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Speech of Thomas E. Watson
at Louisiana Monument, World's
Fair, September 6, 1904.

To a vast throng that gathered to hear him at the Louisiana Monument, World's Fair grounds, St. Louis, September 6, 1904, Thomas E. Watson, the people's matchless candidate for president, spoke as follows:

Fellow Citizens: I desire to bear testimony and render thanks now to the broad mind and generous heart of the ex-governor of this grand old state of Missouri, who can so lift himself above party affiliations as to extend the courtesies to me as he has done on this occasion.

If I were to consult my own feelings, I would not make a speech this afternoon. You see how unfavorable the conditions are here for an address based solely on political ideas. When people come to a great exposition such as this, they do not come for the purpose of hearing a political sermon, but to see and learn from the magnificent educational exhibition which has been provided for them.

For myself, I am exceedingly tired. A partisan speech makes me tired enough; but yesterday, on Labor day, I made a non-partisan speech, and a non-partisan speech just wears me out. Owing to what was thought to be the proper thing, and not wishing to violate the canons of good taste, I confined myself to what is called a non-partisan speech, and I feel as though I had been splitting rails.

When I make a speech, I love to say something; and when I go up against my adversary, I love to strike him so that the way-faring Samaritan, though a fool, would know where to pour his ointment, or stick his plaster. Today I hardly know whether I should make a political speech. (Cries of "Yes, go ahead.") May I make a partisan speech on such lines as I may desire? ("Yes.") May I take the bridle off and let myself go? ("Yes"). All right, I will tell you exactly where I stand and what I stand for, and stand up for it as long as I know how and hit the blows with all the power there is in me.

Does anybody here intend to vote for Mr. Roosevelt? (Cries of "Yes, sure.") Why?—because you are republicans and believe in the principles and policy of the republican party? (Cries of "Yes, that's the reason.") Right, that is the way to speak right out. If you are fair and square out republicans and believe in republican principles and republican policies, you do exactly right when you proclaim to the world your intention to vote for Mr. Roosevelt. And if I were a republican and believed in republican principles and policy, I would vote for Roosevelt, too. But is there any man here who will vote for a candidate who claims a right to democratic votes, and yet does not venture to say wherein he differs from Mr. Roosevelt? The question in this campaign is: Do we need two republican parties? Isn't one of them quite enough? (Cries of "Yes, too many.") To those who believe in republican policies and principles, is there any reason why Teddy isn't enough in one year? Should not the men who want something different from Roosevelt demand a candidate who is brave enough and honest enough to tell us wherein he differs from Roosevelt? Don't let us try to fool the American people! Let us write our principles upon our foreheads where they may be seen, and let us stand up for principle as against pretense.

I lay down this proposition: That in his speech of acceptance, Judge Parker has not told the American people, in plain words, wherein he differs from Theodore Roosevelt on any question of principle or policy. There is the great question of imperialism. Mr. Roosevelt discusses it; Judge Parker discusses it. Tell us what is the difference between the two men. It relates to the Philippine islands. The republican position is that they will give them home rule and self-government as soon as they are prepared for

it; Judge Parker's position is that we will give them self-government when they are ready for it; and there you are. What is the difference? They don't set the time, neither of them. They don't tell us whether it will be next year, next generation or next century. Now, I will give you my opinion, and that is that the people of the Philippine islands will get their independence when the plutocrats of America, who are now engaged in the commercial exploitation of the islands, are ready for them to have it, and not before, no matter which party is in control, and I will take you into my confidence far enough to tell you further that I don't think it will materially anticipate the time when Gabriel blows his trumpet.

On the question of national banks—how does Mr. Roosevelt stand? He is in favor of them. How does Judge Parker stand? He is in favor of them. Where is the difference?

On the question of trusts—Mr. Roosevelt says he will break up the illegal trusts; Parker says he will break up the illegal trusts. Roosevelt does not enumerate the illegal trusts, and Parker does not specify them. Where is the difference?

On the question of money—where is the difference? The republicans are for the gold standard and a telegram was received here in St. Louis indicating that somebody else was in favor of the gold standard, too.

On the negro question—what is the difference between Mr. Roosevelt and Parker? Tell us in plain words so that we will know what you mean. You say that Mr. Roosevelt lunched with Booker Washington. Will Judge Parker say that he wouldn't do it? Will he come out and say it? He is a northern man and a distinguished company of northern men lunched with Booker Washington only last night. Will Judge Parker cut loose from them, or will he appoint negroes to office in the south? Is he in favor of mixed schools in New York, as Grover Cleveland was? If not, let him say so. In other words, let him get votes on his own platform and not by pretending to be "just as good" as Mr. Roosevelt is. If you want the real, genuine republican principle, vote for Roosevelt; if you want to vote for an article that is branded "just as good," vote for Judge Parker.

If you are a Jeffersonian democrat, there is one of two things you have got to do—you have got to abandon your lifelong convictions, or you have to follow the lead of a new party. We say that our party is the only one that stands for the old faith—the faith of our fathers—the faith we were taught to believe was identified with the true welfare of the south. Jefferson was in favor of an income tax, not only because it would put the burden of government on those who get the most benefits out of it and are best able to bear the burdens, but for the reason that a graduated income tax, gradually increasing as the income grows larger, would pour back into the common fund whatever one man got beyond his legitimate deserts. Where does Mr. Roosevelt stand on the income tax? He is against it. Where does Judge Parker stand? He is against it. Where is the difference between the two men on the income tax? Or between the two parties?

The people's party is in favor of taking the taxes off the necessities of life which the people must have. We are in favor of putting the burden of government upon the rich. It was Jefferson's dream that the poor man should pay no taxes. How does Roosevelt stand on it? He is in favor of a protective tariff with incidental revision, now and then. How does Parker stand? He also would like to revise the tariff, but if he is elected he says that he will only have it for four years and in that time he wouldn't be able to do what he would like to do with the tariff. Therefore, the democratic nominee stands where Roosevelt does on the tariff.

We are against national banks, just as Jefferson was. Our position today, on the money question and national bank question, is precisely what the position of the Bryan democrats has

been for the last eight years. You have been preaching it all over the country; your editors wrote for it; your ministers prayed for it. You went to Chicago in 1896 and appropriated our platform. For eight years you worked for it. You got six and a half million votes for it. Bryan democrats, where do you stand today? Did you think you were right? Do you think you were right? If you did and if you do, as I believe you did and do now, where are you going to go to find the representative of your principles? If you were right then, we are right now. We want every honest Bryan democrat of the country to help us fight this battle against plutocracy. We say that these vast railroad corporations which oppress the people and exercise a power of taxation through excessive charges that the government itself can not do, ought to be owned by the government and run in the interest of the people. We say that the labor conditions need reform. I freely declare that I am in favor of the eight-hour day. I freely declare against the slavery in which our children are made to work at tender age, confined in mills, factories and mines. I believe that we are degrading our own youth and degenerating our race when we grind up our children at too tender an age in order that more dividends shall come to those who have already more than their share. No nation ought to devour its own young.

The people's party is also opposed to government by injunction. We want to stop the usurpations and encroachments of the federal judges. And the remedy we propose is to give the people the imperative mandate as well as the right to elect all officers, judicial or otherwise, by a direct vote of the people. When we do that the functions of the government will be in fact in the hands of the people. We are in favor of the initiative and referendum. If the law-making power refuses to enact laws which the people need, let the people themselves compel such laws by petition. If the law-makers pass laws which the people do not approve, let these laws be referred back to the people and voted down. That is the initiative and referendum.

Why, isn't that good democracy? Oh, you say, we approve of that, but let's get the reform inside the democratic party. The democratic party has been pledged to certain reforms since 1892. In 1892, 1896 and 1900, they were pledged against national banks, and in 1902 they rechartered the national banks for twenty years. In 1892 they were pledged to a revision of the tariff in favor of the people. They gave us a tariff that was against the people and in favor of the monopolists.

In 1892, they pledged themselves in favor of states' rights and home rule; and in 1894, Grover Cleveland sent the United States army into the state of Illinois, against the wishes and rights of the people of that democratic state, over the written and repeated protests of the democratic governor of that state, and in violation of the rights of the laborer to get justice for himself. The record of the democratic party is that of a pledge buster, not a pledge keeper. We are further away from reform than we were in 1892. Isn't it time we were trying something else? You have got a republican party with Roosevelt as its candidate. If you want those principles to succeed, vote for Roosevelt, or vote for Parker, and no matter who is elected, republican principles will succeed.

In 1892 Wall street sent to Harrison and demanded that he make certain pledges. The demand was made through Senators Platt and Quay. President Harrison refused to make the required pledges. Grover Cleveland was elected president and we saw the rottenest administration the American people ever had—administration of Wall street and Grover Cleveland. Van Allen wanted to go to the Italian mission; so he contributed \$50,000 to the campaign fund. Morgan, Belmont and the Rothschilds wanted bonds and wanted to re-charter the national banks. Cleveland gave

them the bonds in a midnight deal, a secret scheme, without competition, below the market value, robbing the people of \$10,000,000 on what the bonds were actually worth. Where is the sense of honor of the southern people? Can they endorse things like that?

When Senator Gorman got through with the Wilson bill, we had a measure which put a burden of \$45,000,000 on the backs of the people alone, and the sugar trust—the Havemeyers—which had contributed \$250,000 to the democratic campaign fund in New York alone, got a differential tariff which was worth millions to them every year, and at your expense and mine. The same men that were around Grover Cleveland then are around Judge Parker now. Morgan is there, and he is Belmont's partner. The one controls the L. & N. and the other the Southern. One is driving Roosevelt and the other Parker. No matter who is elected, the partnership will not get hurt. There is Olney, who sent the United States troops into Illinois. There is Gorman, the senatorial agent of all the democratic trusts. There is Belmont, the Rothschilds' agent; there is Lamont, the railroad monopolist, and there is Carlisle, the whisky trust agent. We know what Grover Cleveland promised them in 1892, because we saw the goods delivered. The same crowd being around Parker, ought we not to ask, what has Parker promised to do? Is Parker too good to do what Grover Cleveland did? I say nothing against his personal character. I throw no mud. I try to conduct my campaign on the highest plane. But when I come to his political character, I will quote against him the words of Hon. William J. Bryan, the man, who for eight years has been your leader and prophet. What did he say about him on April 23, 1904, not last year, but last spring when those leaves were turning to unfold their charms to the southern sun. Bryan said: "We now have evidence enough to convict him of total unfitness for the democratic nomination." Mr. Parker then stood upon the New York platform, which crooked Dave Hill had put together. Bryan said that "nobody but an artful dodger could stand on the New York democratic platform." Don't take my word for Parker's political character. You may remind me that Bryan is now supporting him. He is—after a fashion. But if any explanation is needed, that explanation is not due from me, but due from Mr. Bryan.

What else? Not only was the New York platform upon which he was made to stand made for an artful dodger, but the telegram he sent to St. Louis bears strong evidence of being all pre-arranged by crooked Dave Hill before he came, ready to be sprung on the convention after the dangers of the two-thirds rule had been passed; and no matter how much they gagged at the pill, they had it to swallow. That address of acceptance, if anything, was a little more "dodgery" than the New York platform. You all know Dave Hill's crookedness. Parker has been sitting on Hill's political knee, and been absorbing his political gospel from David B. Hill for the last twenty years.

The time will come when the southern people will understand the work I am trying to do for them. We will not win this time, but in the name of the Jeffersonian democracy, we will make this fight and we will appeal to all those who are Jeffersonian in principle to come with us.

Every vote given to me in this campaign will be an encouragement, an inspiration to reformers everywhere. To the extent that you give me your help, you strengthen the arms of those who must lead the grand army of true democracy in 1908.

Let every citizen have the courage to vote his convictions. If you think I am wrong in principle vote your conviction. If you think I am right, vote your conviction. Be a man—not a party slave.

Unless each citizen will be brave enough to support leaders who are believed to be right, it will be impossible to accomplish these reforms which are so much needed.