

nor, unlike Hoover's farm program, would it "keep the Government in business."²⁷

Yet all this was as nothing compared to his oscillations on fiscal policy. He would increase aid to the unemployed, but he would slash federal spending. On this one point he was specific; he would cut government spending 25 per cent. At Sioux City, Iowa, in September, Governor Roosevelt stated: "I accuse the present Administration of being the greatest spending Administration in peace times in all our history. It is an Administration that has piled bureau on bureau, commission on commission, and has failed to anticipate the dire needs and the reduced earning power of the people." In Pittsburgh the next month, he declared: "I regard reduction in Federal spending as one of the most important issues of this campaign. In my opinion, it is the most direct and effective contribution that Government can make to business."²⁸ One of his New Deal administrators reflected subsequently: "Given later developments, the campaign speeches often read like a giant misprint, in which Roosevelt and Hoover speak each other's lines."²⁹

In retrospect, it is clear that a fair amount of the New Deal had been foreshadowed during the campaign. In his acceptance speech, Roosevelt advocated a reforestation program which would employ the nation's youth, an obvious anticipation of the Civilian Conservation Corps. In Portland, Oregon, he came out for public power development and government regulation of utilities. Roosevelt in his Columbus speech, and the Democratic party in its platform, both promised regulation of financial dealings on Wall Street, a pledge which was later fulfilled by a series of regulatory acts. On several occasions, the Governor stressed the need for planning, and in his Commonwealth Club address in San Francisco he administered govern-

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²⁷ *Public Papers*, I, 655. For the contrasting views of historians, see Daniel Fusteld, *The Economic Thought of Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Origins of the New Deal* (New York, 1956), p. 302, n. 26; Freidel, *Roosevelt, The Triumph*, pp. 347-349; Gilbert Fite, *George N. Peek and the Fight for Farm Party* (Norman, Okla., 1954), p. 239; Gertrude Army Slichter, "Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Farm Problem, 1929-1932," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIII (1956), 255, n. 51.
²⁸ *Public Papers*, I, 761, 809. By June 30, 1933, Roosevelt asserted, the "true deficit" might rise above \$1,600,000,000—"a deficit so great that it makes us catch our breath." *Ibid.*, p. 805.

Elmer Davis believed the Democrats had nominated "the man who would probably make the weakest President of the dozen aspirants."²⁴ Walter Lippmann thought him the master of the "balanced antithesis," "a pleasant man who, without any important qualifications for the office, would very much like to be President."²⁵

Roosevelt's campaign did little to reassure critics who thought him a vacillating politician. His speeches sounded painfully discordant themes. He assailed the Hoover administration because it was committed to the idea that we ought to center control of everything in Washington as rapidly as possible," but he advanced policies which would greatly extend the power of the national government. He struck out at the disastrous high-tariff policies of the Republicans, but by the end of the campaign, taunted by Hoover, he had eaten so many of his words that no real difference separated the two candidates on the tariff issue. At times he talked the language of his New Nationalist advisers, at other times, as at Columbus, he spoke the idiom of the New Freedom.²⁶ His Topeka speech left farm leaders, as it was to leave historians, arguing over precisely what he intended. He would initiate a far-reaching plan to help the farmer; but he would do it in such a fashion that it would not "cost the Government any money."

²⁴ Davis, "The Collapse of Politics," *Harper's*, CLXV (1932), 388.
²⁵ *New York Herald-Tribune*, April 28, 1932. See too Lippmann to Newton Baker, July 29, 1932, Baker MSS., Box 149. "It is useless to blame this very unrooseveltian Roosevelt for having no ideas; he really tries his best to have them," snapped the veteran Washington correspondent Charles Willis Thompson. "The Democrats have nominated nobody quite like him since Franklin Pierce. . . ." Thompson, "Wanted: Political Courage," *Harper's*, CLXV (1932), 726-727.
²⁶ *Public Papers*, I, 808, 835-836; *The New York Times*, November 5, 1932; Raymond Moley, *After Seven Years* (New York, 1939), pp. 45-52; Rexford Tugwell, "The Progressive Orthodoxy of Franklin D. Roosevelt," *Ethics*, LXIV (1953), 1-22; Felix Frankfurter to Louis Brandeis, August 7, 1932, Brandeis MSS., G9.