

For release
Morning papers
Saturday
October 31, 1936.

ADDRESS OF

HONORABLE HOMER CUMMINGS

C. C.

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

LYRIC THEATRE

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30, 1936.

9:30 P.M.

Broadcast over Station WFBR

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

There could be no privilege more exhilarating^{ing} than to address the citizens of this historic city in the midst of a great political campaign. Maryland is a beautiful State, the home of romance and charm; and, may I add, the land of intensive and uninterrupted political debate. Moreover, it is the scene of the helpful activities of that versatile and somewhat peculiar Jeffersonian democrat, Frank Kent and the serviceable poll conducted by the thoughtful management of the Baltimore Sun. With these important factors working in happy unison and moving to a common end, it ought not to be difficult to win a glorious democratic victory in November.

The great leaders and statesmen of Maryland have, from the beginning, played an important role in the history of our country. I would not attempt to call the roster of your illustrious men, but I cannot refrain, in this presence, from paying a tribute to one of your noblest sons who has but recently passed away - Governor Albert C. Ritchie. His services have, for all time, enriched the history of your State. He stands amongst your immortals.

Maryland has known the bitterness of the depression, and in common with every other state in the union, it has experienced the revivifying effects of the policies of the Administration. These are facts which speak more eloquently than all the words of political orators, partisan newspapers, and wishful candidates.

If there is one thing that the recent depression has taught us, it is that we are one people and that no large segment of our population can remain long in distress without its effects being felt throughout the country. When

the farmers are impoverished, they cannot buy; when they cannot buy, the manufacturers cannot sell; and when the manufacturers cannot sell, the factories cut down their time, or close entirely and the industrial population is soon in want. If this happens hunger thrusts its gaunt hand into the homes of the poor, and evil forces are set afoot that threaten the security of our form of Government.

Such were the conditions that the President had to meet. Certain persons, whose thought processes have apparently ceased to function, assert 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?

Republican leadership has not met this test nor is it capable of meeting it.

However much Governor Landon and Colonel Knox may camouflage their theories by using such a term as "the American Way," the fact remains that they are distrustful of any governmental policy which does not hark back to the days of laissez faire and to what they so lovingly describe as "rugged individualism", which is the doctrine of each man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.

At the beginning of this Administration the farmers were in distress. The prices they could obtain for their harvests were not sufficient to feed them and pay the interest on their mortgages. The Old Deal had a speedy way of handling that situation. It was to foreclose the mortgages and oust the farmers from their homes. This process was going on in the last months of the Hoover Administration at the rate of a thousand a day. The cost of foreclosing the farm and dispossessing the farmer was trivial compared to the cost of rehabilitating him, or easing him over his difficulties. The President and Congress chose the latter method. They provided for farm loans which have enabled the farmers to save their lands and again become self-supporting citizens. But certain thoughtless critics of the administration assert that the President "retarded recovery". Do you suppose for a moment that the agricultural program of the Administration had no beneficial effect upon the farmers' income and, thereby, upon the general upturn toward prosperity? Do you suppose that the Farm Credit Administration produced no helpful results?

Do you suppose that the Federal Housing Administration, which made possible the refinancing of mortgages at a lessened rate of interest, was not a useful measure? Do you suppose for a moment that it was "retarding" recovery to save homes through the Home Owners Loan Corporation? Do you suppose it was holding back America to swing the Reconstruction Finance Corporation into action to rescue the stockholders and creditors of banks, insurance companies, and railroads? Do you suppose that the money put in circulation in connection with the Public Works Administration and the Works Progress Administration, did not find its way into the channels of trade and into the tills of every shop and store in America?

Do you think for one split second that America would have been better off if the Civilian Conservation Corps had never been organized? Would it have been better to permit the 1,500,000 boys who have found places in these camps to wander aimlessly in the streets and drift into the evil ways that thrive upon idleness? Was America being outranged when the Federal Deposit Insurance Act was passed making safe the deposits of fifty-two million citizens in the banks of our country? Was the Administration lacking in wisdom when it saved and rehabilitated our system of currency and finance?

Do you think that the laboring groups and the farming groups should have received less favorable consideration at the hands of the Government? Was it or was it not, a good thing to establish collective bargaining and seek to abolish child labor and the sweatshop?

Was American prosperity advanced or "retarded" when the Administration passed Statutes regulating stock market transactions with a view to protecting the public against the issuance of spurious and worthless securities? Was American prosperity being "retarded" when, through the activities of the Tennessee Valley Authority, utility rates were lowered everywhere? Was it good or bad for the morale of the country to adopt the Social Security Act, embodying provisions for old-age insurance and grants to states for widows' pensions, child welfare and public health service? Was America injured when the Administration, through international arrangements, extended and revived our languishing foreign trade and brought about a stabilization of international exchange? Was the Administration disregardful of the true interests of our country when it inaugurated the doctrine of the "good neighbor" and produced a feeling of friendliness amongst the nations on this side of the Atlantic which had not been known for generations?

No, my friends, there is no substance whatever to the Republican claim that the President has "retarded" prosperity. Prosperity is here in constantly increasing abundance and it has been brought about by well-conceived measures promptly enacted, intelligently directed and vigorously administered.

So hard put to it are Republican leaders to explain away the extraordinary recovery the American people have made, that they assert that the recovery in Europe has been more rapid than it has been in this country, and that the unemployment problem there no longer creates a serious menace.

I think it was Josh Billings who, at one time, remarked with reference to a certain person that "the difficulty with him is that he knows so many things that are not so." If you look across the waters to the troubled people in foreign lands you will find little encouragement for the criticism of conditions in this country. To mop up unemployment by putting millions into the army and setting more millions to work manufacturing munitions may be one way to meet the unemployment situation, but let me say to Governor Landon that it is not the "American Way." And let me add this too! With millions of storm troops set upon a hair trigger for release into another international conflict, with constantly accumulating bombing planes ready to destroy the cities and the populations of Europe, with supplies of poisonous gases being feverishly prepared for their hideous purpose, and with one nation already plunged into the vortex of a ghastly fratricidal conflict, we are justified in uttering a fervent prayer of thanks to Heaven that we have in the White House a man who loves peace and, above all men else, knows how to preserve it. No, I do not think that Republican orators are serving their cause when they seek to embellish it with illustrations drawn from the Old World.

Nor are they particularly happy in their attempts by other devices to explain the return of prosperity and to deny to President Roosevelt any credit for it. The vociferous and somewhat noisy Colonel Knox, who is an even more thorough-going reactionary than his chief, in one of his speeches made sometime back asserted that recovery began with Hoover. In their adherence to this strange belief Colonel Knox and Mr. Hoover may be in strict accord, but they are clearly in a pitiful minority even in their own party. If recovery began with Mr. Hoover, then of course, the Republican Party should have renominated him; or, at the least, should in their platform have endorsed his administration; or, at a minimum, should have said a few kind words about him in that immortal document. Their political strategy, however, is to persuade the American people, if they can, to forget all about Mr. Hoover and his administration as soon as possible. The difficulty with this method is that it amounts to an apology to the American people for even having had a Hoover administration at all; and no political party ever won an election by apologizing for what it did less than four years before. But,

"The Moving Finger writes and having writ
Moves on. Nor all your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line
Nor all your tears wash out a Word of it."

There it stands; that terrible record of ineptitude and failure, identified for all time with one of the darkest pages in American history. No wonder Republican leaders wish to put that memory behind them. No wonder they want the American people to forget about it. Hence the candidacy of Governor Landon; hence the furtiveness with which Mr. Hoover visits the Republican candidate; hence the consistent policy of saying nothing whatever about Mr. Hoover or his administration. What the Republicans desire is to take over the assets of the

Hoover bankruptcy sale, but they do not want to take over the liabilities. If you will permit a sudden shift of metaphor, the Hoover Administration is the hair shirt that the Republican Party must wear in penance for its sins.

And now, breaking the carefully devised conspiracy of silence, along come the undiplomatic Colonel Knox and blurts out the reckless assertion that recovery began with Hoover. And then, as if to illustrate anew how "good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity", the irrepressible Mr. Hamilton, who seems to be laboring under the delusion that he himself is running for President, experiences a period of self-abnegation, and suggests that prosperity began at the Republican National Convention at Cleveland. He asserts that the people were so thrilled when they heard of Governor Landon's nomination and have been so uplifted by his oratory, that a new spirit has come over the country and nothing can stop them now. I do not labor these points, but let them rest upon their mere assertion. They supply to the campaign a touch of humor that is absolutely priceless.

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.

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.

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 all change, those who accept the past as good enough for the present - those are the groups that are on trial before the conscience of their fellow men.

Fate had set a mighty task for the President. A troubled nation turned to him in its dark hour. The straining hopes of millions were centered upon him. Hunger stretched out its hands to him. The great and the powerful, as well as the lowly and the dispossessed, appealed to him to be saved.

Throughout his term of office he fought against odds to reduce human misery. When old methods failed he had the courage to try new ones. If, on the critical day when he became President, the people could have looked forward to the present hour and could have visualized even one-half of the achievements that have actually taken place, they would, with one voice, have called him blessed. The rich and the powerful may have forgotten what he did for them, but the lowly and the dispossessed have not for one moment abated an iota of their love, their gratitude, their faith. The people have not forgotten. They could not forget. No one can make them forget. They know that there has not been a moment of his life during these last fateful years that was not devoted to their needs and to a realization of their hopes.

And 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 stand 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.