

October 28, 1940

[New York, NY - Roosevelt Park]

FDR Speech File

1327

INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
Queens Bridge Housing Project  
New York, New York  
October 23, 1940

(The text of these remarks was not released to the press.)

I am very, very grateful to all of you.

I remember this place when there was just a little fence around it and some remains of some very old buildings. This is something that makes me think that all of this country must go forward with this kind of social progress. We have accomplished some of it in a great many places but there is still a great deal more to do. Nobody knows that better than I do.

All I can tell you is that I hope you, the families who live here, will put your shoulder to the wheel and see that a lot of other families who need better housing conditions work for it and fight for it and sustain all of the public officials throughout the Union, who are working for a better America. (Applause)

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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.

INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
At the Dedication of the 38th St. Tunnel  
New York, New York  
October 28, 1940

(The text of these remarks was not released to the press.)

I discovered, a good many years ago, that the Mayor of the City of New York keeps his word. That is why I am here today.

I am going to be very, very proud all my life of this ride that I am going to take. It will not be the kind of ride that people prophesy for me a week from tomorrow, but the ride I am going to take through the 38th Street Tunnel -- that is something I will always remember.

In taking that ride, there will come back to me all kinds of memories about the last eight years, memories of people put to work and the saving of one of the most dangerous situations this country has ever been in.

I will visualize public works of every kind, a great many here in the city. But remember that in the State of New York alone there are sixty-two counties and every county has, not one but dozens of useful things that have been built, built with the cooperation of the local authorities, built, in other words, to meet the demand or the request of the locality. Those things were not foisted on the locality by some Federal Government official, but were asked for by the locality as something that the community needed.

And that has been done, not only through the lending agencies of the Government, but also through the agencies that were directly started to give work to people.

I do not go so far -- because I have lived too long and



perhaps I have had too much experience -- I do not go so far as to promise to every man, woman and child in the United States that in the next four years they will all of them have private employment. I could not do that honestly and I could not say that honorably.

But I do say something that you know, that so far as employment and work goes today, things are infinitely better than they were in the spring of 1933, and I believe your Government, your various forms of government, are working so well today, cooperating so finely, that you are going to see an increase in the existing increased employment; you are going to see a very substantial decrease among the ranks of the unemployed.

We are coming along -- we are coming along pretty well. We are going pretty fast. We are not promising Utopia or the millennium in the next four years, but we are asking you to look at what has been done and the humanitarian impulses that lie behind what has been done.

And so, my friends -- I did not know until three minutes ago that this grand crowd would be here to say "Howdy-do" -- let me tell you once more how thrilling it is going to be to go through that tunnel, and I hope to come back to New York many times and see this magnificent link between two of the principal boroughs of this great city.

Thank you.

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INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT,  
ROOSEVELT PARK, NEW YORK CITY,  
OCTOBER 28, 1940.

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I am very glad to come back here. I shall never forget when, four years ago, thousands of school children, here in front of me, repeated that splendid oath to the flag.

When I come down in this part of New York, as I have for well over a quarter of a century, I am reminded of the old prayer which says: "Fashion, God, fashion into one happy people the multitudes brought hither from many kindreds and tongues." For, my friends, that is America.

Every time I come back here I get just a little choky feeling -- it is something that grips my heart a little more each time.

And so, let me say with you, God bless America.

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