

For release
2 P. M.,
Thursday,
August 20, 1936.

ADDRESS

by

HONORABLE HOMER CUMMINGS

C. C.

Attorney General of the United States

Delivered on GOVERNOR'S DAY

at

Springfield, Illinois

Thursday, August 20, 1936.

1:00 P. M.

Governor Horner, Senator Lewis, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I bring you a personal message from the President of the United States. It is in the form of a letter which reads as follows:

"THE WHITE HOUSE

"WASHINGTON

"August 12, 1936,

"Dear Mr. Attorney General:

"When you address the Illinois State Fair at Springfield on Governor's Day will you please convey to Governor Horner and to all present my hearty greetings. I regret exceedingly that circumstances beyond my control prevent my acceptance of the kind invitation to participate personally in the observance of Governor's Day.

"The people of Illinois have proven their mettle in every national crisis and it seems to me that their valiant spirit was never more forcibly exemplified than in their determination to hold their State Fair in the midst of their battle against an appalling drouth. Such courage and such determination are an inspiration to the rest of the country. They proclaim to all the world that progress toward agricultural recovery shall not be halted either by hazard of nature or by mistake of man. A state which attacks its problems in that valiant spirit is bound to win.

"Very sincerely yours,

"(S) Franklin D. Roosevelt

"The Honorable,
"The Attorney General."

Knowing that Governor Horner, for whom we all have the greatest admiration, will cherish this letter as a valuable memento of this inspiring meeting, I present the original to him with my best wishes and the compliments of President Roosevelt.

We in Washington are familiar with Governor Horner's long record of faithful service and we are stirred by the knowledge of the courage and executive skill with which he has administered his great office.

It is, also, a source of satisfaction to have the privilege of speaking from the same platform with my old-time friend Senator James Hamilton Lewis. His outstanding public service and his fascinating personality, have made him one of the most beloved and respected leaders in our national life.

Back of the turmoil and confusion of a political campaign, back of the charges and countercharges there lie real issues. Properly to appraise them we must not fail to grasp the significance of certain outstanding facts. If there is one truth so clearly obvious that it is not open to serious challenge, it is that the long sought prosperity, which so persistently eluded us during the days of President Hoover is in process of glorious realization under the Roosevelt Administration.

Business is on the upgrade everywhere. I do not ask you to take my word for it. I merely ask that you look about you and, if you wish confirmation, read the recent report of the United States Chamber of Commerce, an organization distinctly critical of the present administration. For the first half of this year building construction throughout the country

has increased 76% over the first half of 1935. Employment in the manufacturing industries is now at the highest point since 1930. Retail establishments, stores and shops, are employing 178,000 more people than they did six months ago. Foreign trade is steadily increasing. Wheat, which the farming population was burning for fuel in 1932 and 1933, has crossed the dollar line. Prices for grain, cattle, hogs, and sheep have made proportionate increases. No one will dispute that the average farmer is better off than he has been for a decade.

To those who were stricken in the drought areas, the Federal Government rushed aid as rapidly as it was possible to do so. [Here again was an illustration of what the administration has long recognized, and which the opposition is so reluctant to admit; namely that there are problems with which the States alone are powerless to deal and which need the material support of the government for their solution. The dust, the winds, and the heat do not recognize State lines. The forces of nature have jurisdictions of their own.]

The United States Steel Corporation reported earnings on its common stock for the first time in five years. General Motors Corporation registered the highest earnings for the first quarter of this year since 1929. Chicago Mail Order houses, whose business is largely with farmers and residents of small towns, recorded the best business not in three years, but in fifteen years.

The gross income of our farming groups has increased, approximately, three billion dollars a year since 1932, and more than thirty million of our people, in the agricultural areas, instead of living under the constant

fear of eviction and penury, have developed a power to buy that has stimulated activity in every nook and corner of our country.

Statistics recently compiled by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York disclosed that 909 corporations, consisting of 700 Industrials, 149 Railroads and 60 Utilities, made a net profit of \$142,000,000 in 1932. These same companies, in 1935, made a net profit of \$1,568,000,000, being more than a ten fold increase. One great automobile company in 1932 made a profit of \$165,000; in 1935 it increased its profit one thousand fold to a total amount of \$167,000,000. A summary by the National City Bank of the profits of 2,010 companies showed earnings for the year 1935 of \$2,541,000,000, an increase of 42% over those for 1934, which in turn had been far better than 1933 and 1932. This year the statistics are still more encouraging.

And now permit me to point out one additional figure, which becomes particularly ironical if we bear in mind the tremendous efforts made by the power lobbies to defeat wholesome regulation of the public utility holding companies. They said that such regulations would destroy the business. They circularized the stockholders. They advertised in the newspapers. They denounced the administration. They filled the air with imprecations and forebodings; and yet the fact remains that power production in the last three years of the Old Deal declined 9% and in the first three years of the New Deal increased 326%.

Prosperity is no longer a myth. It is no longer just around the corner. It is here.

What was it the American people expected of President Roosevelt when they elected him? What did they want him to do? What did they hope he would

be able to achieve? Did they for a moment expect him to take over the Hoover policies and carry on from that point? Or were they prepared to support him in affirmative measures of relief, reconstruction and reform?

Imagine that you are standing once more amid the wreckage of the Hoover administration in 1933! Imagine that you are able to look ahead to the present moment! Would you not return fervent thanks to Providence that once again, in a great crisis, America had produced a leader to meet the need of the hour?

When the present administration came into power it initiated a program known as "THE NEW DEAL". That program consisted of specific measures that, taken together, constitute the record of the Administration. How does the opposition deal with this record?

Our Republican friends seem to have developed a peculiar form of strategy. It is chiefly characterized by its violence and its vagueness.

One can read the Republican Platform, the acceptance speech of Governor Landon, and the various fulminations of Colonel Knox, without detecting one definite suggestion of statutory change. It is as if it were the purpose to smite the eye, vex the ear, and submerge the country in a deluge of meaningless words.

Candidates busily intent upon saying nothing whatever will be more and more pressed, as the campaign goes on, for specific utterances and will find it more and more difficult to maintain their reticence. The average voter is apt to convert himself into a human interrogation point and insist upon being shown how and why.

The Republican campaign is, at best, an exploit in expediency. When the Republicans failed to re-nominate Mr. Hoover, when their platform failed to endorse his administration, and, indeed, avoided any reference to him, it was tantamount to an apology to the American people. [No political party ever won an election by apologizing for what it did less than four years before.] But it is suggested that there is a New Deal in the Republican Party. If this implies a repudiation of its previous leadership and record, then, in all good conscience, there should be an interim of repentance before an attempt is made once more to seize national power. If the Republican New Deal is not a repudiation but merely a camouflage to win an election then it amounts to a gigantic hoax and is not entitled to be trusted at all.

When the amiable Governor Landon stands upon the door-step of his new political edifice, and invites the people to enter, it is rather disconcerting to see, crowded within the portals and peering from the windows, the same old groups that sought to "gang up" on the government and sabotage the program of recovery, at every state of its development. But, without the support of these reactionary influences, the Landon candidacy would immediately collapse.

In his acceptance speech of July 30, Colonel Knox, in one of his lighter moments, took occasion to say that "when the American People have a date they want to see what the lady looks like." This is an admirable counsel of caution. If the lady who hides behind the sunflower is dressed in a Liberty League gown, with a Wall Street purse to match, and speaks the platitudes of Hoover, with the voice of Hearst, we are entitled to see what she looks like, so that we may compare her with "Miss Democracy".

Let us have done with generalities. If, when the leaders of the opposition indulge in tirades against "government in business", they mean thereby to refer to such specific measures as the Tennessee Valley project, or the Truth-in-Securities Act, let them say so, and tell us whether they propose to let these measures stand, or whether they seek to do away with them.

If when they talk about "regimentation," they refer to the efforts to aid Agriculture, let them say so.

If when they talk about "sound money" they mean to revalue the gold dollar, or go back to the gold coin standard, let them say so. If when they talk about returning to the "American method" they mean to return to the "Republican method" that existed prior to March 4, 1933, let them say so.

If, as Republican leaders seem to suggest, the Soil Conservation plan was proposed in Republican quarters some years ago, then, at least let them have the grace to admit that while a few of them thought about it, President Roosevelt did something about it. They had twelve years in which to act. The Republicans promised the farmer relief in 1920, and he did not get any. They promised the farmer relief in 1924, and he

did not get any. They promised him relief in 1928 and he did not get any. Their record on farm relief is "a rain of promise and a drought of fulfillment". Roosevelt promised relief in 1932, and the farmer got it.

The American people are entitled to know what the Republican Party proposes to do with the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation which set up a fund for the insurance of bank deposits. The record seems to disclose that Governor Landon opposed this measure. Does he oppose it now? Does the Republican Party oppose it? Do they intend to repeal this law? A little while ago there was a bank failure at East Hampton, in Middlesex County, Connecticut. It so happened that there was no depositor in that bank who had a deposit in excess of \$5,000. That was a case in which every deposit was covered by government insurance and not one single depositor lost a cent. The fifty-two million people who have deposits in American banks are entitled to definite information as to the Republican attitude on this vital matter.

We are entitled also to know what the Republican candidates think about the Farm Credit Administration and the Home Owners Loan Corporation, through which the Roosevelt Administration saved innumerable farms and homes from foreclosure.

What does the Republican Party propose to do about the Truth-in-Securities Act, the Stock Exchange Act, and the regulation of public utility holding companies? Are these acts to be retained or to be repealed? Are they to be amended, and if so in what particulars? Are we to return to the palmy days of the bucket shop and stock frauds?

What is the precise attitude of Governor Landon toward the Social Security program? He proposed, in his acceptance speech, to amend the Act so as "to make it workable". If by this he means to advocate devitalizing amendments which have, from time to time, been suggested by those who never desired to see this law enacted, then let him say so.

What have the Republican candidates to say about the Civilian Conservation Corps? Senator Steiwer, in his keynote address at the Republican Convention, spoke contemptuously of this project. Personally I hesitate to think of the price we would have had to pay in bitter sorrow and useless human wastage if those 1,250,000 boys had not been given a chance at rehabilitation in an outdoor life while engaged in constructive conservation projects. Was it not a good thing to take these youths from idleness and give them opportunity and training in the Civilian Conservation Corps? What have the Republican candidates to say on this subject?

If the leaders of the Republican Party have any constructive program to submit concerning collective bargaining, improve working conditions, the sweat-shop and child labor, let them speak, for the people are eager to hear.

Governor Landon, so I am informed, plans to make some political addresses within the next few days. Will he supply a bill of particulars? I think not. It is far more likely that he will cling tenaciously to a program of obscurity, avoid affirmative suggestions, and limit his challenge

to claimed defects of administration. Perhaps from his standpoint this is the best policy, but I am not at all sure that it is a frank way in which to deal with the American people. If our program were badly conceived, or unsuccessful in operation, the air would be filled with the sounds of insistent voices advocating a repeal of existing laws and the substitution of other and better measures.

The achievements of President Roosevelt stand like a great rock in a weary land. The works of mercy and rehabilitation have gone forward with swiftness and honest purpose. The broken life of America has been restored and hope has re-entered the homes of our people.

Let us support our President who has served so well in a difficult hour, and whose great leadership is needed along the upward path upon which America has again set her feet.