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## **Men and Women of Maine: Speach [sic] and Extracts of Speeches Made by Colonel Roosevelt in Maine, August 18, 1914**

Theodore Roosevelt

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Roosevelt, Col. (T.B.)

# Men and Women of Maine

Speech and Extracts  
of Speeches, made by Colonel  
Roosevelt in Maine

August 18, 1914.

The Republicans claim to be Prohibitionists,  
Have they prohibited the sale of Rum?

The Democrats ask for license to save us from  
the disgrace of nullification. Did we have disgrace  
in 1912?

Judged from their acts-are the claims of either  
Party sincere or made to fool the voters again.

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**Extracts from Opening of Speech  
Made By Col. Roosevelt at  
Lewiston, Aug. 18, 1914.**

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We don't care what creed a man professes, where he was born or where his parents came from. If he's got the right stuff in him, we are for him. If he is a crook we are against him.

We are the heirs of the spirit of Lincoln. We want to stand for decent men. The wisest laws will not be worth anything if you don't have the right men to enforce them.

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Col. Roosevelt then very earnestly asked the rank and file of both of the old parties to consider this fact and to come with the Progressives as the only party that believes that a man who feels that he is fit to govern himself shall have a chance, and that honestly believes that all men are so fit.—*Portland Daily Press*, Wednesday Morning, August 19, 1914.

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He urged everybody in Maine to vote for the Progressive candidates, saying they are all men who deserve well of their fellow men, and that in electing them the voters will be doing not only a great service to this State, but to the cause of justice and good government everywhere.—*Portland Daily Press*, Wednesday Morning, August 19, 1914.

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Men and Women of Maine: Recollect how simple the program of the Progressive Party really is. We believe that in this country nowadays there is a call for some sort of political organization for just everyday common decency. The trouble is a calloused moral sense on one side, and a hysteria and insincerity on the other. If we can only get the rubbish off the souls of the weary plain citizens, there will be a tidal wave in our favor. It is the stay-at-home who really defeats us. As soon as we can get him heartened, as soon as we can get him to understand that this government is his if he chooses to take possession of it, that the bosses and machines will be like dust in a windy street, if once he makes up his mind to turn them out, then he will show the men who have profited by business and political corruption that there is a God in Israel.

Neither of the old party organizations has any idea what it is doing, and neither of them has really any principle at all.

In consequence both the old party organizations are thoroughly insincere and hypocritical, and I wish above all things else to call the attention of the plain decent rank and file of the two old parties

to the fact that no permanent good comes from retaining in power organizations which seek to win elections by announcement of devotion to policies which they adroitly abandon after election. Even if their change in such a case is toward the right, it is a matter of certainty that they are only doing the right because it is expedient and not from motives of principle, and that they cannot be trusted when a new issue comes up; and new issues are always coming up. What we need in public office is honest men with courage and commonsense who are honestly right on the issues that are up, and who therefore can be trusted to be right on the issues that are not up at the moment, but that may at any moment arise. In a public man's term of office it often happens that the most important questions he has to face are on matters that arise after he has been elected. If he is not a straight man a sincere man, then even though as a matter of policy he has declared himself right on one issue, he may go crooked on another issue.

**Republican Organization Worse Than Ever.**

Two years ago a good many honest people, honest progressives, were deceived into supporting gentlemen like Mr. Burleigh, Mr. Haines and Mr. Peters because these gentlemen assured the voters that they were really progressives and would stand for progressive policies. But as a matter of fact in Congress they have stood absolutely with the Bourbon reactionaries of the stamp of Mr. Gallinger and the other men who two years ago took part in the theft from the rank and file of the Republican party of its right to make its own platform and declare for its own policies. The republican party organization is as Bourbon and reactionary now as it was then. If anything it is worse.

There is equally little hope in the democratic party organization. Two years ago in their platform and on the stump their representatives announced that they would reduce the tariff and thereby lower the cost of living and solve the trust question. They have reduced the tariff. The only effect this had upon the trust question was to weaken the smaller competitors of the trusts in the industries affected by the trusts. It did not reduce the cost of living, but it did reduce the capacity of the average man to earn a living. Their promises were absolutely falsified; and their action has been an important contributory cause to business anxiety and depression.

As regards the tariff, remember that the Payne-Aldrich bill was a vicious bill on the one side, just as the present bill is a vicious bill on the other side. The

two bills were made under exactly the same methods are continued just so long as violent reaction one way will be followed by violent reaction the other way. If you put in power the republican organization, under the lead of Messrs. Penrose, Barnes, Gallinger and the others whose hold upon it is as yet unshaken, you will insure another violent revulsion against them. You will thereby insure a process of government by convulsion, the swing of the pendulum alternating from one unhealthy extreme to the other unhealthy extreme.

The one chance of accomplishing results worth having is to adopt the progressive platform as regards the tariff, the trusts, as regards both business and labor. A tariff commission of non-partisan experts, if as efficiently handled as the German tariff commission, will do for this country what the German tariff commission through decades has done for Germany. We are not asking you to try experiments, we are asking you to go into a plain business proposition which has proved its excellence.

#### **The Trust Problem.**

In the same way the trusts can be handled only along the lines we championed. It is utterly hopeless to try to do away with combinations in the business world, just as it is hopeless and mischievous to try to do away with combinations in the labor world, just as we ought to encourage combination and co-operation among the farmers. There must be business combinations. The efforts to stop them all cannot be successful and can only result in mischief. What it needs is control of these corporations, thorough-going and far-reaching control, a control that can only come through the action of the National Government. This control should not be attempted under the guise of lawsuits undertaken to punish people for what has already been done. It should be obtained through continuing supervisory control exercised by an administrative body. This administrative body should in advance tell honest business men what they cannot and what they can do. It should exercise such control over the inception of business as to put a stop at the beginning to the mischievous activities of business that is not honest.

The Progressive Party, far more than any other political organization, has concerned itself with the needs of the wage-worker. We believe in the unions; but we demand the same good conduct from the union as from the corporation. We believe in the wage-workers' right of organization and of collective bargaining. We stand for justice to the plain decent American who works for wages just as we stand for

the plain decent American who runs a business or tills a farm. Whether a man works in a lumber camp, or a factory, or sails on a fishing schooner, or stands behind a counter, or is head of a bank or a railroad, we wish to secure him fair play; we wish to give him a square deal, and to have him give his fellow-citizen also a square deal.

The Progressive party does not believe that the State shall in any way be a busy-body, and intrude itself in private life where it is not wanted. But it does believe that there are many things that the government can do better than individuals can do them, and an even larger number of things in which it can be of assistance to individuals in helping them work together. It does not desire in any case that the government should adopt a patronizing attitude toward the individual. On the contrary, our theory is that the average individual, whatever his position, or whatever the kind of work he aims to do, should primarily be true to the old American ideal of self-help, and that with this fealty to one old American ideal should be fealty to another, the ideal of combination for mutual self-help; and the government should only be called in when its help is not only necessary but desired.

#### **Farmers Most Difficult to Help.**

One of the men whom it is most desirable and at the same time most difficult to help is the farmer. Now in all our country there is not a more typical American than the man in the country districts of the United States who lives on the soil. He does not want any special favors. Above all, he does not want to be patronized for the purpose of keeping him still or getting his vote. What he wants is full justice for himself and his occupation. He has relatively few spokesmen in legislatures. He does not wish more than his share, but he does wish his full share of the common good coming to him directly as a reward of his labor. He does not wish to shirk his work, nor to have anyone else do it for him; but he wishes to feel that his interests are being considered and safeguarded because he earns the right to such consideration and because his welfare is fundamental to the welfare of all of us. Successful agriculture lies at the basis of national well-being, and therefore it deserves care and recognition on the part of public men. The farmer wishes attention and recognition from the government given from his point of view, and not from the point of view of political expediency or party policy. He wants all the institutions with which he is primarily concerned—schools, colleges, experiment stations, agricultural departments—to be well supported, for he takes pride in these institutions. As yet he is not much interested in co-

operation. I think he ought to be far more interested than he is. But our prime duty must be to awaken him to the need of co-operation, and not to try to force it upon him from without. In all these matters we must follow his lead, advising him so far as he is willing to receive advice, but always acting as he himself desires us to act in relation to his own interests. Co-operation is very desirable as a means to an end, but as yet in this country there are many localities where all that is necessary is that side of it which deals with collective bargaining.

Many of the questions most affecting the farmer should not be treated as questions of party policy at all. As I have already said, I hold very strongly that we should endeavor to eliminate the tariff from the domain of party politics through the assistance of a continuing governmental commission. Economic problems cannot be solved by partisan political methods. The real issue is not whether the tariff shall be revised upward or downward. The real issue is to make it fit the case, and this can only come by a continuing study and modification by a competent, independent, non-partisan body of experts. In particular, the farmers' needs can only be met in this fashion, and they are as equally disregarded when his foreign competitors are unduly favored against him, as is the case under the present tariff, and when as under the Payne-Aldrich tariff other people in the republic were given an advantage that he was not allowed. In other words, the tariff question can never be satisfactorily and properly adjusted merely as the policy of a party, seeking votes and distributing favors.

#### **How Highway Policy Should Be Treated.**

What is true of the tariff is true of many of the agricultural questions. The whole highway question should be taken up from this point of view. Instead of merely connecting towns and providing automobile routes, necessary though this also is, there should be a study of the whole state made for the purpose of making it accessible, and not only for the purpose of developing the resources of the land for the farmer himself, but also developing the resources offered by the forests, the streams and even the scenery. The present backroad system is largely uneconomic. Many old roads should be discontinued and new ones laid out on better grades and so placed as to make the farming lands more utilizable. The backroads should not be paved roads, but well laid out, well made, well kept earth roads to serve the people on the land. This is of the first importance to internal development, and

it is a State far more than a county problem.

In the same way, the marketing question, which is important to every person in every state, should be studied as a whole by a continuing body of experts, which should be to this field what the public service commissions are to their fields. We are surely coming to the regulation of marketing agencies by non-political commissions or other bodies that understand the question, and that have power derived from the people.

From all of this it will be seen that I believe that the general attitude of our party toward the farmer is more important than specific promises. We must in good faith so act that the farmer shall have confidence that his needs and problems are to receive serious study and attention and are to be worked out as they arise on the merits of the case and not as a means of political advantage. And they must be worked out under his lead, the rest of us co-operating with him to meet his need.

We appeal to the conscience and commonsense of the people. Ours is the one party where words are made good by deeds. We represent the party of sane radicalism, the one party which fearlessly attacks evils and yet behaves with such judgment as not to damage the body politic while cutting out the evils from the body politic. Every wise business man, every hard-headed, right-thinking farmer, every laboring man, every wage-worker, who thinks intelligently about the future should join with us. Our appeal is to the patriotic men whose hearts and heads are both sound. We stand for prosperity and yet we stand for a proper division of prosperity, for passing prosperity around. Of the two old machines, one by its actions would destroy all prosperity, and the other, if prosperity were obtained, would divert it with enormous disproportion to a few favored and privileged people. We stand for healthy and successful industry, for profitable industry, for efficient work in every direction, and yet we stand for the democratization of industry just as we stand for the democratization of politics. We demand not only absolute honesty in the business and political world alike, but also that the activities of each be made subservient to the common good of all our people.