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ADDRESS OF

HONORABLE HOMER CUMMINGS  
C. C.]  
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

Delivered at  
Book-Cadillac Hotel,  
Detroit, Michigan,  
Tuesday, October 27, 1936,  
10:00 P. M.

Broadcast over Station WXYZ  
and a State-wide hook-up.

The Attorney General said in part:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is a source of very real pleasure to visit Detroit and to have an opportunity to address the people of this magnificent City. I am grateful, too, for the privilege of speaking over the radio to the citizens of this great State. I am happy to appear upon the same platform with my friend, your former Mayor, Frank Murphy. He has not only rendered an outstanding service to this City as its Chief Magistrate during a period of great difficulty, but he has demonstrated his qualities of leadership in many other fields of activity.

It seems to have been his fate to be called upon to deal with tasks of a kind that put to severe test the highest qualities of those who undertake them. No problem connected with the Federal Government was more delicate than that which had to do with the guidance of the people in the Philippine Islands during the critical period of transition leading up to independence. It was not only a difficult task, but a fascinating one as well. It required a knowledge of human nature, unflinching patience, generous sympathy, tactful diplomacy, sound character and incorruptible integrity.

Frank Murphy, as Governor General of the Philippine Islands, has carried forward to success a program of the highest importance to his country and to the people of the friendly Islands whose progress he sought to serve. He disclosed what we knew he abundantly possessed - qualities of statesmanship of the highest order.

The people of Michigan should have no difficulty in recognizing a great leadership when it is available, and in making certain that such in-

valuable ability is enlisted in the service of the state. When Michigan joins the great galaxy of states that on the third of November will participate in the triumphant reelection of President Roosevelt, it will be an added joy to know that it has elected Frank Murphy as its Governor.

Detroit is a great and vital city. Its people have good cause to take deep satisfaction in the story of its steady growth from humble beginnings to its present magnificent realization. Here are centered innumerable commercial and financial activities, as well as one of the most vital, useful and constructive industries characteristic of American life. Here the people had a peculiar and special reason for believing in the security of their jobs, the safety of their homes, and the certainty of a constantly broadening prosperity. And yet, in an evil hour, these beliefs were undermined and these hopes were frustrated.

It requires no visitor from another State to recall to your mind the break up, the wreckage, and the despair that were everywhere apparent but a few short years ago. Surely Detroit has known the bitterness of the depression, and, in common with every other industrial city throughout our country, it has experienced the revivifying effects of the policies of the administration. The facts to which I have referred speak more eloquently and persuasively than the words of political orators, partisan newspapers, or wishful candidates. The disaster which overtook Detroit visited every section of America, industrial and agricultural as well. If there is anything that the recent depression has taught us, it is that we stand or fall together. We are one people and no large segment of our population can remain long in distress without its effects being felt throughout the country.

Ingenious and, at times, grossly unworthy attempts are being made by various devices to confuse the issues, create prejudices, and mislead the public mind. For instance, there seems to be a constantly recurring assertion that President Roosevelt is setting class against class. The very opposite of this statement is true. What he is seeking is a correction of social evils, a broader based existence, a wider participation in the benefits and advantages of our common country, and a more generous distribution of prosperity, so that there will be less and less occasion for class antagonism. The difficulty is that there has been too much of class control, and too little control in the interest of all the people. I submit to you a simple interrogatory - is it best to let evil conditions go on until there is a widespread class consciousness of unadjusted inequities or is it wiser and more statesman-like to correct these wrongs in the interest of domestic peace and mutual good-feeling?

Another device which, for the most part has fallen into disuse since the Liberty League went into hiding, is to bemoan the desperate situation into which the Constitution has fallen and to shed ostentacious tears over the affront put upon the Supreme Court. President Roosevelt is depicted in both instances as the chief offender. This particular issue seems to be in a languishing condition, dying from indifference and neglect. Occasionally, however, sporadic attempts are made to revive it and to breathe into it again

the breath of life.

No one is more feverishly industrious in pursuing this harmless occupation than your own very able and distinguished Senator Vandenberg. I esteem him as a personal friend, honor him for his high attainments and respect him as the most effective orator that the opposition can summon to its support. I freely concede that no one is better qualified than he to rattle the dry bones of a moribund political issue. [He has an amazing and prolific gift of language and one cannot fail to admire the extraordinary skill with which he is able to sprinkle verbal dewdrops on a withered cliché and make it bloom again.] He is resourceful. There are no limits to his versatility, and within the last few days he has astounded America by developing to a high point the noble art of violent debate with a Victrola record. He is inordinately concerned for the safety of the Republic and, although I wish him no harm, I am almost moved to regret that he did not take the nomination himself so that these vital issues might be more fully and adequately debated.

The strange concern which Senator Vandenberg feels for the Constitution and the Courts would be abated to a marked extent if he would permit himself to review the long history of the development of constitutional law. It is a history of controversy and a record of differences of opinion. Mr. Chief Justice Hughes well understands the situation, and, in an address delivered at a recent meeting of the American Law Institute in Washington, made the following statement:

"Of course, it is to be expected that there will be differences of opinion. How amazing it is that in the midst of controversies on every conceivable subject, one should ex-

pect unanimity of opinion upon difficult legal questions! In the highest ranges of thought, in theology, philosophy and science, we find differences of view on the part of the most distinguished experts, -- theologians, philosophers and scientists. The history of scholarship is a record of disagreements. And when we deal with questions relating to principles of law and their application, we do not suddenly rise into a stratosphere of icy certainty."

Unfortunately "the stratosphere of icy certainty" is Arthur's habitual habitat. Occasionally he descends, drifting down as it were on a verbal parachute, waving gaily to the populace and scattering leaflets upon their devoted heads in which he describes the terrible things that have come to pass while he was aloft. It is an amazing and entrancing spectacle.

I think it is fair to say that those who consider themselves the especial guardians of the Constitution and violently attack the intelligence or patriotism of those who do not agree with them, are rendering small service to an adequate understanding of the situation.

The opposition to the President's policies does not come from the people; it comes from relatively small but very influential and powerful groups, supported by enormous wealth and having at their disposal unlimited means of propaganda.

They think primarily in terms of dollars, or the power that dollars represent, and feel little concern for social measures that sound in terms of humanity. I am puzzled by the thought processes of some of these influential and disgruntled citizens who, for so many years, have been riding high, wide, and let me say, not so very handsome. Why should they be enraged

because prosperity is returning? Why are they not content to accept it gracefully? Can it be that they are not willing to have the country prosper except upon their own terms? Why do they not turn in and work with the rest of us to meet our common problems? Are we not all Americans? is this not one country? Are the people in distress not our friends and brothers?

I sometimes think that these incredible people who report greatly increased profits and simultaneously denounce the President must be harboring an inferiority complex. Somewhere, deep down in their subconscious minds there resides a sense of frustration that releases itself in the unbridled outbursts with which, unfortunately, we are all so familiar. They are in the inglorious position of sitting on their money bags, watching the world go by, uttering cries of protest and terror, while they accumulate, at the same time, constantly increasing bank balances.

It is, perhaps, not strange that those who have long controlled the affairs of Government and have turned their power to private advantage, should be resentful of a leadership that is less concerned with their privileges than with the needs of the great masses of the people. By every device known to ingenuity they seek to disrupt the Government's program and break the faith of the people in their President. Every great leader we have ever had has been the victim of calculated slander and reckless invective. All of our great Presidents have had their detractors. Washington knew them.

Jefferson knew them. Jackson knew them, and so on down the list of the illustrious men who gave all they had in the service of their country. No one knew them better than the Great Emancipator, whose mighty spirit still broods over a troubled people. He knew them with all their meanness, all their malice, and all their venom. These wretched traducers proclaimed him a tyrant, a dictator, and a usurper. They said that he was unfit for his great office. They said that he was a waster of the people's substance. They said that he had loaded the country with intolerable taxes and had "piled an enormous debt incalculably high." They said that he was an enemy of our form of Government and had "torn the Constitution to tatters."

And now history repeats itself. Roosevelt knows them, and we know them too for precisely what they are; and their excesses confirm us in our faith and allegiance. 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. 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.