

Chairman and Gentlemen: My feeling at being called upon this occasion is only marred by a feeling which I must frankly confess to you, that it would have been the proudest moment of my life, Mr. Record, if I could like you, have opened the meeting which I believed is destined to be historic in the annals of our republic. Some six or eight weeks ago a distinguished senator tried to be humorous in the senate, an unfortunate combination in the lack of humor in the senator and the lack of sympathy in surroundings. I enjoy humor but I don't like my contemplation of humor to be disturbed by the creaking of the pump handle when it is wrung out by the force pump process. This senator thought he would be humorous by distinguishing between the progressive and the reactionary and so he said the reactionary is one who when he stops can never start again, and that the progressive is one who when he gets started can never stop, and the sage, calm temperament of New England forced a smile, not so much at the humor as from the sense of obligation to the senator to the portrayal of the setting.

"This distinction, however, is correct and it is a great racial significance in the race from which you spring. Long ago in the history of northern Europe there arose that spirit projecting itself. You see that race moving westward overcoming every physical opposition. You see it working along the northern shore. You see it take possession of England and in its more tempestuousness finally brave the rigors of the Atlantic and found a republic upon this continent. Thank God you and I belong to a race that when it gets started it never knows how to stop. Out of the great problems wrought in the history of the republic there came a crisis when a party was founded, a party that you and I were proud of down to a year ago last spring. (Applause.) I am here today to stir up no unnecessary animosity but I am here today to speak in tones that will not be misunderstood or mistaken. During those years from the foundation of our party down to the spring of 1909, making allowance for those imperfections inherent in human nature, our party in the hands of the American people was the great instrument which fairly well solved the problems as they came face to face with the development of our republic. But, my friends, no party can live upon the mere story of its achievements. If there is one fundamental essential of republicanism it is that spirit of progress in harmony with the best interests of this republic which it inherited from the story of migration to revolution, war to sacrifice, that finally found its fruition in the establishment of this republic.

"During those years we met some of the gravest problems of history and it is a proud thing for every republican to cherish that during fifty years of the most momentous history in all the annals of the world save that period which covers the advent of christianity, his party was the instrument used to solve these problems.

"We stand today at the threshold of a new and distinct movement involving no principle that has not been either outwardly or inwardly fundamentally republican.

"Your chairman has spoken of that more acute stage of the question which presents itself today. It is the same story, the same question. Abraham Lincoln in 1861 amid the dark clouds of civil strife realized as well as any American realizes today that African slavery was a mere incident to the struggle of the ages and that struggle of the ages from time to time presents the same great fundamental problem but presents it in a different aspect today. The problem today is whether the American people will be able to take back that which they have surrendered in government, to re-clothe itself with that power with relation to the governmental policy that was inherent and natural in every government and by so doing serve all, or whether they shall allow that few who through the prostitution of their government have put the government of the great republic in the interests of a few.

"Now this gathering means that the people are resolved that the people themselves shall rule and the people ruling, ruling will be in the interest of general welfare. (Applause.)

"Against this effort is that reactionary spirit which has been in part within our party as it has within every party and within every human agency. It would seem as though the minority Bourbon spirit that has claimed the party, part and parcel, would read the handwriting on the wall, but, my friends, there is a common tie that binds Bourbonism wherever it exists. Whether facing the terrors of the French revolu-

tion, whether sitting on the crumbling throne of Spain, or whether finding a place and seeking power within the political agencies of this republic, that common tie is its blindness. The Bourbon wherever he is, is blind. All blind men are not Bourbons but all Bourbons are blind. It would seem as though the warning that came from rock-ribbed Maine, from the great state of Massachusetts, from New York, from West Virginia and the warning that fairly shook Pennsylvania until she was rocked in a storm, the warning that involved the loss of Ohio by 100,000 last year, would have been warning enough for blind Bourbonism. But, no, that was not sufficient. On the heels of that came the splendid victory last week from the state of California.

"And still Bourbonism sits chattering to itself that this is a mere momentary impulse of the people.

"Now, my friends, in this movement permeating the rank and file of the republican party from one ocean to the other there still remains one thing to be done. The human is so constituted that he ever requires a symbol which shall stand as an outward expression of the faith within him.

"If today we could part the curtain that falls in mystery on the pagan faith we would find the pagan temple drawn with a pagan image and so, in its inception in the outward expression of the faith, we deal in the pagan mind. Nations could not live without a banner, and so humans, no matter how determined or how broad spirited, they must have something around which the purpose and policy may cluster. I am one who has minimized the individual in the current of human affairs, and yet I recognize that man is so constituted that he must have something of the human to stand for the purposes within, and after all, my friends, if we wanted to epitomize the historic achievements of our party, in order to do it by name we would look back there a half a century and we would see 4,000,000 of human beings held in bondage; we would see the attorney general of the United States, with that solemnity that always attaches to Bourbonism solemnly advising the president that there was no authority in the constitution to hold the union together.

"We see an uprising of the people, we see the strife, the sacrifice, we see the shackles fall from those 4,000,000 slaves, yet we could read it all in one short name, the name of Abraham Lincoln. (Applause.)

"We view another scene when depression over-spread our land, when strong men begged for work and begged in vain, when the bats were building their nests in the chimneys of the mills. We see there another transformation, we hear the whirr of the wheels, we see the smoke pour forth from the chimneys, we see the man returning home at night with the fruits of toil in the wages he has earned, and yet that could be summed up in one name, the name of William McKinley. (Applause.)

"We see another picture. We see a great people so engrossed in commercialism that the higher ideals seem to have been lost to view. We see an abatement of the best and purest in public life. We see a change come over the scene. We see a people, grasping for higher ideals, we see men brought to the bar of justice, we see organized effort in behalf of the people to hold in check those giant forces that have been developed in our midst, and, while we might spend hours upon that picture, it is all epitomized in one man's name, the name of Theodore Roosevelt. (Applause and cheering.)

"We see another picture. In a sister state, a state that I can speak of with some authority, having in my younger days seen, witnessed and felt the brutal tyranny of the bi-partisan forces that held Wisconsin in its clutch. We see one man brave enough to defy that force, we see him call down upon himself the bitter hostility of that force. Every sinister effort is arrayed against him, but he carries on his fight unflinchingly—not the wild fight of a dreamer, but the struggle of one who, I have no hesitation in saying, in my humble judgment, is the greatest constructive statesman of his age. (Applause and prolonged cheering.)

"By their fruits ye shall know them, is the highest law ever given to man for the test of truth. (Applause.) Can it be said of a man who, for a quarter of a century strews his pathway with those enemies born of the struggle in Wisconsin, and then receives a verdict of 100,000 majority, that his views were unsound? No, lacking in that share of personality which some possess, stern and rugged in his nature, fearless and defiant in his fight, when that man received last year (although his own voice

silenced on the bed of pain) a one hundred thousand majority, it was a tribute to the wisdom and the soundness of the policies for which he had stood. (Applause.)

"I don't know—I don't like to mention names (laughter), but you have got an old gentleman in this state who says he would like to hang men like me (laughter) I cherish no hostility because I do not hold him accountable for what he says (laughter); but among the other murmurings of barbarism is the assertion that we men have disrupted the party. As an answer to that challenge put the 100,000 majority last year of Bob La Follette in Wisconsin (applause), against the 100,000 rolled up against us in the state of Ohio. I care but little for their mutterings and their chattering, and yet I do think the time has come when we as republicans engaged in the struggle of saving a party from Bourbonism, should meet their challenge by pointing to the states where Bourbonism lost in the last campaign as the local leadership of the republican party.

"We pass from Wisconsin to the American senate. A few years ago, if there was a close corporation on the earth it was the American senate. The ipsit dixit was binding, and to challenge its correctness was treason. Its business was being conducted behind closed doors, but there came a change in the senate. The door of the conference committee has been thrown open, and the American sovereign now can know what his servant is doing in conference work. Of all that has been accomplished in the last two years in its fundamental relation to fundamental progress that victory overshadows all else. (Applause.) The years of this man's services rolled by, and, as in Wisconsin, you could not if he was in his grave repeal a law that he ever helped to put on the statute of that state; so today you could not repeal a law, nor can Bourbonism forever successfully contend against the proposed laws advocated by that same man. (Applause.) Again, we have a symbol, and that picture is all epitomized in one man's name, the name of Robert M. La Follette. (Prolonged applause.)

"I believe for one—I of course voice only my opinion, because it is fundamental in this movement that men have a right to their opinion, and the right to express it without being denounced as traitors. (Applause.) My own opinion is that this great uprising, this force that is betraying its presence from one ocean to the other, will waste itself in internal faction and discord, unless, as in all respects of human affairs, we take a symbol around which to rally and within which to crystallize our force and our purpose. (Applause.)

"Now the chairman has well said that we could not today anticipate all the issues of the future. No platform can be drawn that will anticipate and meet them all. But as in the past, men like Lincoln, McKinley and Roosevelt took the place of the necessity of detail in all respects in platform, so Robert M. La Follette in his own lifework, in his grand and triumphant achievement, is in himself a platform that represents the progressive spirit of the republican party. (Prolonged applause.)

"Now there is a difference between violated pledges and pledges redeemed, and the American people are not satisfied with violated pledges even though in deathbed repentance it be promised that they shall eventually be carried out. (Applause.) The American people demand that there be genuine sincerity in pledges, and there is no sincerity equal to that of achievement itself. Some men in public life must sink a plummet into the current of American thought and purpose to catch its drift, to measure its depth and measure its force. Such men may be safe and they may not, but there is one man who does not require to sink a plummet into the current of American thought and purpose, neither to measure its force, to sound its depth, or to ascertain its directions; for the very incarnation of all that is best in American thought and purpose is Robert M. La Follette himself."

WHEN IT SUITS THE TRUSTS

Minden (Neb.) Courier: Archbishop Ireland calls the initiative and referendum democratic madness. Being a republican they could not very well be anything else. Being a republican he is in favor of limiting the power of the people instead of giving them more. He says: "We trust the people when they treat matter with which they are conversant." He would no doubt like to have the class to which he belongs have the power to determine what matters the people were conversant with, and the final verdict of such egotists would be, that they were not competent to treat upon any question.