

December 1933

[Rhodion Club]

FDR Speech File

Given to John

P.P.F.

1010

12/9/33

I am a little disappointed. I had really expected that the satirists of the Gridiron Club would turn their wit and wisdom on things that are going to be done in the days to come. Here I find that you are still talking about that old accomplished fact -- the Recovery Program. The one piece of news which has not yet been discovered by the Washington correspondents is that whereas one month ago the Recovery Program was still in its experimental form, the amiable versions of the erudite and orthodox politicians and economists, who stilled the light in the admirable philosophies of Louis XIV and George III -- of Kaiser Wilhelm and the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street -- the chaste and almost inarticulate protests of these gentlemen have proved to me and to everybody else that the Recovery Program has worked, is working, is going to work and has passed from experiment to fact.

That opening parade of gentlemen bearing placards containing the letters of the alphabet was a delightful added touch. That, too, is a part of my educational campaign. And may I add, parenthetically, as the copy

reader, I find from Louis Howe and Steve Early and Marvin McIntyre, long framed in the reporting art, that your profession still needs to learn how to spell.

I recognize that we have used up most of the letters of the alphabet and it will please you, I know, to learn that I have this morning appointed the Department of Ancient Languages of Harvard University to dig me up a new alphabet. Be kind, I pray you, and do not suggest that that new alphabet will contain any of the letters of the German of Herr Hitler, the Russian of Commissar Stalin or the Italian of my good friend, Mussolini.

But let me give you two other thoughts about alphabet soup. It is good soup, but it is even better when accompanied by a little good and pure liquor and washed down by the honest bear that I have provided with it.

The other thought is that there are two ways of taking your soup: one is the noiseless way, dipping softly with a spoon and conveying it gently to the lips. The other way of eating soup is accompanied by gurgling and dribbling and other loud noises of the mouth. My information is that the vast majority of our people

prefer and are using the noiseless, painless method which is born of good manners.

Every day or so now I am reminded by newspapers and magazines that the Administration's honeymoon is over. I must be frank in telling you that I had not realized that I had been on a honeymoon. But at the same time reports came to me that there are a very large number of somewhat sore brides in this country. And the latest dope story is that some of them are getting sorer and sorer.

I cannot and do not expect that even in the stress of the needs and necessities of this period criticism will be lacking. All of us in positions of responsibility today welcome and definitely seek honest and constructive criticism. When that kind of criticism comes it is worth while and does the country much good. But those two adjectives, "honest" and "constructive" describe certain qualities in him who does the criticizing. First of all that word "honest" presupposes that the critic is without guile and is not seeking through his criticism some special gain or profit for

himself, and also that his criticism is based on a cross-section of the needs of the country as a whole, weighing every part of our national needs in their true relationship.

The other adjective, "constructive", implies that the critic will offer some substitute method, some alternative for reaching the desired end -- for the better building on a permanent basis.

When one is in a jungle, he has to try to cut himself a path in order to get out. If the wrong direction is taken, the only thing to do is to go back and try another one. We have too many people in the national jungle who are sitting still on stumps, telling those of us who are wielding the brush hock and axe that we are headed in the wrong direction and that the best thing we can do is to come and sit down on the stump with them and complain about our hard luck.

We are too busy clearing away the underbrush in order that once more we can find the open road for us to bother our heads about the brethren who still sit complainingly on stumps.

To me the wonderful fact will stand out all the days of my life, no matter what the future may bring forth, that the overwhelming majority of the men and women of this country and the overwhelming part of the press of the country has been willing to work and work hard in the common cause and it is just too bad about the few people who have seen goblins and screech owls behind every bush.

Resting

1933

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It will be purely American.

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~~washing down by~~ the honest beer that I have provided

~~as a part of~~ *as a part of America's new repast*

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Of course 90 per cent of the editors and publishers of the Nation recognize the raising of the issue of the freedom of the press as ^{one of these} ~~as a~~ hobgoblin which might have the sole merit of being amusing to children if it were not so silly -- a sort of Halloween hobgoblin produced out of a pumpkin's head.

Seriously, the country knows, the Members of the Gridiron Club know, and nearly all the editors know that this Administration has never thought of attempting to infringe the Constitutional liberties of the Press of the United States. Boil it down to simple definition-- to the intention of the framers of the Constitution -- to the interpretations by the highest Courts of the land--freedom of the Press means, in ^{first} ~~the~~ analysis and the last analysis the right of a newspaper publisher to serve up the news and serve up his own opinions or interpretations of the news in any shape, manner or form he may wish to use. This includes the right to demand of his reporters that they color their news stories to conform with the political or other objective of the editor. I am happy to say that most editors do not demand this of their reporters but I am sorry to say that some editors do.

Freedom of the press does not include the right to publish news stories or editorials which are contrary to good morals -- obscenity, for example, is not a special prerogative guaranteed by the Constitution.

Neither does freedom of the press include the right to employ small boys and keep them away from ~~normal~~ school; it does not include the right to run a newspaper office in violation of the sanitary code; neither, under the modern dispensation, does it include the right to employ anybody -- office workers or news gatherers -- for rates of pay that do not constitute a living wage or for hours which do not conform to the accepted American standard.

The best proof that the newspapers of the United States have an excellent understanding of the simple fact that no curtailment of the freedom of the press is contemplated is the fact that they have given front page space to news of other industries who are falling in line by wellnigh unanimous accord in adopting the codes of self government in cooperation with N.R.A. and at the same time have relegated this trumped-up controversy over the newspaper code to the obscure spaces among the advertising columns.

And now, my friends, I want to tell you in the sacred confidence of this room of the one disturbing thought that comes to me day after day. Here is this great Nation of ours with dollars that maintain their purchasing power; with a currency that is sounder than it has been in many years; with gold reserves greater than any Nation has ever held; with people going back to work literally by the

millions; with a recovery program that is an accepted success. And yet with this stable dollar -- with this sound currency, we in America *are* ~~not~~ disturbed by the fluctuations and the uncertainty of the currencies and the exchanges of other nations. We see our dollar constant and our good friend the Pound gyrating up and down in comparison with our dollar, and our friend the Franc turning hard springs in relation to our good stable dollar.

We wonder when we wake up in the morning where the Pound and the Franc are going to go to in the course of the day. Our importers and exporters when about to make a contract in foreign lands can not be sure what kind of money they will be paid in on the fulfillment of the contract. It is a hard problem. Here we sit, making good! Here we sit with our vast resources -- resources of population and resources from Mother Nature. We know our own future for the very simple fact that this good old dollar of ours is the *yardstick* ~~sole measure~~ of 93 per cent of everything that we grow or make in this country -- 93 per cent of all that we consume in this country. But, of course, we do feel concerned for that other little 7 per cent of things that we grow or make or use that is affected by foreign exchange.

We should like to see this 7 per cent made stable even as the other 93 per cent is stable. We should like it not only for our own concern in this 7 per cent but also because we honestly wish and hope that the other Nations of the world will so stabilize themselves that we can all be stable.

Here again it is not just a question of whose baby has the measles -- that is a selfish thought -- but it is again the application on a broader scale of what I have said before about trying to get a perspective of the whole of the Nation and not just a little part of it. We in America seek a perspective of the world and the relationship, the true relationship, of every part of the world to every other part. We hope for the stability of world currency, we hope for an increase in the exchange of goods and products between nations -- not with the thought of making one Nation rich at the expense of another but of letting all nations participate in the profits of world trade.

We who are the guests of the distinguished Members of the Oridiron Club know that in the quips, the skits and the satire there is much solid gold and that more than one true word has been spoken here tonight in jest. I am grateful to you all of you for

-10-

another happy evening -- and may I say in bidding you goodnight
that I hope the brides to whom I have referred will soon be
feeling better.

1580

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~~that if I am very fortunate I may be able to meet the author of this~~
~~reader, I find from Louis Howe and Steve Early, and~~
~~Marvin McIntire, long famed in the reporting art, that~~
~~your profession still needs to learn how to spell.~~

I recognize that we have used up most of the
letters of the alphabet and it will please you, I know,
to learn that I have this morning requested the ~~Department~~ ^{AAAP Association}
~~of Administrative Pedagogues~~ ^{to dig me up}
a new alphabet. ~~Be kind, I pray you, and do not suggest~~ ^{we need still more education}
~~that that new alphabet will contain any of the letters~~
~~of the German of Herr Hitler, the Russian Of Comissar~~
~~Stalin or the Italian of my good friend, Mussolini.~~ ^{But} It
will be purely American ~~soups~~.

But let me give you two other thoughts about ~~that~~
alphabet soup. It is good soup, but it is even better
when accompanied by the good and pure cocktails and the
honest beer that ~~we~~ ^{Andrew Farley} have provided as a part of America's
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My information is that the vast majority of our people prefer and are using the noiseless, painless method which is born of good manners.

Every day or so now I am reminded by newspapers and magazines that the Administration's honeymoon is over. I must be frank in telling you that I had not realized that I had been on a honeymoon. But at the same time reports come to me that there are a very large number of somewhat sore brides in this country. And the latest dope story is that some of them are getting sorer and sorer.

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We should like to see this 7 per cent made stable even as the other 93 per cent is stable. We should like it not only for our own concern in this 7 per cent but also because we honestly wish and hope that the other Nations of the world will so stabilize themselves that we can all be stable. *They do so well no ourselves.* Here again it is not just a question of whose baby has the measles -- that is a selfish thought-- but it is again the application on a broader scale of what I have said before about trying to get a perspective of the whole of the Nation and not just a little part of it. We in America seek a perspective

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