
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. 1273

1940 February 10

Address to the American Youth Congress

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT

AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS

FEBRUARY 10, 1940

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

You who are attending this Institute, whose primary aim is to obtain further knowledge of the democratic processes of American government, are very welcome at the White House today. The same welcome is open to all citizens, or prospective citizens, or junior citizens, who believe in the form of government under which the United States has been living with reasonable success for more than a century and a half.

In saying this I am not denying to you in anyway the rights of free assemblage, of free petition and of free speech -- nor am I precluding the right of any Americans, old people or young people, to advocate improvements and change in the operations of the Government of the United States on one very simple condition: That all of you conform to the constitutional processes of change and improvement provided in the Constitution itself.

It is a good thing that you young people are interested enough in government to come to Washington for a Youth Citizenship Institute -- because one of the hardest problems today is the indifference of so many people to the details and the facts of the functioning of their own government.

I have said on many occasions that the greatest achievement of the past seven years in the United States has been not the saving of the nation from economic chaos, not the great series of laws to avert destitution and improve our social standards, but that it has been the awakening of many millions of American men and women to an understanding of the processes of their own governments, local, state and federal. It is a fact that in every community, large and small, people are taking a greater interest in decent government, in forward-looking government than ever before, and that the words of Lincoln in regard to fooling people are infinitely more true today than they were in the sixties.

The past ten years have proved certain obvious facts -- some negative, some positive.

We know that the prosperity of the twenties can properly be compared to the prosperity of the Mississippi bubble days before the bubble burst -- when everybody was money-mad, when the money changers owned the temple, when the nation as a whole forgot the restraint of decent ethics and simple morals, and when the Government in Washington gave completely free reign to what they called individual liberty and the virtual ownership of government itself by the so-called best minds which wholly controlled our finances and our economics. During those ten years you cannot find a single statute enacted for the restraint of excesses nor for the betterment of the permanent security of the individual. That is a straight from the shoulder fact which the American public fortunately has not forgotten.

It is also a simple straight fact that 1930, 1931 and 1932 saw the collapse and disintegration of the philosophy of the twenties, followed in February and the first three days of March, 1933, by an acknowledgment on the part of those who had been the leaders that they could no longer carry on.

Last Monday at a Press Conference I repeated certain comparisons between 1932 and 1939. These facts were misstated and twisted by many newspapers and by some politicians seeking office. Because of this and because I am on a national hook-up, I repeat the figures.

The national income has increased from forty-~~one~~ million
^{and one half}
dollars in 1932 to sixty-eight million dollars in 1939 -- plus

71%.

~~wages and salaries for the month of December, 1932,~~ increased
^{Jan}
from two billion four hundred million dollars to three billion
^{in Dec 1932}
eight hundred and eighty-eight million dollars -- plus 62%.

~~in Dec 1939~~
Weekly payrolls ~~for December~~ increased from eighty million
^{Oct}
dollars in 1932 to one hundred and ninety-seven million dollars
^{in Dec}
in 1939 -- plus 145%.

Cash farm income increased from four billion seven hundred million dollars in the year 1932 to seven billion seven hundred million dollars in the year 1939. And, with the addition of farm benefit payments of over eight hundred million dollars, to a total of eight and a half billion dollars -- plus 82%.

Dividends of corporations that were received by individuals increased from two billion seven hundred and fifty million dollars to four billion two hundred and fifty million dollars -- plus 55%.

It is true that our population has gone up six or seven per cent since 1932, but where twenty-seven million people were employed in non-agricultural pursuits in December, 1932, thirty-five million people were similarly employed in 1939 -- a gain of 28%.

You have heard of certain local or special opposition to our foreign trade policy -- listen to this: Our exports for the calendar year 1932 were worth a billion six hundred million. In 1939 they were worth nearly three billion two hundred million -- an increase of 97%.

I am repeating these figures on the air because not one citizen in a hundred read them in the papers last Tuesday morning.

Furthermore, I remarked last Monday that interest received by individuals in 1939 was 9% less than it had been in 1932.

I am proud of that -- because it means that the exorbitant interest rates on mortgages and on loans of all kinds in 1932 have, because of federal action, been reduced to a ~~lawful~~ and ~~more~~

humane rate to people who had to borrow money for themselves individually ^{or} for themselves as participants ⁱⁿ many varieties of business.

Finally, I said last Monday -- and this was the part that was most seriously mangled and garbled by certain types of papers and certain types of politicians -- that the total debt of all of the people of the United States - private debt, state and local government debts, and the debt of the Federal Government ~~was~~ ^{in 1939} less ~~than~~ than it was in 1932. That is a simple fact -- somewhere ^{around two} ~~between three and four~~ billion dollars less -- in a nation which has six or seven million people more in it than eight years ago.

Why am I giving you all these figures? First, to remove fears -- fears which are subtly instilled in your minds by a propaganda of which you are well aware. The other day I saw an old friend, born, if you like, with a silver spoon in his mouth; moving, if you like, in so-called social circles; a decent citizen who, while he has never held public office, has tried to understand the tendencies of the times. He said to me "I have come to the conclusion that there is no use in my trying to argue with certain types of the older generation because all they do is to hope that some miracle will restore the period of thirty years ago when they did not have to think about social problems; when taxes on the rich were comparatively low; when nobody was worrying about social security, or organized labor, or wages and hours, or the supervision of security offerings, or the regulation of the management of banks". He said "I am past fifty but I recognize full well that those days, thank God, will never come again -- and furthermore, that a great majority of the people today who want to see a liberal administration of government turned out

fast

and replaced by a conservative administration ~~the government~~ are
really wishing down in their hearts for a return of the social
and economic philosophy of 1910.

And now a word of warning to you who are voters and you
who will soon be voters -- several words of warning.

Don't seek or expect Utopia overnight. Don't seek or
expect a panacea -- a grand new law that will give you a handout,
~~place~~ and a guarantee of permanent remunerative occupation
of your own choosing. I told one of your members a couple of
weeks ago, somewhat to his surprise, that ever since I became
Governor of New York in 1929 I have been receiving in every
mail a sincere, honest proposal of some panacea, one of them,
two of them, three of them every day. These plans have not
been put in the waste-basket -- they have been subjected to
the closest scrutiny by honest liberals who have hoped that
somebody would hit on something that would save us all a lot
of time and a lot of worry. It is clear that no such plan
exists.

Take, for example, the question of the employment of old people and the employment of young people. You young people must remember that the problem of the older workers is just as difficult as yours -- that when people slow-up, when they have reached the age when one can reasonably expect no great improvement or imagination in their work, they find it very difficult to get a job. We have not solved the problem of older people and the solution of that problem is evolutionary. We have made beginnings with the Old Age Pension Act, but we know that it is only a beginning and that through the next ten or twenty years the system must be extended and improved. Ham and eggs, and other plans will not do it because they are all open to the simple objection that they either print so much paper money that the money would soon be worthless or that the whole burden would be placed on the shoulders of the younger workers.

In the case of jobs for you young people, let me make it very clear in the beginning that it is not at all certain that your opportunities for employment are any worse today than they were for young people ten years or twenty years or thirty years ago. The problem of jobs for young people is vastly more difficult than it was one hundred years ago because in 1840 the great open spaces of the West were crying aloud for willing hands -- but today the physical frontiers are gone.

Yes, you and I have a very distinct problem. You and I know that industrial production calls for fewer hands per unit because of the improvement of machinery. I have given you the figure showing that weekly payrolls are 145% bigger than in December, 1932. That does not mean that 145% more people are employed. Obviously not. Fewer people are needed to produce the same volume of goods. And one of the things that disturbs me greatly is that in the present pick-up of industry, it is cheaper for most factory managers to work people over-time, even at double pay, than it is to put on an extra shift.

This means, in effect, that we have not yet found the method of spreading employment to more people when good times come;

It means, too, that we have not yet eliminated the terrific peaks and valleys of production and consumption. We have made definite gains. We hope and believe that we have found the way to prevent a recurrence of the collapse from the high point of 1929 to the low point of February, 1933. We have not stopped the swing of the pendulum but we believe we have greatly circumscribed the width of that swing from one extreme to the other.

Therefore, I suggest again that on social and economic matters you and I are substantially in agreement as to the objective but that there are some of you who think that objective can be gained overnight. I don't. I do believe, however, that all of us can make definite strides toward that objective if we retain a government which believes in the objectives wholeheartedly and which is bent on working toward it as fast as the people of this country as a whole will let us. That in the long run is a reaffirmation of our faith in democracy.

One final word of warning: Do not as a group pass resolutions on subjects which you have not thought through and on which you cannot possibly have complete knowledge.

This business of passing resolutions at Conventions of patriotic societies, of Chambers of Commerce, of Manufacturers' Associations, of Peace Societies, of Youth Congresses is a perfectly legitimate American habit, just as it is a fact that there are many thousands of organizations for almost every conceivable objective which are kept going unwittingly, in order that an Executive Secretary, Legislative agents and other officers may find so-called useful employment. Hence the flood of lobbyists in Washington, of special counsel, of hired writers, which literally infests the halls of the Congress and the ante-rooms of all the agencies of the Executive Branch of the Government today.

And I am not forgetting some of the visitors who come to see the President himself.

I have in mind the type of organization which passes resolutions on some matter of the utmost complexity -- in the field, for example, of national defense or international economics -- some situation on which there may be not two opinions but a dozen, some situation on which the policy of the moment must be formed by those who have given deep study to every phase of the problem. Such a decision ought not to be influenced by ~~any gathering~~ ^{any gathering} of old or young, local or national, which gets a smattering of the subject from two or three speakers, who themselves have but a smattering of the necessary knowledge.

One of the big local American Youth Congress Councils, I am told, took a decisive stand against the granting of American loans to Finland -- not on the ground that we ought to ~~spend~~ ^{spend} the money ~~out~~ here among our own needy unemployed, but on the ground that such action was "an attempt to force America into the imperialistic war".

1 reason why we
That ~~revolution~~ spoke unadulterated twaddle, based perhaps
on sincerity, ~~and~~, at the same time, on ninety per cent
ignorance of what they were talking about.

I can say this to you with a smile because many of
you will recognize the inherent wisdom and truth of what I
am saying. Here is a small Republic in northern Europe
which, without any question whatsoever, wishes solely to
maintain its own territorial and governmental integrity.
Nobody with any pretense at common sense believes that
Finland had any ulterior designs on the integrity of the
Soviet Union.

That American sympathy is ninety-eight per cent with
the Finns in their effort to stave off invasion of their
own soil is by now axiomatic. That America wants to help
them by lending or giving money to them to save their own
lives is also axiomatic by now. That the Soviet Union
would, because of this, declare war on the United States is
about the silliest thought that I have ever heard advanced
in the fifty-eight years of my life. That we are going to

war with the Soviet Union is an equally silly thought. And, therefore, while I have not the slightest objection in the world to the passing of ~~any~~ ^{fair & free} resolutions by conventions, I do think that there is room for improvement in common sense thinking and definite room for improvement in the art of not passing resolutions ^{condemning} ~~about~~ things one knows very little about.

And so I suggest that all of you smile and -- don't do it again.

More than twenty years ago, while most of you were very young children, I had the utmost sympathy for the Russian people. In the early days of Communism I recognized that many leaders in Russia were bringing education and better health and better opportunity to millions who had been kept in ignorance and serfdom under the imperial regime. I disliked the regimentation under Communism. I abhorred the indiscriminate killings of thousands of innocent victims. I heartily deprecated the banishment of religion -- though I knew that before long Russia would return to religion for the simple reason that four or five thousand years of

recorded history have proved that mankind has always believed in God in spite of dozens of abortive attempts to exile God.

I hoped that Russia would work out its own problems and that their government would eventually become a peace-loving, popular government which would not interfere with the integrity of its neighbors.

That hope is today either shattered or put away in storage against a better day. The Soviet Union, as a matter of practical fact, known to you and known to all the world, is a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world. It has allied itself with another dictatorship and it has invaded a neighbor so infinitesimally small that it could do no injury to the Soviet Union, and ^{Dzius} sought only to live at peace as a democracy, and a liberal, forward-looking democracy at that.

It has been said that some of you are Communists. That is an unpopular term these days. As Americans you have a right to call yourselves Communists. You have a right peacefully and openly to advocate certain ideals of

theoretical Communism; but as Americans you have not only a right but a sacred duty to confine your advocacy of changes in law to the methods prescribed by the Constitution of the United States -- and you have no American right, by act or deed of any kind, to subvert the Government and the Constitution of this Nation.

That, I am confident, receives the overwhelming support
of the ~~Internally~~ ^{great} ~~communistic~~ majority of your organization
and of every other large organization of American youth. You ^{This, things}
and I and the things we represent are essentially identical,
and it will be your task when I am gone from the scene to
carry on the fight for a continuance of liberal government,
an improvement of its methods, the effectiveness of its work,
~~we must help those who have proved that they will~~
~~above all, the willingness of those who run government~~
~~our representatives to try everlastingly to make things~~
a little better with each succeeding year. Keep your ideals
high, keep both feet on the ground and keep everlastingly
at it.

Franklin D. Roosevelt

Big reading copy

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ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
Delivered from the South Portico of the White House
To the Delegates of the
National Citizenship Institute of the American Youth Congress
February 10, 1940, 12:30 P. M.

(LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:)

FELLOW CITIZENS:

You who are attending this institute, whose primary aim is to obtain further knowledge of the democratic processes of American government, you are very welcome at the White House today. (Applause) The same welcome is open to all citizens, or prospective citizens, or junior citizens, all who believe in the form of government under which the United States has been living with reasonable success for more than a century and a half.

And I think that some of us have in the back of our heads the fact that if we had a different form of government this kind of a meeting on the White House lawn could not take place. In saying this I am not denying to you or anybody else in any way the rights of free assemblage, of free petition (and), of free speech --- nor am I precluding the right of any Americans, old people or young people, to advocate improvements and change in the operations of the Government of the United States on one very simple condition: that all of you conform to the constitutional processes of change and improvement (in) by the Constitution of the United States itself.

It is a good thing, it is a grand thing, that

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.

(RECORDED AND EDITED)

: PRACTICALLY WORD FOR WORD

...ing enough statistical about you know the way
of international relations outside of all the years
in America you are very... Americans inclined to assume
it assumes some sort (meaning) rather than others
tend to... exercise especially to... assume the
same inclination to think and all... inclined one like... another
differences there giving need and natural basis of
difference here you have a point where not because
to stand out in every way to... one's own country I think
to... most... particularly a... half an hour just after about two
hours speech ended and no audience a... to... talk with... Americans
or... gathered for me I... right... you are all... really... other... you...
...you... and to... right... and you... you... all... take... you... to... now
I am... you... --... because... and to... (but)... nothing... and to... regard
you... to... always... the... Americans... you... to... right... and... nothing...
nothing... and... all... always... the... Americans... always... of... always...
always... you... no... always... basis... and... to... Americans... and... to...
encouragement... and... or... nothing... not... to... like... : nothing...
nothing... and... and... (at)... Americans... the... regard... to... assuming...
...right... yourself... basis... and... to... never
that... and... don't... a... all... think... body... a... all... it

you young people are interested enough in government to come to Washington for a Youth Citizenship Institute -- because one of the hardest problems today is the indifference of so many people to the details and the facts of the functioning of their own government.

I have said on many occasions that the greatest achievement of the past seven years in the United States has been not the saving of the nation from economic chaos, not the great series of laws to avert destitution and to improve our social standards, but that it has been the awakening of many millions of American men and women to an understanding of (the processes of) their own governments, local and state and federal. It is a fact that in every community, large and small, people are taking a greater interest in decent government, in forward-looking government than ever before and, incidentally, that the words of Lincoln in regard to fooling people are infinitely more true today than they were in the eighteen sixties.

(The) These past ten years have proved certain obvious facts -- some negative and some positive.

We know that the prosperity of the twenties -- and a good many of you remember them -- the prosperity of the twenties can properly be compared to the prosperity of the Mississippi bubble days before the bubble burst -- when everybody was money-mad, when the money changers owned the temple, when the nation as a whole forgot the restraint of

decent ethics and simple morals, and then the Government in Washington gave completely free rein to what they called individual liberty (and the), gave completely free rein to the virtual ownership of government itself by the so-called best minds, best minds which wholly controlled our finances and our economics and forgot our social problems. During those ten years you cannot find a single statute enacted for the restraint of excesses (nor for) enacted for the good, the betterment of the permanent security of the individual. That is a straight from the shoulder fact, the sad fact, which the American public fortunately has not forgotten.

It is also a simple straight fact that in 1930, (19)'31 and (19)'32, those years saw the collapse and the disintegration of the philosophy of the twenties, followed in February and the first three days of March, 1933, by an acknowledgment on the part of those who had been the leaders that they could no longer carry on.

And, just by way of further illustration of the fact that we have been making progress since those dark days -- not as great progress, of course, as we want or seek, but just by way of illustration -- let me repeat certain comparisons that I gave the other day at a Press Conference, comparisons between 1932 and 1939. (Last Monday at a Press Conference I repeated certain comparisons between 1932 and 1939). These facts were misstated

and twisted by many newspapers and by some politicians seeking office. Because of this and because I am on a national hook-up, I repeat the figures. (Laughter - applause)

Well, let us see, the national income from all sources has increased from forty billion dollars in (19)'32 to sixty-eight and (one) a half billion dollars in (19)'39 -- in other words, plus 71%.

Wages and salaries have increased from two billion four hundred million (dollars) in December (19)'32 to three billion eight hundred and eighty-eight million dollars in December (19)'39 -- plus 62%.

Weekly factory payrolls increased from eighty million dollars in December (19)'32 to (one) a hundred and ninety-seven million dollars in December (19)'39 -- plus 145%.

Cash farm income increased from four billion seven (hundred million dollars) in (the year 19) '32 to seven billion seven (hundred million dollars) in (the year 19)'39. And with the addition of farm benefit payments of over eight hundred million (dollars), to a total of eight and a half billion dollars -- or 82%.

Dividends of corporations -- most of you, most of us do not get many of them but never mind -- dividends of corporations that were received by individuals increased from two billion seven hundred and fifty million dollars in '32 to four billion two hundred and fifty million

dollars in '39 -- plus 55%

Now, it is true that our population has gone up since that time six or seven per cent (since 1932), but where twenty-seven million people were employed in non-agricultural pursuits in December, (19)'32, thirty-five million people were similarly employed in (19)'39 -- a gain of 28%.

You have heard of certain local or special opposition to our foreign trade policy -- listen to this: Our exports -- that means goods that we made and sold outside the country -- our exports for the year (19)'32 were worth a billion six hundred million. But in (19)'39 they (were worth) had gone up to nearly three billion two hundred million -- an increase of 97%.

I am repeating these figures on the air because not one citizen in a hundred read them in the papers last Tuesday morning.

Furthermore, as I remarked last Monday (that), interest received by individuals -- that does not mean wages or salaries, it means interest on loans; this past year, in 1939, interest so received had gone down nine per cent (was 9% less than it had been in 1932) since (19)'32. Now, I am proud of that -- because it means that the exorbitant interest rates on mortgages and on loans of all kinds in 1932 have, because of federal action, been reduced to a lower rate (and), a more humane rate to people who had to borrow money for themselves individually or for themselves as

participants in many varieties of business, and that is some achievement.

And, finally, I said last Monday -- and this was the part that was most seriously mangled (and garbled) by certain types of papers and certain types of politicians -- I said that the total debt of all of the people of the United States -- private debt, state debt (and), local government debt(s), and the (debt of the) Federal Government debt was less in 1939 than it was in 1932. That is a simple fact -- somewhere around two billion dollars less -- and that in the face of an increase of our population of six or seven million people. (in a nation which has six or seven million people more in it than eight years ago.)

Why am I giving you all these figures? First, to remove fears -- fears which are subtly instilled in your minds by a propaganda of which you are well aware. The other day I saw an old friend, a little younger than I am, but not much, but who was born, if you like, with a silver spoon in his mouth; moving, if you like, in so-called social circles, but, nevertheless, a decent citizen who, while he has never held public office, has tried, I think with some success, to understand the tendencies of the times, and he said this to me, he said: "I have come to the conclusion that there is no use in my trying to argue with certain types of the older generation because all they do is to hope, hope that some miracle will restore the

period of thirty years ago, a period when they did not have to think about social problems; a period when taxes on the very rich were comparatively low; a period when (nobody was) none of them were worrying about social security or the getting of jobs, or organized labor, or wages and hours, or the supervision of security offerings, or the regulation of the management of banks." (He said) And he went on to say: "I am past fifty but I recognize full well that those days, thank God, will never come again -- and furthermore, that a great majority of the people today who want to see a liberal administration of government turned out and replaced by a conservative administration (of government) are really wishing deep down in their hearts for a return of the old social and economic philosophy of 1910."

And now (a) some words of warning or perhaps I should say of suggestion. The first is this: You good people, I am afraid, are getting pretty wet in this rain and I hope very much that before your afternoon session your officers will give you a chance to go back to your rooms and if you have not got a spare change with you, to get off what you have got on and get it dried, because there is one thing we do not want out of this fine conference and that is any cases of pneumonia. Here are some more suggestions to you who are voters and (you) who will soon be voters: (-- several words of warning.)

Don't seek or expect Utopia overnight. Don't

seek or expect a panacea -- (a grand) some wonderful new law that will give (you) to everybody who needs it a handout -- or a guarantee of permanent remunerative occupation of your own choosing. I told one of your members a couple of weeks ago, somewhat to his surprise, that ever since I became Governor of New York in 1929, I have been receiving in every mail (a) some sincere, honest proposal (of) for some panacea (one of them, two of them, three of them every day). I have been receiving them one a day or two a day or three a day ever since. Now, (these) those plans have not been put in the wastebasket -- they have been subjected to the closest scrutiny by honest liberals who have hoped that somebody, somewhere would hit on something that would save us all a lot of time and a lot of worry. (It is clear that no such plan exists). I am afraid that so far, after these twelve years, that no such plan has come forth yet.

Take, for example, the question of the employment of old people and the employment of young people. You young people must remember that the problem of the older workers in America is just as difficult as yours -- that when people slow up, when they have reached the age when one can reasonably expect no great improvement (or), no great new imagination in their work, (they) those people find it very difficult to get a job. We have not solved the problem of older people and yet the solution (of that problem is) seems to me to be evolutionary and that evolu-

tion is doing pretty well. We have made beginnings with the Old Age Pension Act, but we know (that) it is only a beginning and that through the next ten or twenty years (the) that system must be greatly extended and greatly improved. Ham and eggs, and other plans (will not) won't do it because they are all open to the simple objection that they either provide for printing (so much paper) a lot of paper called money that the money, if you print too much of it, would soon be worthless or (that) they are based on some plan by which the whole burden would be placed on the shoulders of the younger workers.

In the case of jobs for (you) young people, let me make it very clear in the beginning that it is not at all certain that your opportunities for employment are (any) much worse today than they were for young people ten years or twenty years or thirty years ago. There were problems then, just as there are today, but people did not understand them and under the kind of conservative government that we were having so often in those days, the problems never got a chance to be stated to the American people. The problem of jobs for young people is vastly more difficult than it was (one) a hundred years ago because in 1840 the great open spaces of the West were crying aloud for willing hands -- but today (the physical frontiers are gone) those western frontiers are pretty well filled up.

Yes, you and I have a very distinct problem. For instance, you and I know that industrial production calls for fewer hands per unit because of the improvement of machinery. I have given you the figures showing that weekly payrolls in this country are 145% bigger today than they were in December, (19)'32. That does not mean that 145% more people are employed. Obviously not. Fewer people are needed to produce the same volume of goods. And one of the things that disturbs me greatly, just as it disturbs you, is that in the present pickup of industry, it is too often cheaper for (most) factory managers to work people overtime, even at time and a half or double pay, than it is to put on an extra shift.

That is something that we have got to tackle, that problem in these coming years. (This) It means, in effect, that we have not yet found the method of spreading employment to more people when good times come.

It means, too, that we have not yet eliminated the terrific peaks and valleys of production and consumption. We have made (definite) gains. We hope and believe that we have found the way to prevent, for example, a recurrence of the collapse that took place from the high point of (19)'29 to the low point of February, (19)'33. We have not stopped the swing of the pendulum but we believe we have greatly circumscribed the width of (that) the swing from one extreme to the other. That means more

permanence of employment.

Therefore, I suggest again that on social and economic matters you and I are substantially in agreement as to the objective but that there are some of you who think that that objective can be (gained) obtained over-night. I don't. I do believe, however, that all of us can make definite strides toward that objective if we retain a government which believes in the objective(s), believes in it wholeheartedly and which is bent on working towards it as fast as the people of this country as a whole will let us. That in the long run is a reaffirmation of our faith in democracy.

One final word (of warning): Do not as a group pass resolutions on subjects which you have not thought through and on which you cannot possibly have complete knowledge. This business of passing resolutions at Conventions of Patriotic Societies, of Chambers of Commerce, of Manufacturers' Associations, of Peace Societies, yes, and of Youth Congresses is a perfectly legitimate American habit just as it is a fact that there are many thousands, a great many thousands of organizations for almost every conceivable objective, organizations which are kept going, unwittingly on the part of most of the members, in order that some Executive Secretary(ies), Legislative agent(s) (and) or some other officer(s) may find so-called useful employment. Hence the flood of

lobbyists in Washington, of special counsel, drawing big
pay for doing nothing at all, of hired writers, (which)
people who literally infest(s) the halls of the Congress
(and the ante-rooms of) and all the agencies of the Execu-
tive Branch of the Government today. And I am not forget-
ting some of the visitors who come to see the President
himself.

I have in mind the type of organization (which)
that passes resolutions on some form, some matter of the
utmost complexity -- in the field, for example, of national
defense or international economics -- some situation on which
there may be not two opinions but a dozen, some situation
on which the policy of the moment must be formed by those
who have given deep study to every phase of the problem.
Such a decision ought not to be influenced by any gathering
of old people or young people, or anybody else, local or
national, which gets a smattering of the subject from two
or three speakers, who themselves have but a smattering of
the (necessary knowledge) subject themselves.

One of the big local American Youth Congress
Councils, I am told, took a decisive stand against the
granting of (American loans to Finland) some form of aid,
by loan or otherwise, by America to Finland, -- did that,
not on the ground that we ought to spend the money here
among our own needy unemployed, but on the ground that such
action was "an attempt to force America into (the) an

imperialistic war." My friends, that reason(ing) was unadulterated twaddle, unadulterated twaddle, based perhaps on sincerity, but, at the same time, on ninety per cent ignorance of what they were talking about.

I can say this to you with a smile because many of you will recognize the inherent wisdom and truth of what I am saying. Here is a small Republic in northern Europe, a Republic which, without any question what(so)ever, wishes solely to maintain its own territorial and governmental integrity. Nobody with any pretense (at) of common sense believes that Finland had any ulterior designs on the integrity or the safety of the Soviet Union.

That American sympathy is ninety-eight per cent with the Finns in their effort to stave off invasion of their own soil (is by now), that American sympathy by now is axiomatic. That America wants to help them by lending or giving money to them to save their own lives is also axiomatic (by now) today. That the Soviet Union would, because of this, declare war on the United States is about the (most absurd) silliest thought that I have ever heard advanced in the fifty-eight years of my life. And that we are going to war ourselves with the Soviet Union is an equally silly thought. And, therefore, while I have not the slightest objection in the world to the passing of (futile) resolutions by conventions, I do think (that) there is room for improvement in commonsense think-

ing and definite room for improvement in the art of not passing resolutions concerning things one (knows very little about) does not know everything about.

And so I suggest that all of you can smile with me on this subject but please do not pass resolutions of that kind again (and -- don't do it again.)

More than twenty years ago, while most of you were (very) pretty young children, I had the utmost sympathy for the Russian people. In the early days of Communism I recognized that many leaders in Russia were bringing education and better health and above all, better opportunity to millions who had been kept in ignorance and serfdom under the imperial regime. I disliked the regimentation (under) of Communism. I abhorred the indiscriminate killings of thousands of innocent victims. I heartily deplored the banishment of religion -- though I knew that (before long) some day Russia would return to religion for the simple reason that four or five thousand years of recorded history have proved (that) to mankind that mankind has always believed in God in spite of (dozens of) many abortive attempts to exile God. (Applause)

And I, with many of you, hoped that Russia would work out its own problems and that their government would eventually become a peace-loving, popular government (which with a free ballot, a government that would not interfere with the integrity of its neighbors.

That hope is today either shattered or is put away in storage against (a) some better day. The Soviet Union, as a matter of practical fact, as everybody knows and has got the courage to face the fact, the practical fact that is known to you and known to all the world, is run by a dictatorship, a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world. It has allied itself with another dictatorship and it has invaded a neighbor so infinitesimally small that it could do no (injury) conceivable possible harm to the Soviet Union, (and) a small nation that seeks only to live at peace as a democracy, and a liberal, forward-looking democracy at that.

It has been said that some of you are Communists. That is (an) a very unpopular term (these days) today. As Americans you have a right, a legal and constitutional right, to call yourselves Communists, those of you who do. You have a right peacefully and openly to advocate certain ideals of theoretical Communism: but as Americans you have not only a right but a sacred duty to confine your advocacy of changes in law to the methods prescribed by the Constitution of the United States -- and you have no American right, by act or deed of any kind, to subvert the Government and the Constitution of this Nation. (Applause)

That, I am confident, receives the overwhelming support of the great majority of your organization and of every other (large) organization of American youth. The

things you and I represent are essentially the same and it will be your task, when I am gone from the scene, to carry on the fight for a continuance of liberal government, an improvement of its methods and the effectiveness of its work. Above all, we must help those who have proved that they will try everlastingly to make things a little bit better for the people of our Nation with each succeeding year. And so I say to you, keep your ideals high, keep both feet on the ground and keep everlastingly at it.

(Applause)

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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February 10, 1940

The following address of the President to be delivered from the South Portico of the White House to the delegates of the National Citizenship Institute of the American Youth Congress, MUST BE HELD FOR RELEASE in newspapers appearing on the streets not earlier than 12:30 P.M., E. S. T., February 10, 1940.

PLEASE SAFEGUARD AGAINST PREMATURE RELEASE.

WILLIAM D. HASSETT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

You who are attending this institute, whose primary aim is to obtain further knowledge of the democratic processes of American government, are very welcome at the White House today. The same welcome is open to all citizens, or prospective citizens, or junior citizens, who believe in the form of government under which the United States has been living with reasonable success for more than a century and a half.

In saying this I am not denying to you in anyway the rights of free assemblage of free petition and of free speech -- nor am I precluding the right of any Americans, old people or young people, to advocate improvements and change in the operations of the Government of the United States on one very simple condition: That all of you conform to the constitutional processes of change and improvement provided in the Constitution itself.

It is a good thing that you young people are interested enough in government to come to Washington for a Youth Citizenship Institute -- because one of the hardest problems today is the indifference of so many people to the details and the facts of the functioning of their own government.

I have said on many occasions that the greatest achievement of the past seven years in the United States has been not the saving of the nation from economic chaos, not the great series of laws to avert destitution and improve our social standards, but that it has been the awakening of many millions of American men and women to an understanding of the processes of their own governments, local, state and federal. It is a fact that in every community, large and small, people are taking a greater interest in decent government, in forward-looking government than ever before, and that the words of Lincoln in regard to feeling people are infinitely more true today than they were in the sixties.

The past ten years have proved certain obvious facts -- some negative, some positive.

We know that the prosperity of the twenties can properly be compared to the prosperity of the Mississippi bubble days before the bubble burst -- when everybody was money-mad, when the money changers owned the temple, when the nation as a whole forgot the restraint of decent ethics and simple morals, and when the Government in Washington gave completely free reign to what they called individual liberty and the virtual ownership of government itself by the so-called best minds which wholly controlled our finances and our economics. During those ten years you cannot find a single statute enacted for the restraint of excesses nor for the betterment of the permanent security of the individual. That is a straight from the shoulder fact which the American public fortunately has not forgotten.

It is also a simple straight fact that 1930, 1931 and 1932 saw the collapse and disintegration of the philosophy of the twenties, followed in February and the first three days of March, 1933, by an acknowledgment on the part of those who had been the leaders that they could no longer carry on.

Last Monday at a Press Conference I repeated certain comparisons between 1932 and 1939. These facts were misstated and twisted by many newspapers and by some politicians seeking office. Because of this and because I am on a national hook-up, I repeat the figures.

The national income has increased from forty billion dollars in 1932 to sixty-eight and one-half billion dollars in 1939 -- plus 71%.

Wages and salaries have increased from two billion four hundred million dollars in December 1932 to three billion eight hundred and eighty-eight million dollars in December 1939 -- plus 62%.

Weekly payrolls increased from eighty million dollars in December 1932 to one hundred and ninety-seven million dollars in 1939 -- plus 145%.

Cash farm income increased from four billion seven hundred million dollars in the year 1932 to seven billion seven hundred million dollars in the year 1939. And with the addition of farm benefit payments of over eight hundred million dollars, to a total of eight and a half billion dollars -- plus 62%.

Dividends of corporations that were received by individuals increased from two billion seven hundred and fifty million dollars to four billion two hundred and fifty million dollars -- plus 50%.

It is true that our population has gone up six or seven per cent since 1932, but where twenty-seven million people were employed in non-agricultural pursuits in December, 1932, thirty-five million people were similarly employed in 1939 -- a gain of 28%.

You have heard of certain local or special opposition to our foreign trade policy -- listen to this: Our exports for the calendar year 1932 were worth a billion six hundred million. In 1939 they were worth nearly three billion two hundred million -- an increase of 97%.

I am repeating these figures on the air because not one citizen in a hundred read them in the papers last Tuesday morning.

Furthermore, I remarked last Monday that interest received by individuals in 1939 was 9% less than it had been in 1932. I am proud of that -- because it means that the exorbitant interest rates on mortgages and on loans of all kinds in 1932 have, because of federal action, been reduced to a lower and more humane rate to people who had to borrow money for themselves individually or for themselves as participants in many varieties of businesses.

Finally, I said last Monday -- and this was the part that was most seriously mangled and garbled by certain types of papers and certain types of politicians -- that the total debt of all of the people of the United States - private debt, state and local government debts, and the debt of the Federal Government was less in 1939 than it was in 1932. That is a simple fact -- somewhere around two billion dollars less -- in a nation which has six or seven million people more in it than eight years ago.

Why am I giving you all these figures? First, to remove fears -- fears which are subtly instilled in your minds by a propaganda of which you are well aware. The other day I saw an old friend, born, if you like, with a silver spoon in his mouth; moving, if you like, in so-called social circles: a decent citizen who, while he has never held public office, has tried to understand the tendencies of the times. He said to me "I have come to the conclusion that there is no use in my trying to argue with certain types of the older generation because all they do is to hope that some miracle will restore the period of thirty years ago when they did not have to think about social problems; when taxes on the rich were comparatively low; when nobody was worrying about social security, or organized labor, or wages and hours, or the supervision of security offerings, or the regulation of the management of banks". He said "I am past fifty but I recognize full well that those days, thank God, will never come again -- and furthermore, that a great majority of the people today who want to see a liberal administration of government turned out and replaced by a conservative administration of government are really wishing down in their hearts for a return of the social and economic philosophy of 1910."

And now a word of warning to you who are voters and you who will soon be voters -- several words of warning.

Don't seek or expect Utopia overnight. Don't seek or expect a panacea -- a grand new law that will give you a handout -- a guarantee of permanent remunerative occupation of your own choosing. I told one of your members a couple of weeks ago, somewhat to his surprise, that ever since I became Governor of New York in 1939 I have been receiving in every mail a sincere, honest proposal of some panacea, one of them, two of them, three of them every day. These plans have not been put in the waste-basket -- they have been subjected to the closest scrutiny by honest liberals who have hoped that somebody would hit on something that would save us all a lot of time and a lot of worry. It is clear that no such plan exists.

Take, for example, the question of the employment of old people and the employment of young people. You young people must remember that the problem of the older workers is just as difficult as yours -- that when people slow-up, when they have reached the age when one can reasonably expect no great improvement or imagination in their work, they find it very difficult to get a job. We have not solved the problem of older people and the solution of that problem is evolutionary. We have made beginnings with the Old Age Pension Act, but we know that it is only a beginning and that through the next ten or twenty years the system must be extended and improved. Egg and eggs, and other plans will not do it because they are all open to the simple objection that they either print so much paper money that the money would soon be worthless or that the whole burden would be placed on the shoulders of the younger workers.

In the case of jobs for you young people, let me make it very clear in the beginning that it is not at all certain that your opportunities for employment are any worse today than they were for young people ten years or twenty years or thirty years ago. The problem of jobs for young people is vastly more difficult than it was one hundred years ago because in 1840 the great open spaces of the West were crying aloud for willing hands -- but today the physical frontiers are gone.

Yes, you and I have a very distinct problem. You and I know that industrial production calls for fewer hands per unit because of the improvement of machinery. I have given you the figure showing that weekly payrolls are 145% bigger than in December, 1932. That does not mean that 145% more people are employed. Obviously not. Fewer people are needed to produce the same volume of goods. And one of the things that disturbs me greatly is that in the present pick-up of industry, it is cheaper for most factory managers to work people overtime, even at double pay, than it is to put on an extra shift.

This means, in effect, that we have not yet found the method of spreading employment to more people when good times come.

It means, too, that we have not yet eliminated the terrific peaks and valleys of production and consumption. We have made definite gains. We hope and believe that we have found the way to prevent a recurrence of the collapse from the high point of 1929 to the low point of February, 1933. We have not stopped the swing of the pendulum but we believe we have greatly circumscribed the width of that swing from one extreme to the other.

Therefore, I suggest again that on social and economic matters you and I are substantially in agreement as to the objective but that there are some of you who think that objective can be gained overnight. I don't. I do believe, however, that all of us can make definite strides toward that objective if we retain a government which believes in the objectives wholeheartedly and which is bent on working toward it as fast as the people of this country as a whole will let us. That is the long run is a reaffirmation of our faith in democracy.

One final word of warning: Do not as a group pass resolutions on subjects which you have not thought through and on which you cannot possibly have complete knowledge. This business of passing resolutions at Conventions of Patriotic Societies, of Chambers of Commerce, of Manufacturers' Associations, of Peace Societies, of Youth Congresses is a perfectly legitimate American habit, just as it is fact that there are many thousands of organizations for almost every conceivable objective which are kept going unwittingly, in order that Executive Secretaries, Legislative agents and other officials may find so-called useful employment. Hence the flood of lobbyists in Washington, of special counsel, of hired writers, which literally infests the halls of the Congress and the ante-rooms of all the agencies of the Executive Branch of the Government today. And I am not forgetting some of the visitors who come to see the President himself.

I have in mind the type of organization which passes resolutions on some matter of the utmost complexity -- in the field, for example, of national defense or international economics -- some situation on which there may be not two opinions but a dozen, some situation on which the policy of the moment must be formed by those who have given deep study to every phase of the problem. Such a decision ought not to be influenced by any gathering of old or young, local or national, which gets a smattering of the subject from two or three speakers, who themselves have but a smattering of the necessary knowledge.

One of the big local American Youth Congress Councils, I am told, took a decisive stand against the granting of American loans to Finland -- not on the ground that we ought to spend the money here among our own needy unemployed, but on the ground that such action was "an attempt to force America into the imperialistic war". That reasoning was unadulterated twaddle, based perhaps on minority, but, at the same time, on ninety per cent ignorance of what they were talking about.

I can say this to you with a smile because many of you will recognize the inherent wisdom and truth of what I am saying. Here is a small Republic in northern Europe which, without any question whatsoever, wishes solely to maintain its own territorial and governmental integrity. Nobody with any pretense at common sense believes that Finland had any ulterior designs on the integrity of the Soviet Union.

That American sympathy is ninety-eight per cent with the Finns in their effort to stave off invasion of their own soil is by now axiomatic. That America wants to help them by lending or giving money to them to save their own lives is also axiomatic by now. That the Soviet Union would, because of this, declare war on the United States is about the most absurd thought that I have ever heard advanced in the fifty-eight years of my life. That we are going to war with the Soviet Union is an equally silly thought. And, therefore, while I have not the slightest objection in the world to the passing of futile resolutions by conventions, I do think that there is room for improvement in common sense thinking and definite room for improvement in the art of not passing resolutions concerning things one knows very little about.

And so I suggest that all of you smile and -- don't do it again.

More than twenty years ago, while most of you were very young children, I had the utmost sympathy for the Russian people. In the early days of Communism I recognized that many leaders in Russia were bringing education and better health and better opportunity to millions who had been kept in ignorance and servitude under the imperial regime. I disliked the regimentation under Communism. I abhorred the indiscriminate killing of thousands of innocent victims. I heartily deprecated the banishment of religion -- though I knew that before long Russia would return to religion for the simple reason that four or five thousand years of recorded history have proved that mankind has always believed in God in spite of dozens of abortive attempts to exile God.

I hoped that Russia would work out its own problems and that their government would eventually become a peace-loving, popular government which would not interfere with the integrity of its neighbors.

That hope is today either shattered or put away in storage against a better day. The Soviet Union, as a matter of practical fact, known to you and known to all the world, is a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world. It has allied itself with another dictatorship and it has invaded a neighbor so infinitesimally small that it could do no injury to the Soviet Union, and seeks only to live at peace as a democracy, and a liberal, forward-looking democracy at that.

It has been said that some of you are Communists. That is an unpopular term these days. As Americans you have a right to call yourselves Communists. You have a right peacefully and openly to advocate certain ideals of theoretical Communism; but as Americans you have not only a right but a sacred duty to confine your advocacy of changes in law to the methods prescribed by the Constitution of the United States -- and you have no American right, by act or deed of any kind, to subvert the Government and the Constitution of this Nation.

That, I am confident, receives the overwhelming support of the great majority of your organization and of every other large organization of American youth. The things you and I represent are essentially the same and it will be your task, when I am gone from the scene, to carry on the fight for a continuance of liberal government, an improvement of its methods, the effectiveness of its work. Above all, we must help those who have proved that they will try everlastingly to make things a little better with each succeeding year. Keep your ideals high, keep both feet on the ground and keep everlastingly at it.

Suggested remarks for brief address to
delegates to the Citizenship Institute of
the American Youth Congress. It should
be noted that this congregation of young
people is primarily for the purpose of
promoting the adoption of the American
Youth Act---

It is a pleasure for me to meet all of you assembled in this
large congregation of young people from all parts of our great country.
I wonder how those of you who have come the longest distances felt as
you passed through various States on the train or in automobiles. Did
you get the thrill I always experience when I travel? Did you feel
exhilarated as you saw the fields spread out before you and the count-
less cities and towns along the way? Did you think of the incalculable
human energy and ingenuity that have been invested in bringing this
continent to this point of its development? I wonder if you sensed that
great pride I always feel when I think that I am a part of it all? Did
you respond to the challenging idea: "What can we make of it in our
generation?"

I have a feeling that none of you will go home from this meeting
without a new glimpse of the great opportunities that we have in this
young land of ours. Seeing much of America ought to be a part of the
education of every young person. It is only by seeing it that you may
fully understand what we mean when we older folk say that the greatest
things are still ahead for America. To be sure, the world is in a sorry
plight, beset by problems. Our country has been passing through troublous
times. But never has a generation inherited better tools or greater
knowledge with which to attack problems than yours. The land has been
cleared by our forebears who worked from sun-up to sun-down. Cities

have been built, libraries accumulated, a vast educational organization established, a sensitive transportation and communication system created, new and improved ways of doing things evolved -- a thousand and one things are parts of your rich inheritance. Best of all, we have so far preserved the priceless institutions of self-government.

Now, if I catch the spirit of youth aright, you want to pitch in and make the most of your inheritance. You are demanding the opportunity to expand and improve our cities and towns, to cultivate and manage the land, to refine and promote our common cultural and spiritual life. And you want your government to share your aspiration. Well, you can be sure that those of us in government do share that aspiration. We want to do everything that is sound and practical to release your energies to work upon the problems and possibilities of America.

What interests me most about your gathering is that you call it a "Citizenship Institute." You know, many groups come to Washington and, I am afraid, they sometimes leave the national seat of government without thinking much about that word "citizenship." The title of this gathering says to me that you are not merely trying to get the government to do something for youth but that you are likewise concerned with what youth can do for its government. It is fitting, therefore, that I should say something to you about the responsibilities of citizenship.

Sometimes we lose sight of the fact that the government is really all of us doing together certain things which we cannot do as well individually or through private groups. Government to some of our citizens is a vague abstraction, representing unlimited power and a

reservoir of funds fed by mysterious springs located somewhere in the mint. But you and I know that the financial power of government is limited by the assets of the people who constitute the government; that government cannot bestow benefits except by taxing those assets. When we talk about how to attack such a problem as the unemployment of youth, let us remember that simple fact.

You know that I have steadfastly insisted that it is the first responsibility of our government to conserve and to protect the natural and human resources of America. These resources are the stuff out of which the future is to be evolved. But when government steps in to shield millions of people from the disastrous effects of natural and economic calamities, it uses the wealth and power of the people. It cannot tap some supernatural treasure chest. Let us never forget that.

You who have the greatest stake in the future must be wary of the popular jargon which wily agitators have used in other lands to set youth to marching -- the jargon of medicine men selling a cure for everything in one bottle labeled "government" or "party." You must be clear-eyed concerning the individual responsibilities of the citizen as well as about the collective obligations of government. While some citizens do need the support and helping hand of government at certain times and under unusual conditions, in the long run it is the responsibility of the citizens to support the government and not of the government to support the citizens.

There are two kinds of support needed by government from its citizens. First, it needs to maintain a pool of financial power sufficient to protect, serve and improve the general welfare of the

people in such ways as only the government can. The citizens themselves must create and constantly replenish this cooperative pool which we call the national budget. Now they can't do this unless they have personal budgets sufficient to meet the requirements of a decent life, with some to spare. The government cannot be solvent very long unless the mass of its people are solvent and self-supporting. For this reason we have regarded it as the first job of government to promote the balancing of the personal budgets out of which we have the only reasonable hope of balancing the national budget.

The second kind of support which government needs from its citizens is moral and spiritual. The wisdom of the great collective actions taken through government can never be much greater than the understandings of the millions of citizens whose public opinion controls those actions. The problems which I face and which Senators and Representatives in Congress face cannot be solved except in terms of the insight and understanding of the citizens. The impractical idealist sometimes wonders why problems are not solved more quickly by the leaders of government. Well, such an idealist forgets that the leaders of government cannot go any faster than the mass of the people are prepared to follow. Government is merely the instrument through which people solve certain problems which they cannot solve successfully as individuals or through private groups. Government is not a magician able to work miracles. If democracy is to work, the people must make it work. They must know their business as citizens and make wise choices in selecting representatives.

There is a tendency in our complex times to miss this point of personal responsibility as the foundation stone of democratic government. Citizens sometimes give their votes to candidates who promise that the government will take care of them, will relieve them of the responsibility of thinking and acting for themselves. But let's see clearly, young people, that whenever government undertakes to support the people it must sooner or later seize control of their time and energy in order to produce the means of support. Now, there is a vast difference between using the great collective pool of financial power as an insurance against times of distress, as a means of conserving human and natural resources, and merely supporting and subsidising people and businesses by numerous hand-outs. The first is a sensible function designed to conserve the power and vitality of the Nation. The latter is a dangerous pitfall leading toward the weakening of individual character and eventually to the establishment of dictatorship of some kind.

Our great problem now is to employ the full creative energies of our people and particularly of our youth. You can help force the Nation to keep its eyes fixed on that problem and to cooperate in the struggle to create the conditions under which general employment is possible. Through the National Youth Administration, the C.C.C., by means of grants to the States for vocational education, and through other agencies and methods we have tried to hedge against the depleting and exhausting forces of depression. We have paid for time during which to think and plan permanent and general prosperity. Our sole aim has

not been to relieve suffering and to prevent destruction of morale. Our primary objective has been and is to put people to work so that they can support themselves at an American standard of living, and be able to contribute to the national financial pool.

Those of us in government who have grappled with this problem and have made real progress in the last few years have not lost faith in the capacity of our institutions to finish the job simply because the job is not yet finished. Some people with different, and I think, short-sighted and obsolete views have opposed some of the things which I think would have helped us to make more rapid progress toward the goal. But that is the price we gladly pay to make progress our way -- the American way. You need only scan the headlines to appreciate how much better slow progress is than the much-vaunted royal roads to Utopia tried in some other parts of the world.

At least, we aren't blowing up our precious natural resources and destroying our people in war. We are still concentrating our energies on the main problems -- not running away from them to some battlefield. As long as the American people are talking and thinking freely about the main problems, I have confidence that we shall work out sound solutions. When we do, the solutions will be ours, understood and approved by the majority of us, and not solutions imposed by one arrogant mind but understood by almost no one.

In your Citizenship Institute I hope you will be vigorous in demanding that all of us face up to the main issue, jobs and opportunities for the eager energies of American youth. But I also hope that you will be even more vigorous in reasserting the faith of youth

in itself and in the institutions of democracy which it inherits. I do not ask you to be patient with unemployment or lack of adequate educational opportunities. But I do ask you to be patient with the process of democracy, to believe in it, to be loyal to it, to cling to it.

The essence of what I want to say to you was put in a paragraph recently by a good friend of mine. He said, "They tell us that the devotion of youth in Europe to the mass movements of Stalin, the Führer, and the Duce, is thrilling and that we in America have nothing to match it. I wish we could feel an equal thrill born of an equal devotion to democracy and to the kind of religion that sustains it. The dignifying of personality, the giving of conscience to God above all human institutions, the achievement not of popular liberty alone but of popular equality and fraternity, the erection of human society on transformed, responsible personal character--that is the cause on which the highest hopes of mankind depend." (The above is taken from an address of Harry Emerson Fosdick- "A Religion to Support Democracy")

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Wm D. Hassett

RADIO ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS
FEBRUARY 10, 1940

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

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In saying this I am not denying to you in anyway the rights of free assemblage, of free petition and of free speech -- nor am I precluding the right of any Americans, old people or young people, to advocate improvements and change in the operations of the Government of the United States on one very simple condition: That all of you conform to the constitutional processes of change and improvement provided in the Constitution itself.

It is a good thing that you young people are interested enough in government to come to Washington for a Youth Citizenship Institute — because one of the hardest problems today is the indifference of so many people to the details and the facts of the functioning of their own government.

I have said on many occasions that the greatest achievement of the past seven years in the United States has been not the saving of the nation from economic chaos, not the great series of laws to avert destitution and improve our social standards, but that it has been the awakening of many millions of American men and women to an understanding of the processes of their own governments, local, state and federal. It is a fact that in every community, large and small, people are taking a greater interest in decent government, in forward-looking government than ever before, and that the words of Lincoln in regard to fooling people are infinitely more true today than they were in the sixties.

The past ten years have proved certain obvious facts -- some negative, some positive.

We know that the prosperity of the twenties can properly be compared to the prosperity of the Mississippi bubble days before the bubble burst -- when everybody was money-mad, when the money changers owned the temple, when the nation as a whole forgot the restraint of decent ethics and simple morals, and when the Government in Washington gave completely free reign to what they called individual liberty and the virtual ownership of government itself by the so-called best minds which wholly controlled our finances and our economics. During those ten years you cannot find a single statute enacted for the restraint of excesses nor for the betterment of the permanent security of the individual. That is a straight from the shoulder fact which the American public fortunately has not forgotten.

It is also a simple straight fact that 1930, 1931 and 1932 saw the collapse and disintegration of the philosophy of the twenties, followed in February and the first three days of March, 1933, by an acknowledgment on the part of those who had been the leaders that they could no longer carry on.

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BANK
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71%.

Salaries
Wages and ~~hours for the month of December, 1932,~~ increased ^{in December 1932,} from two billion four hundred million dollars to three billion ^{in December 1939} eight hundred and eighty-eight million dollars -- plus 62%.

Weekly payrolls ~~in December~~ increased from eighty million ^{December} dollars in 1932 to one hundred and ninety-seven million dollars in 1939 -- plus 145%.

Cash farm income increased from four billion seven hundred million dollars in the year 1932 to seven billion seven hundred million dollars in the year 1939. And with the addition of farm benefit payments of over eight hundred million dollars, ~~in December~~ to a total of eight and a half billion dollars -- plus 82%.

Dividends of corporations that were received by individuals increased from two billion seven hundred and fifty million dollars to four billion two hundred and fifty million dollars -- plus 55%.

It is true that our population has gone up six or seven per cent since 1932, but where twenty-seven million people were employed in non-agricultural pursuits in December, 1932, thirty-five million people were similarly employed in 1939 -- a gain of 28%.

You have heard of certain local or special opposition to our foreign trade policy -- listen to this: Our exports for the calendar year 1932 were worth a billion six hundred million. In 1939 they were worth nearly three billion two hundred million -- an increase of 97%.

I am repeating these figures on the air because not one citizen in a hundred read them in the papers last Tuesday morning.

Furthermore, I remarked last Monday that interest received by individuals in 1939 was 9% less than it had been in 1932. I am proud of that -- because it means that the exorbitant interest rates on mortgages and on loans of all kinds in 1932 have, because of federal action, been reduced to a ^{lower} ~~more~~ humane rate to people who had to borrow money for themselves ^{or} individually ~~and~~ for themselves as participants ⁱⁿ many varieties of business~~on~~ :

Finally, I said last Monday -- and this was the part that was most seriously mangled and garbled by certain types of papers and certain types of politicians -- that the total debt of all of the people of the United States - private debt, state and local government debts, and the debt of the Federal Government ^{In 1939} ~~is less today~~ around two somewhere between three and four billion dollars less -- in a nation which has six or seven million people more in it than eight years ago.

Why am I giving you all these figures? First, to remove fears -- fears which are subtly instilled in your minds by a propaganda of which you are well aware. The other day I saw an old friend, born, if you like, with a silver spoon in his mouth; moving, if you like, in so-called social circles; a decent citizen who, while he has never held public office, has tried to understand the tendencies of the times. He said to me "I have come to the conclusion that there is no use in my trying to argue with certain types of the older generation because all they do is to hope that some miracle will restore the period of thirty years ago when they did not have to think about social problems; when taxes on the rich were comparatively low; when nobody was worrying about social security, or organized labor, or wages and hours, or the supervision of security offerings, or the regulation of the management of banks". He said "I am ~~passed~~⁴⁵ fifty but I recognize full well that those days, thank God, will never come again -- and furthermore, that a great majority of the people today who want to see a liberal administration of government turned out

and replaced by a conservative administration of government are really wishing down in their hearts for a return of the social and economic philosophy of 1910.

And now a word of warning to you who are voters and you who will soon be voters -- several words of warning.

Don't seek or expect Utopia overnight. Don't seek or expect a panacea -- a grand new law that will give you a ~~handout~~ ^A guarantee of permanent remunerative occupation of your own choosing. I told one of your members a couple of weeks ago, somewhat to his surprise, that ever since I became Governor of New York in 1929 I have been receiving in every mail a sincere, honest proposal of some panacea, one of them, two of them, three of them every day. These plans have not been put in the waste-basket -- they have been subjected to the closest scrutiny by honest liberals who have hoped that somebody would hit on something that would save us all a lot of time and a lot of worry. It is clear that no such plan exists.

Take, for example, the question of the employment of old people and the employment of young people. You young people must remember that the problem of the older workers is just as difficult as yours -- that when people slow-up, when they have reached the age when one can reasonably expect no great improvement or imagination in their work, they find it very difficult to get a job. We have not solved the problem of older people and the solution of that problem is evolutionary. We have made beginnings with the Old Age Pension Act, but we know that it is only a beginning and that through the next ten or twenty years the system must be extended and improved. Ham and eggs, and other plans will not do it because they are all open to the simple objection that they either print so much paper money that the money would soon be worthless or that the whole burden would be placed on the shoulders of the younger workers.

In the case of jobs for you young people, let me make it very clear in the beginning that it is not at all certain that your opportunities for employment are any worse today than they were for young people ten years or twenty years or thirty years ago. The problem of jobs for young people is vastly more difficult than it was one hundred years ago because in 1840 the great open spaces of the West were crying aloud for willing hands -- but today the physical frontiers are gone.

Yes, you and I have a very distinct problem. You and I know that industrial production calls for fewer hands per unit because of the improvement of machinery. I have given you the figure showing that weekly payrolls are 145% bigger than in December, 1932. That does not mean that 145% more people are employed. Obviously not. Fewer people are needed to produce the same volume of goods. And one of the things that disturbs me greatly is that in the present pick-up of industry, it is cheaper for most factory managers to work people over-time, even at double pay, than it is to put on an extra shift.

This means, in effect, that we have not yet found the method of spreading employment to more people when good times comes

It means, too, that we have not yet eliminated the terrific peaks and valleys of production and consumption. We have made definite gains. We hope and believe that we have found the way to prevent a recurrence of the collapse from the high point of 1929 to the low point of February, 1935. We have not stopped the swing of the pendulum but we believe we have greatly circumscribed the width of that swing from one extreme to the other.

Therefore, I suggest again that on social and economic matters you and I are substantially in agreement as to the objective but that there are some of you who think that objective can be gained overnight. I don't. I do believe, however, that all of us can make definite strides toward that objective if we retain a government which believes in the objectives wholeheartedly and which is bent on working toward it as fast as the people of this country as a whole will let us. That in the long run is a reaffirmation of our faith in democracy

One final word of warning: Do not as a group pass resolutions on subjects which you have not thought through and on which you cannot possibly have complete knowledge. This business of passing resolutions at conventions of patriotic societies, of Chambers of Commerce, of Manufacturers' Associations, of Peace Societies, of Youth Congresses is a perfectly legitimate American habit, just as it is a fact that there are many thousands of organizations for almost every conceivable object^s which are kept going unwittingly, in order that ~~the~~ Executive Secretary ~~of~~ Legislative agents and other officers may find so-called useful employment. Hence the flood of lobbyists in Washington, of special counsel, of hired writers, which literally infests the halls of the Congress and the ante-rooms of all the agencies of the Executive Branch of the Government today. And I am not forgetting some of the visitors who come to see the President himself.

I have in mind the type of organization which passes resolutions on some matter of the utmost complexity -- in the field, for example, of national defense or international economics -- some situation on which there may be not two opinions but a dozen, some situation on which the policy of the moment must be formed by those who have given deep study to every phase of the problem. Such a decision ought not to be influenced by a ^{my opinion} smattering of old or young, local or national, which gets a smattering of the subject from two or three speakers, who themselves have but a smattering of the necessary knowledge.

One of the big local American Youth Congress Councils, I am told, took a decisive stand against the granting of American loans to Finland -- not on the ground that we ought to ^{use} ~~use~~ the money ~~out~~ here among our own needy unemployed, but on the ground that such action was "an attempt to force America into the imperialistic war".

~~That was~~ reasoning was unadulterated twaddle, based perhaps on sincerity, ~~and~~, at the same time, on ninety per cent ignorance of what they were talking about.

I can say this to you with a smile because many of you will recognize the inherent wisdom and truth of what I am saying. Here is a small Republic in northern Europe which, without any question whatsoever, wishes solely to maintain its own territorial and governmental integrity. Nobody with any pretense at common sense believes that Finland had any ulterior designs on the integrity of the Soviet Union.

That American sympathy is ninety-eight per cent with the Finns in their effort to stave off invasion ~~of their~~ own soil is by now axiomatic. That America wants to help them by lending or giving money to them to save their own lives is also axiomatic by now. That the Soviet Union would, because of this, declare war on the United States is most absurd. ~~about the~~ thought that I have ever heard advanced in the fifty-eight years of my life. That we are going to

war with the Soviet Union is an equally silly thought. And, therefore, while I have not the slightest objection in the world to the passing of ~~futile~~ ^{futile} resolutions by conventions, I do think that there is room for improvement in common sense thinking and definite room for improvement in the art of not passing resolutions ~~about~~ ^{concerning} things one knows very little about.

And so I suggest that all of you smile and -- don't do it again.

More than twenty years ago, while most of you were very young children, I had the utmost sympathy for the Russian people. In the early days of Communism I recognized that many leaders in Russia were bringing education and better health and better opportunity to millions who had been kept in ignorance and serfdom under the imperial regime. I disliked the regimentation under Communism. I abhorred the indiscriminate killings of thousands of innocent victims. I heartily deprecated the banishment of religion -- though I knew that before long Russia would return to religion for the simple reason that four or five thousand years of

recorded history have proved that mankind has always believed in God in spite of dozens of abortive attempts to exile God.

I hoped that Russia would work out its own problems and that their government would eventually become a peace-loving, popular government which would not interfere with the integrity of its neighbors.

That hope is today either shattered or put away in storage against a better day. The Soviet Union, as a matter of practical fact, known to you and known to all the world, is a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world. It has allied itself with another dictatorship and it has invaded a neighbor so infinitesimally small that it could do no injury to the Soviet Union, and ~~sought~~ ^{seeked} only to live at peace as a democracy, and a liberal, forward-looking democracy at that.

It has been said that some of you are Communists. That is an unpopular term these days. As Americans you have a right to call yourselves Communists. You have a right peacefully and openly to advocate certain ideals of

theoretical Communism; but as Americans you have not only a right but a sacred duty to confine your advocacy of changes in law to the methods prescribed by the Constitution of the United States -- and you have no American right, by act or deed of any kind, to subvert the Government and the Constitution of this Nation.

That, I am confident, receives the overwhelming support
of the ~~Massachusetts~~ majority of your organization
and of every other large organization of American youth. ~~The things you~~
~~and I and the things we represent are essentially the same,~~
and it will be your task, when I am gone from the scene, to carry on the fight for a continuance of liberal government, an improvement of its methods, the effectiveness of its work, ~~we must help those who here before~~
~~Above all, the willingness of those who run government~~
~~that they will~~
~~try everlastingly to make things~~
a little better with each succeeding year. Keep your ideals high, keep both feet on the ground and keep everlastingly at it.

STATEMENTS FILE

Shorthand by Kanner

HOLD FOR RELEASE

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February 10, 1940

The following address of the President to be delivered from the South Portico of the White House to the delegates of the National Citizenship Institute of the American Youth Congress, MUST BE HELD FOR RELEASE in newspapers appearing on the streets not earlier than 12:30 P.M., E. S. T., February 10, 1940.

PLEASE SAFEGUARD AGAINST PREMATURE RELEASE.

WILLIAM D. HASSETT

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

You who are attending this institute, whose primary aim is to obtain further knowledge of the democratic processes of American government, are very welcome at the White House today. The same welcome is open to all citizens, or prospective citizens, or junior citizens, who believe in the form of government under which the United States has been living with reasonable success for more than a century and a half.

In saying this I am not denying to you in anyway the rights of free assembly, of free petition and of free speech — nor am I precluding the right of any Americans, old people or young people, to advocate improvements and change in the operations of the Government of the United States on one very simple condition: That all of you conform to the constitutional processes of change and improvement provided in the Constitution itself.

It is a good thing that you young people are interested enough in government to come to Washington for a Youth Citizenship Institute — because one of the hardest problems today is the indifference of so many people to the details and the facts of the functioning of their own government.

I have said on many occasions that the greatest achievement of the past seven years in the United States has been not the saving of the nation from economic chaos, not the great series of laws to avert destitution and improve our social standards, but that it has been the awakening of many millions of American men and women to an understanding of ~~the promises~~ of their own governments, local, state and federal. It is a fact that in every community, large and small, people are taking a greater interest in decent government, in forward-looking government than ever before, and that the words of Lincoln in regard to feeling people are infinitely more true today than they were in the sixties.

The past ten years have proved certain obvious facts — some negative, some positive.

We know that the prosperity of the twenties can properly be compared to the prosperity of the Mississippi bubble days before the bubble burst — when everybody was money-mad, when the money changers owned the temple, when the nation as a whole forgot the restraint of decent ethics and simple morals, and when the Government in Washington gave completely free reign to what they called individual liberty, ~~and the virtual ownership of government itself by the so-called best minds~~, which wholly controlled our finances and our economics. During those ten years you cannot find a single statute enacted for the restraint of excesses ~~merely~~ for the betterment of the permanent security of the individual. That is a straight from the shoulder fact which the American public fortunately has not forgotten.

It is also a simple straight fact that 1930, 1931 and 1932 saw the collapse and disintegration of the philosophy of the twenties, followed in February and the first three days of March, 1933, by an acknowledgment on the part of those who had been the leaders that they could no longer carry on.

Last Monday at a Press Conference I repeated certain comparisons between 1932 and 1939. These facts were misstated and twisted by many newspapers and by some politicians seeking office. Because of this and because I am on a national hook-up, I repeat the figures.

The national income has increased from forty billion dollars in 1932 to sixty-eight and one-half billion dollars in 1939 -- plus 71%.

Wages and salaries have increased from two billion four hundred million dollars in December 1932 to three billion eight hundred and eighty-eight million dollars in December 1939 -- plus 62%.

Weekly payrolls increased from eighty million dollars in December 1932 to one hundred and ninety-seven million dollars in 1939 -- plus 145%.

Cash farm income increased from four billion seven hundred million dollars in the year 1932 to seven billion seven hundred million dollars in the year 1939. And with the addition of farm benefit payments of over eight hundred million dollars, to a total of eight and a half billion dollars -- plus 82%.

Dividends of corporations that were received by individuals increased from two billion seven hundred and fifty million dollars to four billion two hundred and fifty million dollars -- plus 59%.

It is true that our population has gone up six or seven per cent since 1932, but where twenty-seven million people were employed in non-agricultural pursuits in December, 1932, thirty-five million people were similarly employed in 1939 -- a gain of 26%.

You have heard of certain local or special opposition to our foreign trade policy -- listen to this: Our exports for the calendar year 1932 were worth a billion six hundred million. In 1939 they were worth nearly three billion two hundred million -- an increase of 57%.

I am repeating these figures on the air because not one citizen in a hundred read them in the papers last Tuesday morning.

Furthermore, I remarked last Monday that interest received by individuals in 1939 was 9% less than it had been in 1932. I am proud of that -- because it means that the exorbitant interest rates on mortgages and on loans of all kinds in 1932 have, because of federal action, been reduced to a lower and more humane rate to people who had to borrow money for themselves individually or for themselves as participants in many varieties of business.

Finally, I said last Monday -- and this was the part that was most seriously maligned and garbled by certain types of papers and certain types of politicians -- that the total debt of all of the people of the United States -- private debt, state and local government debts, and the debt of the Federal Government -- was less in 1939 than it was in 1932. That is a simple fact -- somewhere around two billion dollars less -- in a nation which has six or seven million people more in it than eight years ago.

Why am I giving you all these figures? First, to remove fears -- fears which are subtly instilled in your minds by a propaganda of which you are well aware. The other day I saw an old friend, born, if you like, with a silver spoon in his mouth; moving, if you like, in so-called social circles; a decent citizen who, while he has never held public office, has tried to understand the tendencies of the times. He said to me "I have come to the conclusion that there is no use in my trying to argue with certain types of the older generation because all they do is to hope that some miracle will restore the period of thirty years ago, when they did not have to think about social problems; when taxes on the rich were comparatively low; when nobody was worrying about social security, or organized labor, or wages and hours, or the supervision of security offerings, or the regulation of the management of banks". He said "I am past fifty but I recognize full well that those days, thank God, will never come again -- and furthermore, that a great majority of the people today who want to see a liberal administration of government turned out and replaced by a conservative administration of government are really wishing down in their hearts for a return of the social and economic philosophy of 1910."

And now a word of warning to you who are voters and you who will soon be voters -- several words of warning.

Don't seek or expect Utopia overnight. Don't seek or expect a panacea -- a grand new law that will give you a handout -- a guarantee of permanent remunerative occupation of your own choosing. I told one of your members a couple of weeks ago, somewhat to his surprise, that ever since I became Governor of New York in 1929 I have been receiving in every mail a sincere, honest proposal --~~for~~ some panacea, one of them, two of them, three of them every day. These plans have not been put in the waste-basket -- they have been subjected to the closest scrutiny by honest liberals who have hoped that somebody would hit on something that would save us all a lot of time and a lot of worry. It is clear that no such plan exists.

Take, for example, the question of the employment of old people and the employment of young people. You young people must remember that the problem of the older workers is just as difficult as yours -- that when people slow-up, when they have reached the age when one can reasonably expect no great improvement of imagination in their work, they find it very difficult to get a job. We have not solved the problem of older people and the solution of that problem is evolutionary. We have made beginnings with the Old Age Pension Act, but we know that it is only a beginning and that through the next ten or twenty years the system must be extended and improved. Ham and eggs, and other plans will not do it because they are all open to the simple objection that they either print so much paper money that the money would soon be worthless or that the whole burden would be placed on the shoulders of the younger workers.

In the case of jobs for your young people, let me make it very clear in the beginning that it is not at all certain that your opportunities for employment are any worse today than they were for young people ten years or twenty years or thirty years ago. The problem of jobs for young people is vastly more difficult than it was one hundred years ago because in 1840 the great open spaces of the West were crying aloud for willing hands -- but today the physical frontiers are gone.

Yes, you and I have a very distinct problem. You and I know that industrial production calls for fewer hands per unit because of the improvement of machinery. I have given you the figure showing that weekly payrolls are 145% bigger than in December, 1932. That does not mean that 145% more people are employed. Obviously not. Fewer people are needed to produce the same volume of goods. And one of the things that disturbs me greatly is that in the present pick-up of industry, it is cheaper for most factory managers to work people overtime, even at double pay, than it is to put on an extra shift.

This means, in effect, that we have not yet found the method of spreading employment to more people when good times come.

It means, too, that we have not yet eliminated the terrific peaks and valleys of production and consumption. We have made definite gains. We hope and believe that we have found the way to prevent a recurrence of the collapse from the high point of 1929 to the low point of February, 1933. We have not stopped the swing of the pendulum but we believe we have greatly circumscribed the width of that swing from one extreme to the other.

Therefore, I suggest again that on social and economic matters you and I are substantially in agreement as to the objective but that there are some of you who think that objective can be gained overnight. I don't. I do believe, however, that all of us can make definite strides toward that objective if we retain a government which believes in the objectives whole-heartedly and which is bent on working toward it as fast as the people of this country as a whole will let us. That in the long run is a reaffirmation of our faith in democracy.

One final word of warning: Do not as a group pass resolutions on subjects which you have not thought through and on which you cannot possibly have complete knowledge. This business of passing resolutions at Conventions of Patriotic Societies, of Chambers of Commerce, of Manufacturers' Associations, of Peace Societies, of Youth Congresses is a perfectly legitimate American habit, just as it is a fact that there are many thousands of organizations for almost every conceivable objective, which are kept going unwittingly, in order that Executive Secretaries, legislative agents and other officers may find so-called useful employment. Hence the flood of lobbyists in Washington, of special counsels, of hired writers, which literally infests the halls of the Congress and the ante-rooms of all the agencies of the Executive Branch of the Government today. And I am not forgetting some of the visitors who come to see the President himself.

I have in mind the type of organization which passes resolutions on some matter of the utmost complexity -- in the field, for example, of national defense or international economics -- some situation on which there may be not two opinions but a dozen, some situation on which the policy of the moment must be formed by those who have given deep study to every phase of the problem. Such a decision ought not to be influenced by any gathering of old or young, local or national, which gets a smattering of the subject from two or three speakers, who themselves have but a smattering of the necessary knowledge.

One of the big local American Youth Congress Councils, I am told, took a decisive stand against the granting of American loans to Finland -- not on the ground that we ought to spend the money here among our own needy unemployed, but on the ground that such action was "an attempt to force America into the imperialistic war". That reasoning was unadulterated twaddle, based perhaps on sincerity, but, at the same time, on ninety per cent ignorance of what they were talking about.

I can say this to you with a smile because many of you will recognize the inherent wisdom and truth of what I am saying. Here is a small Republic in northern Europe which, without any question whatsoever, wishes solely to maintain its own territorial and governmental integrity. Nobody with any pretense of common sense believes that Finland had any ulterior designs on the integrity of the Soviet Union.

That American sympathy is ninety-eight per cent with the Finns in their effort to stave off invasion of their own soil, is by now axiomatic. That America wants to help them by lending or giving money to them to save their own lives is also axiomatic by now. That the Soviet Union would, because of this, declare war on the United States is about the most absurd thought that I have ever heard advanced in the fifty-eight years of my life. That we are going to war with the Soviet Union is an equally silly thought. And, therefore, while I have not the slightest objection in the world to the passing of futile resolutions by conventions, I do think that there is room for improvement in common sense thinking and definite room for improvement in the art of not passing resolutions concerning things one knows very little about.

And so I suggest that all of you smile and -- don't do it again.

More than twenty years ago, while most of you were very young children, I had the utmost sympathy for the Russian people. In the early days of Communism I recognized that many leaders in Russia were bringing education and better health and better opportunity to millions who had been kept in ignorance and servitude under the imperial regime. I disliked the regimentation ^(under) Communism. I abhorred the indiscriminate killings of thousands of innocent victims. I heartily deplored the banishment of religion -- though I knew that before long Russia would return to religion for the simple reason that four or five thousand years of recorded history have proved that mankind has always believed in God in spite of dunces-of-abortion attempts to exile God.

I hoped that Russia would work out its own problems and that their government would eventually become a peace-loving, popular government which would not interfere with the integrity of its neighbors.

That hope is today either shattered or put away in storage against a better day. The Soviet Union, as a matter of practical fact, known to you and known to all the world, is a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world. It has allied itself with another dictatorship and it has invaded a neighbor so infinitesimally small that it could do no injury to the Soviet Union, and seeks only to live at peace as a democracy, and a liberal, forward-looking democracy at that.

It has been said that some of you are Communists. That is an unpopular term these days. As Americans you have a right to call yourselves Communists. You have a right peacefully and openly to advocate certain ideals of theoretical Communism; but as Americans you have not only a right but a sacred duty to confine your advocacy of changes in law to the methods prescribed by the Constitution of the United States -- and you have no American right, by act or deed of any kind, to subvert the Government and the Constitution of this Nation.

That, I am confident, receives the overwhelming support of the great majority of your organization and of every other ~~large~~ organization of American youth. The things you and I represent are essentially the same and it will be your task, when I am gone from the scene, to carry on the fight for a continuance of liberal government, an improvement of its methods, the effectiveness of its work. Above all, we must help those who have proved that they will try everlastingly to make things a little better with each succeeding year. Keep your ideals high, keep both feet on the ground and keep everlastingly at it.

(Cont'd)

STATEMENTS FILE

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT
Delivered from the South Portico of the White House
to the delegates of the
National Citizenship Institute of the American Youth Congress
February 10, 1940, 12:30 P.M.

(LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:
FELLOW CITIZENS:

You who are attending this institute, whose primary aim is to obtain further knowledge of the democratic processes of American government, you are very welcome at the White House today. (Applause) The same welcome is open to all citizens, or prospective citizens, or junior citizens, all who believe in the form of government under which the United States has been living with reasonable success for more than a century and a half.

And I think that some of us have in the back of our heads
the fact that if we had a different form of government, this kind of
a meeting on the White House lawn could not take place. In saying this I am not denying to you or anybody else in any way the rights of free assemblage, of free petition (and), of free speech -- nor am I precluding the right of any Americans, old people or young people, to advocate improvements and change in the operations of the Government of the United States on one very simple condition: that all of you conform to the constitutional processes of change and improvement provided (in) by the Constitution of the United States itself.

It is a good thing, it is a grand thing, (finish par.)

I have said on many occasions that the greatest achievement of the past seven years in the United States has been not the saving of the nation from economic chaos, not the great series of laws to avert destitution and to improve our social standards, but that it has been the awakening of many millions of American men and women to an understanding of (the processes of) their own governments, local and state and federal. It is a fact that in every community, large and small, people are taking a greater interest in decent government, in forward-looking government than ever before, and, incidentally, that the words of Lincoln in regard to fooling people are infinitely more true today than they were in the eighteen sixties.

(The) These past ten years have proved certain obvious facts -- some negative and some positive.

We know that the prosperity of the twenties -- and a good many of you remember them -- the prosperity of the twenties can properly be compared to the prosperity of the Mississippi bubble days before the bubble burst -- when everybody was money-mad, when the money changers owned the temple, when the nation as a whole forgot the restraint of decent ethics and simple morals, and then the Government in Washington gave completely free ~~rein~~ ^{rein} to what they called individual liberty (and the), gave completely free rein to the virtual ownership of government itself by the so-called best minds, best minds which wholly controlled our finances and our economics and forgot our social problems. During those ten years you cannot find a single statute enacted for the restraint of excesses

(nor for) enacted for the good, the betterment of the permanent security of the individual. That is a straight from the shoulder fact, the sad fact, which the American public fortunately has not forgotten.

It is also a simple straight fact that in 1930, 1931 and 1932, those years saw the collapse and the disintegration of the philosophy of the twenties, followed in February and the first three days of March, 1933, (finish par.)

And, just by way of further illustration of the fact that we have been making progress since those dark days -- not as great progress, of course, as we want or seek, but just by way of illustration -- let me repeat certain comparisons that I gave the other day at a Press Conference, comparisons between 1932 and 1939 (Last Monday at a Press Conference I repeated certain comparisons between 1932 and 1939). These facts were misstated (finish par., adding at the end (Laughter - applause)

Well, let us see, the national income from all sources has increased from forty billion dollars in (19)'32 to sixty-eight and (one) a half billion dollars in (19)'39 -- in other words, plus 71%.

Wages and salaries have increased from two billion four hundred million (dollars) in (fin. par.)

Weekly factory payrolls increased from eighty million dollars in December (19)'32 to (one) a hundred and ninety-seven million dollars in December '39 plus 145%.

Cash farm income increased from four billion seven (hundred million dollars) in (the year 19)'32 to seven billion seven (hundred million dollars) in (the year 19)'39. And with the addition of farm

benefit payments of over eight hundred million (dollars), to a total of eight and a half billion dollars -- or 82%.

Dividends of corporations -- most of you, most of us do not get many of them but never mind -- dividends of corporations that were received by individuals increased from two billion seven hundred and fifty million dollars, ^{✓ 32} to four billion two hundred and fifty million dollars in '39 -- plus 55%.

Now, it is true that our population has gone up since that time six or seven per cent (since 1932), but where twenty-seven million people were employed in non-agricultural pursuits in December, (19)'32, thirty-five million people were similarly employed in (19)'39 -- a gain of 28%.

You have heard of certain local or special opposition to our foreign trade policy -- listen to this: Our exports -- that means goods that were made and sold outside the country -- our exports for the year (19)'32 were worth a billion six hundred million. ^{But} in (19)39 they (were worth) have gone up to (fin. par.)

(Copy next par.)

Furthermore, as I remarked last Monday (that), interest received by individuals -- that does not mean wages or salaries, that means interest on loans; this past year, in 1939, interest so received had gone down nine per cent (was 9% less than it had been in 1932) since (19)'32. Now, I am proud of that -- because it means that the exorbitant interest rates on mortgages and on loans of all kinds in 1932 have, because of federal action, been reduced to a lower rate (and), a more humane rate to people who had to borrow money for themselves individually

or for themselves as participants in many varieties of business,
and that is some achievement.

And, finally, I said last Monday -- and this was the part
that was most seriously mangled (and garbled) by certain types of
papers and certain types of politicians -- I said that the total debt
of all of the people of the United States -- private debt, state debt
(and), local government debt(s), and the (debt of the) Federal Govern-
ment debt was less in 1939 than it was in 1932. That is a simple fact --
somewhere around two billion dollars less -- (in a nation which has
six or seven million people more in it than eight years ago) and that
in the face of an increase of our population of six or seven million
people.

Why am I giving you all these figures? First, to remove
fears -- fears which are subtly instilled in your minds by a propaganda
of which you are well aware. The other day I saw an old friend, ~~Maxey~~
~~Maxey~~ ⁺ a little younger than I am, but not much, ~~who was born, if you~~
like, with a silver spoon in his mouth; moving, if you like, in so-
called social circles, but, nevertheless, a decent citizen who, while
he has never held public office, has tried, I think with some success,
to understand the tendencies of the times, and he said this to me, he
said: "I have come to the conclusion that there is no use in my trying
to argue with certain types of the older generation because all they
do is to hope, hope that some miracle will restore the period of
thirty years ago, the period when they did not have to think about
social problems; ~~the period~~ ^{or the period} when taxes on the very rich
were comparatively low; the period when (nobody was) ~~worrying~~ worrying none of them ~~were~~

worrying ~~about~~ about social security or the getting of jobs, or organized labor, or wages and hours, or the supervision of security offerings, or the regulation of the management of banks." (He said) And he went on to say: "I am past fifty but I recognize full well that those days, thank God, will never come again -- and furthermore, that a great majority of the people today who want to see a liberal administration of government turned out and replaced by a conservative administration (of government) are really wishing ~~well~~ down in their hearts for a return of the old social and economic philosophy of 1910."

And now (a) some words of warning or perhaps I should say of suggestion. The first is this: You good people, I am afraid, are getting ~~pretty~~ wet in this rain and I hope very much that before your afternoon session your officers will give you a chance to go back to your rooms and if you have not ^a spare change with you, to get off what you have ^{on} and get it dried, because there is one thing we do not want out of this fine conference and that is any cases of pneumonia. Here are some more suggestions to you who are voters and (you) who will soon be voters: (-- several words of warning.)

Don't seek or expect Utopia overnight. Don't seek or expect a panacea -- (a grand) some wonderful new law that will give (you) ~~to everybody who needs it a handout -- or~~ a guarantee of permanent remunerative occupation of your own choosing. I told one of your members a couple of weeks ago, somewhat to his surprise, that ever since I became Governor of New York in 1929 I have been receiving in every mail (a) some sincere, honest proposal (of) for some panacea (one of

them, two of them, three of them every day). I have been receiving
them one a day or two or three a day ever since. Now, (these) ~~twelve~~
plans have not been put in the waste basket -- they have been sub-
jected to the closest scrutiny by honest liberals who have hoped that
somebody, somewhere would hit on something that would save us all a lot
of time and a lot of worry. (It is clear that no such plan exists.)
I am afraid that so far, after these twelve years, that no such plan
has come forth yet.

Take, for example, the question of the employment of old
people and the employment of young people. You young people must
remember that the problem of the older workers in America is just as
difficult as yours -- that when people slow up, when they have reached
the age when one can reasonably expect no great improvement (or), no
great new imagination in their work, (they) those people find it very
difficult to get a job. We have not solved the problem of older
people and yet the solution (of that problem is ~~revolutionary~~) seems to
me to be evolutionary and that evolution is doing pretty well. We
have made beginnings with the Old Age Pension Act, but we know (that)
it is only a beginning and that through the next ten or twenty years
(the) that system must be greatly extended and greatly improved. Ham
and eggs, and other plans (will not) won't do it because they are all
open to the simple objection that they either ~~provide for~~ ^{provide for} print ~~too much paper~~ ^{too much paper} money
that the money ~~provide for~~ ^{print} a lot of paper called money
but that money, if you print too much of it, would soon be worthless or
(that) they are based on some plan by which the whole burden would be
placed on the shoulders of the younger workers.

In the case of jobs for (you) young people, let me make it very clear in the beginning that it is not at all certain that your opportunities for employment are (any) much worse today than they were for young people ten years or twenty years or thirty years ago. There were problems then, just as there are today, but people did not understand them and under the ^{kind of} conservative government that we were having so often in those days, the problems never got a chance to be stated to the American people. The problem of jobs for young people is vastly more difficult than it was ^{long} hundred years ago because in 1840 the great open spaces of the West were crying aloud for willing hands -- but today (the physical frontiers are gone) those western frontiers are pretty well filled up.

Yes, you and I have a very distinct problem. For instance, you and I know that industrial production calls for fewer hands per unit because of the improvement of machinery. I have given you the figures showing that weekly payrolls ^{in this country} are 145% bigger today than they were in December, 1952. That does not mean that 145% more people are employed. Obviously not. Fewer people are needed to produce the same volume of goods. And one of the things that disturbs me, just as it disturbs you, greatly is that in the present pickup of industry, it is too often cheaper for (most) factory managers to work people overtime, even at time and a half or double pay, than it is to put on an extra shift.

That is something that we have got to tackle, that problem, in these coming years. (This) ^{of} means, in effect, that we have not yet found the method of spreading employment to more people when good times come.

It means, too, that we have not yet eliminated the terrific peaks and valleys of production and consumption. We have made (definite) gains. We hope and believe that we have found the way to prevent, for example, a recurrence of the collapse ~~if we can't~~ that took place from the high point of (1929) to the low point of February, (1933). We have not stopped the swing of the pendulum but we believe we have greatly circumscribed the width of (that) the swing from one extreme to the other. That means more permanence of employment.

Therefore, I suggest again that on social and economic matters you and I are substantially in agreement as to the objective but that there are some of you who think that that objective can be gained overnight. I don't. I do believe, however, that all of us can make definite strides toward that objective if we retain a government which believes in the objective(s), believes in it wholeheartedly and which is bent on working toward it as fast as the people of this country as a whole will let us. That in the long run is a reaffirmation of our faith in democracy.

One final word (of warning): Do not as a group pass resolutions on subjects which you have not thought through and on which you cannot possibly have complete knowledge. This business of passing resolutions at Conventions of Patriotic Societies, of Chambers of Commerce, of Manufacturers' Associations, of Peace Societies, yes, and of Youth Congresses is a perfectly legitimate American habit, just as it is a fact that there are many thousands, a great many

thoroughly

thousands of organizations for almost every conceivable objective, or ~~organizations~~ which are kept going, unwittingly on the part of most mem
~~bers,~~ in order that ~~some~~ Executive Secretaries, Legislative agents (and) or
~~other officer(s)~~ may find so-called useful employment. Hence the flood
of lobbyists in Washington, of special counsel, drawing big pay for
doing nothing at all, of hired writers, (which) people who literally
infest(s) the halls of the Congress (and the ante-rooms of) and all
the agencies of the Executive Branch of the Government today. And I
am not forgetting some of the visitors who come to see the President
himself.

I have in mind the type of organization (which) that passes
resolutions on some form, some matter of the utmost complexity -- in the
field, for example, of national defense or international economics --
some situation on which there may be not two opinions but a dozen,
some situation on which the policy of the moment must be formed by
those who have given deep study to every phase of the problem. Such
a decision ought not to be influenced by any gathering of old people
or young; ~~or~~ ^{adult} anybody else, local or national, which gets a smattering
of the subject from two or three speakers, who themselves have but a
smattering of the (necessary knowledge) subject ~~themselves~~.

One of the big local American Young Congress Councils, I am
told, took a decisive stand against the granting of (American loans
to Finland) some form of aid, by loan or otherwise, by America to Fin-
land, ~~did that~~ not on the ground that we ought to spend the money
here among our own needy unemployed, but on the ground that such

action was "an attempt to force America into (the) an imperialistic war." My friends, that reason(ing) was unadulterated twaddle, unadulterated twaddle, based perhaps on sincerity, but, at the same time, on ninety per cent ignorance of what they were talking about.

I can say this to you with a smile because many of you will recognize the inherent wisdom and truth of what I am saying. Here is a small Republic in northern Europe, a Republic which, without any question whatsoever, wishes solely to maintain its own territorial and governmental integrity. Nobody with any pretense (at) of common sense believes that Finland had any ulterior designs on the integrity or the safety of the Soviet Union.

That American sympathy is ninety-eight per cent with the Finns in their effort to stave off invasion of their own soil (is by now), that American sympathy by now is axiomatic. That America wants to help them by lending or giving money to them to save their own lives is also axiomatic (by now) today. That the Soviet Union would, because of this, declare war on the United States is about the (most absurd) silliest thought that I have ever heard advanced in the fifty-eight years of my life. And that we are going to war ourselves with the Soviet Union is an equally silly thought. And, therefore, while I have not the slightest objection in the world to the passing of (futile) resolutions by conventions, I do think (that) there is room for improvement in commonsense thinking and definite room for improvement in the art of not passing resolutions concerning things one (knows very little about) does not know everything about.

And so I suggest that all of you can smile with me on this
subject but please do not pass resolutions of that kind again (and--
don't do it again).

More than twenty years ago, while most of you were (very) pretty young children, I had the utmost sympathy for the Russian people. In the early days of Communism I recognized that many leaders in Russia were bringing education and better health and above all ~~even~~ a better opportunity to millions who had been kept in ignorance and serfdom under the imperial regime. I disliked the regimentation (under) of Communism. I abhorred the indiscriminate killings of thousands of innocent victims. I heartily deplored the banishment of religion -- though I knew that (before long) some day Russia would return to religion for the simple reason that four or five thousand years of recorded history ~~to mankind~~ ^{that man has} have proved inexorable (that) mankind ^{has} always believed in God in spite of (dozens) many abortive attempts to exile God. (Applause)

And I, with many of you, hoped that Russia would work out its own problems and that their government would eventually become a peaceful, popular government (which) with a free press, a government ~~but~~ ^{but} that would not interfere with the integrity of its neighbors.

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That hope is today either shattered or is put away in storage against (a) some better day. The Soviet Union, as a matter of practical fact, as everybody knows ^{and} that has got the courage to face the fact, the practical fact, known to you and known to all the world, is run by a dictatorship, ~~as~~ a dictatorship as absolute as any other dictatorship in the world. It has allied itself with another dictatorship and it has invaded a neighbor so infinitesimally small that it could do no

(injury) conceivable possible harm to the Soviet Union, (and) a small nation that seeks only to live at peace as a democracy, and a liberal, forward-looking democracy at that.

It has been said that some of you are Communists. That is (an) a very unpopular term (these days) today. As Americans you have a right, a legal and constitutional right, to call yourselves Communists, those of you who do. You have a right peacefully and openly to advocate certain ideals of theoretical Communism; but as Americans you have not only a right but a sacred duty to confine your advocacy of changes in law to the methods prescribed by the Constitution of the United States -- and you have no American right, by act or deed of any kind, to subvert the Government and the Constitution of this Nation. (Applause)

That, I am confident, receives the overwhelming support of the great majority of your organization and of every other (large) organization of American youth. The things you and I represent are essentially the same and it will be your task, when I am gone from the scene, to carry on the fight for a continuance of liberal government, an improvement of its methods and the effectiveness of its work. Above all, we must help those who have proved that they will try everlastingly to make things a little ^{bit} better for the people of our Nation with each succeeding year. And so I say to you, keep your ideals high, keep both feet on the ground and keep everlastingly at it. (Applause)

FDR is speaking from West Front
Portion of White House to Delegation of the
National Committee of Negroes of the
American Youth Congress, Feb. 10, 1940

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