

Portion of address delivered before the 1940 Democrat Convention  
in Mineral Wells, Texas, by:

MR. ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT

COPY

Reported by:

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A F T E R N O O N   S E S S I O N  
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The Afternoon Session of the Texas Democratic State Convention, held in Convention Hall, Mineral Wells, Texas, was called to order at 2:00 o'clock p. m., Mr. Hal P. Collins presiding.

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CHAIRMAN COLLINS: Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to introduce the first speaker on this afternoon's session. We are proud that he is a Texan and without further ado, I want all of you to hear from Elliott Roosevelt of Fort Worth, the son of our President. (Applause)

MR. ELLIOTT ROOSEVELT (Fort Worth, Texas): Ladies and gentlemen of the State Democratic Convention here in Mineral Wells.

I came here today to deliver a nonpolitical address. I was requested by our beloved Mr. Germany to talk on a subject which is very close to my heart. I was requested to talk on the subject of Americanism, and with your permission I will do so today, but before doing so, I feel it my duty as an individual Democrat, talking for myself only, to express my views as the Vice-Chairman of this Convention---Temporary Vice-Chairman, in the same manner that your Chairman expressed himself this morning. (Applause)

I have the greatest admiration in all the World for our Chairman, and I might add that I listened to his program on the radio and he is a wonderful master of ceremonies. I have a little radio program also and sometimes I talk too much. (Laughter) But with your permission I am going to take off my coat for a few

minutes and talk politics in the State of Texas. (Takes off coat amid applause)

We here in the State of Texas, believe it or not, you backsliders are going to vote by the largest majority that the State of Texas has ever cast for the Democratic nominees from top to bottom. (Applause)

You know, I belong to a family that is rather large and--yes, some of us get a little bit high up in the air, but I would like to say that we all hang together. I noticed in the paper where some other families in Texas so far haven't hung together. (Applause)

Now I have to take this stand today, or I wouldn't be the son of the man whom I revere more than any other person in all the World. (Applause) I would like to put myself on record right now in stating that I believe that the State of Texas will cast the largest plurality for the Democratic Party of any State in the Union. (Applause)

You know, I took a trip a few weeks ago up through the Rocky Mountain States. I went through New Mexico and Colorado and Wyoming and Nevada and on my way up I noticed that every where I stopped I saw a lot of Willkie buttons, and I was very much disturbed until I started to come home and I got down into Colorado in a small town---very close to the Broadmoor Hotel in Colorado Springs, and I went into this filling station and up to the operator who waited on me on the way up and I said, "What has happened to the Willkie button you had on your blouse?" "Oh, he said, "The season is over, all of the rich folks have

left." (Applause)

I can't make a speech. All I can say is what I feel and I think that I speak for the majority of the voters of the State of Texas that we demand--yes, that we demand of all of our Democratic representatives who speak for the rank and file of the voters of this State that they state just where they stand this year, and they will also have to state that they are Democratic all the way down the line. (Applause)

Now I have heard a great deal about wasteful spending. (Laughter) You know the spending that has been going on in this country during the last seven years has been done for a purpose. Do you happen to remember back to March, 1933? Do you happen to remember how you felt then? Do you remember the day when the banks were closed? Do you remember the days when there were millions of people all over the United States who were standing in line waiting for soup to be handed out to them? All right, what has that money been spent for? That money has been spent to keep the spark of hope and life alive in the hearts of all Americans regardless of their circumstances. (Applause)

I came down to Texas because I believe as our Chairman believes--that here in Texas a man may express his opinion and state his views frankly, and that is what I am here to do. (Applause) And I want to say that there is no room in the State of Texas for hyphenated Democrats. (Applause) There is no more room for hyphenated Democrats than there is room for hyphenated Americans. (Applause)

I respect the wishes of any man who chooses to side with the Republican candidate in this campaign---but there are no Willkie Democrats. There are no Willkie Democrats. There is a renegade Democrat heading the Republican ticket. (Applause)

You know, I listened with a great deal of interest this morning to a statement regarding political machines. Who was the man who cleaned up Tammany Hall? Do you remember who he was? Who was the man who cleaned up our next door State? Louisiana. Who was the man who brought clean government to Kansas City for the first time in its history? All right, we don't want the Democratic Party to countenance any political machines that misuse our Democratic way of life, and we don't stand on party lines on that either. There have been Democratic machines that have been cleaned up.

Now there seems to be some question about how rapidly we can do the job. I think we need four more years to finish it up-- don't you? I challenge the political integrity of any American who fails to find an abundance of inspiration in the last seven years, and the best proof of that is the stand that the Republican candidate has taken in backing up in toto everything right down to the R.E.A. that the Democrats have done. (Applause)

Going back to 1933. Fear was the companion of every mother. Fear was the associate of every business man, large and small, and I have heard it stated during the last few months and during the last few years since a measure of prosperity and safety has come back to big business, but they wanted change. Well, they could have had a change in 1933 with the greatest of

ease. Our form of government could have been overthrown. And they are dissatisfied today. They have no reason to be dissatisfied because business lives today only because of the Democratic Party during the last seven years. (Applause) For seven years we have fed the hungry, clothed the naked and given the youth of America the opportunity to stand on their own feet. No good American ever challenged a dollar spent to feed the hungry, but it has not been in vain. The average man has food in his cupboard and shoes on his feet and his children are smiling again instead of crying. Call it the New Deal, call it wasting money-- but I prefer to call it the "Human Deal". (Applause)

For seven long years Washington has been interested in young men and women. We took thousands of them from the alleys, street corners, freight trains and dens of idleness and with the C. C. C. have given a chance to thousands of young Americans. We have trained them in mind and given them determination in their hearts to be worthy of this great country. If that be waste, then thank God for the waste. (Applause)

For seven long years American business has beaten back. Where is there an American with a grateful heart who can find fault with the R. F. C. headed by our own Texas' son--Jesse Jones? (Applause) Big business, little business--every where in America has had its assistance, and today business men look on ledgers filled with balances marked in black instead of red.

In addition no friend of labor can see in the seven years of the Democrat's rule anything save an intense practical effort to give to all a fair portion of their product.

And I would like to go into one more subject that is very close to the heart of our great government. For two years the Governor has campaigned before the people of Texas with one burning issue---to give to the aged a just pension. Who started social security in the United States of America? All right, I say to you---say to you with all sincerity that the Governor of Texas today is calling on the next Legislature, and he is not the pioneer in this field---he is the man whom Texas has chosen to carry out the great ideal of granting to the aged that which is their due, and I say to you that what he is striving to do is to go hand in hand with the policies of our Federal Government, so I can see no difference between the campaign our Governor is making and the campaign that our President is making for reelection. (Applause)

And incidentally, and I think a thing that has been stressed far too little is the fact that during the last seven years no criminal has been too mighty, no criminal has been able to escape from his just due in prison if he has committed crimes for which he should have been committed years before under Republican administration. (Applause) Again I say party lines have been no barriers. Criminals in high places have been driven to the prisons, and I would like to say before I leave the political aspect of this speech that there is only one reason why I felt that I had to come before you and express my heartfelt feelings as a Democrat of the State of Texas. I do not plan to enter the campaign quite so enthusiastically. (Laughter) I think there is someone in Washington that could conduct it far

better than I but he wasn't here today to speak for himself, and as I thought we ought to have a little clarifying of the issues (Laughter) I thought it would be a good idea if every Democrat in high position, every prominent Democrat, made known how he feels about our party ticket from top to bottom.

(Applause) And commit himself now so that we can determine whether those people shall lead us on in November, or whether after November we shall know what to do with them. (Laughter)

And that is all I have got to say on the political subject except to tell you that I am going to vote the straight Democratic ticket from top to bottom as I think every one else in this room will do. (Applause)

And now I hope it is time for all of us to be good friends again and I hope we will hear some nice statements later on how everybody is going to vote.

Now, I would like to get on to a subject I feel is of extreme importance to Democrats and Republicans alike. I would like to say this--that regardless of who we elect President in 1940, that man shall be our leader for the next four years and all of us shall recognize him as our President. (Applause) And I am very lucky. I am lucky for the reason everybody here today is lucky. One of the most fortunate positions that one can find one's self in this World today is the position of being an American citizen.

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