

WARREN G. HARDING PAPERS

A MICROFILM EDITION



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CROSS-COUNTRY SPEECH

June 28, 1923 Idaho Falls, Idaho

0672

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT AT IDAHO FALLS, IDAHO, JUNE 28, 1923.

We have come to Idaho today in the course of what perhaps may be regarded as the most extended tour for inspection of national concerns that has ever been the privilege of an American President. Including a trans-continental tour, a visit to Alaska, and a return to the Capital by way of our great Pacific States, the Panama Canal, and Porto Rico, it will enable us to consider at first and a series of national interests extending from Arctic to tropics, from Atlantic to Pacific. They embrace a range so wide and varied that we may fairly doubt if any other government is called upon to deal with a comparable array of interests, involving the welfare of so great a community.

It is true that the present tour is being devoted largely to the newer, the less developed part of our national domain. These are the parts of our country in which very largely the future of our country lies. The character of our institutions, the society we shall develop, our relations with the rest of the world, must be largely determined by the direction which development in these newer parts of our country shall take.

In Idaho we all recognize one of those truly imperial commonwealths, yet to a great extent in the making, which we look upon as store-houses of opportunity and resources. Yesterday we visited a great wonderland, in a remote section of Utah; a region of surpassing riches, yet almost unknown to our country outside the State of Utah. It was a wonderful experience for all of us, a reminder such as I wish might be brought home to every American, impressing us with a new conception of the immensity of America's estate and opportunities. Your Idaho is another

(Idaho Falls.....2)

such community, boasting an unexampled wealth in everything that a great people may require. Your magnificent West needs only more of population, more of capital, to support the wonderful enterprise and initiative of its people, who have carried its development so far in so short a time.

When I said a moment ago that the character of our institutions, the kind of society we shall develop in this Republic, is bound to be determined largely by these newer regions I had in mind a particular phase of the industrial and commercial problems about which I wish to speak briefly. From the beginning of western development it has been the ambition of these communities to secure the widest diversification of industry, to become so far as possible self-contained and self-supporting. So you have wrought in your mines, your forests, your fields; you have introduced new and varied forms of agriculture; you have established manufactures that a generation ago would have been deemed impossible here. You recognized early, what we of the East are coming to realize, the necessity to build up such self-contained societies of widely varied interests and occupations, because in a country of our "magnificent distances" we cannot always place so great a reliance upon transportation in our exchange of products as we have committed ourselves to in the past. In the long run we shall have a more homogeneous, closely knit, and self-reliant nation as we shall the more nearly approach the idea of self-sufficient communities in all parts of the country.

So I want to report to you people of the West the conviction of the Administration that the time has come to adopt a broad policy of encouraging the utilization and development of your resources, human and material. That conservation which would ~~lock up~~ such riches as

(Idaho Falls3*

these, and raise barriers against their development when the nation needs them, is not true conservation; it is rather the policy of the miser who hoards his wealth with no conception of making it serviceable to himself or to the society which enabled him to possess it. We will always oppose monopolies and special privileges in these natural resources. We are committed to the program of making these resources serve the man of moderate means, the home-builder, the worker, the producer. Within these limitations upon free opportunity, we must cling to policies which shall envisage the fullest, the broadest, the most generous and intelligent utilization of these tremendous possibilities.

One of the most engrossing problems of our time, confronting all countries and all societies, is the exorbitant cost of living. We ~~must~~ realize that the real producer, under our elaborate and costly system of distribution, is not permitted a fair share of his product for his own use and enjoyment. We have become convinced that somehow our system of distribution has grown too cumbersome, too costly, too complex, too indirect, too unrelated to the interests of real producer and legitimate consumer. We must find methods to take up as much as possible of the slack in the long line between producer and consumer; to give the producer a better share in that which he furnishes to the community, and to enable the consumer to meet his requirements at reasonable cost.

To this end many experiments have been made in cooperative production, transportation, distribution, and purchasing. To a great extent, these experiments have proceeded from the enterprise and initiative of the western people, to whom these problems have presented themselves with especial insistence. But for the spirit of cooperation, the willingness to be mutually helpful, the determination to give first

(Idaho Falls.....4)

place to the interest of the community you could not have made your West what it is. Working cooperations on a great scale, practical in operation and adequate to cope with our problems can never be possible except where there is this spirit, determination, and purpose. It is because the West has led so far in devising such workable programs that I have ~~much~~ thought to say a few words along this line today.

Developments of the last generation have brought the instrumentalities of transportation, of finance, of corporate organization and operation into a closer harmony with the true public interest than ever before. Government has sought to make itself helpful, to point the way, to remove ancient barriers of custom or tradition, and to curb the excessive demands of privilege, in order to cheapen for the great public many of the services which for erly were dominated by private interests and operated with too exclusive a consideration for private profit. Anything tending to break down personal initiative, to destroy enterprise and ambition, must not enter into any program which can hope for the approval of the American people. Ours is an individualistic society, and we want it to remain so. We want this Republic to remain always the land of opportunity wherein every man's abilities and usefulness shall

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measure his personal advancement and prosperity. The kind of a program to encourage cooperation and coordination which I have in mind, would not interfere with the freedom of proper opportunity; rather, it would enhance the individual's chance to better his individual fortune.

The need of this time is to shorten the bridge between producer and consumer, and to reduce the toll that must be paid for passing over it. We all know a good deal about the various cooperative societies, associations and corporations which have undertaken, in many cases with notable success, to improve the position of the agricultural producers. Such organizations have been successful in all parts of this country, and in many parts of the old world. They have already done a great work and taught us many valuable lessons. Where there are obstacles, imposed by unfortunate statutes or public policies, in the way of expanding such activities as these, they might well be gradually removed through measures of helpfulness and encouragement.

On the whole, I think the agricultural community has been more alive to the promotion of its interests along these lines, than has the urban community. The farmers have seen where their interest lay, and have been more prompt and energetic in adopting effective measures to promote them, than the people of the city and town have been. There is need to have working and practical cooperative associations of producers in the country, and at the same time to have equally effective cooperations among the consuming communities of the cities and towns; and, finally, to link these two sets of cooperators together in a coordination for mutual advantage to both. I believe it is possible, and altogether desirable, that systems of credit and finance should be developed, under public auspices, to encourage both these kinds of cooperation, and to draw them together into

a harmonious working scheme of widespread distribution at the lowest possible expense.

We have in recent years given much attention to developing a system of agricultural finance, particularly adapted to the needs of American farm producers. Some critics have indeed protested that it was class legislation. Perhaps it was; but as I suggested in discussing the problems of agriculture in Kansas the other day, it was in the interest of a vitally important section of the community which has heretofore had altogether too little consideration. Not only have I no apology for what has been done in the interest of the agricultural community; not only do I regard it as one of the monumental achievements of the last generation in developing our country's institutions; - but I venture that we might with profit to the whole people consider the possibility of effecting an analogous organization to promote and encourage, through measures of credit and finance, a proper organization of the consuming community in both cities and country. I have not attempted to work out even an outline, much less the details, of such a system; but I believe it is possible, feasible, and certain to command the sympathy of men and women who have the true interest of the country at heart. I hope to be able, as the result of studies and investigations, to recommend for the consideration of the Congress measures which shall represent a beginning along this line. It is a big and pregnant subject to which no thinking man or woman can deny the fullest and most careful consideration. My thought is that government should give the largest encouragement, consistent with sound economics and proper government functions, to every effort of the people to help themselves in dealing with the high cost of living and the relationship of incomes to our household budgets.

I have wondered if it were not possible, for example, that a scheme

of cooperation among consumers, financed in part at least through a carefully organized and supervised adaptation of the principles of the savings bank or the building and loan society, might be made to serve a splendidly useful purpose in this department of our economic life. I think this would be preferable to having limited sections of the community undertaking to establish financial independence and economic solidarity, as some of them have lately been doing. The development of such a general program into a sound working business scheme would doubtless be found chiefly an affair of the state governments, but one in which the jointure of state and national authorities might prove practicable and even necessary.

I bring this suggestion to you, not as a wrought-out proposal of policy, but as the suggestion of a direction which might be given to activities of this kind. I believe the suggestion is worthy of careful examination and consideration. I am convinced that its discussion would be fruitful of good results, and a reminder to some who are disposed to take unreasonable tolls from both the consuming and the producing public, that this public has the right, the power, and the ability to devise means to protect itself.

The aim and object of our every policy must be the establishment and maintenance of an independent and self-respecting, reliant and industrious, intelligent and self-helpful American citizenship. We must seek to encourage thrift, to promote saving, to make the American home the headquarters of an ever-broadening culture, a larger understanding

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of the complex problems of our times, and of a determined aspiration
for the fullest measure of economic and social justice.

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CROSS-COUNTRY SPEECHES

June 29, 1923 Helena, Montana

Butte, Montana

CROSS-COUNTRY SPEECH

July 2, 1923 Spokane, Washington

0776

Address of the President

on

Development, Reclamation and Water-Utilization,

Spokane, Washington, July 2, 1923, 8:30 p.m.

Doubtless one who comes from so far east as Ohio, is bound to be regarded when he comes among you people of the farthest Northwest as at least an Easterner; he may reasonably expect to be confused with the Yankees of "Way Down East"; and, I suppose, need not be surprised if he is looked upon as almost an oriental. This is a big country, and our notions of latitude and longitude are largely comparative. I have friends in the southern corner

of Texas who speak of the pan-handle area
of that State as "up North". I have
heard folks in Maine talk about the
journalistic marvels of Winstead, Connecti-
cut, as among the wonders of the great and
bounding West.

Matters move rapidly in our times and
country. Having always lived in Ohio, my
recollection stretches from the time when
we were regarded as living "way out West",
to the period when we began to be considered
by real western people as effete easterners.
Anyhow, whether I am viewed from New England
as a westerner, or, from the Pacific slope
as a slow-going coach from down east, I

find satisfaction in the fact that whoever looks at this country of ours from all directions is bound to recognize it as the biggest thing anywhere and to thrill with pride in being a citizen of it.

To live, extend, act, argue
It has been in my mind, during these days of travel in the west, to express on some appropriate occasion a few views regarding those problems which we summon to our minds under the headings of conservation, reclamation and development.

Nowadays, I think there is disposition to change the order of terms, and mention development first. Not that we are any less devoted to conservation; but there is increasing realization that in our

national development we have reached the time when wise programs for development

in all parts of our domain must be encouraged.

Our higher aspirations for an ideal life

Traveling about this country, and

somewhat also in other countries, I have

been constantly impressed that wise development of natural resources does not often result in their disastrous diminution.

Rather, it seems as a rule to result in a growing, an expanding, an increasing supply and variety of the very riches upon which we make drafts. Europe has sustained great and growing populations for many centuries, yet I am assured that its agricultural areas are producing more per acre today than ever before. China and Japan have been for

centuries classed as over-populated; yet their populations go on increasing, and their standards of living improving. India has been afflicted with periodic famine for thousands of years, attributed primarily to excess of population in certain parts. Yet the population has gone right on increasing; and in modern times, when the rate of increase has been greatest, the liability to famine has been least. The Island of Java, which is a good deal smaller than Iowa, was rated when it had about 11,000,000 inhabitants, as one of the most densely populated areas of the world. Now it has around 40,000,000, and they are better off than their ancestors ever were. Such instances might be multiplied indefinitely,

to prove that development, far from exhausting resources, commonly means their multiplication. When our own country had 3,000,000 people, they were all poor; now that it has 110,000,000, they are the richest in the world.

This Modern Slave.

From all this you will gather, and quite correctly, that I do not fear that present development is liable to impoverish us in the future. The precise contrary, according to every historical analogy, is what will take place. Why, you all remember that a quarter century ago so wise a man as James J. Hill was warning us that within fifteen years this country would have to import wheat! Twice that period

has passed, our population has grown enormously, and yet today we are producing a greater surplus of wheat than any other country in the world. Our difficulty is not to find wheat for ourselves but to find other countries that will buy it

*from us, and at freee which
is maney. But after I pay*

In 1896 Mr. Bryan eloquently assured us that gold could no longer serve as the world's money standard because there couldn't possibly be enough of it produced.

Before the echoes of his oratory had died away, science had perfected new processes of gold extraction, and in a few years another group of earnest people were just as solemnly warning us that we

couldn't go on using gold as our money standard, because it was getting too common! Fortunately for us, we didn't get unduly excited about either prediction, and today we find about everybody agreed that to get back on the gold basis is one of the world's greatest needs.

So, contemplating the certainty that another century will give us a population of probably 300,000,000, one is forced to conclude that a wise development of resources is the only policy to which we dare commit ourselves. There was a time when the public domain was thought of as a treasure house of potential wealth to be locked up against the day when we should need it. It was assumed that by

locking it up we should make it surely available whenever it was required. As a matter of fact, that would prevent it from being ready when needed. Development must be gradual; a business of the decades and the centuries. It should, indeed, be give wise direction and supervision. The opportunities of the newer country should be so administered as to insure their equitable distribution in future. We have done with the era of thoughtless and reckless exploitation of our domain. There will not again come a time when imperial estates will be distributed with lavish hands to enterprizing gentlemen whose only claim is that they would like to own them. We have curbed greed, and are seeking justice.

We want the West to be a land of homes and of the freest opportunity for the establishment of families possessing independent means of livelihood. It is recognized that the very different conditions of the plains and mountain areas, compel many modifications of the policies that have served so well in other parts of the country. Those modifications are being wrought out gradually, with a view to promoting here that wide diversification of industries and occupations which is invited by your variety of resources, and which is the ideal state of a modern society. It is not desirable that the West should fall into the hands of

bonanza corporations, seeking to exploit it for the profit of stockholders who live somewhere else. But on the other hand, it is worth while to emphasize that many of the most valued resources of the West are of such character, and their development must be on such a scale, that they can only be made available under concentrated management and by the use of capital in large units. We must enforce measures which will give capital and management attractive returns, but which will always keep in sight the primary purpose of dealing out justice, even-handed opportunity, and an absolutely fair interest in the product of human

industry, effort and intelligence.

I spoke a moment ago of the fact that as a rule the utilization of nature's resources commonly results in their increase rather than their diminution.

That is peculiarly true of one especially valuable resource of your mountain west:

I mean your water. The flow of a great river that runs away to the sea without being utilized for power or for irrigation,

It is like a river that
is wasted forever. To prevent its

development is not to save it for the benefit of a distant future. If it is to be of service tomorrow, it must be harnessed today.

Our whole view of the relation of water

to western development has changed much in the last generation. Only a few years since these waters were looked upon as potentially useful merely for irrigation and agriculture. We entered upon a great program of irrigation enterprise, in that era when we had as yet but a vague notion about the dual purpose that your water resources ought to serve. But now we know that the same water can in most cases be utilized both for power and irrigation. Thus the great power development will mark the sites of industrial centers, adjacent to which will grow up rich areas of intensive agricultural production. The industrial populations will provide markets, without

impossible transportation expenditure, for the products of the soil; and in turn the people on the soil will afford markets for the products of industry.

Transportation will be increased and cheapened through electrification of the railways; and in the light of what we now know about all aspects of this subject, we may confidently look forward to a generation in which these young and vigorous commonwealths of the West will boast as great a population as the entire nation numbers today, capable of living for the greater part within itself, representing the widest variety of occupations and interests, and having its problem of transportation largely solved

for it because it will be so nearly

self-sufficient and self-contained.

Railroad electric

It is doubtful if there is in the

world such a region of varied opportunity

and universal wealth, as this mountain

empire of yours. I quite understand that

this statement would have sounded foolish

to the men and women who two generations

ago toiled across plains and over mountain

trails as pioneers of the new domain.

They came from the East; they had been

raised on the theory of the great American

desert; and their early visions of an

inhospitable land whose possibilities

they could not possibly understand, was

not calculated greatly to change that

impression. But today we know differently.

We know of your stores of coal and iron, copper and phosphates, potash and silver, gold and zinc and lead, along with all the other minerals and metals that latter-day industry has found so necessary. We know the richness of your plains and valleys, and we know how to bring the water from your mountain heights to make them blossom as the rose and groan with plenty. We know of your fruits and forests, your cereals, your vegetables and livestock. We know that here is the land of all lands to challenge and fascinate such a race as you have planted here. Your country presents its invitation and its opportunity to whoever is capable of a contribution to human well-being;

to science, to industry, to the masters of metallurgy, of the electrical arts, of agriculture. Your story, varied and colorful, will grip the interest of those who write, in history and literature, the story of this nation; and the scenic splendors of your hundred Switzerlands will burn its inspiration into the soul of American art.

Western people have had reasons to complain that there is not always a sympathetic or understanding attitude in some other parts of the country, toward the irrigation development that the West must have. You people of the Inland Empire might well remind your critics that

during the uncounted centuries when the greatest civilizations had their seat on the Euphrates and the Nile, they were nurtured by an agriculture which depended on irrigation; on conserving and utilizing the waters of a few great streams. If we could know all the truth, it is probable we would learn that one of the first real impulses to developing civilization was given by those who discovered the possibility of irrigation as a means to agricultural production. The archaeologists who go to dig into the remains of cities so old that their very names have been lost, are constantly coming back to us with accounts of early irrigation works, constructed so

Long before our era that we can only vaguely conjecture their antiquity. Even today, there are regions in India where crops are produced by carrying water from the streams in skins, and putting it on the higher ground. It was thus that men got their earliest ideas of engineering science and systematized agriculture.

Our irrigation program is after all only a proposal to repeat, on the scale of modern engineering operations, the works by which primitive man learned to subjugate the earth and make it serve the needs of a developing social order. Ancient Egypt, which originated the civilization of which we are the direct inheritors,

was little more than a strip of land ten miles wide and three hundred miles long, which would have been a desert had not the Nile's waters been conserved and utilized each season following the annual floods. The Columbia river basin, alone, under the program of development on which your Inland Empire is bent, will be made the seat of a greater, incomparably more rich and varied empire of industry and agriculture, than was the Egypt which served as granery for imperial Rome. Not once, but a hundred times over, will we reproduce here in the plains and mountains and valleys of our West the wealth and productivity which enabled the Pharoahs to

build monuments for the wonder of all time. But the monuments to our achievement will bear inscriptions telling, not of the slavery and sufferings of generations which gave their lives to perpetuate the glory of a tyrant. Our inscriptions will tell of great, free states made up of contented, cultured and Christian homes.

I am sure you are interested in what the federal government can do to help solve the problems on which your future so largely depends. As we have gone onward in reclamation, there has been impatience that we could not proceed faster. There have been disappointments in the progress of work involving intricate and diversified engineering and hesitant

financing. But I have been heartened by the convincing evidences I have already seen of the wonderful results where water meets the land.

The Government is interested to aid your efforts, from the standpoint of adding to the national wealth, by the transmutation of arid spaces into fertile fields. It is interested also in the protection of the national finances, so that money advanced to prosper this work may not be dissipated in doubtful projects or jeopardized in experiments. We must look for plans that are safe; plans so conceived that they will not unduly burden the settler in the days when he is reducing the land to production; plans that will be

reasonably broad, and that will not commit the government to unwise or unseasonable expenditures.

I have been pleased to commend the subject of extended reclamation to the consideration of the Congress, mindful of the fact that reclamation from the national viewpoint must be considered as an investment of funds which will at length be returned to the government. The government's part is to supply expert engineering service, to advance finances for enterprizes too vast for private capital, and to supervise and safeguard the work so that the balance of fair-dealing may be maintained between government and settler, until the

dream of an enlarged west comes true.

I have seen the statement that if the projects under investigation by the reclamation service be finally approved and completed, an area of cultivable land will be added equal to one of our largest agricultural states. A proposal to create the equivalent of a new state is something to challenge the conquering spirit of America. We know that the task one day will be done. It is for us a question of method; of proceeding with such business judgment, and on such sound principles, that the future may look back and say that it was well done. Of all these problems we are particularly reminded in this region, because the Columbia conveys to the mind

~~significant suggestions~~; for her no one could be indifferent or fail to appreciate the splendid picture that lies behind the curtain of the mountains.

It is a matter all the more compelling, because these same waters which bring wealth to the soil, also pulsate with power for your cities, your railroads, and your industries. The use of the streams for power is inevitably tied in with reclamation. One purpose supplements the other in fulfilling the destiny of the waters as they flow on their way to the sea. And there are yet other uses for your waters. We must see that the navigable waterways are maintained; and here again we

find that the benevolence of the Creator has provided means to advance the projects of man. Frequently it is possible to improve navigation as an incident to developing power and irrigation works.

Moreover, we want the flow of the streams for these great purposes, national purposes all, conserved. In other lands has been taught the lesson of waste that followed denuding the forested slopes, and permitted erosion to end its work in flood and devastation. We in America must not be so thoughtless or profligate. We must have a policy of reforestation that will preserve the national interest, and at the same time permit use of the timber as it is needed.

So we see how the discussion of reclamation naturally leads on to that of waterpower; and then to the maintained navigability of streams which carry commerce; and on again to the need of saving, while utilizing, our forests. It is a many-sided problem, in essence a problem of protecting the common good. The government comes in, neither as an interloper nor as a benevolent carry-all, but in its legitimate relation, under the Constitution, to these truly national concerns which touch so intimately the people of this Inland Empire, of the Pacific coast, of the West and of the entire United States.

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