
Franklin D. Roosevelt — “The Great Communicator”
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**Series 2: “ You have nothing to fear but fear itself:” FDR
and the New Deal**

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1940 January 19

**Radio Message to the White House Conference on
Children in a Democracy**

Jan 19 - 1947

The Senate and the Nation are sadly bereft by the passing of Senator Borah. We shall miss him, and mourn him, and long remember the superb courage which was his. He dared often to stand alone and, even at times, to subordinate party ^{interests} personally interest when he saw a divergence of party interest and the national interest.

Fair minded, firm in principle and shrewd in judgment, he sometimes gave and often received hard blows; but he had great personal charm and a courteous manner which had its source in a kind heart. He had thought deeply and studied with patience all of the great social, political and economic questions which had so vitally concerned his countrymen during the long period of his public service.

His utterances commanded the close attention of the Senate and of a far flung audience whenever he spoke. A unique figure, his passing leaves a void in American public life.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN IN A DEMOCRACY

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

JANUARY 19, 1940

Last April when this Conference first met at the White House I asked you to consider two things: First, how a democracy can best serve its children; and, second, how children can best be helped to grow into the kind of citizens who will know how to preserve and perfect our democracy.

Since then a succession of world events has shown us that our democracy must be strengthened at every point of strain or weakness. All Americans want this country to be a place where children can live in safety and grow in understanding of the part they must play in the Nation's future. Adequate national defense calls for adequate munitions and implements of war and, at the same time, for educated, healthy and happy citizens. Neither requisite taken alone and without the other will give us national security.

And now it is my pleasure to receive from you the General Conference Report with its program of action. You have adopted this report after two days of careful deliberation, preceded by nearly a year of study and discussion.

Almost every one within reach of my voice thinks of children in terms of two or three subjects in which he has special experience, such as education or recreation or health. Or, he may have great enthusiasm for one particular kind of child-welfare service. I myself am tremendously interested, for example, in crippled children. This Conference report, however, rightly call on us to think of the child as a whole, as he is related to the life of his family, his community, and the entire Nation.

I can illustrate best the extent to which the interests of children are interwoven with the interests of families and communities by giving you the main topics of the Conference report.

The first part reminds us sharply that by every step we take to protect the families of America we are protecting the children also. Here the recommendations in general constitute an argument for buttressing and strengthening the institution of the family as it relates to the health, training, and opportunities of children in a democracy. This part of the discussion includes families and their incomes; families in need of assistance; families and their dwellings; the family as the threshold of democracy.

Following these topics, the report discusses religion in the lives of children; schools; leisure-time activities; libraries; protection against child labor; youth and their needs; conserving child health; social services for children; children in minority groups; and public financing and administration.

After reviewing the record of the past ten years, your Conference finds that we have definitely improved our social institutions and public services. You conclude, and rightly, that to have made progress in a period of

hardship and strain proves that America has both strength and courage. But we have still much to do. Too many children are still living under conditions that must be corrected if our democracy is to develop to its highest capacity.

You tell us that more than half the children of America live in families that do not have enough money to provide fully adequate shelter, food, clothing, medical care and educational opportunity.

You are rightly concerned that provision be made for those who are unemployed, whether for economic or personal reasons. To keep families from starving while fathers walk the streets in vain search of jobs will not give children the best start in life.

Social insurance to provide against total loss of income, and appropriate work projects adjusted to fluctuations in private employment and to both urban and rural needs, constitute the first lines of defense against family disaster.

You tell me in effect what I have been talking about for many years -- that we are moving forward toward an objective of raising the incomes and living conditions of the poorest third of our population, that we have made some dent on the

problem, and that most decidedly we cannot stop and rest on our somewhat meager laurels.

I agree with you that public assistance of many kinds is necessary but I suggest to you that mere grants in aid constitute no permanent solution but that we should address ourselves to two policies: First, to increase the average of incomes in the poorer communities and areas, and, second, to an insistence that every community and area pay taxes in accordance with its ability to pay.

The Conference report has called attention also to the need for continuing and expanding public and private housing programs if families in the lowest income groups are to live in dwellings suitable for the rearing of children.

Last April I referred to our concern for the children of migratory families who have no settled place of abode. The situation of these children who have no homes, and can put down no roots in school or community, calls for special consideration. This means in its simplest terms a program for the permanent resettlement of at least one million people -- and money spent on it, after careful planning, will be returned to the Nation many times over in a relatively short time.

Your report has devoted many pages to family economics. We all recognize that the spirit within the home is the most important of all influences in the growth of the child. In family life the child should first learn confidence in his own powers, respect for the feelings and rights of others, the security of mutual good will, faith in God. Here he should find a common bond between the interests of the individual and the interests of the group. Mothers and fathers, by the kind of life they build within the four walls of home, are largely responsible for the future public and social life of our country.

Just as we cannot take care of the child apart from his family, so his welfare is bound up with other institutions that influence his development -- the school, the church, and the agencies which offer useful and happy activities and interests for leisure time. The work of all these institutions needs to be harmonized so as to give our children rounded growth with the least possible conflict and loss. The money and hard work that go into these public and private enterprises are repaid many times over.

Religion, especially, helps children to appreciate life in its wholeness and to develop a deep sense of the sacredness of human personality. In view of the estimate that perhaps one-half the children in this country are having no regular religious instruction, it is important to consider how provision can best be made for religious training. In this we must keep in mind both the wisdom of maintaining the separation of Church and State and the great importance of religion in personal and social living.

I share with you the belief that fair opportunity for schooling should be available to every child in our country. I agree with you that no American child, merely because he happens to be born where property values are low and local taxes do not support good schools, should be placed at a disadvantage in his preparation for citizenship.

Certainly our future is endangered when nearly a million children of elementary school age are not in school;

when thousands of school districts and even some entire States do not pay for good schools. This situation has been reported by many agencies, private and public, and needs to be still more widely understood. But I suggest again that the permanent answer is not mere handouts from the Federal Treasury but has to be solved by improving the economics of the poorer sections of the country and an insistence on adequate taxation in accordance with ability to pay.

We must plan also on a larger scale to give American children a chance for healthful play and worth-while use of leisure. I agree with you that a democratic government has vital interest in these matters. I am glad that you have suggested a national commission, under private auspices, to study leisure-time needs and recreational resources.

More than in any previous decade, we know how to safeguard the health of parents and children. Because of the advance of medical knowledge and the growth of public health work, we have it in our power to conquer many diseases and to promote good health.

New opportunities mean new duties. It was one thing to let people sicken and die when we were helpless to protect them. It is now quite another thing to leave a large portion of our population without care. It is my definite hope that within the next ten years every part of the country will have complete service for all women during maternity and for all new born infants.

So, too, good nutrition is the basis of child health. I am in sympathy with your suggestion that I appoint a National Nutrition Committee to review our present knowledge and coordinate our efforts, looking toward the development of nutrition policies based on the newest and best knowledge.

You have charted a course for ten years or more ahead. Nevertheless, the steps we take today will determine how far we can go tomorrow, and in what direction.

I believe with you that if anywhere in the country any child lacks opportunity for home life, health protection, education, or moral and spiritual development, the strength of the Nation and its ability to cherish and advance the principles of democracy are thereby weakened.

I ask all our fellow citizens who are within the sound of my voice to consider themselves identified with the work of this Conference. I ask you all to study and to discuss with friends and neighbors the program it has outlined, and how its objectives can be realized. May the security and happiness of every boy and girl in our land be our concern, our personal concern, from now on.

You the members of this Conference are the
children of a Democracy are the leaders
of the American Army of Peace

Franklin Roosevelt
Original copy - but a great deal
of interpolation as distinct

NOTE: Following is address as actually delivered.

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
broadcast from the White House
in connection with the
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN IN A DEMOCRACY
January 19, 1940, 10:40 P.M., E.S.T.

MISS PERKINS, MEMBERS OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON
CHILDREN IN A DEMOCRACY:

I come here tonight with a very heavy heart because shortly ago I received word of the passing of a very old friend of mine, a very great American, Senator Borah. I had known him for a great many years and I had realized, although perhaps on this or that or the other political problem we may have differed from time to time, yet his purpose and my purpose and the ultimate objective of, I think, everybody in this room interested in the future of America, were identical -- and the Nation has lost one of its great leaders in his passing.

I am glad to come here in the thought that Senator Borah of Idaho would want us to go on with the work of building a better citizenship in the days to come in the United States.

You know, I go back, not as far as he did, but I go back a great many years. I go back to my days in college when I worked for an organization called "The Social Service Committee" -- after that, my wife came into the picture and, when we were engaged, I discovered that she was teaching classes of children on the East Side in New York.

And then, very soon after I was admitted to the Bar, I got to know another very great American, an old friend of yours and mine, Homer Folks. And probably Homer does not remember it himself but in New York in those days we were just beginning to take up the problem of providing milk for babies, for mothers, in all parts of that big city. And I, wanting to do something in addition to trying to learn a little law, went in with an organization which has long since ceased to exist because it was absorbed by greater organizations, the New York Milk Committee, and I worked for two or three years in trying to help in placing milk stations for babies on the East Side and West Side and up in the Bronx in New York City.

Homer Folks was one of the principal moving agencies in setting that up and it is rather an interesting thing that the woman who was most greatly responsible for helping to provide milk for dependent poor children in the great city of New York was Mrs. Borden Harriman. I sent Mrs. Harriman as United States Minister to Norway two years ago.

Last April when this Conference first met in this room I asked you to consider two things: first, how a democracy can best serve its children; and, the corollary, how children can best be helped to grow into the kind of citizens who will know how to preserve and perfect our democracy.

Since that time -- since last April -- a succession of world events has shown us that our democracy must be strengthened at every point of strain or weakness. All Americans want this country to be a place where children can live in safety and grow in understanding of the part that they are going to play in the future of our American Nation. And on that question, people have come to me and they have said, "What about defense?" "Well," I have said, "internal defense and external defense are one and the same thing. You cannot have one unless you can have both."

Adequate national defense, in the broadest term, calls for adequate -- yes, on the one side -- munitions and implements of war and, at the same time, it calls for educated, healthy and happy citizens. And neither requisite, taken alone, takes all by itself without the other, will give us, will defend the national security.

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.

And so today, in January, 1940, it is my pleasure to receive from you the General Conference Report with its program of action. You have adopted this report after days of careful deliberation, preceded by nearly a year of study and discussion.

And, by way of illustration, I am having a problem with the Congress of the United States as to whether the problems of the United States are going to be decided after a couple of days of careful deliberation in each House or whether I am going to get a couple of million dollars for undertaking studies that would correspond to this year of study, this year of discussion, that you good people have been putting into the problem of children in a democracy. And I think I am going to win out.

When I started to jot down some notes about what I was going to say tonight -- and so far I have been speaking, as you have observed, practically extemporaneously -- I said to myself, "This is going to be the most dreadful speech I have ever delivered," because, when I come to write down notes and dictate a speech, I say to myself, "What is it in this particular subject that I am going to talk about that hits me between the eyes?" And, on this particular subject of children in a democracy, the thing that hit me between the eyes was what I got about a week ago, a list, a tabulation, a catalog of what you have been studying.

And so I felt that the Nation as a whole ought to realize that the subject of children covers several pages of a catalog. There are so many interests involved, so many problems involved. Almost everybody who is hearing me tonight I suppose in every state of the Union thinks of children in terms of two or three of these subjects on the average, two or three subjects in which he or she has special experience or special interest, such as education of children or the recreation of children or the health of children. Or he or she may have some great enthusiasm for one particular kind of child welfare service. For instance, I myself am tremendously interested in crippled children.

But this Conference report rightly calls on us to think of children as a whole, as each child is related, not to one life, not only to his own life but to the lives of his brothers and sisters, the life of his family and then, inevitably, to the life of his community, the life of his county, the life of his State and the life of his Nation.

And that is why if people in this country are going to think of this problem as it really is, they have got to listen to a catalogue for the next ten minutes.

I can illustrate best the extent to which the interests of children are interwoven with the interests of families and communities by giving you these main topics of the conference and I do not think there is any one of these topics of which we can say, "Well, that is awfully nice, but what relation has it to the problem of my child?" Well, of course it has, every subject here has.

And the first part of the Conference report reminds us sharply that by every step we take to protect the families of America, we are protecting the children also. Well, put that in another way: it means that what Federal Government and state government, county government, town government, village government, everything else, what they are doing to coordinate the economy and the social problems of their own communities in relation to the whole population necessarily has an effect on every child in that community. Here we find in this report recommendations in general which constitute an argument for buttressing and strengthening, in the first instance, the institution of the family, the family as it relates again to a whole, and of other things - health, training and opportunities of children in what we are pleased to call a democracy and, thank God, it still is.

This part of the discussion includes families and their incomes, families in need of assistance, families and their dwellings and the family as a threshold to the future democracy of this country.

And then, following that group of topics, the report discusses a lot of other things that either enter or ought to enter into the life of every American child in every part of the country, schools, religion, leisure time activities -- mind you, these are all separate topics that we are trying to coordinate into one national picture -- libraries, protection against child labor, youth and the needs of youth, the conserving of child health, the social services for children, children in minority groups and, something that a lot of people forget, as I have good reason to know as the Chief Executive, the subject of public financing and administration.

But what I am specially pleased about is this: that this Conference, made up of men and women that belong to every political party in every part of the country, has found that we have definitely improved our social institutions and our public services during these past ten years. And the only thing that good old Homer Folks said that I do not agree with -- he called them "these terrible ten years", and I do not. I think they have been the most interesting ten years since -- what? Well, at least since the Civil War and maybe since the Revolution. And we are all glad we have had a part in them because I believe that though we have had lots of trouble, lots of difficulties, that these past ten years have been ten useful and, on the whole, ten years of definite progress in a democracy.

The Conference concludes, and rightly, that to have made progress in a period of hardship and strain proves that America has both strength and courage.

But, again, I agree with the Conference that we still have got a long way to go. Too many children, and you can find them in every State in the Union, are living under conditions that must be corrected if our democracy is to develop to its highest capacity. The Conference tells me that more than half of the children of America are living in families that do not have enough money to provide fully adequate shelter, adequate food, adequate clothing and adequate medical care and adequate educational opportunities.

I have been called to task, as you all know, because I have reiterated, reiterated many times, something about one-third of America, -- the ill-clothed, ill-housed, ill-fed -- criticized on the ground that I was saying something derogatory. I have been telling the truth and you good people have sustained me by that statement that more than half the children of America are living in families that do not have enough money to provide fully adequate shelter, food, clothing, medical care and educational opportunity. Why should not we admit it? By admitting it we are saying we are going to improve things.

Yes, and you are rightly concerned that provision be made for those who are unemployed, whether for economic or personal reasons. To keep families from starving while the fathers walk the streets in vain in search for jobs will not give children the best start in life.

Social insurance to provide against total loss of income, and appropriate work projects adjusted to fluctuations in private employment and both urban and rural needs, constitute the first lines of defense against family disaster.

And I am glad of what has been said tonight about urban problems. I think my very good old friend, the Mayor of New York, would not mind my telling a story or what happened up at Hyde Park last autumn. He was up there, lunching with us. We had a big lunch, eighteen or twenty people, and we were talking about the problem of distribution or population in the United States. Well, that is an old thing that I have been sort of "chipping" about for a great many years, twenty or thirty years. And I talked about the problem of overrunning the cities. I talked about whether it was a good thing with a big question mark, about cities getting too big, the bigger cities getting still bigger, and whether we could not work on some plan for a greater decentralization of the population, the building up of the smaller communities. And then, as a sort of jest I said, "You know, Flavelle, I am going to say something small that you won't agree with. I think your problem in New York City, with seven million men, women and children in it, is a bad one. I think that the problem of civilized life in a community of that size is almost too big a problem and I think that New York would be better off if it had six million people instead of seven."

And the Mayor of New York looked at me and he said, "Mr. President, I cannot agree." He said, "Mr. President, you are wrong." He said, "New York would be better off if it had 5 million people in it instead of 7."

And, by way of following up the same subject -- this is just purely from memory -- we were talking of conditions before the World War, somewhere around 1913 or 1914 which I was over here in the Navy Department -- I find an extraordinarily interesting pamphlet which carried out the thought that you have heard tonight about rural populations. It was by a great French doctor who had made all kinds of examinations or records, vital statistics in half a dozen of the greatest cities of Europe, and he had come to the conclusion and had attempted to prove it by family statistics that they finally that had been ofty-bred for three or four generations died out and that the only families in cities that survived were the families that had an influx of country blood every generation or two. Now, I do not know whether our modern medical friends will support that but it seems to me to be something well worth our thinking about in terms of the service of the future.

You tell me, in effect, in this Report what I have been talking about for many years, that we have been moving toward toward the objective of raising the incomes and the living conditions of the poorer portion of our population, that we have made some dent on this problem and that, at least decidedly, we cannot stop and rest on our father's shoulders.

Yes, I agree with you that public assistance of many kinds is necessary. But I suggest to you that the Federal treasury has a bottom to it, and that more grants in aid constitute no permanent solution of the problem of our health, our education, or our children, but that we should address ourselves to two definite policies: First, to increase the coverage of incomes in the poorer communities and in the poorer groups, in the poorer areas of the nation and, secondly, that we should address ourselves to an insistence that in every community, in every state and the District of Columbia, they should not taxes in accordance with ability to pay.

The Conference report, going on which this -- what shall I call it? -- Sunbeam catalogue -- has called attention also to the need for continuing and expanding public and private housing programs if the families in the lowest income groups are to live in dwellings suitable for the raising of children.

Last April, to take another item, I referred to our concern for the children of the migratory families who have no settled place of abode. I spoke casually to the Press today about a study I am making. Up in the State of Washington we are spending a great many millions to harness the Columbia River, to put a great dam up there which will pump the water up onto a huge area of land capable of providing a living for 500 thousand people, irrigated land, today a desert, which can be made a garden with the power of modern science. This ought to go there! Are we going to treat them two years from now, just as we treat the average irrigation project? Will it be a contract with the Government to pay out the loan over a period of years on the basis -- first come, first served?

I have read a book; it is called "Groups of Truth" and there are 300,000 Americans that live in the covers of that book. I would like to see the Columbia Basin devoted to the care of 500,000 people represented in Groups of "Truth".

Migratory families, the situation of their children, children who have no home, families who can put down no roots, cannot live in a community, -- that calls for special consideration. But I am being practical. I am trying to find a plan for them to go. This means, in the simplest terms, a program for the permanent re-arrangement of at least one million people in the Columbia Basin and a lot of other places. And remember that the money spent on it after careful planning is going to be returned to the United States Government many times over in a relatively short time.

To go on, your report has devoted many pages to family economics. I know very little about that -- my wife does. We all recognize that the spirit within the home is the most important influence in the growth of the child. In family life the child should first learn confidence in his own parents, respect for the feelings and the rights of others, the feeling of security and mutual good will and faith in God. Here he should find a common bond between the interests of the individual and the interests of the group. Brothers and Sisters, by the kind of life they build within the four walls of the home, are largely responsible for the future social and public life of the country.

And, just as we cannot take care of the child apart from the family, as his welfare is bound up with a lot of other institutions that influence his development, -- the school, the church, the agencies that offer useful and happy activities and interests for leisure time. The work of all these institutions needs to be harmonized so as to give our children rounded growth with the last possible conflict and loss of effort. And the money and hard work that go into these public and private enterprises are, again, repaid many times.

And I think that religion, religion especially, helps children to appreciate life in its wholeness, to develop a deep sense of the sanctities of the human personality. In view of the estimate that perhaps one-half of the children of America are having no regular religious instruction, it seems to me important to consider how provision can best be made for some kind of religious training. We can do it because in this way we are capable of keeping in mind both the wisdom of maintaining the separation of Church and State and, at the same time, giving weight to the great importance of religion in personal and social living.

And I share with you the belief that fair opportunity for schooling ought to be available to every child in this country. I agree with you that no American child, merely because he happens to be born where property values are low and local taxes do not even though they should, support the schools, should be placed at a disadvantage in his preparation for citizenship.

Certainly our future is endangered when nearly a million children of elementary school age are not in school; when thousands of school districts and even some entire States do not pay for good schools. This situation has been reported by many agencies, private and public, and, the way I have got it down here in my manuscript, needs to be more widely understood. That does not mean anything. What I really wanted to say is this: I would like to put on the front page of every newspaper in the United States, a list of the most backward school districts, the most backward school states in the United States.

That is rough treatment but if every person in the United States could know where the conditions are worst, -- education and health -- those areas would get the sympathy, the understanding and the help for improving those worst of conditions. And again, I have to suggest that the permanent answer is not mere handouts from the Federal Treasury but that the problem has to be solved by improving the economics in these poorer sections and an insistence, hand in hand with it, that there be adequate taxation in accordance with ability to pay.

We must plan also, on a larger scale, to give American children a chance for healthful play and worthwhile use of leisure. I agree with you that a democratic government has a vital interest in those matters. And I am glad that you have suggested a national commission, under private auspices, to study leisure-time needs and recreational resources.

More than in any previous decade we know how to safeguard the health of parents and children. Because of the advance of medical knowledge and the growth of public health work, we have it in our power to conquer diseases that we could not conquer ten years ago, and the ability to promote general good health.

New opportunities to us mean new duties. It was one thing to let people sicken and die when we were helpless to protect them. And it is quite another thing to leave a large portion of our population without care at all. It is my definite hope that within the next ten years every part of the country -- just to use an example -- and I believe that hope can be fulfilled -- every part of the United States will have complete and adequate service for all women during maternity and for all new-born infants. That we can do.

So, too, good nutrition is the basis of child health. And I am equally in sympathy with your suggestion that I appoint a National Nutrition Committee to review our present knowledge and to coordinate our efforts, looking toward the development of nutrition policies based on the newest and best methods, and we are making new discoveries every day.

You, all the members of the Conference, have charted a course, a course for ten years to come. Nevertheless, the steps that we take now, in this year of 1940, are going to determine how far we can go tomorrow, and in what direction.

I believe with you that if anywhere in the country any child lacks opportunity for home life, for health protection, for education, for moral or spiritual development, the strength of the Nation and its ability to cherish and advance the principles of democracy are thereby weakened.

I ask all our fellow citizens who are within the sound of my voice to consider themselves identified with the work of this Conference. I ask you all to study and discuss with friends and neighbors the program that it has outlined, to study how its objectives can be realized. May the security and the happiness of every boy and girl in our land be our concern, our personal concern, from now on.

You, the members of this Conference, this Conference on Children in a Democracy, you are leaders of a new American Army of peace.

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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January 19, 1940

CAUTION: This address of the President, to be broadcast from the White House in connection with the White House Conference on Children in a Democracy, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE until released.

NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets MUT EARLIER THAN 10:30 P. M., E. S. T., January 19, 1940.

Care must be exercised to prevent premature publication.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

Last April when this Conference first met at the White House I asked you to consider two things: First, how a democracy can best serve its children; and, second, how children can best be helped to grow into the kind of citizens who will know how to preserve and perfect our democracy.

Since then a succession of world events has shown us that our democracy must be strengthened at every point of strain or weakness. All Americans want this country to be a place where children can live in safety and grow in understanding of the part they must play in the Nation's future. Adequate national defense calls for adequate munitions and implements of war and, at the same time, for educated, healthy and happy citizens. Neither requisite taken alone and without the other will give us national security.

And now it is my pleasure to receive from you the General Conference Report with its program of action. You have adopted this report after two days of careful deliberation, preceded by nearly a year of study and discussion.

Almost every one within reach of my voice thinks of children in terms of two or three subjects in which he has special experience, such as education or recreation or health. Or, he may have great enthusiasm for one particular kind of child-welfare service. I myself am tremendously interested, for example, in crippled children. This Conference report, however, rightly calls on us to think of the child as a whole, as he is related to the life of his family, his community, and the entire Nation.

I can illustrate best the extent to which the interests of children are interwoven with the interests of families and communities by giving you the main topics of the Conference report.

The first part reminds me sharply that by every step we take to protect the families of America we are protecting the children also. Here the recommendations in general constitute an argument for buttressing and strengthening the institution of the family as it relates to the health, training, and opportunities of children in a democracy. This part of the discussion includes families and their incomes; families in need of assistance; families and their dwellings; the family as the threshold of democracy.

Following these topics, the report discusses religion in the lives of children; schools; leisure-time activities; libraries; protection against child labor; youth and their needs; conserving child health; social services for children; children in minority groups; and public financing and administration.

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

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After reviewing the record of the past ten years, your Conference finds that we have definitely improved our social institutions and public services. You conclude, and rightly, that to have made progress in a period of hardship and strain proves that America has both strength and courage. But we have still much to do. Too many children are still living under conditions that must be corrected if our democracy is to develop to its highest capacity.

You tell us that more than half the children of America live in families that do not have enough money to provide fully adequate shelter, food, clothing, medical care and educational opportunity.

You are rightly concerned that provision be made for those who are unemployed, whether for economic or personal reasons, to keep families from starving while fathers walk the streets in vain search of jobs will not give children the best start in life. Social insurance to provide against total loss of income, and appropriated work projects adjusted to fluctuations in private employment and to both urban and rural needs, constitute the first lines of defense against family disaster.

You tell me in effect what I have been talking about for many years -- that we are moving forward toward an objective of raising the incomes and living conditions of the poorest third of our population, that we have made some dent on the problem, and that most decidedly we cannot stop and rest on our somewhat meager laurels.

I agree with you that public assistance of many kinds is necessary but I suggest to you that mere grants in aid constitute no permanent solution but that we should address ourselves to two policies: First, to increase the average of incomes in the poorer communities and areas, and, second, to insistence that every community and area pay taxes in accordance with its ability to pay.

The Conference report has called attention also to the need for continuing and expanding public and private housing programs if families in the lowest income groups are to live in dwellings suitable for the rearing of children.

Last April I referred to our concern for the children of migratory families who have no settled place of abode. The situation of those children who have no home, and can put down no roots in school or community, calls for special consideration. This means in its simplest terms a program for the permanent resettlement of at least one million people -- and money spent on it, after careful planning, will be returned to the Nation many times over in a relatively short time.

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We must plan also on a larger scale to give American children a chance for healthful play and worth-while use of leisure. I agree with you that a democratic government has vital interest in these matters. I am glad that you have suggested a national commission, under private auspices, to study leisure-time needs and recreational resources.

More than in my previous decades, we know how to safeguard the health of parents and children. Because of the advance of medical knowledge and the growth of public health work, we have it in our power to conquer many diseases and to promote good health.

Now opportunities mean new duties. It was one thing to let people sicken and die when we were helpless to protect them. It is now quite another thing to leave a large portion of our population without care. It is my definite hope that within the next ten years every part of the country will have complete service for all women during maternity and for all newborn infants.

So, too, good nutrition is the basis of child health. I am in sympathy with your suggestion that I appoint a National Nutrition Committee to review our present knowledge and coordinate our efforts, looking toward the development of nutrition policies based on the newest and best knowledge.

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I ask all our fellow citizens who are within the sound of my voice to consider themselves identified with the work of this Conference. I ask you all to study and to discuss with friends and neighbors the program it has outlined, and how its objectives can be realized. May the security and happiness of every boy and girl in our land be our concern, our personal concern, from now on.

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HOLD FOR RELEASE

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January 19, 1940

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NOTE: Release to editions of all newspapers appearing on the streets BUT EARLIER THAN 10:30 P. M., E. S. T., January 19, 1940.

Care must be exercised to prevent premature publication.

STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

Last April when this Conference first met at the White House I asked you to consider two things: First, how a democracy can best serve its children; and, second, how children can best be helped to grow into the kind of citizens who will know how to preserve and perfect our democracy.

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I can illustrate best the extent to which the interests of children are interwoven with the interests of families and communities by giving you the main topics of the Conference report.

The first part reminds me sharply that by every step we take to protect the families of America we are protecting the children also. Here the recommendations in general constitute an argument for buttressing and strengthening the institution of the family as it relates to the health, training, and opportunities of children in a democracy. This part of the discussion includes families and their incomes; families in need of assistance; families and their dwellings; the family as the threshold of democracy.

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I share with you the belief that fair opportunity for schooling should be available to every child in our country. I agree with you that no American child, merely because he happens to be born where property values are low and local taxes do not support good schools, should be placed at a disadvantage in his preparation for citizenship.

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So, too, good nutrition is the basis of child health. I am in sympathy with your suggestion that I appoint a National Nutrition Committee to review our present knowledge and coordinate our efforts, looking toward the development of nutrition policies based on the newest and best knowledge.

You have charted a course for ten years or more ahead. Nevertheless, the steps we take today will determine how far we can go tomorrow, and in what direction.

I believe with you that if anywhere in the country any child lacks opportunity for home life, health protection, education, or moral and spiritual development, the strength of the Nation and its ability to cherish and advance the principles of democracy are thereby weakened.

I ask all our fellow citizens who are within the sound of my voice to consider themselves identified with the work of this Conference. I ask you all to study and to discuss with friends and neighbors the program it has outlined, and how its objectives can be realized. May the security and happiness of every boy and girl in our land be our concern, our personal concern, from now on.

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*Principles and final
draft from*
WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN IN A DEMOCRACY

ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Labor Dept.

Jan 19 40

Madam Chairman,

Last April when this Conference first met at the White House I asked you to consider two things: First, how a democracy can best serve its children; and, Second, how children can best be helped to grow into the kind of citizens who will preserve and perfect our democracy.

Since then a succession of world events has shown us that our democracy must be strengthened at every point of strain or weakness.

~~Every step we take to give all children a fair chance reaffirms our faith in the future of America and the future of democracy. I am confident that All Americans want this country to be a place where children can live in safety and grow in understanding of the part they must play in the Nation's future.~~ (A)

And now it is my pleasure to receive from you the General Conference Report with its program of action. You have adopted this report after two days of careful deliberation, preceded by nearly a year of study and discussion.

Almost every one within reach of my voice thinks of children in terms of two or three subjects in which he has special experience, such as education, recreation, or health. Or, he may have great enthusiasm for one particular kind of child-welfare service. I myself am tremendously interested, ^{for example}, ~~rightly~~ in crippled children. This Conference report, however, compels us to think of the child

as a whole, as he is related to the life of his family, his community, and the entire Nation.

I can illustrate best the extent to which the interests of children are interwoven with the interests of families and communities by giving you the main topics of the Conference report. The first part reminds us sharply that by every step we take to protect the families of America we are protecting the children also. Here the recommendations in general constitute an argument for buttressing and strengthening the institution of the family as it relates to the health, training, and opportunities of children in a democracy. This part of the discussion includes families and their incomes; families in need of assistance; families and their dwellings; the family as the threshold of democracy. Following these topics, the report discusses religion in the lives of children; schools; leisure-time activities; libraries; protection against child labor; youth and their needs; conserving child health; social services for children; children in minority groups; and public financing and administration.

After reviewing the record of the past ten years, your Conference finds that we have ~~not only maintained but improved our social institutions and public services.~~ You conclude, and rightly, that to have made progress in a period of hardship and strain proves that America has both strength and courage. Such knowledge gives us the strongest assurance for the future, and enables us to say frankly ~~that~~ we have still much to do. Because we have done much and purpose to do more, we can face the fact that ~~too~~ many children are still living under conditions that must be corrected if our democracy is

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to develop to its highest capacity.

~~This Conference is concerned chiefly with the ability of the family to protect and nurture its children. Children cannot be safe when their families are in jeopardy. The resources and the stability of family life are matters of importance to the whole Nation.~~

You tell us that more than half the children of America live in families that do not have enough money to provide fully adequate shelter, food, clothing, medical care and educational opportunity. A conference on children cannot fail to give attention to unemployment, illness, low wages, poor housing. Our goal should be so to develop our economic life as to assure as soon as possible full employment in both agriculture and industry, with earnings sufficient to meet family needs.

You are rightly concerned that provision be made for those who are unemployed, whether for economic or personal reasons. To keep families from starving while fathers walk the streets in vain search of jobs will not give children the best start in life. ~~Look for the father~~ means more to the child than any other form of service.

Social insurance to provide against total loss of income, and appropriate work projects adjusted to fluctuations in private employment and to both urban and rural needs, constitute the first lines of defense against family disaster. *N.B.*

Public assistance in the form of aid to dependent children, and general relief supplementary to other forms of aid, are further lines of defense. I note your recommendation that public assistance and general relief policies should be developed in accordance with the

needs of the people and the capacities of the various units of government, local, State and Federal. It is of great importance that these forms of aid be sufficient in each case to safeguard family health and security, and especially the growth and welfare of children.

The Conference report has called attention also to the need for continuing and expanding ~~public and private~~ housing programs if families in the lowest income groups are to live in dwellings suitable for the rearing of children.

Last April I referred to our concern for the children of migratory families who have no settled place of abode. The situation of these children who have no homes, and can put down no roots in school or community, calls for special consideration. *C No #* ~~For many of them the Federal Government is the only available source of help, since they have no permanent State or local residence.~~

All methods of meeting unemployment and poverty need to be carefully and frequently reviewed, with one goal by the next ten-year period a reasonable measure of economic security for every family.

Your report has devoted many pages to family economics. ~~These pages have been given to the personal side of family life. This is~~ ~~the~~ economic security calls for many kinds of public action that are beyond the power of any individual. Nevertheless, we all recognize that the spirit within the home is the most important of all influences in the growth of the child. In family life the child should first learn confidence in his own powers, respect for the feelings and rights of others, the security of mutual good will, faith in God. Here he should find a common bond between the interests of the individual and

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the interests of the group. Mothers and fathers, by the kind of life they build within the four walls of home,^{are} largely effect^{the} the future public and social life of our country.

Just as we cannot take care of the child apart from his family, so his welfare is bound up with other institutions that influence his development,— the school, the Church, and the agencies which offer useful and happy activities and interests for leisure time. The work of all these institutions needs to be encouraged and harmonized so as to give our children rounded growth with the least possible conflict and loss. The money and hard work that go into these public and private enterprises are repaid many times over in the soundness and health of the whole community.

Religion, especially, helps children to appreciate life in its wholeness and to develop a deep sense of the sacredness of human personality. In view of the estimate that perhaps one-half the children in this country are having no regular religious instruction, it is important to consider how provision can best be made for religious training. In this we must keep in mind both the wisdom of maintaining the separation of Church and State and the great importance of religion in personal and social living.

I share with you the belief that fair opportunity for schooling should be available to every child in our country. I agree with you that no American child, merely because he happens to be born where property values are low and local taxes ~~cannot~~^{No not} support good schools, should be placed at a disadvantage in his preparation for citizenship.

Certainly our future is endangered when nearly a million children of elementary school age are not in school; when thousands of school districts and even some entire States have ~~not~~ ^{do not} the means to pay for good schools. This situation has been reported by many agencies, private and public, and needs to be still more widely understood. Your report again puts clearly before us the need for enlarging units of school administration, for substantial State aid in every State, and for Federal assistance in reducing inequalities in educational opportunity among the States.

We must plan also on a larger scale to give American children a chance for healthful play and worth-while use of leisure. I agree with you that a democratic government has vital interest in these matters. I am glad that you have suggested a national commission, under private auspices, to study leisure-time needs and recreational resources.

More than in any previous decade, we know how to safeguard the health of parents and children. Because of the advance of medical knowledge and the growth of public health work, we have it in our power to conquer many diseases and to promote good health.

New opportunities mean new duties. It was one thing to let people sicken and die when we were helpless to protect them. It is now quite another thing to leave a large portion of our population without care. Long before the end of another decade complete service for all women during maternity and for all newborn infants should be available either through private resources or public funds. Within that time all children should be under effective health supervision and have access to competent medical care. In this way we can look

forward to a future America with glowing health a natural asset of its citizens.

✓, too, Good nutrition is the basis of child health. I am in sympathy with your suggestion that I appoint a National Nutrition Committee to review our present knowledge and coordinate our efforts, looking toward the development of nutrition policies based on the newest and best knowledge.

Other aspects of child welfare that your report brings forcibly to our attention include consolidation and extension of the gains made in abolishing child labor; provision of either schooling or employment opportunity for all young people; social services for children with special handicaps; and efforts to assure good health and educational opportunity to children of all races and national origins. Underlying all these services, there should be public understanding of their necessity, and development of sound principles of administration.

I am glad to note that although you recognize the need for doing everything possible to strengthen the health and well-being of children this year, you have not limited your recommendations to what can be done at once. You have charted a course for 10 years or more ahead. Nevertheless, the steps we take today will determine how far we can go tomorrow, and in what direction.

The question is not alone, what can a democracy do for its children and youth? It is even more, how can children and youth be prepared to give what may be required in service and in cooperation in a society dedicated to the principles of freedom and the worth of human personality?

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN IN A DEMOCRACY

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

JANUARY 19, 1940

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Jan. 19, 1940

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STEPHEN EARLY
Secretary to the President

STATEMENTS FILE

①
ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
To be broadcast from the White House
^{Hotel} in connection with the
White Conference on Children in a Democracy
January 19, 1940, 10.40 P.M., E.S.T.

MISS PERKINS, MEMBERS OF THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON CHILDREN IN A
DEMOCRACY:

I come here tonight with a very heavy heart because shortly ago I received word of the passing of a very old friend of mine, a ^{great} very good American, Senator Borah. I had known him for a great many years and I had realized, although perhaps on this or that or the other political problem we ~~may~~ have differed from time to time, yet his purpose and my purpose and the ultimate objective of, I think, everybody in this room interested in the future of America ~~these~~ ~~were~~ identical and the Nation has lost one of its great leaders in his passing.

I am glad to come here in the thought that Senator Borah of Idaho would want us to go on with the work of building a better citizenship in the days to come in the United States.

You know, I go back, not as far as he did, but I go back a great many years. I go back to my days in college when I worked for an organization called the Social Service Committee. ~~and~~ after that my wife came into the picture and, when we were engaged, I discovered that she was ~~taching~~ teaching classes of children on the East Side in New York.

And then, very soon after I was admitted to the Bar, I got to know another very great American, an old friend of yours and

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(V)

mine, Homer Folks. (b) And probably Homer does not remember it himself but in New York in those days we were just beginning to take up the problem of providing milk for babies, for mothers, in all parts of that big city. And I, wanting to do something in addition to trying to learn a little law, went in with an organization which has long since ceased to exist because it was absorbed by greater organizations, the New York Milk Committee, and I worked for two or three years in trying to help in placing milk stations for babies on the East Side and West Side and up in the Bronx in New York City. Homer Folks was one of the principal moving agencies in setting that up and it is rather interesting thing that the woman who was most greatly responsible for helping to provide milk for dependent poor children in the great city of New York, Mrs. Borden Harriman. I sent Mrs. Harriman as United States Minister to Norway two years ago.

Last April when this Conference first met (at (b)) in this room I asked you to consider two things: first, how a democracy can best serve its children; and, (c) the corollary, how children can best be helped to grow into the kind of citizens who will know how to preserve and perfect our democracy.

Since (b) that time -- since last April -- a succession of world events has shown us that our democracy must be strengthened at every point of strain or weakness. All Americans want this country to be a place where children can live in safety and grow in understanding of the part that they are (b) going to play in the (Nation's) future of our American Nation. And on that question, people have come

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to me and they have said, "What about defense?" Well, I have said, internal defense and external defense are one and the same thing. You cannot have one unless you can have both." Adequate national defense, in the broadest term, calls for adequate -- yes, on the one side -- munitions and implements of war and, at the same time, it calls for educated, healthy and happy citizens. And neither requisite, taken alone, taken all by itself (without the other, will give us, will defend the national security.

And so today, in January, 1940, (And now) it is my pleasure to receive from you the General Conference Report with its program of action. You have adopted this report after () days of careful deliberation, preceded by nearly a year of study and discussion.

And, by way of illustration, I am having a problem with the Congress of the United States as to whether the problems of the United States are going to be decided after a couple of days of careful deliberation in each House or whether I am going to get a couple of million dollars that would correspond to this year of study, this year of discussion, that you good people have been () putting in to the problem of Children in a Democracy. And I think I am going to win out.

When I started to jot down some notes about what I was going to say tonight -- and so far I have been speaking, as you have observed, practically extemporaneously -- I said to myself, "This is going to be the most ~~useful~~ speech I have ever delivered," because, when I come to write down notes and dictate aspeach, I say to myself, "What is it in this particular subject that I am going to talk about that hits me

concluded



between the eyes?" And, on this particular subject of children in a democracy, the thing that hit me between the eyes was what I got about a week ago, a list, a tabulation, a catalog of what you have been studying.

And so I felt that the Nation as a whole ought to realize that the subject of children covers several pages of a catalog. There are so many interests involved, so many problems involved. Almost everybody who is hearing me tonight ~~now~~ I suppose in every state of the Union ~~(almost everyone within reach of my voice)~~ thinks of children in terms of ~~now~~ two or three of these subjects on the average, two or three subjects in which he or she have ~~(in which he has)~~ special experience or special interest, such as education of children or the recreation of children or the health of children. Or he ^{or she} may have some great enthusiasm for one particular kind of child welfare service. For instance, I myself am tremendously interested ~~in (for example)~~ in crippled children. But this Conference report ~~(however)~~ rightly calls on us to think of ~~the child~~ children as a whole, as (the) each child to is related, not to one life, ~~not to his life~~, not only/his own lives life but to the life of his brothers and sisters, the life of his family and then, inevitably, to the life of his community, the life of his county, the life of his State and the life of (and the entire) his Nation.

(Underlined signature)

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And that is what why people in this country are going to think of this problem as it really is, they have got to listen to a catalogue for the next ten ~~minutes~~. ~~ten thousand~~.

I can illustrate best the extent to which the interests of children ~~are~~ interwoven with the interests of families and communities by giving you these main topics of the conference and I do not think there is any one of these topics ~~that~~ we can say "Well, that is awfully nice, but what relation has it to the problem of my child?" Well, of course it has, every subject here ~~has~~.

And the first part of the Conference report reminds us sharply that by every step we take to protect the families of America, we are ~~protecting~~ the children also. Well, put that in another way: it means that what Federal Government and State Government, County Government, Town Government, Village Government, everything else, what they are doing to coordinate the economy/^{and} the social problems of their/communities in relation to the whole population necessarily has an effect on every child in that community. Here we find in this report the recommendations ~~mixtum~~ in general which constitute an buttressing and argument for ~~emergent~~ strengthening, in the first instance, the institution of the family, the family as it relates again to a whole, and of other things, health, training and opportunities of children in what we are ~~pleased~~ to call a democracy and, thank God, it still is.



This part of the discussion includes families and their incomes, families in need of assistance, families and their dwellings and the family as a threshold to the future democracy of this country.

And then, following that group of topics, the report discusses a lot of other things that either enter or ought to enter into the life ~~health~~ of every American child in every part of the country, schools, religion, leisure time activities -- mind you, these are all separate topics that we are trying to coordinate into one national picture -- libraries, protection against child labor, youth and the needs of youth, the conserving of child health, the social services for children, children in minority groups and, something that a lot of people forget, as I have good reason to know as the Chief Executive, the subject of public financing and administration.

But what I am specially pleased about is this: that this Conference, made up of men and women that belong to every political party in every part of the country, has found that we have definitely improved our social institutions and our public services during these past ten years. ~~(employment)~~) And the only thing that good old Homer Folks said that I do not agree with -- he called them "these terrible ten years,"^{1/2} and I do not. I think they have been the most interesting ten years since -- what? Well, at least since the Civil War and maybe since the Revolution. And we are all glad we have had a part in them lots because I believe that though we have had ~~most~~ of trouble, lots of difficulties, that these past ten years have been ten useful and, on

the whole, ten years of definite progress in a democracy.

The Conference concludes, and rightly, that to have made progress in a period of hardship and strain proves that America has both strength and courage. But, again, I agree with the Conference that we still have got a long way to go.

Too many children, and you can find them in every State in the Union, are living under conditions that must be corrected if our democracy is to develop to its highest capacity.

The Conference tells me that more than half of the children of America are living in families that do not have enough money to provide fully adequate shelter, adequate food, adequate clothing and adequate medical care and adequate educational opportunities.

I have been called to task, as you all know, because I have reiterated, reiterated many times, something about one-third of America, the ill-clothed, ill-housed, ill-fed -- criticized on the ground that I was saying something derogatory. I have been telling the truth and you good people have sustained me by that statement that more than half the children of America are living in families that do not have enough money to provide fully adequate shelter, food, clothing, medical care, and educational opportunity. Why should not we admit it? By admitting it we are saying we are going to improve things.

Yes, and you are rightly concerned that provision be made for those who are unemployed, whether for economic or personal reasons. To keep families from starving while the fathers walk the streets in vain in search for jobs will not give children the best start in life.

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Social insurance to provide against total loss of income, [redacted] and appropriate work projects adjusted to fluctuations in private employment and both urban and rural needs, constitute the first lines of defense against family disaster.

And I am glad of what has been said tonight about [redacted]
problems. I think my very good old friend, the Mayor of New York,
would not mind my telling a story of what happened up at Hyde Park
last autumn. He was up there, lunching with us! We had a big lunch,
eighteen or twenty people, and we were talking about the problem of
distribution of population in the United States. Well, that is an
old thing that I have been sort of hobbying about for a great many
years, twenty or thirty years. And I talked about the problem of
overcrowding in cities. I talked about whether it was a good thing,
with a big question mark, about cities getting too big, the bigger
cities getting still bigger, and whether we could not work on some plan
for a greater decentralization

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of the population, the building up of the smaller communities. And
then, as a sort of ~~jest~~ I said, " You know, Fiorello, I am
going to say something awful that you won't agree with. I think your
problem in New York City , with seven million men, women and children
in it is a bad one! I think that the problem of civilized life in a
community of that size is almost ^{X?} big a problem and tI think that New
York would be better off if it had six million people instead of seven."

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And the Mayor of New York looked at me and he said, "Mr. President, I cannot agree." He said, "Mr. President, you are wrong." He said, "New York would be better off if it had 5 million people in it instead of 7!"

And, by way of following up the same subject -- this is just purely from memory. [redacted] we were talking of conditions before the World War, somewhere around 1913 or 1914 ~~and~~ when I was over here in the Navy Department, I read an extraordinarily interesting pamphlet which carried out the thought that you have heard tonight about rural populations. It was by a great French doctor who had made all kinds of examinations of records, vital statistics in half a dozen of the great cities of Europe, and he had come to the conclusion and had attempted to prove it by family statistics that any family that had been city bred for three or four generations died out and that the only families in cities that survived were the families that had an influx of country blood every generation or two. Now, I do not know whether our modern medical friends will support that but at least it is something well worth our thinking about in terms of the America of the future.

You tell me, in effect, in this report what I have been talking about for many years, that we have been moving forward toward the objective of raising the incomes and the living conditions of the poorest portion of our population, that we have made some dent on the problem and that,

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most decidedly, we cannot stop and rest on our rather meagre laurels.

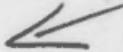
Yes, I agree with you that public assistance of many kinds is necessary. But I suggest to you that the Federal treasury has ~~some~~ bottom to it, and that mere grants in aid constitute no permanent solution of the problem of our health, our education, or our children, but that we should address ourselves to two definite ~~policies~~ policies: First, to increase the average of incomes in the poorer communities ~~and~~, and in the poorer groups, in the poorer areas of the nation and, secondly, that we should address ourselves to an insistence that in every community, in every state and the District of Columbia, they should pay taxes in accordance with ability to pay.

The Conference report, going on with this -- what shall I call it? -- Sears Roebuck catalogue, and it is very educational to read a catalogue, ~~it~~ has called attention also to the need for continuing and expanding public and private housing programs if the families in the lowest income groups are to live in dwellings suitable for the raising of children.

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Last April, to take another item, I referred to our concern for the children of the migratory families who have no settled place of abode. I spoke casually to the Press today about a study I am making. Up in the State of Washington we are spending a great many millions to harness the Columbia River, to put a great dam up there which will pump the water ~~up~~ onto a

Insp A



I have read a book; it is called "Grapes of Wrath".
and there are 50^W,000 Americans that live in the covers
of that book. I would like to see the Columbia Basin
devoted to the care of 500,000 ~~people represented in~~ ~~members~~ "Grapes of
Wrath".

Migratory families, the situation of their children,
children who have no homes, families who can put down no
roofs, cannot live in a community -- that calls for
special consideration. But I am trying being practical.
I am trying to find a place for them to go. This means,
in its simplest terms, a program for the permanent re-
settlement of at least one million people in the Columbia
Basin and a lot of other places. And remember that the
money spent on it after careful planning is going to be
returned to the United States Government many times over
in a relatively short time.

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huge area of land capable of providing a living for 500 thousand people, irrigated land, today a desert, which can be made a garden with the process of modern science. Who ought to go there? Are we going to treat that, two years from now, just as we treat the average irrigation project? Will it be ~~the Government~~, a contract with the Government to pay out the loan over a period of years -- first come, first served?



(Take in Insert A.)



To go on, your report has devoted many pages to family economics. I know very little about that -- my wife does. We all recognize that the spirit within the home is the most important influence in the growth of the child. In family life the child should first learn confidence in his own powers, respect for the feelings and the rights of others, the feeling of security and mutual good will and faith in God. Here he should find a common bond between the interests of the individual and the interests of the group. Mothers and fathers, by the kind of life they build within the four walls of the home, are largely responsible for the future social and public life of the country.



And, just as we cannot take care of the child apart from the family, so his welfare is bound up with a lot of other institutions that influence his development, -- the ~~xxxxxx~~ school, the church, the agencies that offer useful and happy activities and interests for leisure time. The work of all these institutions needs to be harmonized so as to give our children rounded growth with the least possible conflict and loss of effort. And the money and

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hard work that go into these public and private enterprises
are, again, repaid many times.

And I think that religion, religion especially, helps children to appreciate life in its wholeness, to develop a deep sense of the sacredness of the human personality. In view of the estimate that perhaps one-half of the children of America are having no regular religious instruction, it seems to me important to consider how provision can best be made for some kind of religious training. We can do it because in this way we are capable of keeping in mind both the wisdom of maintaining the separation of Church and State and, at the same time, giving weight to the great importance of religion in personal and social living.

And I share with you the belief that fair opportunity for schooling ought to be available to every child in this country. I agree with you that no American child, merely because he happens to be born where property values are low and local taxes do not, even though they should, support the schools, ~~that~~ ^{his} ~~that~~ should be placed at a disadvantage in ~~the~~ preparation for citizenship.

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Certainly our future is endangered when nearly a million children of elementary school age are not in school; when thousands of school districts and even some entire States do not pay for good schools. This situation has been reported by many agencies, private and public, and, the way I have got it down here in my manuscript, needs to be more widely understood. That does not mean anything. What I really wanted to say is this; I would like to put on the front page of every newspaper in the United States,

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a list of the most backward school districts, the most backward school states in the United States. That is rough treatment but if every person in the United States could know where the conditions are worst, -- education and health -- those areas would get the sympathy, the understanding and the help for improving those worst of conditions. And again, I have to suggest that the permanent answer is not mere handouts from the Federal Treasury but that the problem has to be solved by improving the economics in these poorer sections and an insistence, hand in hand with it, that there be adequate taxation in accordance with ability to pay.

We must plan also, on a larger scale, to give American children a chance for healthful play and worth-while use of leisure. I agree with you that a democratic government has a vital interest in those matters. And I am glad that you have suggested a national commission, under private auspices, to study leisure-time needs and recreational resources.

More than in any previous decade we know how to safeguard the health of parents and children. Because of the advance of medical knowledge and the growth of public health work, we have it in our power to conquer disease that we could not conquer ten years ago, and the ability to promote general good health.

New opportunities ~~exist~~ to us mean new duties. It was one thing to let people sicken and die when we were helpless to protect them. And it is ~~quite~~ quite another thing to leave a large portion of our population without care at all. It is my definite hope that within ~~the~~ the next ten years every part of the country just to use an example -- and I believe ~~that~~

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that hope can be fulfilled -- every part of the United States will have complete and adequate service for all women during maternity and ~~and~~ all new born infants. That we can do.

So, too, good nutrition is the basis of child health. And I am equally in sympathy with your suggestion that I appoint a National Nutrition Committee to review our present knowledge and to coordinate our efforts, looking toward the development of nutrition policies based on the newest and best methods, /We are making new discoveries every day.

You, all the members of the Conference, have charted a course, ~~in~~ a course for ten years to come. Nevertheless, the steps that we take now, this year of 1940, are going to determine how far we can go tomorrow, and in what direction.

I believe with you that if anywhere in the country any child lacks opportunity for home life, for health protection, for education, for moral or spiritual development, the strength of the Nation and its ability to cherish and advance the principles of democracy are thereby weakened.

I ask ~~in~~ all our fellow citizens who are within the sound of my voice to consider themselves identified with the work of this Conference. I ask you all to study and discuss with friends and neighbors the program that it has outlined, to study how its objectives can be realized. May the security and happiness of every boy and girl in our land be our concern, our personal concern, from now on.

You, the members of this Conference, this Conference on Children in a Democracy, you are leaders of a new American Army of peace.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. Secretary,
I am sending you a copy of the letter I wrote to Senator [unclear] in which I expressed my support for his proposal to ban assault weapons. I believe that this legislation is important for the safety of all Americans, particularly children and families. I urge you to support this bill and work towards its passage.