

September 26, 1940

[Breaking Ground for New Hall of Records]

FDR Speech File

1307

P. P. F.
IF

file

FOR THE PRESS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 26, 1940

Informal remarks of the President in connection with the breaking of ground for the new Hall of Records, Washington, D. C., Thursday, September twenty-sixth.

DOCTOR THOMPSON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE DISTRICT:

I am very glad to come here in person today to take part in this breaking of the ground for this new Hall of Records.

Some of you know that I am so historically minded that I save everything I can get my hands on. I save old documents of all kinds, documents that go back to the early days of the Republic, and even documents that relate to the present Administration.

Having that historical sense, I believe that old records ought to be kept for historical reasons because you never can tell when something that does not seem of any particular value today may be of real value a hundred years from now.

But there is another reason. There are a great many documents that obviously will be of historical value and even of current value in our normal business life. About seven years ago I found that in the office of the Recorder of Deeds, the Government of the District was losing about \$40,000 a year. Now, of course, we ought to make the recording, not only of deeds but of any other documents, pay as it goes. We are a thrifty people. We ought not to have to pay out of tax money a loss in running an office of that kind. And during these years we have reached the amazing peak, under Dr. Thompson, of making a profit of \$40,000 a year.

Those documents, as I say, relate to current events and they also relate to a great many old events. They go back, for example, in the real estate of the District, to, I think, 1792, when there were a great many old land records. They have been all recopied in Dr. Thompson's administration; they are now in good shape. And we have to remember that every time any one of you buys or sells a piece of property in the District of Columbia, you have got to check back to see whether the title is genuine or not.

Furthermore, in addition to this saving -- this profit instead of the old loss -- we have brought our work up to date. In those old days, when we were children, seven years ago, it would take you not only hours and days, but weeks and months before you could get recorded by your government the various necessary documents for real estate sales or purchases and many other forms of documents that had to be recorded, not only under the law, but for the sake of safety of property.

And so this Administration, I think, has done something under Dr. Thompson, to help the business men and property owners of the District of Columbia, and at a fee cost, incidentally, that is just about as low as any place in the United States.

Then there is another thing: As I mentioned the other day, I am a combination of Scotch and Dutch business man. We are going to save money for the taxpayers of the District by putting up this building because today we are paying out an enormous sum in rent -- \$240,000 a year, I think it is -- and with this new building, owned by the Government and paid for by the Government, we are going to amortize it, pay for it, through the profits that are being made today, in a very short time. And, after that, when we are in the building, there won't be any more rent to pay. So, from that point of view, as business people, we feel that this new building is a mighty good investment.

And so I am glad to come here and congratulate Dr. Thompson and all of his assistants, his whole staff, on the splendid business-like job that has been done and to express the hope that he will be in this very important office for many long years to come for the service of the community and the Nation.

* * * * *

FOR THE PRESS

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEPTEMBER 26, 1940

Informal remarks of the President in connection with
the breaking of ground for the new ~~Recorder of Deeds~~
~~Building~~, Washington, D. C., Thursday, September
twenty-sixth.

*Hall of
Records*

Doctor Tompkins, Ladies and Gentlemen of the District: ~~of~~

I am very glad to come here in person today to take part in this breaking of the ground for this new Hall of Records.

Some of you know that I am so historically *mindful* that I save everything I can get my hands on. I save old documents of all kinds, documents that go back to the early days of the Republic, and even documents that relate to the present Administration.

Having that historical sense, I believe that old records ought to be kept for historical reasons because you never can tell when something that does not seem of any particular value today may be of real value a hundred years from now.

But there is another reason. There are a great many documents that obviously will be of historical value and even of current value in our normal business life. About seven years ago I found that ~~in~~ the office of the Recorder of Deeds, ~~the Government~~ *the Government* of the District was losing about \$40,000 a year. Now, of course, we ought to make the recording, ~~of~~ not only of deeds but of any other documents, pay as it goes. We are a thrifty people. We ought not to have to pay out of tax money a loss in running an office of that kind. And during these years we have reached the amazing peak, under Dr. Tompkins, of making a profit of \$40,000 a year.

Those documents, as I say, relate to current events and they also relate to a great many old events. They go back, for example, in the real estate of the District, to, I think, 1792, when there were a great many old land records. They have been all recopied in Dr. Thompkins' administration; they are now in good shape. And we have to remember that every time any one of you buy^s or sell^s a piece of property in the District of Columbia, you have ^{got} to check back to see whether the title is genuine or not.

Furthermore, in addition to this saving, this profit instead of the old loss, we have brought our work up to date. In those old days (when we were children) seven years ago, it would take you not only hours and days, but weeks and months before you could get recorded by your government the various necessary documents for real estate sales or purchases and many other forms of documents that had to be recorded, not only under the law, but for the sake of safety of property.

And so this Administration, I think, has done something under Dr. Thompkins, to help the business men and property owners of the District of Columbia, and at a ^{fee} cost, incidentally, ~~that is~~ that is just about as low as any place in the United States.

Then there is another thing: As I mentioned the other day, I am ~~a~~ combination of Scotch and Dutch business man. We are going to save money for the taxpayers of the District

by putting up this building because today we are paying out an enormous sum in rent -- \$240,000 a year, I think it is -- and with this new building, owned by the Government and paid for by the Government, we are going to amortize it, pay for it, through the profits that are being made today, in a very short time. And, after that, when we are in the building, there won't be any more rent to pay. So, from that point of view, as business people, we feel that this new building is a mighty good investment.

And so I am glad to come here and congratulate Dr. Thompkins and all of his assistants, his whole staff, on the splendid business-like job that has been done and to express the hope that he will be in this very important office for many long years to come for the service ^{of the} ~~to~~ community and ^{the} ~~the~~ Nation.

End

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

September 26, 1940

Informal remarks of the President in connection with the breaking of ground for the new Hall of Records, Washington, D. C., Thursday, September twenty-sixth.

1632

DOCTOR THOMPSON, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE DISTRICT:

I am very glad to come here in person today to take part in this breaking of the ground for this new Hall of Records.

Some of you know that I am so historically minded that I save everything I can get my hands on. I save old documents of all kinds, documents that go back to the early days of the Republic, and even documents that relate to the present Administration.

Having that historical sense, I believe that old records ought to be kept for historical reasons because you never can tell when something that does not seem of any particular value today may be of real value a hundred years from now.

But there is another reason. There are a great many documents that obviously will be of historical value and even of current value in our normal business life. About seven years ago I found that in the office of the Recorder of Deeds, the Government of the District was losing about \$40,000 a year. Now, of course, we ought to make the recording, not only of deeds but of any other documents, pay as it goes. We are a thrifty people. We ought not to have to pay out of tax money a loss in running an office of that kind. And during these years we have reached the amazing peak, under Dr. Thompson, of making a profit of \$40,000 a year.

These documents, as I say, relate to current events and they also relate to a great many old events. They go back, for example, in the real estate of the District, to, I think, 1792, when there were a great many old land records. They have been all recopied in Dr. Thompson's administration; they are now in good shape. And we have to remember that every time any one of you buys or sells a piece of property in the District of Columbia, you have got to check back to see whether the title is genuine or not.

Furthermore, in addition to this saving -- this profit instead of the old loss -- we have brought our work up to date. In those old days, when we were children, seven years ago, it would take you not only hours and days, but weeks and months before you could get recorded by your government the various necessary documents for real estate sales or purchases and many other forms of documents that had to be recorded, not only under the law, but for the sake of safety of property.

And so this Administration, I think, has done something under Dr. Thompson, to help the business men and property owners of the District of Columbia, and at a fee cost, incidentally, that is just about as low as any place in the United States.

Then there is another thing: As I mentioned the other day, I am a combination of Scotch and Dutch business man. We are going to save money for the taxpayers of the District by putting up this building because today we are paying out an enormous sum in rent -- \$240,000 a year, I think it is -- and with this new building, owned by the Government and paid for by the Government, we are going to amortize it, pay for it, through the profits that are being made today, in a very short time. And, after that, when we are in the building, there won't be any more rent to pay. So, from that point of view, as business people, we feel that this new building is a mighty good investment.

And so I am glad to come here and congratulate Dr. Thompson and all of his assistants, his whole staff, on the splendid business-like job that has been done and to express the hope that he will be in this very important office for many long years to come for the service of the community and the Nation.

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.