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DRAFT #3

SPEECH OF THE PRESIDENT

POUGHKEEPSIE, N. Y.

NOVEMBER 4, 1940

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MY NEIGHBORS OF DUTCHESS COUNTY:

My reason for speaking to you tonight is not to ask your votes on the morrow. It is rather to tell you of a little of the past and a little of the future.

It is just thirty years ago that I first campaigned in our County -- when I was running for State Senator and old Dick Connell of the News Press was running for Congress. In those days we did not have a Democratic paper in Dutchess County and Dick Connell ran for Congress so often that he finally got elected. He always said that his success was due to the fact that in previous unsuccessful campaigns he stopped at every school house he passed and made a little speech on democracy and the American Flag to the pupils. He claimed that enough school children grew up over a period of years to know him, to remember the incident, and to vote for him.

I won in that year of 1910 against the father of your present Congressman. In those days this Hudson River section of ours was closer politically between the two major parties than it has been in recent years. Speaking not in a partisan way but as one who, you know, has been always interested locally in civic betterment, I am inclined to think that close competition between the two parties in these river counties was a very good thing. Each party was striving to outdo the other, not in promises alone, but in the actualities of good government.

In those days, thirty years ago, I am inclined as an observer to believe that county and local government in Dutchess and the other counties was stimulated by the closeness of the races that were made.

The same thing was true in those days in regard to State and even National politics. We were not committed to any set way of voting. We used to have an occasional Democrat in the Congress or in the State Senate or in the Assembly and once in a blue moon this good old County of Dutchess used to go Democratic. In the interest of good

government, I think it would be a fine thing if it could go Democratic again now.

And that leads me to emphasize not in a party sense but in an American sense the need that all of us have to think day and night in terms of our own historic form of government. It is true, as we all know, that in many other parts of the world serious and sometimes successful attacks have been made on it. New forms of government, based on a theory of might rather than the theory of right, have waged wars against innocent peoples.

But in the long run I believe, for example, that the Germanic and Italian peoples, with their proud heritage of freedom, will return, with the rest of the world, to self government based on free elections.

Events abroad seem far away to us because time and distance have been so greatly shortened. We must always remember that peace in our land may depend on our thoroughly recognized ability to defend ourselves.

And you and I are thankful tonight that we have peace throughout the length and breadth of this land. And what is more, the people, by their strength, intend to keep this country at peace.

To you the men and women of my own home County,  
I speak for the last time here on Market Street on the  
eve of a campaign. All my life I have been, yes, all  
my life I shall be devoted to the welfare and interests  
of Dutchess County.

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