

THE PROGRESSIVES, PAST AND PRESENT

BY THEODORE ROOSEVELT

When I came to prepare my speech at Osawatomie, I found I desired to say more than could well go into it; and part of what I thus wished to say I put in this article.

THESE have been two great crises in our country's history: first when it was formed, and then again when it was perpetuated. The formative period included not merely the Revolutionary War, but the creation and adoption of the Constitution and the first dozen years of work under it. Then came sixty years during which we spread across the continent—years of vital growth, but of growth without rather than growth within. Then came the time of stress and strain which culminated in the Civil War, the period of terrible struggle upon the issue of which depended the justification of all that we had done earlier, and which marked the second great period of growth and development within. The name of John Brown will be forever associated with this second period of the Nation's history; and Kansas was the theater upon which the first act of the second of our great National life dramas was played. It was the result of the struggle in Kansas which determined that our country should be in deed as well as in name devoted to both union and freedom, that the great experiment of democratic government on a national scale should succeed and not fail. It was a heroic struggle; and, as is inevitable with all such struggles, it had also a dark and a terrible side. Very much was done of good, and much, also, of evil; and, as was inevitable in such a period of revolution, often the same man did both good and evil. For our great good fortune as a nation, we, the people of the United States as a whole, can now afford to forget the evil, or at least to remember it without bitterness, and to fix our eyes with pride on the good that was accomplished. Even in ordinary times there are very few of us who do not see the problems of life as through a glass, darkly; and when the glass is clouded by the murk of furious popular passion, the vision of the best and the bravest is dimmed. Looking back, we are all of us

now able to do justice to the valor and the disinterestedness and the love of the right as to each it was given to see the right, shown both by the men of the North and the men of the South in that contest which was finally decided by the attitude of the West. We can see the Puritan soldier, the man of the Bible and the sword, embodied again in Stonewall Jackson, just as we see that Puritan embodied in the stern soldiers who warred against Jackson. We can admire the heroic valor, the sincerity, the self-devotion shown alike by the men who wore the blue and the men who wore the gray; and our sadness that such men should have had to fight one another is tempered by the glad knowledge that ever hereafter their descendants shall be found fighting side by side, struggling in peace as well as in war for the uplift of their common country, all alike resolute to raise to the highest pitch of honor and usefulness the nation to which they all belong.

I do not speak of this struggle of the past merely from the historic standpoint. Our interest is primarily in the application to-day of the lessons taught by the contest of half a century ago. It is of little use for us to pay lip loyalty to the mighty men of the past unless we sincerely endeavor to apply to the problems of the present precisely the qualities which in other crises enabled the men of that day to meet those crises. It is half melancholy and half amusing to see the way in which well-meaning people gather to do honor to the men who, in company with John Brown, and under the lead of Abraham Lincoln, faced and solved the great problems of the nineteenth century, while at the same time these same good people nervously shrink from or frantically denounce those who are trying to meet the problems of the twentieth in the spirit which was accountable for the successful solution of the problems of Lincoln's time.

John Brown stands to us now as repre-

sensing the men and the generation who rendered the greatest service ever rendered this country. He stood for heroic valor, grim energy, fierce fidelity to high ideals. A great debt is owed to John Brown because he is one of the most striking figures in the mighty struggle which was to keep us forever a free and united nation, which was to secure the continuance of the most tremendous democratic experiment ever tried. He did much in his life and more in his death; he embodied the inspiration of the men of his generation; his fate furnished the theme of the song which most stirred the hearts of the soldiers. John Brown's work was brought to completion, was made perfect, by the men who bore aloft the banner of the Union during the four terrible years which intervened between Sumter and Appomattox. To the soldiers who fought through those years—and of course to a very few of their civilian chiefs, like Lincoln—is due the supreme debt of the Nation. They alone, of all our people since we became a nation, rendered to us and to all who come after us a service literally indispensable. They occupy the highest and most honorable position ever occupied by any men of any generation in our country.

Of that generation of men to whom we owe so much, the man to whom we owe most is, of course, Lincoln. Valor, energy, disinterestedness, idealism—all these were his; and his also was that lofty and far-seeing wisdom which alone could make the valor, the disinterestedness, the energy, the idealism, of service to the Republic. Here again, in meeting the problems of to-day, let us profit by, and welcome, and co-operate with the John Browns; but let us also remember that the problems can really be solved only if we approach them in the spirit of Abraham Lincoln.

John Brown prepared the way; but if the friends of freedom and union had surrendered themselves to his leadership, the cause of freedom and union would have been lost. After his death Lincoln spoke of him as follows:

“John Brown's effort was peculiar. It was not a slave insurrection. It was an attempt by white men to get up a revolt among slaves in which the slaves

refused to participate. In fact, it was so absurd that the slaves, with all their ignorance, saw plainly enough it could not succeed. That affair, in its philosophy, corresponds with the many attempts related in history at the assassination of kings and emperors. An enthusiast broods over the oppression of a people till he fancies himself commissioned by Heaven to liberate them. He ventures the attempt, which ends in little less than his own execution. Orsini's attempt on Louis Napoleon and John Brown's attempt at Harper's Ferry were, in their philosophy, precisely the same. The eagerness to cast blame on Old England in the one case and on New England in the other does not disprove the sameness of the two things.”

In our struggle to-day we can study Lincoln's career purely as an example to emulate; we can study John Brown's career partly as such an example, but partly also as a warning. I think such study is especially necessary for the extremists among the very men with whom my own sympathy is especially keen. I am a progressive; I could not be anything else; indeed, as the years go by I become more, and not less, radically progressive. To my mind the failure resolutely to follow progressive policies is the negation of democracy as well of progress, and spells disaster. But for this very reason I feel concern when progressives act with heedless violence, or go so far and so fast as to invite reaction. The experience of John Brown illustrates the evil of the revolutionary short-cut to ultimate good ends. The liberty of the slave was desirable, but it was not to be brought about by a slave insurrection. The better distribution of property is desirable, but it is not to be brought about by the anarchic form of Socialism which would destroy all private capital and tend to destroy all private wealth. It represents not progress, but retrogression, to propose to destroy capital because the power of unrestrained capital is abused. John Brown rendered a great service to the cause of liberty in the earlier Kansas days; but his notion that the evils of slavery could be cured by a slave insurrection was a delusion analogous to the delusions of those who expect to cure the evils of

plutocracy by arousing the baser passions of workingmen against the rich in an endeavor at violent industrial revolution. And, on the other hand, the brutal and shortsighted greed of those who profit by what is wrong in the present system, and the attitude of those who oppose all effort to do away with this wrong, serve in their turn as incitements to such revolution; just as the insolence of the ultra proslavery men finally precipitated the violent destruction of slavery.

In one of Lincoln's addresses immediately after his second election, at a time when any man of less serene magnanimity would have been tempted to advocate extreme measures and to betray personal exultation, or even to show hatred of his opponents, he said, in part:

"Human nature will not change. In any future great national affair, compared with the men of this, we shall have as weak and as strong, as silly and as wise, as bad and as good. Let us therefore study the incidents of this as philosophy, to learn wisdom from, and none of them as wrongs to be revenged. May not all having a common interest reunite in a common effort to save our common country? For my own part, I have striven and shall strive to avoid placing any obstacle in the way. So long as I have been here I have not willingly planted a thorn in any man's bosom. May I ask those who have not differed with me to join with me in this same spirit towards those who have?"

Surely such a union of indomitable resolution in the achievement of a given purpose, with patience and moderation in the policy pursued, and with kindly charity and consideration and friendliness to those of opposite belief, marks the very spirit in which we of to-day should approach the pressing problems of the present.

These problems have to do with securing a more just and generally widespread welfare, so that there may be a more substantial measure of equality in moral and physical well-being among the people whom the men of Lincoln's day kept undivided as citizens of a single country, and freed from the curse of negro slavery. They did their part; now let us do ours.

Fundamentally, our chief problem may be summed up as the effort to make men,

as nearly as they can be made, both free and equal; the freedom and equality necessarily resting on a basis of justice and brotherhood. It is not possible, with the imperfections of mankind, ever wholly to achieve such an ideal, if only for the reason that the shortcomings of men are such that complete and unrestricted individual liberty would mean the negation of even approximate equality, while a rigid and absolute equality would imply the destruction of every shred of liberty. Our business is to secure a practical working combination between the two. This combination should aim, on the one hand, to secure to each man the largest measure of individual liberty that is compatible with his fellows getting from life a just share of the good things to which they are legitimately entitled; while, on the other hand, it should aim to bring about among well-behaved, hard-working people a measure of equality which shall be substantial, and which shall yet permit to the individual the personal liberty of achievement and reward without which life would not be worth living, without which all progress would stop, and civilization first stagnate and then go backwards. Such a combination cannot be completely realized. It can be realized at all only by the application of the spirit of fraternity, the spirit of brotherhood. This spirit demands that each man shall learn and apply the principle that his liberty must be used not only for his own benefit but for the interest of the community as a whole, while the community in its turn, acting as a whole, shall understand that while it must insist on its own rights as against the individual, it must also scrupulously safeguard these same rights of the individual.

Lincoln set before us forever our ideal when he stated that this country was dedicated to a government of, by, and for the people. Our whole experiment is meaningless unless we are to make this a democracy in the fullest sense of the word, in the broadest as well as the highest and deepest significance of the word. It must be made a democracy economically as well as politically. This does not mean that there shall not be leadership in the economic as in the political world, or, that there shall not be ample reward for high distinction and great service. Quite the

contrary. It is our boast that in our political affairs we have combined genuine political equality with high distinction in individual service. During a century and a third we here on this continent—more completely than anywhere else at any other time—have actually realized the democratic principle, the principle of popular government. Yet during this period we have produced, in the persons of Washington and Lincoln, two leaders who on the roll of the world's worthies stand higher than any other two men ever produced by any other country during a similar length of time. We believe that it is entirely possible to combine equality of rights and at least an approximate equality in the opportunity to achieve material well-being, with the opportunity for the highest kind of individual distinction. Hitherto our efforts towards this end have related to purely political matters; we must now strive to achieve the same end in economic matters.

To achieve our purpose we cannot trust merely to haphazard, easy-going methods with complete absence of official Government action and a too exclusively material standard. These did well enough in the pioneer days when problems were comparatively simple, and when the country was still so large that Uncle Sam could give every man a farm, so that, if any man did not succeed where he was, all he had to do was to move somewhere else. We must be true to the spirit of our ancestors, and therefore we must avoid any servility to the letter of what they said and did. There must be equal rights for all, and special privileges for none; but we must remember that to achieve this ideal it is necessary to construe rights and privileges very differently from the way they were necessarily construed, by statesmen and people alike, a century ago. We must strive to achieve our ideal by an exercise of governmental power which the conditions did not render necessary a century ago, and of which our forefathers would have felt suspicious. This is no reflection on the wisdom of our forefathers; it is simply an acknowledgment that conditions have now changed. If our farmers now used the wasteful methods that served for their great-grandfathers they would not merely fail in the

present, but would work a grave wrong to the American citizens of the future. In the same way we must apply new political methods to meet the new political needs, or else we shall suffer, and our children also. In the same way, when we speak of the "square deal," we include two thoughts, each supplementary to the other. The square deal can be secured in part by honest enforcement of existing laws; by honest application of the principles upon which this Government was founded, by the exercise of an aroused and enlightened public opinion. But in order completely to secure it, there must be whatever legislation is necessary to meet the new conditions caused by the extraordinary industrial change and development that have taken place during the last two generations. The greatest evils in our industrial system to-day are those which rise from the abuses of aggregated wealth; and our great problem is to overcome these evils and cut out these abuses. No one man can deal with this matter. It is the affair of the people as a whole. When aggregated wealth demands what is unfair, its immense power can be met only by the still greater power of the people as a whole, exerted in the only way it can be exerted, through the Government; and we must be resolutely prepared to use the power of the Government to any needed extent, even though it be necessary to tread paths which are yet untrod. The complete change in economic conditions means that governmental methods never yet resorted to may have to be employed in order to deal with them. We cannot tolerate anything approaching a monopoly, especially in the necessities of life, except on terms of such thoroughgoing governmental control as will absolutely safeguard every right of the public. Moreover, one of the most sinister manifestations of great corporate wealth during recent years has been its tendency to interfere and dominate in politics.

It is not merely that we want to see the game played fairly. We also want to see the rules changed, so that there shall be both less opportunity and less temptation to cheat, and less chance for some few people to gain a profit to which either they are not entitled at all, or else which is so enormous as to be greatly in excess

of what they deserve, even though their services have been great. We wish to do away with the profit that comes from the illegitimate exercise of cunning and craft. We also wish to secure a measurable equality of opportunity, a measurable equality of reward for services of similar value. To do all this, two mutually supplementary movements are necessary. On the one hand, there must be—I think there now is—a genuine and permanent moral awakening, without which no wisdom of legislation or administration really means anything; and, on the other hand, we must try to secure the social and economic legislation without which any improvement due to purely moral agitation is necessarily evanescent.

We pride ourselves upon being a practical people, and therefore we should not be merely empirical in seeking to bring about results. We must set the end in view as the goal; and then, instead of making a fetish of some particular kind of means, we should adopt whatever honorable means will best accomplish the end. In so far as unrestricted individual liberty brings the best results, we should encourage it. But when a point is reached where this complete lack of restriction on individual liberty fails to achieve the best results, then, on behalf of the whole people, we should exercise the collective power of the people, through the State Legislatures in matters of purely local concern, and through the National Legislature when the purpose is so big that only National action can achieve it. There are good people who, being discontented with present-day conditions, think that these conditions can be cured by a return to what they call the "principles of the fathers." In so far as we have departed from the standards of lofty integrity in public and private life to which the greatest men among the founders of the Republic adhered, why, of course, we should return to these principles. We must always remember that no system of legislation can accomplish anything unless back of it we have the right type of National character; unless we have ideals to which our practice measurably conforms. But to go back to the governmental theories of a hundred years ago would accomplish nothing whatever; for it was under the conditions of unre-

stricted individualism and freedom from Government interference, countenanced by those theories, that the trusts grew up, and private fortunes, enormous far beyond the deserts of the accumulators, were gathered. The old theories of government worked well in sparsely settled communities, before steam, electricity, and machinery had revolutionized our industrial system; but to return to them now would be as hopeless as for the farmers of the present to return to the agricultural implements which met the needs of their predecessors, the farmers who followed in the footsteps of Daniel Boone to Kentucky and Missouri. It may be that, in the past development of our country, complete freedom from all restrictions, and the consequent unlimited encouragement and reward given to the most successful industrial leaders, played a part in which the benefits outweighed the disadvantages. But nowadays such is not the case.

Lincoln had to meet special and peculiar problems, and therefore there was no need and no opportunity for him to devote attention to those other problems which we face, and which in his day were so much less intense than in ours. Nevertheless, he very clearly put the proper democratic view when he said: "I hold that while man exists it is his duty to improve not only his own condition but to assist in ameliorating mankind." And again: "Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital; capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed but for labor. Labor is the superior of capital, and deserves much the higher consideration. Capital has its rights which are as worthy of protection as any other rights. . . . Nor should this lead to a war upon the owners of property. Property is the fruit of labor; property is desirable; is a positive good in the world. Let not him who is houseless pull down the house of another, but let him work diligently and build one for himself, thus by example showing that his own shall be safe from violence when built." It seems to me that in these words Lincoln took substantially the attitude that we ought to take; he showed the proper sense of proportion in his relative estimates of capital and labor, of human rights and property rights. Above all, in this speech, as in so many others, he

taught a lesson in wise kindness and charity; an indispensable lesson to us of to-day, for if we approach the work of reform in a spirit of vindictiveness—in a spirit of reckless disregard for the rights of others, or of hatred for men because they are better off than ourselves—we are sure in the end to do not good but damage to all mankind, and especially to those whose especial champions we profess ourselves to be. Violent excess is sure to provoke violent reaction; and the worst possible policy for our country would be one of violent oscillation between reckless upsetting of property rights, and unscrupulous greed manifested under pretense of protecting those rights. The agitator who preaches hatred and practices slander and untruthfulness, and the visionary who promises perfection and accomplishes only destruction, are the worst enemies of reform; and the man of great wealth who accumulates and uses his wealth without regard to ethical standards, who profits by and breeds corruption, and robs and swindles others, is the very worst enemy of property, the very worst enemy of conservatism, the very worst enemy of those "business interests" that only too often regard him with mean admiration and heatedly endeavor to shield him from the consequences of his iniquity.

Now, the object we seek to achieve is twofold. A great democratic commonwealth should seek to produce and reward that individual distinction which results in the efficient performance of needed work, for such performance is of high value to the whole community. But hand in hand with this purpose must go the purpose which Abraham Lincoln designated as the "amelioration of mankind." Only by an intelligent effort to realize this joint process of individual and social betterment can we keep our democracy sound. We all admit this to be true politically; but we have not paid much heed to the question from its economic side. The wage-earner primarily needs what it is pre-eminently to the interest of our democratic commonwealth that he should obtain—that is, a high standard of living, and the opportunity to acquire the means whereby to secure it. Every power of the Nation should be used in helping him to this end; taking care, however, that the help shall

be given in such fashion as to represent real help, and not harm; for the worst injury that could be done him or any other man would be to teach him to rely primarily on "the State" instead of on himself. The collective power of the State can help; but it is the individual's own power of self-help which is most important.

Now, I am well aware that demagogues and doctrinaire reformers of a certain type may try to turn such use of the powers of the State into an abuse. We should set our faces like flint against any such abuse. We should make it fully understood by the workingmen—by the men of small means—that we will do everything in our power for them *except what is wrong*; but that we will do wrong for no man—neither for them nor for any one else. Nevertheless, the fact that there are dangers in following a given course merely means that we should follow it with a cautious realization of these dangers, and not that we should abandon it, if on the whole it is the right course.

It is just so with personal liberty. The unlimited freedom which the individual property-owner has enjoyed has been of use to this country in many ways, and we can continue our prosperous economic career only by retaining an economic organization which will offer to the men of the stamp of the great captains of industry the opportunity and inducement to earn distinction. Nevertheless, we as Americans must now face the fact that this great freedom which the individual property-owner has enjoyed in the past has produced evils which were inevitable from its unrestrained exercise. It is this very freedom—this absence of State and National restraint—that has tended to create a small class of enormously wealthy and economically powerful men whose chief object is to hold and increase their power. Any feeling of special hatred toward these men is as absurd as any feeling of special regard. Some of them have gained their power by cheating and swindling, just as some very small business men cheat and swindle; but, as a whole, big men are no better and no worse than their small competitors, from a moral standpoint. Where they do wrong it is even more important to pun-

ish them than to punish a small man who does wrong, because their position makes it especially wicked for them to yield to temptation; but the prime need is to change the conditions which enable them to accumulate a power which it is not for the general welfare that they should hold or exercise, and to make this change not only without vindictiveness, without doing injustice to individuals, but also in a cautious and temperate spirit, testing our theories by actual practice, so that our legislation may represent the minimum of restrictions upon the individual initiative of the exceptional man which is compatible with obtaining the maximum of welfare for the average man. We grudge no man a fortune which represents merely his own power and sagacity exercised with entire regard to the welfare of his fellows. But the fortune must not only be honorably obtained and well used; it is also essential that it should not represent a necessary incident of widespread, even though partial, economic privation. It is not even enough that the fortune should have been gained without doing damage to the community. We should only permit it to be gained and kept so long as the gaining and the keeping represent benefit to the community. This I know implies a policy of a far more active governmental interference with social and economic conditions than we have hitherto seen in this country; but I think we have to face the fact that such increase in governmental activity is now necessary. We should work cautiously and patiently and with complete absence of animosity, except toward the individuals whom we are certain have been guilty of flagrant evil; but we should also work firmly to realize the democratic purpose, economically and socially as well as politically. We must make popular government responsible for the betterment both of the individual and of society at large.

Let me repeat once more that, while such responsible governmental action is an absolutely necessary thing to achieve our purpose, yet it will be worse than useless if it is not accompanied by a serious effort on the part of the individuals composing the community thus to achieve each for himself a higher standard of individual betterment, not merely material but

spiritual and intellectual. In other words, our democracy depends on individual improvement just as much as upon collective effort to achieve our common social improvement. The most serious troubles of the present day are unquestionably due in large part to lack of efficient governmental action, and cannot be remedied without such action; but neither can any remedy permanently avail unless back of it stands a high general character of individual citizenship.

This governmental improvement can be accomplished partly by the States, in so far as any given evil affects only one State, or one or two States; in so far as a merely local remedy is needed for a merely local disease. But the betterment must be accomplished partly, and I believe mainly, through the National Government. I do not ask for over-centralization; but I do ask that we work in a spirit of broad and far-reaching nationalism when we deal with what concerns our people as a whole. I no more make a fetish of centralization than of decentralization. Any given case must be treated on its special merits. Each community should be required to deal with all that is of merely local interest; and nothing should be undertaken by the Government of the whole country which can thus wisely be left to local management. But those functions of government which no wisdom on the part of the States will enable them satisfactorily to perform must be performed by the National Government. We are all Americans; our common interests are as broad as the continent; the most vital problems are those that affect us all alike. The regulation of big business, and therefore the control of big property in the public interest, are pre-eminently instances of such functions which can only be performed efficiently and wisely by the Nation; and, moreover, so far as labor is employed in connection with inter-State business, it should also be treated as a matter for the National Government. The National power over inter-State commerce warrants our dealing with such questions as employers' liability in inter-State business, and the protection and compensation for injuries of railway employees. The National Government of right has, and must exercise,

its power for the protection of labor which is connected with the instrumentalities of inter-State commerce.

The National Government belongs to the whole American people; and where the whole American people are interested that interest can be effectively guarded only by the National Government. We ought to use the National Government as an agency, a tool, wherever it is necessary, in order that we may organize our entire political, economical, and social life in accordance with a far-reaching democratic purpose. We should make the National governmental machinery an adequate and constructive instrument for constructive work in the realization of a National democratic ideal. I lay emphasis upon the word *constructive*. Too often the Federal Government, and above all the Federal judiciary, has permitted itself to be employed for purely negative purposes—that is, to thwart the action of the States while not permitting efficient National action in its place. From the National standpoint nothing can be worse—nothing can be full of graver menace—for the National life than to have the Federal courts active in nullifying State action to remedy the evils arising from the abuse of great wealth, unless the Federal authorities, executive, legislative, and judicial alike, do their full duty in effectually meeting the need of a thoroughgoing and radical supervision and control of big inter-State business in all its forms. Many great financiers, and many of the great corporation lawyers who advise them, still oppose any effective regulation of big business by the National Government, because, for the time being, it serves their interest to trust to the chaos which is caused on the one hand by inefficient laws and conflicting and often unwise efforts at regulation by State governments, and, on the other hand, by the efficient protection against such regulation afforded by the Federal courts. In the end this condition will prove intolerable, and will hurt most of all the very class which it at present benefits. The continuation of such conditions would mean that the corporations would find that they had purchased immunity from the efficient exercise of Federal regulative power at the cost of being submitted to a violent and radical

local supervision, inflamed to fury by having repeatedly been thwarted, and not chastened by exercised responsibility. To refuse to take, or to permit others to take, wise and practical action for the remedying of abuses is to invite unwise action under the lead of violent extremists.

I do not wish to see the Nation forced into ownership of the railways if it can possibly be avoided; and the only alternative is thoroughgoing and effective regulation, which shall be based on full knowledge of all the facts, including a physical valuation of the property, the details of its capitalization, and the like. We should immediately set about securing this physical valuation. The Government should oversee the issuance of all stocks and bonds, and should have complete power over rates and traffic agreements. The railways are really highways, and it is the fundamental right of the people as a whole to see that they are open to use on just and reasonable terms, equal to all persons. The Hepburn Bill marked a great step in advance; the law of last session, in its final shape and as actually passed, marks, on the whole, another decided step in advance.

Corporate regulation is merely one phase of a vast problem. The true friend of property, the true conservative, is he who insists that property shall be the servant and not the master of the commonwealth; who insists that the creature of man's making shall be the servant and not the master of the man who made it. The citizens of the United States must effectively control the mighty commercial forces which they have themselves called into being.

Corporations are necessary to the effective use of the forces of production and commerce under modern conditions. We cannot effectively prohibit all combinations without doing far-reaching economic harm; and it is mere folly to do as we have done in the past—to try to combine incompatible systems—that is, to try both to prohibit and regulate combinations. Combinations in industry are the result of an imperative economic law which cannot be repealed by political legislation. The effort at prohibiting all combination has substantially failed. The only course left is active corporate regulation—that is, the

control of corporations for the common good—the suppression of the evils that they work, and the retention, as far as may be, of that business efficiency in their use which has placed us in the forefront of industrial peoples. I need waste no words upon our right so to control them. The corporation is the creature of government, and the people have the right to handle it as they desire; all they need pay attention to is the expediency of realizing this right in some way that shall be productive of good and not harm. The corporate manager who achieves success by honest efficiency in giving the best service to the public should be favored because we all benefit by his efficiency. He realizes Abraham Lincoln's definition which I have quoted above, because he works for his own material betterment and at the same time for the "amelioration of mankind," and he should be helped by the Government because his success is good for the National welfare. But a man who grasps and holds business power by breaking the industrial efficiency of others, who wins success by methods which are against the public interest and degrading to the public morals, should not be permitted to exercise such power. Instead of punishing him by a long and doubtful process of the law after the wrong has been committed, there should be such effective Government regulation as to check the evil tendencies at the moment that they start to develop. Overcapitalization in all its shapes is one of the prime evils; for it is one of the most fruitful methods by which unscrupulous men get improper profits, and when the holdings come into innocent hands we are forced into the uncomfortable position of being obliged to reduce the dividends of innocent investors, or of permitting the public and the wage-workers, either or both, to suffer. Such really effective control over great inter-State business can come only from the National Government. The American people demands the new Nationalism needful to deal with the new problems; it puts the National need above sectional or personal advantage; it is impatient of the utter confusion which results from local legislatures attempting to treat National issues as local issues; it is still more impatient of the National impotence which springs from the

over-division of governmental powers; the impotence which makes it possible for local selfishness, or for the vulpine legal cunning which is hired by wealthy special interests, to bring National activities to a deadlock:

The control must be exercised in several different ways. It may be that National incorporation is not at the moment possible; but there must be some affirmative National control, on terms which will secure publicity in the affairs of and complete supervision and control over the big, Nation-wide business corporations; a control that will prevent and not legalize abuses. Such control should imply the issuance of securities by corporations only under thoroughgoing Governmental supervision, and after compliance with Governmental requirements which shall effectually prevent overcapitalization. Such control should protect and favor the corporation which acts honestly, exactly as it should check and punish, when it cannot prevent, every species of dishonesty.

In the Inter-State Commerce Commission and in the Federal Bureau of Corporations we have bodies which, if their powers are sufficiently enlarged after the right fashion, can render great and substantial service. The average American citizen should have presented to him in a simple and easily comprehended form the truth about the business affairs that affect his daily life as consumer, employee, employer, as investor, as voter. The issue of securities should be subject to rigorous Government supervision. There are concrete instances of unfair competition that can be reached under the Federal criminal legislation, and they should be attacked and destroyed in the courts. But the laws should be such that normally, and save in extraordinary circumstances, there should be no need of recourse to the courts. What is needed is administrative supervision and control. This should be so exercised that the highways of commerce and opportunity should be open to all; and not nominally open, but really open, a consistent effort being made to deprive every man of any advantage that is not due to his own superiority and efficiency, controlled by moral purpose. The National Bureau of Corporations has not been given the powers or the funds

to develop its full usefulness, and yet it offers one of the prime means at the disposal of the people of keeping them fully acquainted with all the facts about corporation control. We have a right to expect from this Bureau and from the Inter-State Commerce Commission a very high grade of public service. We should be as sure of the proper conduct of inter-State railways and the proper management of inter-State business as we are now sure of the conduct and management of the National banks, and we should have as effective supervision in one case as in the other.

Not only as a matter of justice and honesty, but as a matter of prime popular interest, we should see that this control is so exercised as to favor a proper return to the upright business manager and honest investor. In the matter of railway rates, for instance, it is just as much our duty to see that they are not too low as that they are not too high. We must preserve the right of the railway employee to proper wages and the right of the investor to proper interest as scrupulously as we preserve the right of the shipper and the producer and the consumer. We cannot afford to do injustice, or suffer it to be done, to any of these. But in order to do justice we must have full knowledge. We must have the right to find out every fact connected with the business of the railway, so as to base our judgment, not on any one fact, but on all taken together. Inasmuch as it is so often impossible to punish wrongs done in the past, and to prevent the consequences of the wrongs thus committed being felt by one innocent class, without shifting the burden to the shoulders of another innocent class, we ought to provide that hereafter business shall be carried on from its inception in such a way as to prevent swindling. Incidentally, this will also tend to prevent that excessive profit by one man, which may not be swindling, under existing laws, but which nevertheless is against the interest of the commonwealth. To know all the facts is of as much interest to the investor and the wage-worker as to the shipper, the producer, the consumer. Full knowledge of the past helps us in dealing with the future. If we find that high rates are due to overcapitalization

in the past, or to any kind of sharp practice in the past, then, whether or not it is possible to take action which will partly remedy the wrong, we are certainly in a better position to prevent a repetition of the wrong.

Let me, in closing, put my position in a nutshell. When I say that I am for the square deal, I mean not merely that I stand for fair play under the present rules of the game, but that I stand for having these rules changed so as to work for a more substantial equality of opportunity and of reward for equally good service. So far as possible, the reward should be based upon service; and this necessarily implies that where a man renders us service in return for the fortune he receives, he has the right to receive it only on terms just to the whole people. For this reason there should be a heavily progressive National inheritance tax on big fortunes. The really big fortune, by the mere fact of its size, acquires qualities which differentiate it in kind as well as in degree from what is possessed by men of relatively small means. A heavily progressive inheritance tax on all such fortunes (heaviest on absentees) has the good qualities of an income tax, without its drawbacks; it is far more beneficial to the community at large, and far less burdensome to private individuals, as well as far more easily collected. A moderate, but progressive, income tax, carefully devised to fall genuinely on those who ought to pay, would, I believe, be a good thing; but a heavy and heavily progressive inheritance tax on great fortunes would be a far better thing.

I have tried to set before you my creed. I believe in property rights, but I believe in them as adjuncts to, and not as substitutes for, human rights. I believe that normally the rights of property coincide with the rights of man; but where they do not, then the rights of man must be put above the rights of property. I believe in shaping the ends of government to protect property; but wherever the alternative must be faced, I am for man and not for property. I am far from underestimating the importance of dividends, but I rank dividends below human character. I know well that if there is not sufficient prosperity the people will in the end rebel against any system, no mat-

ter how exalted morally; and reformers must not bring upon the people permanent economic ruin, or the reforms themselves will go down in the ruin. But we must be ready to face any temporary disaster—whether or not brought on by those who will war against us to the knife—if only through such disaster can we attain our goal. And those who oppose all reform will do well to remember that ruin in its worst form is inevitable if our National life brings us nothing whatever but a swollen and badly distributed material prosperity. In other words, I feel that material interests are chiefly good, not in themselves, but as an indispensable foundation upon which we should build a higher superstructure, a superstructure without which the foundation becomes worthless. Therefore I believe that the destinies of this country should be shaped primarily by moral forces, and by material forces only as they are subordinated to these moral forces. I believe that material wealth is an exceedingly valuable servant, and a particularly abhorrent master, in our National life. I think one end of government should be to achieve prosperity; but it should follow this end chiefly to serve an even higher and more important end—that of promoting the character and welfare of the average man. In the long run, and inevitably, the actual control of the government will be determined by the chief end which the government subserves. If the end and aim of government action is merely to accumulate general material prosperity, treating such prosperity as an end in itself and not as a means, then it is inevitable that material wealth and the masters of that wealth will dominate and control the course of national action. If, on the other hand, the achievement of material wealth is treated, not as an end of government, but as a thing of great value, it is true—so valuable as to be indispensable—but of value only in connection with the achievement of other ends, then we are free to seek through our government, and through the supervision of our individual activities, the realization of a true democracy. Then we are free to seek not only the heaping up of material wealth, but a wise and generous distribution of such wealth so as to diminish grinding poverty, and, so far as

may be, to equalize social and economic no less than political opportunity.

The people as a whole can be benefited morally and materially by a system which shall permit of ample reward for exceptional efficiency, but which shall nevertheless secure to the average man who does his work faithfully and well, the reward to which he is entitled. Remember that I speak only of the man who does his work faithfully and well. The man who shirks his work, who is lazy or vicious, or even merely incompetent, deserves scant consideration; we may be sorry for his family, but it is folly to waste sympathy on the man himself; and it is also folly for sentimentalists to try to shift the burden of blame from such a man himself to "society;" and it is an outrage to give him the reward given to his hard-working, upright, and efficient brother. Still less should we waste sympathy on the criminal; there are altogether too many honest men who need it; and one chief point in dealing with the criminal should be to make him understand that he will be in personal peril if he becomes a lawbreaker. I realize entirely that in the last analysis, with the nation as with the individual, it is private character that counts for most. It is because of this realization that I gladly lay myself open to the charge that I preach too much, and dwell too much upon moral commonplaces; for though I believe with all my heart in the nationalization of this Nation—in the collective use on behalf of the American people of the governmental powers which can be derived only from the American people as a whole—yet I believe even more in the practical application by the individual of those great fundamental moralities.

A certain type of rather thinly intellectual man sneers at these moralities as "commonplaces;" and base and evil men, selfish and shortsighted men, are immensely pleased to see them denounced and derided. Yet surely it is the duty of every public man to try to make all of us keep in mind, and practice, the moralities essential to the welfare of the American people. It is of vital concern to the American people that the men and women of this great Nation should be good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers, sons and daughters; that we should be

good neighbors, one to another, in business and in social life; that we should each do his or her primary duty in the home without neglecting the duty to the State; that we should dwell even more on our duties than on our rights; that we should work hard and faithfully; that we should prize intelligence, but prize courage and honesty and cleanliness even more. Inefficiency is a curse; and no good intention atones for weakness of will and flabbiness of moral, mental, and

physical fiber; yet it is also true that no intellectual cleverness, no ability to achieve material prosperity, can atone for the lack of the great moral qualities which are the surest foundation of national might. In this great free democracy, more than in any other nation under the sun, it behooves all the people so to bear themselves that, not with their lips only but in their lives, they shall show their fealty to the great truth pronounced of old—the truth that Righteousness exalteth a nation.