is the direct result of investment in education. And the democratization of education has made it possible for outstanding ability, which would otherwise be completely lost, to make its outstanding contribution to the common weal. We cannot afford to overlook any source of human raw material. Genius flowers in most unexpected places; "it is the impetus of the undistinguished host that bears forth a Diomed or a Hector."

No government can create the human touch and self-sacrifice which the individual teacher gives to the process of education. But what Government can do is to provide financial support and to protect from interference the freedom to learn.

No one wants the Federal Government to subsidize education any more than is absolutely necessary. It has been and will be the traditional policy of the United States to leave the actual management of schools and their curricula to state and local control.

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Such things did not need as much emphasis a generation ago; but when the clock of civilization can be turned back by burning libraries, by exiling scientists, artists, musicians, writers and teachers, by dispersing universities, and by censoring news and literature and art, an added burden is placed upon those countries where the torch of free thought and free learning still burns bright.

If the fires of freedom and civil liberties burn low in other lands, they must be made brighter in our own.

If in other lands the press is censured we must redouble our efforts here to keep it free.

If in other lands the eternal truths of the past are threatened by intolerance we must provide a safe place here for their perpetuation.

There may be times when men and women in the turmoil of change lose touch with the civilized gains of centuries of education; but the gains of education are never really lost. Books may be burned and cities sacked, but truth, like the yearning for freedom, lives in the hearts of humble men and women. The ultimate victory of tomorrow is with democracy, and through democracy with education, for no people can be kept eternally ignorant or eternally enslaved.

