
Greater New York Fund
1941 Campaign

Address by
Hon. James A. Farley

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ADDRESS

BY

HON. JAMES A. FARLEY

Mr. O'MAHONEY. Mr. President, on Monday, April 14, 1941, Hon. James A. Farley, former Postmaster General, delivered an address at the opening dinner of the 1941 campaign to raise a fund for the welfare and health services operating in Greater New York. I ask unanimous consent that this address by a distinguished citizen and former official be printed in the Appendix of the RECORD.

There being no objection, the address was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

Mr. FARLEY. This is a thrilling occasion. In this room are men and women whose energy and vision and organizing ability have helped to make this city the business center of the world. Here, too, are men and women whose skill and strength and steadfastness are the foundation on which the city's business has risen to greatness. Some of us are white of skin, some dark; some pledge allegiance to one creed, some to another; but all of us—employer and employee, capital and labor, Catholic, Protestant, and Jew—are united tonight by concern for one common cause, the Greater New York Fund, whose fourth annual campaign opens today.

We have fallen into the way of saying that the Greater New York Fund is an appeal to business firms and employee groups on behalf of some 400 great welfare and health services. I say to you that this is an appeal for something far more fundamental than support for these 400 organizations. It is an appeal for the American way of life. It is an appeal for the future of 2,000,000 of our fellow New Yorkers. It is an appeal that could only be made in a city like this, and a country like this, where we are free—free to express our good will for each other, free to live and speak and worship as we will, free to help each other as we will, without a question asked as to politics or race or faith.

That's an appeal worth answering, in these troubled times. While we sit here in friendship, men and women are fighting and suffering and dying in other parts of the world. Bitter prejudice and discrimination and intolerance have bred a war that is crushing peaceful towns and green valleys and once-prosperous cities. Many of us have known these cities and towns and quiet valleys in happier days. We have friends and relatives there. From those countries whose names are in all the headlines have come men and women who have enriched the life of this Nation in countless ways.

Our hearts are heavy as we think of the destruction that is going on, and we should not be Americans if we were not quick and generous in our efforts to relieve the widespread suffering abroad.

But there is suffering in our own city of New York; here, too, are men and women broken in body and spirit; here, too, are children hungry and helpless.

These are our people. You have seen their faces in the fund motion picture. You know—after seeing the picture—that these New York neighbors of ours are no different from ourselves. There are no visible scars to mark them as casualties in the battle for health and well-being. We should not recognize them if we passed them on the street outside of this hotel, or sat next to them in the subway train going home. We might truly say, "There, but for the grace of God, go I."

Suppose that came true next week, next month, next year.

If that happened, I'd want to know there'd be another chance for me and mine. You'd want that chance, too—for yourself—for your wife or child—for the man who runs the little shop where you have your shoes repaired.

Well—it's up to you and me.

The Greater New York Fund is our chance to give a chance, to our own people, here at home. It's home defense; and if there were time I could cite instance after instance from the records of draft boards all over the country to prove to you how vital to our national defense it is that these welfare and health services be—not maintained—but strengthened. We're paying a price right now because in years past we have given too little attention to the day-in, day-out struggle against undernourishment and sickness and discontent.

For 3 years now the Greater New York Fund has called on us for this vital defense.

For 3 years you and I, who work and do business in this city, have not made good.

The need which the fund gave us a chance to meet year by year during the last 3 years totals \$30,000,000. The business firms, corporations, and employee groups of the greatest and richest city in the world raised \$11,000,000. Business has not raised as much as \$4,000,000 in any one of these years to give a helping hand to the people who need a break in a city where business prospers as it does nowhere else in the world.

When I say that the need is \$10,000,000 a year, that is not a guess. A committee composed of businessmen and women, social workers, public-spirited and philanthropic citizens, worked for several years in the middle thirties analyzing the city's health and welfare services and how the demands on them had increased, and estimating from

their financial statements their immediate and future needs.

In 1938 the Greater New York Fund was formed. Its purpose was twofold: First, to raise new and additional money to eke out the rapidly dwindling total of philanthropic contributions; second, to obtain this needed additional support from the source that had thus far given least—the business concerns and employee groups of New York City.

The fund offered business a simple method making one contribution once a year to help social welfare and health agencies meet their budgets. Thus business not only was relieved of sifting hundreds of appeals each year from individual agencies but obtained a channel by which it could merge into one donation all its giving to the important welfare and health services that participate in the fund. The fund plan offered assurance that business enterprises which contributed would receive no further appeals from fund agencies. It guaranteed the distribution of the money raised without waste, and with something more—the certainty that for the first time in New York's history the distribution would be scientific, well organized, aimed to help forgotten groups and neglected areas.

How did business respond to this?

Let us look at the record.

In 1938 the amount raised fell short of the need by \$8,600,000. In 1939 the shortage was \$5,800,000. In 1940, again there was a deficit of \$6,800,000.

That is water over the dam now. This year—today—we are faced with the fourth campaign of the Greater New York Fund.

What is New York business going to do about it?

I am counting on raising not less than \$5,000,000.

We can do this. We can do much more than this—if we go about it in the right way.

First, we must believe in the Greater New York Fund. We can't sell anything that we don't believe in.

Second, we must show our prospects—the businessmen into whose offices we go—that by this one gift to the fund they cover their contributions to 400 agencies.

Third, we must break down the all-too-frequent opposition by firms to permitting their employees to be solicited as groups. Employees have just as much right as their employers to a chance to do their duty to community welfare.

Fourth, our campaign must be short and vigorous. A long campaign means wasting money.

Fifth, we must see our prospects in person. It isn't enough to write. It isn't enough to telephone. We'll have to wear out shoe leather on this job. Nothing takes the place of a personal interview.

Sixth, we must follow through on solicitation of employee groups. We must stimulate interest among employees, not only in our own companies but wherever we have business connections. In small firms where

there are no company chairmen, this is especially important.

That is our strategy—conviction, speed, face-to-face appeal—and the greatest of these is conviction.

Over a million employees now are organized into contributing groups. Many of these groups have never been so organized before. Pledges are already coming in and the increases are striking—for instance, the trucking section, which raised \$3,500 last year, is working on a goal of \$20,000 from the drivers to be matched by a similar gift from the trucking employers.

Labor is backing the fund. Over the air and in union meetings the appeal has already been presented to scores of groups of organized workers.

The business women of the city are behind us, the churches, public-spirited civic organizations. Ten thousand volunteers have been working day and night at fund headquarters, in the boroughs, in factories, and stores and offices, forgetting their personal profit, their convenience, and their comfort. Tonight I pay tribute to them all. Their hard work is one of the two important factors in the success which I am confident I shall be able to report to you 6 weeks from this time.

The second factor in our success is the quality of the service for the support of which we appeal. Listen to this letter, written to one of our fund organizations:

"Do you suppose any of your contributors have ever stood outside the door of a social agency, licked in body and soul * * *. I was in that position a year ago. * * *

"I had been led to expect that social workers took a fiendish glee in prying into one's past, ruthlessly tearing down every defense, until you felt as naked as the day you came into the world, but since you were asking for charity you'd have to take it.

"But to my surprise this social worker I talked to did no such thing. She didn't ask one embarrassing question. * * * And unexpectedly I found myself pouring out the whole pitiful story, the succession of nervous shocks, the severe illness that had necessitated a year in bed under the most trying conditions, and that had drained me of every scrap of physical strength and emotional stability, the shortness of funds that wouldn't even cover my meager food needs during convalescence, and the difficult struggle back to health and normalcy which just didn't seem worth the effort. * * *

"I left her an hour later with funds enough to meet my most pressing needs and with the firm conviction that here was one person who was interested in me and who really cared what happened to me. In all the months since that time I haven't changed my mind. * * *

"There has been plenty of financial help, what with two more operations and another long convalescence. But somehow, it just hasn't felt like charity; certainly not when she came to the hospital both times and sat

with me through the last difficult hour before going to the operating room."

I haven't time to read the rest of that letter, but let me ask you this question.

Are you willing that such help should end? That it should even be curtailed?

I am not, but the record tells me that in these last 3 years the shortage of money has forced some organizations to cut entire services and others to help fewer people or do less for those they have helped. Sometimes emergency service only has been given, where long-time preventive work was needed.

Don't count the cost of such reduced services in money only. Dollars alone can't measure the loss when a summer camp, fully equipped to care for 200 children a season, has to be closed for 4 years; when a hospital has to deny free care to 400 sick people who need it; when there is less medical and dental service in a neighborhood center; when unmarried mothers can no longer be helped to keep their babies with them and are thus deprived of their greatest incentive for rebuilding their lives.

Let me say one thing more.

I believe in the Greater New York Fund.

Wherever I go in this city that I am proud to call my home, I see evidences of the fine work that the fund is helping to support. I have seen one organization where men and women who were being shut away from life by the loss of hearing were being helped to break down the silence that was walling them in. I have seen another organization where children—eager, talented, courteous—were busy and useful and happy in a clubhouse set like an oasis in the midst of a drab neighborhood once notorious as the breeding place of criminals.

And when I was there I noticed that the dingy walls of the houses adjoining the play-

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ground were hidden by a tremendous painting illustrating a fairy tale we all know—Jack and the Beanstalk. There was the famous beanstalk—four stories high, growing out of the concrete-covered soil of New York—and there was a small boy, climbing determinedly to the top. I looked at that painting, and I looked at the boys and girls crowding around me to welcome me to their club, and I thought that the Greater New York Fund was something like that pictured beanstalk—giving boys and girls, men and women, too, for that matter, not something to cling to, but something to climb by—to climb to health, to usefulness, to happiness and independence.

An organization that does that is worth working for.

A city that supports such an organization is a good city in which to live or make a living.

And so tonight, as our campaign opens, I give you this challenge:

Let's stand together.

Let's work hard.

Let's give the Greater New York Fund's 1941 campaign support that is on a par with the vast trade and activity of our city.

On the wall of this room is the magnificent poster which is Miss Neysa McMein's contribution to the fund. That little girl might be your child or mine. She is, literally, one in a million—a million young people in this city against whom the doors of fund welfare and health organizations must not close.

Ladies and gentlemen, I call on you to do more than work—go out and fight to make this campaign succeed. We must win. The stake is that look of faith and hope on the face of a child.