

July 8, 1938

[Louisville, KY]

1145

FDR Speech File

INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
Louisville, Kentucky  
July 9th, 1938.

1157

(Mayor Scholtz introduced the President.)

Mr. Mayor, Senator Barkley, friends of Louisville:

This is the first chance I have had to come to Louisville since the great flood of last year.

First of all, I want to congratulate you and also the citizens of other communities who suffered so greatly from that flood.

I want to thank you for the firm courage and the fine spirit with which you met that disaster.

Your Mayor told me a few minutes ago that every cloud seems to have its silver lining. Very certainly, in the case of Louisville, the flood reestablished human nature and made you all better neighbors to each other.

Not only in the crisis of a great flood but also in the long process of rebuilding, you have exemplified the spirit of self-help and cooperation between citizens and with the agencies of government.

I want to tell you in a very few words of another gain from that disaster. When I went to Washington, nearly six years ago, I found there were many different agencies of the Government concerned with disasters, and each one of them worked hard in its own line of work. But, there was no coordination between them.

That flood last year on the Ohio and the Mississippi gave me an opportunity to test out the new machinery I had created to meet national disasters. Last year, when the rain began to fall on the furthest creeks, in the upper reaches of the upper tributaries of the Ohio, all of the Federal agencies, working with the State agencies, were able to meet in co-operative efforts to combat the flood as it worked its way down toward the sea.

Through that leadership of coordination and especially through the leadership of a great American who unfortunately has passed on -- Admiral Cary Grayson of the National Red Cross -- all of the agencies; the Red Cross itself, the Army Engineers, the Corps Area Commanders, the Public Health Service, the Army and Navy Medical Corps, the life boats of the Navy and their crews, and the Works Progress Administration, the U. S. Coast Guard -- all worked under a united leadership and threw all of the resources of the Federal Government to the assistance of life and the salvaging of property.

Also as a result of that flood, we, in Washington, have worked out a definite national policy. The Ohio Basin and other great river basins subject to floods can and are going to be made safe for our American civilization.

Of course we are not going to pay for it all. We are proceeding on the definite policy that every community will gladly do as much of its share of the work of flood prevention as the community can properly afford, and that over and above those contributions your Federal Government is assuming responsibility. That is another proof of the necessity of planning. A lot of people laugh about all the planning we are doing in Washington. But, in the long run, taking just flood prevention as one of the many examples, we will save hundreds of millions of dollars by planning for the future.

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.

Flood prevention pays. It pays even if the Federal Government has to create a temporary deficit by borrowing money for flood prevention works at this time.

In one of our great national water heads -- before the Federal Government stepped in with planning and with work -- the average loss of property in a given year ran as high as twenty-five million dollars. That was just properly alone -- twenty-five million dollars a year without counting the toll of human lives -- twenty-five millions of property damage to crops, to homes, to industrial plants, to highways and railways. It seems to me that, as a matter of practical business sense, it is well worth our while to spend, yes, two or three hundred million dollars on a watershed of that kind if thereby and for all time we can eliminate an annual loss of twenty-five million dollars.

On another watershed, the Missouri, the figures relating to the destruction of buildings and highways and industrial plants are not as great in annual loss as they are in other places but, in the case of the Missouri River and its tributaries, a careful checkup shows that thousands and thousands of acres of rich bottom land are being carried every year down to the Gulf of Mexico. Those lands are worth millions of dollars even as they are today. Think of their worth to the generations to come. Think of what they are worth, in terms of dollars, for the production of foodstuffs for future generations.

Here again, I think it is a mighty good business proposition to spend money now to save vast sums in future years.

Flood prevention is a national problem. The people of the Ohio Valley understand this and, I am sure, approve our intentions -- under a well coordinated plan -- to make the Ohio Basin flood proof; flood proof for our children and for their children.

In this work of planning and coordinating work on a vast scale, I want to acknowledge the splendid assistance I have received from the Senior Senator from Kentucky. This is a national problem. We need people of national experience with a national point of view to carry it out.

I wish I could stay here longer and see all of the work that you have done. I have been tremendously interested in it. From many sources, not Louisville sources alone but people who have visited here from every part of the Union, I have been given reports of the splendid work of rehabilitation you have carried out. Some day I hope to be able to come back here and stay a little longer.

There is only one advantage I have over you good people: I am going to get bigger fish in the Pacific than you can get in the Ohio.

It has been fine to see you. Thanks.

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Draft

Rewritten hunting notes  
SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT  
LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY *front neighbor*

JULY 8, 1938.

This is the first opportunity I have had to come to Louisville since the great Ohio Valley flood of last year.

First of all, I want to congratulate you and also the citizens of other communities, who suffered so greatly from that flood, on the firm courage and fine spirit with which you met that disaster.

Not only in the active crisis of the flood itself but in the long process of rebuilding, you have ~~been~~ exemplified the spirit of self-help and of cooperation between citizens and between the different agencies of Government.

That big flood also gave me an opportunity to test out the machinery which I had set up in Washington. In previous disasters of a similar kind, the many Federal agencies involved worked hard but without much cooperation among themselves. Last year a small group, acting under carefully prepared plans, met together in the National Capitol while the rain was still falling and when the flood waters themselves were still in the upper tributaries of the Ohio.

Working through the leadership of that splendid citizen, the late Admiral Cary Grayson, Chairman of the National Red Cross, the Army Engineers, the Corps Area Commanders, the Public Health Service, the Army and Navy Medical Corps, the Coast Guard, the Navy Floating Equipment and the Works Progress Administration, we were able to throw all the resources of the Federal Government to the assistance of life and property.

From that flood we have worked out a definite national policy. The Ohio Basin and other great river basins subject to flood can, we are confident be made safe for our American civilization. We are proceeding on the definite policy of asking every community to do as much of the share of the work as the community can properly afford, over and above those contributions your Federal Government is assuming the responsibility.

Flood prevention pays even if the Federal Government has to create a temporary deficit by borrowing money for flood prevention works at this time.

On one watershed, before the Federal Government assumed responsibility, the annual average net loss was

\$25,000,000 a year in the physical destruction of property -- crops, homes, industrial plants, railways and highways. As a matter of practical business sense it is well worthwhile to spend two or three hundred million dollars if thereby, for all time, you can eliminate an annual net loss of \$25,000,000. And that does not count the annual loss of lives of human beings. The saving of this loss of life is another reason why it pays to borrow money to end it.

On another great watershed of the Nation the figures relating to the destruction of buildings and highways was not as great, but in that case a careful check-up showed that thousands and thousands of acres of rich bottom lands were being carried to the sea every year. These lands were worth millions of dollars as of today, but they were worth many more millions of dollars for the production of food stuffs for future generations. Here again it has been a good business proposition to spend a lot of money now in order to save a huge annual loss.

In all of these cases the interest we pay on this money and the amortization of the debt are far lower than what, up to this time, has been the net annual loss.

The people of the Ohio Valley understand this and I am sure approve our intention under a well coordinated plan to make the Ohio Basin flood-proof for our children and our children's children.

It is a national problem and we need people of national experience and a national point of view to carry it out.

In carrying it out, let us do all we can to keep partisan politics out of it.

Let me give you an example. I was disheartened this morning at reading an editorial in a very partisan newspaper in Cincinnati. It objected to my veto of a bill which sought to ~~correct~~ correct stream pollution. It did not mention the fact that for years I have been working to stop the dumping of sewage into our rivers and lakes. It did not mention the fact that in vetoing the bill I pledged my full cooperation to Federal cooperation in ending stream pollution.

It said I had vetoed it because of a whining legal objection. And that from a paper which prides itself on upholding the strict interpretation of the Constitution of the United States! The serious trouble with the bill was that it made the Public Health Service superior to the President of the United States, who, under the Constitution, is, whether we like it or not, the head of the Executive

*-*  
Friends of the Government.

~~This is an illustration of political differentiation  
and I still am hopeful that the people of this country will  
see through silly and narrow views of their issue and will  
work together regardless of party to meet, harmoniously and  
constitutionally, the same problems that confront us.~~

I wish I had time to thank you both and our all  
that you have accomplished in Louisville during the past  
year, but I hope to do so back again next week if not sooner.  
Alice Berkley.

INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT

Louisville, Kentucky, July 8 1938.

(The President was introduced by Mayor Scholtz)

Mr. Mayor, Senator Berkley, friends of Louisville:

This is the first chance that I have had to come to Louisville since the great flood of last year. First of all, I want to congratulate you and also the citizens of other communities who suffered so greatly from that flood. I want to thank you for the firm courage and the fine spirit with which you met that disaster.

Your Mayor told me a few minutes ago that every cloud seems to have its silver lining, and very certainly, in the case of Louisville, the flood reestablished human nature and made you all better neighbors to each other.

Not only in the crisis of a flood but also in the long process of rebuilding, you have exemplified the spirit of self-help and cooperation between citizens and with the agencies of government.

I want to tell you in a very few words of another gain from that disaster. When I went to Washington, nearly six years ago, I found ~~that~~ there were many different agencies of the Government ~~that~~ concerned with ~~dis-~~ disasters, and each one of them worked hard in ~~their~~ own line of work, ~~all right~~. But there was no coordination between them. That flood last year on the Ohio and the Mississippi gave me an opportunity to test out the new machinery ~~that~~ I had created to meet national disaster. In previous ~~the~~ states, the many Federal agencies worked hard but without much cooperation among ~~themselves~~. Last year, when the rain began to fall on the ~~further~~ creeks, the upper reaches of the upper tributaries of the Ohio, the machinery ~~that~~ we had started ~~set together~~ ~~and~~ with the result that all of the Federal agencies, working with the State agencies, were able to meet ~~the flood~~ in <sup>in</sup> cooperative efforts to combat the flood as it worked its way down towards the sea.

Through that leadership of coordination and especially through the leadership of a great American, who unfortunately has passed on -- Admiral Cary Grayson, of the National Red Cross, all of the agencies, the Red Cross itself, the Army Engineers, the Corps Area Commanders, the Public Health Service, the Army and Navy Medical Corps, the life boats of the Navy and their crews, and the Works

*the U.S. Coast Guard --*

Progress Administration, all of them working under united leadership  
~~and~~ and <sup>ed</sup> ~~a~~ ~~threw~~ all of the resources of the Federal Government to the assistance of life and the salvaging of property. ~~It~~ <sup>PP</sup> also, as a result ~~especially~~ of that flood, we in Washington have worked out a definite national policy. The Ohio Basin and other great river basins subject to floods can ~~be~~ and ~~are~~ ~~confidently~~ going to be made safe for our American civilization.

Of course we are not going to pay for it all. We are ~~saving~~ ~~every community~~ proceeding on the definite policy that every community will gladly do as much of its share of the work of flood prevention as the community can properly afford, and that over and above those contributions your Federal Government is assuming responsibility. That is another ~~good~~ proof of the necessity of planning. A lot of people laugh about all the planning ~~that~~ we are doing in Washington. But in the long run, taking just flood prevention as one of the many examples, ~~in the long run~~ we will save hundreds of millions of dollars by planning for the future.

Flood prevention pays. It pays even if the Federal Government has to create a temporary deficit by borrowing money for flood prevention works at this time.

In one of our great national watersheds ~~the Ohio River~~ before the Federal Government stepped in with planning and with work! --

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*The U.S. Coast Guard --*

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In one of our great national watersheds ~~the Ohio River~~ before the Federal Government stepped in with planning and with work! --

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Here again, I think it is a mighty good business proposi-

tion to spend money now ~~in order~~ to save vast sums in ~~the~~ future years.

~~The flood prevention is~~ a national problem, and the people of the Ohio Valley understand this and I am sure approve our intentions under a well coordinated plan, to make the Ohio Basin flood proof, flood proof for our children and for their children.

In this work of planning and coordinating ~~the work~~ and doing it on a vast scale that takes in many ~~states~~, I want to acknowledge the splendid assistance ~~that~~ I have ~~had~~ received from the Senior Senator from Kentucky. ~~because~~ This is a national problem, we need people of national experience with a national point of view to carry it out.

I wish I could stay here longer and see all of the work that you have done. I have been tremendously interested in ~~it~~ <sup>F</sup> from many sources, not ~~alone~~ Louisville sources but people who have visited here from every part of the Union, I have been given ~~reports~~ of the splendid work of rehabilitation ~~that~~ you have carried out. Some day I hope to be able to come back ~~here~~ <sup>and stay</sup> a little longer, ~~where I am not needed~~ for the Pacific ocean ~~area~~.

There is only one thing that I really have an advantage over you good people: I am going to get bigger

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*you can set*

fish in the Pacific than ~~ever~~ in the Ohio.

It has been fine to see you ~~and I hope to see you back~~  
~~again very soon.~~ Thanks.

*Franklin Roosevelt*  
*H*