

July 9, 1938

[Oklahoma City, Oklahoma]

FD R Speech File

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT

OKLAHOMA CITY

JULY 9, 1938

Oklahoma will always have a certain distinction in my memory, for it is the only part of the forty-eight States which bore a different name when, as a small boy, I started to study Geography. I am fortunate in being able to remember it as Indian territory and to remember also the enormous interest in every part of the country when the prospective settlers lined up at the borders and, at the sound of a bugle, rushed forward to establish new homes and new communities in this delightful part of the country.

Since those days you have gone far. A splendid future lies before you, and you can rest assured that your National Government knows very definitely that you are on the map.

Oklahoma is natural resources conscious, and I am glad that Oklahoma also appreciates so well that natural resources are national resources and that in their conserving and development, all of us have to make our plans from the national point of view.

Slowly but surely we are developing a national policy in regard to the oil resources of the Nation, and your Governor has given great assistance toward that end.

Probably the most important long-range problem is the use of land and water. I was sorry that I could not have stopped this morning to view the Grand River Dam Project.

It was due to the persistent effort of my old friend, Senator Thomas, *W. W. W. W.* ~~that the appropriation bill of 1936 was amended,~~

~~with the result~~ that the Grand River Dam Project is definitely under way.

That project is a good illustration of the national aspect of water control, for it is a vital link in the still larger problem of the whole of the Valley of the Arkansas --

a planning task that starts in the ^{Rocky} mountains ~~of Colorado~~, west of the Royal Gorge, and runs on down through Colorado and Kansas and Oklahoma and Arkansas to the Mississippi River itself. The day will come when every drop of water that flows into that great watershed, through all those States, will be controlled for the benefit of mankind -- for the growing of forests, for the prevention of soil erosion, for the irrigation of land, for the development of power, for the ending of floods and for the improvement of navigation.

Such a vision will be of direct benefit to millions of our people, and the price paid for it will be returned many times.

In a similar way, the Federal Government is using the fact of unemployment and the necessity for giving help to many of our people, in order to assist communities in the erection of much needed public improvements. This is true of the work of many agencies of the Government, especially the Public Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration.

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It is essential, of course, that if the national policies of the National Administration are to be carried forward there must be a general agreement on those policies by those who are responsible for the legislation which makes them possible.

Two weeks ago, in speaking over a national hook-up, I referred to that fact -- to the fact that the Nation is living today under a government which is essentially liberal and nationally thinking in its outlook -- a government which is progressively bettering economic and social conditions.

I explained why, if the people want that kind of government to continue, they should choose officials to represent that point of view -- and that if the people want to go back to the school of thought of the twenties, they should choose people with a conservative outlook.

And I suggested also that it is always a good thing to look beyond the surface of things and into men's hearts.

Do they really mean what they say -- or are they the kind that profess great devotion to the cause of bettering the lot of their fellowmen, and, when the time for action comes, find all kinds of reasons why they should not support the action proposed. ~~Two weeks ago~~ I referred to such people as - "yes,

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devotion to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the quickening of religion, to a greater willingness on the part of the individual to help his neighbor ^{and} to live less unto and for himself alone.

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America needs a government of constant progress along liberal lines. America requires that this progress be sane and honest. America calls for government with a soul.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Original reading copy

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
July 9, 1938, about 6.00 P.M.

(The President was introduced by Senator Thomas.)

SENATOR THOMAS, GOVERNOR WARLAND, MR. MAYOR, MY FRIENDS OF OKLAHOMA:

I am glad at last, after many years of wanting to and trying to, I am glad to come to Oklahoma City.

(Oklahoma) Your great State will always have a certain distinction in my memory, (for) because it is the only part of the forty-eight states which, when I, as a small boy, started to study geography, bore a different name (when, as a small boy, I started to study Geography). I am fortunate in being old enough to be able to remember it as Indian Territory and to remember also the enormous interest in every part of the country when the prospective settlers lined up at the borders and, at the sound of a bugle, rushed forward to establish new homes and new communities in this delightful part of the (country) earth.

Since those days you good people have gone far. A splendid future lies before you, and you can rest assured that your National Government knows very definitely that you are on the map. (Applause)

During the past ten or fifteen years, when I was Governor of New York, and even before that, I specialized on the subject of natural resources and therefore I am particularly glad that Oklahoma is natural resources conscious, and I am glad that (Oklahoma also) it appreciates so well that natural resources are, at the same time, national resources and that in their conserving and development, all of us, far and near, have to make our plans from the national point of view.

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.

Slowly but surely we are developing a national policy, for example, in regard to the oil resources of the Nation, and your Governor has given great assistance toward that end. (Applause)

Probably the most important long-range problem is something that affects all of us, whether we live in the city or the country, and that is the use of land and water. I was sorry this morning that I could not have stopped (this morning) to view the Grand River Dam Project. It was due to the persistent effort of my old friend, Senator Thomas, and Senator Lee, (applause) (that the appropriation bill of 1935 was amended, with the result that the Grand River Dam Project is definitely under way) that that particular project is definitely under way, and I might say the same thing about other projects on other watersheds of this State.

(That) I think the Grand River project is a good illustration of the national aspect of water control, (for) because it is a vital link in the still larger problem of the whole (of the) Valley of the Arkansas -- a planning task -- and some people laugh at planning -- that starts far west in the Rocky Mountains, west of the Royal Gorge, and runs on down through Colorado and Kansas and Oklahoma and Arkansas to the Mississippi River itself and thence to the sea. The day will come, I hope, when every drop of water that flows into that great watershed, through all those states, will be controlled for the benefit of mankind, controlled for the growing of forests, for the prevention of soil erosion, for the irrigation of land, for the development of water power, for the ending of floods and (for) the improvement of navigation.

(Such a vision will be of direct benefit to millions of

our people, and the price paid for it will be returned many times.)

A vision like that, my friends, will be of direct benefit to millions of our people, not only to the people of the territory through which that river flows but indirectly to the people on the Pacific Coast, on the Atlantic Seaboard, and in the deep South. And the price, the dollars and cents we pay for a great development of that kind, will return to the pocketbooks of the State manyfold. The same thing applies to the Red River and to the tributaries that flow into the other streams.

In (a similar) the same way, the Federal Government is using the fact, the unfortunate fact, of unemployment and the necessity for giving help to many of our people, using that fact in order to assist communities in the erection of much-needed public improvements. This is true, as you know, of the work of many agencies of the Federal Government, especially the Public Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration.

Senator Thomas has been of enormous help to me and the Administration in keeping me advised as to the needs of your State and as to how we, in Washington, could help to meet them. (Applause) For example, I am told by (Senator Thomas) him that the Works Progress program in Oklahoma is leaving permanent monuments all over the State, monuments that will last to the time of our great grandchildren, and in the matter of new and improved schoolhouses alone, just that one item in this State, (and that in the matter of new or improved schoolhouses alone this State) in cooperation with WPA, the State has made a greater record than any other state in the Union. (Applause)

I have to think along national lines and, in the last analysis, you do too. It is essential, of course, that if the national policies of the National Administration are to be carried forward there must be a general agreement on those policies by those who are responsible for the legislation which makes them possible.

Two weeks ago, in speaking over a national hookup, I referred to that fact -- to the fact that the Nation is living today, and has been since March 4, 1933, essentially under a government (which) that is essentially liberal and nationally thinking in its outlook -- a government which is progressively bettering our economic and social conditions. (Applause)

And I explained why, if the people want that kind of government to continue, they should choose officials to represent that point of view -- and that, on the other hand, if (the) people want to go back to the school of thought of the unfortunate twenties of this century, they should choose people with a conservative outlook. (Applause)

And I suggested (also) that it is always a good thing to look beyond the surface, beneath the surface, of things (and) to look into men's hearts.

Do they really mean what they say -- or are they the kind that profess great devotion to the cause of bettering the lot of their (fellowmen) fellow countrymen, and, when the time for action comes, find all kinds of reasons why they (should) cannot support the action proposed. (Applause) (I refer to such people as -) And I have referred to people of that kind as "Yes, but - people."

Of course, some are not even "Yes, but - people" for I note that one of the candidates for a place on the Democratic State ticket

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
DELIVERED AT OKLAHOMA CITY

JULY 9, 1938

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Slowly but surely we are developing a national policy in regard to the oil resources of the Nation, and your Governor has given great assistance toward that end.

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I am told by Senator Thomas that the Works Progress program in Oklahoma is leaving permanent monuments all over the State, and that in the matter of new or improved school houses alone this State, in cooperation with WPA, has made a greater record than any other State in the Union.

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In the same way we find others who seek office, sincerely or otherwise, on impossible pledges and platforms -- people with panaceas for reforming the world overnight -- people who are not practical in an age which must be both practical and progressive. Theodore Roosevelt was perhaps a bit rough when he referred to such people as "the lunatic fringe". Strictly speaking they are not lunatics but in many cases a little push would shove them over the line.

During these past six years the people of this Nation have definitely said "yes" to the old biblical question - "Am I my brother's keeper"? In these six years I sense a growing devotion to the teachings of the Scriptures, to the quickening of religion, to a greater willingness on the part of the individual to help his neighbor and to live less unto and for himself alone.

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STATEMENTS FILE

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CAUTION: This address of the President, to be delivered at Oklahoma City, is to be held for release upon delivery — expected at 5:30 P. M., July 9, 1938.

PLEASE GUARD AGAINST PREMATURE RELEASE.

Stephen T. Early
Secretary to the President.

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