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. 1164

1938 August 11

Athens, GA - Address at University of Georgia
It is with particular pride in and increased devotion to this State, that I become today an alumnus of the University of Georgia. During many years I have had important contacts with your Trustees and Faculty and I can therefore appreciate the excellent service which you are rendering to the cause of education not only in Georgia but in the Nation.

Many years have gone by since I first came to Warm Springs and got to know and to love the State and its people. I wonder if you, who live here all the time, can realize as well as I, who have been coming here once or twice a year, the amazing progress that has been made here in a short decade and a half -- and especially in the past five years. If you see a person morning, noon and night you do not note the changes of growth or health of that friend as readily as if you see him only at intervals; and that is why I feel that I can speak with perspective.
In my earlier years here I saw a South in the larger sense forgotten in the midst of an unhealthy national speculation — a boom era which thought in terms of paper profits instead of human lives.
And for those days what has the South to show today? A few great fortunes perhaps, but most of the profits went north.

Then came the tragic years of the depression. Closed banks in almost every community, ruinous crop prices, idle mills, no money for schools or roads — a picture of despair.

Yet, through all those years, the South was building a new school of thought — a group principally recruited from younger men and women who understood that the economy of the South was vitally and inexorably linked with that of the Nation, and that the national good was dependent equally on the improvement of the welfare of the South.

They began asking searching questions: — why is our pay — in other words our earning capacity — so low; why are our roads so bad; why is our sanitation and medical care so neglected; why are our teachers so inadequately paid; why are our local school buildings and equipment so antiquated?
I do not mince words because, first of all, I have a right—a nation-wide right, a State right and withal a sympathetic and understanding right to speak them and, secondly, because you as well as I know them to be true.

It may not be politic but it is good American idealism to recognize, to state boldly, that in 1932 the conditions of human life in Georgia and in other states of the lower South were as a whole at the bottom of the national scale. At the same time let us rejoice and take pride in the undoubted fact that in these past six years the South has made greater economic and social progress up the scale than at any other period in her long history. It is my objective and yours to maintain that march and to accelerate its pace.

On the side of education a long experience teaches us that the improvement of educational facilities is inevitably bound up with economic conditions. Years ago I was told by a distinguished citizen of Georgia that public school education was well provided for because there was a law—- or perhaps it was in the State Constitution itself— providing that every child should have a
full school year and that attendance for each school year through grade school was compulsory. But I soon discovered school after school in the rural districts -- and most of them are rural districts -- where the school was open only four months or five months a year -- or was too small to hold all the children -- or couldn't employ enough teachers -- or where children, whose parents wanted them to work, could stay away from school with complete immunity.

Apparently a law or a clause in the Constitution was not enough.

What is law without enforcement? Apparently the Divine method "Let there be light -- and there was light" did not work as mere man's dictum.

Then I began to analyze: Was it due to lack of interest?

No, it was due to lack of money. Every man and woman I talked with deplored the wretched school conditions, wanted better schools, better trained and better paid teachers, wanted more teachers, wanted a full school year. But -- the answer was always the same -- we cannot get more money from taxes.
And why not? The answer is simple: The taxable values were not there. The tax rates were not too low but the actual going values of property were so meagre that when taxes on those values were collected the sum received could not pay for adequate teachers or equipment. Public education was therefore dependent on public wealth. Public wealth was too low to support good schools.

That analysis of mine -- made even before I was elected Governor of New York, led my mind to many other questions:

Why were land values and therefore taxable values in Georgia so low? With that question came a study of land use, of worn out land, of cheaper fertilizer, of forestation, of erosion, of crop diversification, of crop prices, of marketing, of freight rates. And all of these things bore directly on the problem of better schools.

Why were people getting such low pay for a day's work? That led to a study of purchasing power, of decent wages, of the cost of living, of taxable income, of sound banking, of small merchants. And these things, too, bore directly on the problem of better schools.
In other words, social conditions -- schools and hospitals and clothing and housing and food -- were intimately dependent on economic conditions -- higher wages, higher farm income and more profits for small business men.

So you will see that my thoughts for the South are no new thing. Long before I had any idea of re-entering public life I was planning for better life for the people of Georgia. In the later years I have had some opportunity to practice what I have long preached.

Obviously the Federal Government cannot carry the load alone. In education, for example, Washington has greatly assisted by using the labor of people who really need help to build school-houses, to give student aid, and to pay many teachers. And Washington will help by giving some grants in aid to those communities which need them the most. But Washington should not and cannot rightly subsidize public education through the United States. Education should be run by the States and their subdivisions.
Therefore, in the long run, the best way for your national government to assist state and local educational objectives is to tackle the national aspects of economic problems -- to eliminate discriminations between one part of the country and another -- to raise purchasing power and thereby create wealth in those sections where it is far too low -- to save the waste and the erosion of our natural resources, to encourage each section to become financially independent, to take the lead in establishing social security -- and at the same time to explain to the people in every part that constant progressive action is better than following either those who want to slow up or those who promise they will hand you the moon on a silver platter a week after they are elected.

At heart Georgia shows devotion to the principles of democracy. It has occasional lapses, but it really does not believe either in demagoguery or feudalism dressed up in democratic clothes.

You of the University are greatly responsible for the present and the future. Well are you doing your part. From today onward I share proudly and more fully in that part.

(End)
GOVERNOR RIVERS, CHANCELLOR SANFORD, PRESIDENT CALDWELL, AND YOU,
THE MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA:

It is with particular pride in and increased devotion to this State, that I (become today) find myself about to become an alumnus of the University (of Georgia). (Applause) During many years I have had important contacts with your (Trustees and Faculty) Board of Regents, with your Faculty and with many of your graduates, and I can therefore appreciate the (excellent) splendid service which you are rendering to the cause of education not only in the State of Georgia but (in) throughout the Nation.

Many years have gone by since I first came to Warm Springs and got to know and to love the State and its people. For years before that I have heard much of Georgia from the lips of that old friend of mine, George Foster Peabody, who, reversing my process, was born in Georgia and became a citizen of the State of New York. Wherever he lived, wherever he went, there was one thing about Mr. Peabody that stood out and that was his love for humanity. And, so, I am proud today to be receiving a degree that was put through by Mr. Peabody some time before his unfortunate death. I wonder if you, who live here in the State all the time, can realize as well as I, who have been coming here once or twice a year, whether you can realize the amazing progress that has been made (here) in this State in a short decade and a half -- and, if I may be permitted to encore the suggestion of the Governor, especially in the past five years. Now,
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.
if you see a person intimately morning, noon and night, you do not note the changes of growth or of health of that friend as readily as if you see him only at intervals; and that is why I feel that I can speak of Georgia with true perspective.

In my earlier years here I saw a South in the larger sense forgotten, forgotten in the midst of an unhealthy national speculation -- a boom (period) era which thought in terms of paper profits instead of human lives. And for those days what has the South to show today? A few great fortunes perhaps, but most of the profits went north.

Then came the tragic years of the depression. Closed banks in almost every community, ruinous crop prices, idle mills, no money for schools or roads -- a picture of despair, and I knew Georgia of those days, too.

Yet, through all those years the South was building a new school of thought -- a group principally recruited from younger men and women who understood that the economy of the South was vitally and inextricably linked with that of the Nation, and that the national good was equally dependent (equally) on the improvement of the welfare of the South. They, those younger men and women, began asking searching questions: -- Why is our pay -- in other words, why is our earning capacity so low? Why are our roads so bad? Why is our sanitation, (and) our medical care so neglected? Why are our teachers so inadequately paid? Why are our local school buildings and equipment so antiquated?

I do not mince words because, first of all, I have a right -- a nation-wide right, a State right and withal a sympathetic and under-
standing right to speak them and, secondly, because you as well as I know them to be true.

It may not be politic but it is good American idealism to recognize, to state boldly that in 1932, six short years ago, the conditions of human life and human living in Georgia and in other states of the lower South were as a whole at the bottom of the national scale. And, at the same time let us rejoice and take pride in the undoubted fact that in these past six years the South has made greater economic and social progress up the scale than at any other period in her long history. (Applause) It is my objective and yours to maintain that march and to accelerate its pace.

On the side of education a long experience teaches us that the improvement of educational facilities is inevitably bound up with economic conditions. Years ago, when I first came to Georgia, I was told by a distinguished citizen of (Georgia) the State that public school education was well provided for because there was a law -- or perhaps it was in the State Constitution itself -- providing that every child should have a full school year -- and that attendance for each school year through all the years of grade school and into the high schools was compulsory. But I soon discovered, as I might have known that I would, discovered that school after school in the rural districts of the State -- and most of (them) the districts are rural districts -- where the school was open only four months or five months a year -- or the school was too small to hold all the children that wanted to go to it, that the school (or) couldn't employ enough teachers -- or where children, whose parents wanted them to work instead of going to school, could stay away from school
with complete immunity. And then I made a discovery: Apparently a law or a clause in the Constitution was not enough. What is law without enforcement? Apparently the Biblical method, the divine method "Let there be light -- and there was light" did not work as mere man's dictum.

And then I began to analyze: Was it due to lack of interest? No, not at all. It was due to lack of money. Every man and woman I talked with deplored the wretched school conditions, wanted better schools, better trained (and), better paid teachers, wanted more teachers, wanted a full school year. But -- the answer was always the same -- we cannot get more money from taxes.

And why not? The answer again is simple: The taxable values were not there. The tax rates were not too low but the actual going values of property were so meagre that when taxes on those values were collected the sum received could not pay for adequate teachers or proper equipment. Public education was therefore dependent on public wealth. And public wealth was too low to support good schools.

That analysis of mine -- made even before I was elected Governor of New York, led my mind to many other questions: Why were land values and therefore taxable values (in Georgia so low?) in this State too low? With that question came a study of land use, of worn-out land, of cheaper fertilizer, of afforestation, of erosion, of crop diversification, of crop prices, of marketing, and of freight rates. And all of (these) those things bore directly on the problem of better schools.

Why were people getting such low pay for a day's work?
That led to a study of purchasing power, of decent wages, of the cost of living, of taxable income, of sound banking, of small merchants. And (these) those things, too, bore directly on the problem of better schools.

In other words, social conditions -- schools and other things that were dependent for support on this same original supply of funds, (and hospitals and clothing and housing and food) hospitals, medical care and better sanitation and those other matters that were dependent in a similar way, clothing and housing and food -- all those other things that we call by the general name of better social conditions -- were intimately dependent on economic conditions -- higher wages, higher farm income and more profits for small businessmen.

So you will see that my thoughts for the South are no new thing. Long before I had any idea of re-entering public life I was planning for better life for the people of Georgia. In (the) these later years I have had some opportunity to practice what I have long preached. (Applause)

Obviously the Federal Government cannot carry the load alone. In education, for example, the Government in Washington has greatly assisted by using the labor of people who really need help to build schoolhouses, to give student aid, and to pay at least a part of the salaries to many teachers. And Washington will help in the days to come, I am confident, by giving some grants in aid to those communities which need them the most. But let us remember well that the Government in Washington should not and cannot rightly subsidize public education throughout the United States. That must remain wholly free, wholly independent. Education should be run by
the states and their subdivisions and not by the Federal Government.

Therefore, in the long run, the best way for your National Government to assist state and local educational objectives is to tackle the national aspects of economic problems -- to eliminate discriminations between one part of the country and another -- to raise purchasing power and thereby create wealth in those sections where it is (far) too low -- to save the waste and the erosion of our natural resources, to encourage each section to become financially independent, to take the lead in establishing social security -- and at the same time to explain to the people in every part that constant progressive action is better, a thousand times better, than following the lead of either those who want to slow up or those who promise they will hand you the moon on a silver platter a week after they are elected. (Applause)

At heart Georgia shows devotion to the principles of democracy. (It) Georgia, like other states, has occasional lapses, but it really does not believe either in demagogy or feudalism, even though they are dressed up in democratic clothes.

And so, my friends, I am very happy to be with you today. I am happy to have had even a glimpse of this place. For about fourteen years I have been promising to come over from Warm Springs to Athens and some time ago, a good many years ago, I said that I would not come to Athens until I got a good road from Warm Springs to here. But that was a very rash speech, as it turned out; the road is not quite through yet but my good friend, the Governor, tells me it is on its way. That was enough for me, so here I am. (Applause)
To be a part of you is a great honor and a great privilege. You of the University are greatly responsible for the manner of meeting the problems of the present. You will be greatly responsible for the future. Well are you doing your part. From today onward I share proudly, more fully, in that part. (Applause)
It is with particular pride in and increased devotion to this State that I become today an alumnus of the University of Georgia. During many years I have had important contacts with your Trustees and Faculty and I can therefore appreciate the excellent service which you are rendering to the cause of education not only in Georgia but in the Nation.

Many years have gone by since I first came to Warm Springs and got to know and to love the State and its people. I wonder if you, who live here all the time, can realize as well as I, who have been coming here once or twice a year, the amazing progress that has been made here in a short decade and a half -- and especially in the past five years. If you see a person morning, noon and night you do not note the changes of growth or health of that friend as readily as if you see him only at intervals; and that is why I feel that I can speak with perspective.

In my earlier years here I saw a South in the larger sense forgotten in the midst of an unhealthy national speculation -- a boom era which thought in terms of paper profits instead of human lives. And for those days what has the South to show today? A few fortunes perhaps, but most of the profits went north.

Then came the tragic years of the depression. Closed banks in almost every community, ruinous crop prices, idle mills, no money for school or roads -- a picture of despair.

Yet, through all those years, the South was building a new school of thought -- a group principally recruited from younger men and women who understood that the economy of the South was vitally and inexorably linked with that of the Nation, and that the national good was dependent equally on the improvement of the welfare of the South. They began asking searching questions: Why is our pay -- in other words our earning capacity -- so low? Why are our roads so bad? Why is our sanitation and medical care so neglected? Why are our teachers so inadequately paid? Why are our local school buildings and equipment so antiquated?

I do not mince words because, first of all, I have a right -- a nation-wide right, a State right and withal a sympathetic and understanding right to speak them, and, secondly, because you as well as I know them to be true.

It may not be politic but it is good American idealism to recognize, to state boldly, that in 1933 the conditions of human life in Georgia and in other states of the lower South were as a whole at the bottom of the national scale. At the same time let us rejoice and take pride in the undoubted fact that in these past six years the South has made greater economic and social progress up the scale than at any other period in her long history. It is my objective and yours to maintain that march and to accelerate its pace.

On the side of education a long experience teaches us that the improvement of educational facilities is inevitably bound up with economic conditions. Years ago I was told by a distinguished citizen of Georgia that public school education was well provided for because there was a law -- or perhaps it was in the State Constitution itself -- providing that every child should have a full school year -- and that attendance for each school year through grade school was compulsory. But I soon discovered school after school in the rural districts -- and most of them are rural districts -- where the school was open only four months or five months a year -- or was too small to hold all the children -- or couldn't employ enough teachers -- or where children, whose parents wanted them to work, could stay away from school with complete immunity.
Apparently a law or a clause in the Constitution was not enough. What is law without enforcement? Apparently the Divina method "Let there be light, and there was light" did not work as mere man's dictum.

Then I began to analyze: Was it due to lack of interest? No, it was due to lack of money. Every man and woman I talked with deplored the wretched school conditions, wanted better schools, better trained and better paid teachers, wanted more teachers, wanted a full school year. But -- the answer was always the same -- we cannot get more money from taxes.

And why not? The answer is simple: The taxable values were not there. The tax rates were not too low but the actual going values of property were so meagre that when taxes on those values were collected the sum received could not pay for adequate teachers or equipment. Public education was therefore dependent on public wealth. Public wealth was too low to support good schools.

That analysis of mine -- made even before I was elected Governor of New York, led my mind to many other questions: Why were land values and therefore taxable values in Georgia so low? With that question came a study of land use, of worn out land, of cheaper fertilizer, of forestation, of erosion, of crop diversification, of crop prices, of marketing, of freight rates. And all of these things bore directly on the problem of better schools.

Why were people getting such low pay for a day's work? That led to a study of purchasing power, of decent wages, of the cost of living, of taxable income, of sound banking, of small merchants. And these things, too, bore directly on the problem of better schools.

In other words, social conditions -- schools and hospitals and clothing and housing and food -- were intimately dependent on economic conditions -- higher wages, higher farm income and more profits for small business men.

So you will see that my thoughts for the South are no new thing. Long before I had any idea of re-entering public life I was planning for better life for the people of Georgia. In the later years I have had some opportunity to practice what I have long preached.

Obviously the Federal Government cannot carry the load alone. In education, for example, Washington has greatly assisted by using the labor of people who really need help to build schoolhouses, to give student aid, and to pay many teachers. And Washington will help by giving some grants in aid to those communities which need them the most. But Washington should not and cannot rightly subsidize public education throughout the United States. Education should be run by the States and their subdivisions.

Therefore, in the long run, the best way for your national government to assist state and local educational objectives is to tackle the national aspects of economic problems -- to eliminate discriminations between one part of the country and another -- to raise purchasing power and thereby create wealth in those sections where it is far too low -- to save the waste and the erosion of our natural resources, to encourage each section to become financially independent, to take the lead in establishing social security -- and at the same time to explain to the people in every part that constant progressive action is better than following either those who want to slow up or those who promise they will hand you the moon on a silver platter a week after they are elected.

At heart Georgia shows devotion to the principles of democracy. It has occasional lapses, but it really does not believe either in demagoguery or feudalism dressed up in democratic clothes. You of the University are greatly responsible for the present and the future. Well are you doing your part. From today onward I share proudly and more fully in that part.

End.
Uni. of Georgia

It is with particular pride and increased devotion to this State, that I address you today, as Alumnus of the University of Georgia. During many years I have had important contacts with your Trustees and Faculty and I can testify to the excellent service which you are rendering to the cause of education not only in Georgia, but in the Nation.

Many years have gone by since I first came to Athens Georgia and got to know the State and its people. I wonder if you, who live here all the time, can realize as well as I who have been coming here once or twice a year, the amazing progress that has been made here in a short decade and a half - and especially in the last five years. If you are a person running from dawn and night you do not note the changes of growth or health of that friend as readily as if you see him only at intervals; and that is why I feel that I can speak with enthusiasm.

In my earlier years here I was a student in the larger sense, in the midst of unhealthy national apathy - a boom period which thought in terms of paper profits instead of
German Jews. And for these days what has the
South to show today? A few great senatorial deeds,
but most of the budgets went North.

Then came the tragic years of the depression.
Clouded heads in almost every community, millions
of foreclosures, idle mills, no money for schools
or roads—a picture of despair.

Yet through all those years the South was
building a new school of thought—a group of
themselves recruited from younger men and women
who understood
that the recovery of the South was vitally
and inexorably linked with that of the nation
and that the national good was dependent
equally on the improvement of the welfare of the
South. They began asking searching questions—
why is our pay—in other words our earning
capacity—so low, why are our roads so bad,
why is our sanitation and medical care so
neglected, why are our teachers so inadequate
by modern standards, why are our local school
buildings and equipment so antiquated?

I do not misuse words, because first of all
I have a right—a nationwide right, a State right—and
without a sympathetic and understanding right
To speak then, and sincerely because you as well as I know that it is true.

It may not be quite politics, but it is good American idealism to recognize the facts boldly that in 1932 the conditions of human life in Georgia and in other parts of the North were as a whole at the bottom of the national scale. At the same time let us rejoice and take pride in the industrial fact that in the past six years the South has made greater economic and social progress than at any other period in its long history. It is my ardent and yearning to maintain that march and to accelerate its pace.

On the side of education a long experience teaches us that the improvement of teaching is inevitably bound up with economic conditions. Years ago I was told by a distinguished citizen of Georgia that public school education was provided for because there was a law - a statute - in the State Constitution itself - providing that every child should have a full school year and that attendance for each school year through grade school was compulsory. But I read...
Discarded school after school in the rural districts and most of them are rural districts—where the school year was only 4 months or 5 months a year—or was too small to hold all the children—or couldn’t employ enough teachers—or where children whose parents wanted them to work could stay away from school with complete immunity. Apparently it was not enough to be satisfied with a few or a chance in the landholding. Apparently the Divine method “let there be light” and there was light did not work as Mormon’s dictum.

Then I began to analyze. Was it due to lack of interest? No, it was due to lack of money. Every man and woman I talked with deplored the wretched school conditions wanting better schools, better qualified and better paid teachers wanted more teachers wanted a full school year. But the answer was always the same—we cannot get more money from taxes.

And why not? The answer is simple: The Taxable values were out there. The tax rate was not the law, but the actual giving values of property were no longer than when taxes
or these values were collected the economic and public education was therefore dependent on public wealth. Public wealth was too low to support good schools.

That analysis of mine - much time before I was elected Governor of New York - led me to consider many other questions. Why were land values in Georgia so low? With what justice comes a study of land use, of wages, of taxes, and the price of land, of diversification, of crops, prices of marketing, and all of these things were directly on the problem of other schools.

What were people getting and how they paid for a day's work? That led to a study of household budgets of the wage earners, of tax and income, of small farmers, of small merchants. And these things, too, were directly on the problem of other schools.

In other words, social conditions - schools and hospitals and clothing and housing and food were sleeping in the same bed with economic conditions - higher wages, higher farm income, and more profits for small businesses.
So you will see that my thoughts for the South are no new thing. Long before I had any thought of entering public life I was planning for better life for the people of Georgia. In the later years I have had some opportunity to practice what I have long advocated.

Obviously the Federal Government cannot carry the load alone. In education for example Washington has greatly assisted by using the labor of people who really need help to build schoolhouses, to give student aid, and to pay many teachers. And Washington will help by giving some grants in aid to those communities which need them the most. But Washington should not and cannot rightly subsidize public education throughout the United States. Education should be run by the States and their subdivisions.

Therefore in the long run the first duty for your national government is to assist State and local educational objectives is to tackle the national aspects of economic problems—to eliminate discriminations between one part of the country and another—to raise productivity, power, and thereby create wealth in those
sections where it is fair too low - to raise the
wealth, and the section of our natural resources, to
encourage each section to become financially
independent, to take the lead in establishing
social security - and at the same time to
explain to the people in every fact that constant
progressive action is better than following either
those who want to always go on those who promise
you the moon on a silver platter a week after
they are elected.

At least Georgia shows devotion to the principle of democracy.

It is occasional to pass, but it really does not follow
either in demagoguery or fundamentalism dressed up
in democratic clothes. You of the University
are greatly responsible for future. 
Well are you
doing your part? From today onward
I place in that part.
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

It is with particular pride and increased devotion to this State, that I become today an alumnus of the University of Georgia. During many years I have had important contacts with your Trustees and Faculty and I can therefore appreciate the excellent service which you are rendering to the cause of education not only in Georgia but in the Nation.

Many years have gone by since I first came to Warm Springs and got to know and to love the State and its people. I wonder if you, who live here all the time, can realize as well as I, who have been coming here once or twice a year, the amazing progress that has been made here in a short decade and a half and especially in the past five years. If you see a person morning, noon and night you do not note the changes of growth or health of that friend as readily as if you see him only at intervals; and that is why I feel that I can speak with perspective.

STATEMENTS FILE
Shorthand By Kannee
In my earlier years here I saw a South in the larger sense forgotten in the midst of an unhealthy national speculation -- a boom period which thought in terms of paper profits instead of human lives. And for those days what has the South to show today? A few great fortunes perhaps, but most of the profits went north.

Then came the tragic years of the depression. Closed banks in almost every community, ruinous crop prices, idle mills, no money for schools or roads -- a picture of despair.

Yet, through all those years, the South was building a new school of thought -- a group principally recruited from younger men and women who understood that the economy of the South was vitally and inexorably linked with that of the Nation, and that the national good was dependent equally on the improvement of the welfare of the South. They began asking searching questions: why is our pay -- in other words our earning capacity -- so low; why are our roads so bad; why is our sanitation and medical care
so neglected; why are our teachers so inadequate by modern standards? why are our local school buildings and equipment so antiquated?

I do not mince words because, first of all, I have a right -- a nation-wide right, a State right and withal a sympathetic and understanding right to speak them and, secondly, because you as well as I know them to be true.

It may not be good politics but it is good American idealism to recognize, to state boldly that in 1932 the conditions of human life in Georgia and in other states of the lower South were as a whole at the bottom of the national scale. At the same time let us rejoice and take pride in the undoubted fact that in these past six years the South has made greater economic and social progress up the scale than at any other period in her long history. It is my objective and yours to maintain that march and to accelerate its pace.
On the side of education a long experience teaches us that the improvement of educational facilities is inevitably bound up with economic conditions. Years ago I was told by a distinguished citizen of Georgia that public school education was well provided for because there was a law -- or perhaps it was in the State Constitution itself -- providing that every child should have a full school year -- and that attendance for each school year through grade school was compulsory. But I soon discovered school after school in the rural districts -- and most of them are rural districts -- where the school was open only four months or five months a year -- or was too small to hold all the children or couldn't employ enough teachers -- or where children whose parents wanted them to work could stay away from school with complete immunity. Apparently it was not enough to be satisfied with a law or a clause in the Constitution. What is law without enforcement? Apparently the Divine method "Let there be light -- and there was light" did not work as mere man's dictum.
Then I began to analyze: Was it due to lack of interest? No, it was due to lack of money. Every man and woman I talked with deplored the wretched school conditions, wanted better schools, better teachers, and better paid teachers, wanted more teachers, wanted a full school year. But -- the answer was always the same -- we cannot get more money from taxes.

And why not? The answer is simple: The taxable values were not there. The tax rates were not too low but the actual going values of property were so meagre that when taxes on those values were collected the sum received could not pay for adequate teachers or equipment. Public education was therefore dependent on public wealth. Public wealth was too low to support good schools.

That analysis of mine -- made even before I was elected Governor of New York, led my mind to many other questions: Why were land values and therefore taxable values in Georgia low? With that question came a study of land use, of worn out land, of cheaper fertilizer, of forestation, of erosion,
of crop diversification, of crop prices, of marketing, of freight rates. And all of these things bore directly on the problem of better schools.

Why were people getting such low pay for a day's work? That led to a study of purchasing power, of decent wages, of the cost of living, of taxable income, of sound banking, of small merchants. And these things, too, bore directly on the problem of better schools.

In other words, social conditions -- schools and hospitals and clothing and housing and food -- were arising in the face with economic conditions -- higher wages, higher farm income and more profits for small business men.

So you will see that my thoughts for the South are no new thing. Long before I had any thought of re-entering public life I was planning for better life for the people of Georgia. In the later years I have had some opportunity to practice what I have long preached.
Obviously the Federal Government cannot carry the load alone. In education, for example, Washington has greatly assisted by using the labor of people who really need help to build schoolhouses, to give student aid, and to pay many teachers. And Washington will help by giving some grants in aid to those communities which need them the most. But Washington should not and cannot rightly subsidize public education throughout the United States. Education should be run by the States and their subdivisions.

Therefore, in the long run, the best way for your national government to assist state and local educational objectives is to tackle the national aspects of economic problems -- to eliminate discriminations between one part of the country and another -- to raise purchasing power and thereby create wealth in those sections where it is too low -- to save the waste and the erosion of our natural resources, to encourage each section to become financially
independent, to take the lead in establishing social security
-- and at the same time to explain to the people in every part
that constant progressive action is better than following
either those who want to slow up or those who promise you the
moon on a silver platter a week after they are elected.

At heart Georgia shows devotion to the principles of
democracy. It has occasional lapses, but it really does not
believe either in demagoguery or feudalism dressed up in
democratic clothes. You of the University are greatly
responsible for the present and the future. Well are you
doing your part. From today onward I share proudly in that
part.

End