

For Release After Delivery.

A D D R E S S

by

HONORABLE HOMER CUMMINGS
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
CHAIRMAN OF THE CONNECTICUT DELEGATION

SECONDING THE NOMINATION

of

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT

at the

DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

PHILADELPHIA

Friday afternoon, June 26, 1936.

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE
CONVENTION:

In behalf of the Democracy of Connecticut I express sincere appreciation of this opportunity to speak in support of the nomination of President Roosevelt.

To those whose political hopes have been frustrated and who find themselves out of power involuntarily, the last three years may have seemed like "three long years"; but to the American people they have been three swift-moving years, three fruitful years, three years of achievement and triumph in the face of difficulties that might well have appalled the stoutest heart.

When the present Administration came into power, our country was in the throes of a depression far more devastating than war. Our financial structure was in ruins. The distress of our farming population had become a nation-wide tragedy. Our industries had practically ceased to function. Foreign trade had been brought to a standstill, price levels were falling everywhere, and the burden of debt was beating our people to their knees.

I do not pause to assess the responsibility for these conditions. The essential fact is that they actually existed and were bequeathed by the outgoing Administration to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Did he lack vision? Did he lack resourcefulness? Did he lack courage? Did he lack devotion to the

public service? Did he lack the gift of leadership, or the capacity to guide in a great national emergency? The united voice of America testifies to the contrary.

His immediate problem had to do with the financial and banking crisis. On Monday, March 6, 1933, he issued his first proclamation which suspended the operation of all of our banking institutions throughout the country, prevented their destruction and afforded an opportunity for rehabilitation. That dramatic and drastic exercise of presidential power was a superb act of courageous statesmanship - and it saved the nation.

Moreover, the President, acting in close cooperation with a patriotic Congress, approved of a series of Acts and promulgated supporting Executive Orders that checked the outflow of gold, stopped domestic hoarding, and effected a sweeping change in the financial structure of our country.

Our credit never stood higher than it does today and the American dollar is the soundest monetary unit on the face of the earth.

Nor was the President content to rest with these achievements. He realized, even if his critics did not, the extent of the task involved in the effort to restore the broken life of America. The need was imperative and he moved with swiftness to the works of mercy and rehabilitation. Those who, for selfish purposes, seek to sabotage this program of recovery assume a heavy responsibility.

The New Deal is not on trial. I do not come to defend the New Deal or the policies of the Administration. I proclaim them as the source of our salvation and our security. Those who resist social advance, those who oppose necessary change, those who regard the past as good enough for the present -- those are the groups that are on trial before the bar of public opinion.

When the history of this era is written, in the cool and contemplative days of a later period far removed from the animosities and misunderstandings of the present time, President Roosevelt will be more and more clearly revealed not only as a friend of human justice and social progress, but as the protector and defender of our accredited form of Government, which, by his genius, he has vindicated.

The dawning future is aglow with promise. Everywhere, on every hand, in every line of activity, there is a constantly improving situation.

President Roosevelt has done more than restore material prosperity. He has restored the faith of our people.

Every President who has guided this nation through a troubled hour has been denounced as a destroyer of the Constitution, as a usurper, as a dictator, and as an enemy of honest wealth. Turn back the pages of our history for a moment and read this characteristic attack upon our first President:

"The American nation has been debauched by Washington *** The President has violated the Constitution."

So virulent were the assaults made upon him that, in a moment of exasperation, Washington said he would rather be in his grave than in the Presidency.

Let me draw your attention to the following quotation:

"We saw the Executive power grasp in one hand the sword and the purse of the nation and in the other the Legislative and the judicial authority, and hold them in relentless grip to the complete annihilation of our constitutional rights. *** We saw trade disordered, Government finances ruined, an enormous debt piled incalculably high, intolerable taxes ***. We saw the superb Constitution, under which our country has grown great and respected, torn in shreds."

What I have just read sounds strangely like a pronouncement by the Liberty League or the leaflet recently distributed amongst the delegates to this Convention by five unhappy warriors. On the contrary it is a statement made by a leading Northern newspaper in 1862 with reference to Abraham Lincoln.

And now, in many influential quarters, similar attacks are being made upon President Roosevelt, who has carried the Government, the Constitution, and the people safely through

the peril and misery of an unparalleled depression to a new and happier day.

All that he is, all that he has, all that he hopes, he has placed at the service of his fellow-citizens. I say to you that the people do well to love the President. By an unerring instinct they recognize his faith in them, his passion for justice, his espousal of the cause of the exploited, and his devotion to our institutions. They understand full well the attacks that have been made upon him. They are not disconcerted because he is unpopular with the beneficiaries of the abuses to which he has put an end, and they love him for the enemies he has made. No nominee of reaction, no candidate content to deal in platitudes, no sterile traditionalism, no excesses of radicalism, no program of abuse can seduce them from their faith in their great leader, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.