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Speech Drafts: Address at the Dedication of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial, January 19, 1936

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Address at the Dedication of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial,
January 19, 1936

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draft

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For the Press

January ~~25~~, 1936

(18)

This address of the President, to be delivered at the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial dedication ceremonies, American Museum of Natural History, New York City, on Sunday, January ~~25~~th, MUST BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE UNTIL RELEASED.

minutes,

Release upon delivery, expected about 2:00 P. M., Eastern Standard Time.

CAUTION: Please safeguard against premature release.

STEPHEN EARLY
Assistant Secretary to the President

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will soon

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MR. CHAIRMAN, GOVERNOR LEHMAN, MAYOR LA GUARDIA, TRUSTEES OF THE
NEW YORK STATE ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL, TRUSTEES OF THE AMERICAN MUSEUM
OF NATURAL HISTORY, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

~~Few American statesmen have touched more sides of our
national life than Theodore Roosevelt. None has had a wider range
of interests. His activities, his associations, his political achieve-
ments, his friendships, his aspirations embraced ^{virtually} ~~pretty nearly~~ every-
thing with which mankind is concerned. And he was as much at home in
one field of activity as another. He never drew his ideas from a
narrow induction. His enthusiasms kept pace with his interest. He
had a magnificent robustness. Nothing human was alien to him.~~

~~"He was brother to king and soldier and slave."~~

~~II~~ This memorial, the corner stone of which I laid, and in the
dedication of which I am privileged to participate this afternoon, is
typical of Theodore Roosevelt. It reflects the universality of his
mind and of his interests. Its decorations -- in place or in planning
-- tell part of the ~~marvelous~~ story of his life ^{his work and his play:} they depict
the construction of the Panama Canal in which he was ^{the} dominating spirit;
the Treaty of Portsmouth, which ended the Russo-Japanese War; the quest
for scientific knowledge which carried him into the African jungle;
symbolic figures of Fauna and Flora to tell generations to come of
his interest in nature and in conservation -- all these bear witness
to his intense vitality and to his varied contributions to our national
culture. The Roosevelt Memorial Commission has been faithful in executing
its trust.

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quality about Theodore Roosevelt which all of us who knew him recall at this hour. We think of him not as an abstract being dwelling apart on the heights but rather as a friendly ^{soul} ~~spirit~~ pervading this very hall which we are dedicating in his memory. ~~Fitting indeed is it then, that this stately ^{memorial} structure is to be used daily in a ^{useful} practicable way thereby furthering his aims and perpetuating his ideals.~~

I Theodore Roosevelt possessed talents and abilities unusual even among leaders of men. Whatever he did, he did with all of his might. He was elected to the New York Assembly while still in his twenties and became forthwith a nationally known figure. He continued to be a national figure when at thirty-one he was made a Civil Service Commissioner and worked with all the zeal of a crusader for Civil Service reform. His passion for justice and for law and order found outlet in his administration as President of the Board of Police Commissioners of New York. His Spanish War service followed. ^{His} Rough Riders caught the imagination of the country and he became ^{a national hero.} ~~the hero of every school boy in the land.~~ Up to his time the Vice Presidency had ^{generally} been the graveyard of political ambitions -- the Vice Presidents who had succeeded to the Presidency had already passed into political oblivion. But we know that for him the office meant no such obliteration.

~~Theodore Roosevelt's predominant trait, according to one of the members of his Cabinet, was combativeness.~~ ^{With this spirit of ^{vital activity,} ~~combativeness~~} ~~be it also remembered that he received the Nobel Peace Prize.~~

^{In him} was combined a passion for righteousness and that strong sense of justice

which found expression in the "Square Deal". Race, creed, color were not determining factors with him. He took a man for what he was.

"A man who is good enough to shed his blood for his country", said he at Springfield, Illinois on a fourth of July, "is good enough to be given a square deal afterwards. More than that no man is entitled to, and less than that no man shall have."

~~His settlement of the coal strike at the turn of the century was, in his own words: "much the most important thing I did about labor from every standpoint".~~

In his first Message to Congress he had written: "The most vital problem with which this country, and, for that matter, the whole civilized world, has to deal, is the problem which has for one side the betterment of social conditions, moral and physical, in large cities, and for another side the effort to deal with that tangle of far-reaching questions which we group together when we speak of 'labor.'"

This creed for social justice may be found in these quotations from later messages:

"In the vast and complicated mechanism of our modern civilized life, the dominant note is the note of industrialism, and the relations of capital and labor, and especially of organized capital and organized labor, to each other, and to the public at large, come second in importance only to the intimate questions of family life."

"The corporation has come to stay, just as the trade union has come to stay. Each can do and has done great good. Each should be favored as long as it does good, but each should be sharply checked where it acts against law and justice."

We still remember how those whom he denounced with righteous wrath winced under the stigma of such flashing epithets as "malefactors of great wealth", "the wealthy criminal class" and the "lunatic fringe".

He had a gift for pungent phrases and boiled down his whole political philosophy into such a homely and popular maxim as "speak softly but carry a big stick". No wonder that John Morley said in 1904: "The two things in America which seem to me most extraordinary are Niagara Falls and President Roosevelt."

~~Jacob Riis, one of Theodore Roosevelt's many biographers, as well as one of his most idolatrous followers, cites this as the finest compliment he ever heard paid to his hero: A certain lady had always been looking for some great hero in whom to embody all her high ideals, and, said she: "I always wanted to make Roosevelt out that; but, somehow, every time he did something that seemed really great it turned out, upon looking at it, that it was only just the right thing to do." Riis adds: "And that comes as near anything could to putting him just right."~~

~~Also~~ With clearness of vision, ^{of} energy, ^{of} and unfaltering faith, he labored through his entire strenuous career to transform politics from a corrupt traffic to a public service. With a very passion for justice and equality before the law he sought with voice and pen, with every resource at his command, to obtain for men everywhere their constitutional guarantee of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I have ^{purposefully} emphasized the many-sidedness ^{his} of ~~his~~ character.

That extraordinary range of interests makes difficult the task of any one who would adequately summarize his career and achievements. Varied

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His volumes on American history, on current problems, and on his own experiences as hunter and explorer, captured the interest of the American people.

We know how he loved the great outdoors. He loved

as were his political activities, the scope of his literary interests was no less extended. ~~Two~~ ^{his} volumes in American biography as widely removed as Thomas Hart Beaton and Gouverneur Morris came early from his pen along with substantial works on phases of American history, ~~which captured his interest.~~ ^{on current problems, and in his own experiences as hunter and explorer,}

~~We~~ ^{we} know how he loved the great outdoors. ~~Hunting and exploration became passions.~~ He loved the ~~lonely~~ life of the boundless plains which he had known as a rancher in the ~~Bad Lands of the~~ West.

He found strength and solace in the wilderness. ~~he was ever a lover of bold, wild freedom.~~ He knew the birds and animals and trees and plants and flowers. ~~This earlier experience which he records in "The Winning of the West" later was to be enlarged in the quest for big game in the African jungle and in the exploration of unknown rivers in the Valley of the Amazon, mightiest river on the globe.~~

~~It~~ And so he worked and wrought and wrote. His familiarity with ~~all~~ literature, with history and biography was reflected with ~~such vivid effect~~ alike in his private writings and in his public utterances. Who but he could have given Bunyan's "Man-with-the-Muckrake" an emphasis which he gave it thirty years ago so that the term "muckraker" passed into the language and is current with us to this day?

~~It~~ He enriched and enlarged and extended our cultural horizon. Out of the rich ~~and varied~~ experiences he had known, his mind received a cast which later was reflected with ~~vividness~~ when he

infused action and life and color into what before his time had been a
document at dull and drab ~~state papers~~ ^{National}. Time would not permit even a recital
of the titles of his books, so wide was the range of his writing.

I Everything about ~~this many sided man~~ ^{him} was big, vital,
national. He was able to see ~~all~~ ^{great} problems in their true perspective
because he ~~always~~ looked at the Nation as a whole. There was nothing
narrow ~~or parochial~~ ^{on local} or sectional about him. It is not for me here

today to speak of the final place which history will accord Theodore
Roosevelt; ~~nor would I at this time enlarge upon the beauty and~~
~~unity and unalloyed happiness of his domestic life.~~ *world knows*

That Theodore Roosevelt was a great patriot and a great soul.

I When he died the Secretary of his Class at Harvard in sending
to his classmates a notice of his passing, added this quotation from
"Pilgrim's Progress":

"After this it was noised abroad that Mr. Valiant-for-truth
was taken with a summons by the same post as the other, and had
this for a token that the summons was true, 'That his pitcher was
broken at the fountain.' When he understood it, he called for
his friends and told them of it. Then he said, 'I am going to my
Father's, and though with great difficulty I have got hither,
yet now I do not repent me of all the trouble I have been at to
arrive where I am. My sword I give to him that shall succeed me
in my pilgrimage, and my courage and skill to him that can get it.
My marks and scars I carry with me, to be a witness for me that I
have fought His battles who now will be my rewarder.'"

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