

The Outlook for Prosperity Addresses

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Introductory Remarks by the Chairman

MR WILLCOX: Gentlemen of the Economic Club: I am very sorry to say this afternoon we received the following telegram:

"Continuous session of Senate prevents attendance tonight. Republicans refuse to pair. Express my sincere regrets to your members.

"Henry F. Hollis."

sc That means that the only Democratic senator from the State of New Hampshire since 1852 is prevented from being with us, and we are to lose the privilege of hearing from him on this subject which means so much to us all.

sc I therefore shall introduce as the first speaker a gentleman from the West, or the Middle West, who is in touch as a business man with all the lines of industry throughout, I might say, the whole country, but particularly in the Middle West. I take pleasure in introducing Mr Edward W. Douglas, Vice-President of the Simmons Hardware Company of St Louis, whose particular subject is "The Fundamental Conditions in the West."

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Address by

Mr. E. W. DOUGLASS,

Vice President of the ~~S~~immons Hardware Company
of St. Louis.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:-

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In the element^{AL} which makes for prosperity the ^{MATERIAL} fundamental condition and the trend of thought among the people are of primal importance. You cannot ascribe priority to either one, for, since 1907, our troubles, I think, have been as much due to the unrest and the unsettlement of the public mind as to the great droughts which brought which brought such distress to great portions of the West and of the South.

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The prosperity which we are ^W ~~are~~ ^W ~~have been~~ ^W ~~all these dreary years,~~ ^W is going to be, I believe and hope and pray, a different kind of prosperity in many ways from that we have ever known before, inasmuch as I think it will be a prosperity shared in more by the many and less proportionately by the few than ever before in the history of our country. It seems to me element^{AL} that the welfare of the plain, everyday man is the best thing in the world for an enduring prosperity, because it increases his purchasing power, and will make ^W ~~him~~ ^W just that much more an element in the business world.

The industry of transportation naturally claims our attention. You hear much of ~~the fact~~ that the prosperity of the country depends upon the railroads. That is practically putting the cart before the horse. It were better to say that as one of the great elements of prosperity, the railroads should be in a position to bear their due share. Unfortunately, they remind us now very much like poor Tom in King Lear; they have been very much a'cold. It is idle and futile and academic to go into the reason of this. The real proposition is the remedy and treatment. I am glad to tell you very definitely and very positively that the general public attitude of hostility to and distrust of the railroads is fast dying out. It is my fortune to mingle much with the wholesome, sane, husky man that makes up the citizenship of the West, and I have had opportunity to know what he thinks, - the one who was ^{ONCE} always the "great unwashed", but is now only the "great untterrified". In the State of Missouri there have been very definite evidences during the past four months of what the people feel toward the railroads. This thought does not pretend to reach a solution of the difficulty, for it is a long way to Tipperary yet on that proposition. It does not take into consideration the question as to whether the railroads are endeavoring to earn dividends on unduly watered stock, but simply realizes they are not

giving to the public the services that they should, and if the real reason is that their revenues are not sufficient, then that reason must be removed before we can go any further.

Mining is in an unsettled state, other than zinc, which is flourishing. In coal mines, however, the situation is better, largely because we seem to have gotten to the end of that fratricidal industrial strife which has been a disgrace to the state and to the nation. There are more mines opening up; there are more men employed, and the operatives and the miners seem to have gotten at last an inkling of that great fact, that to do business with one another in any station of life you have to get the other fellow's point of view and have some sympathy with his ~~method~~ ^{MODE} of thought.

In copper mining we are guessing. It depends much in the output as to whether the price goes up, and the price depends upon the output, and outside of comparatively few people who won't tell, we don't know very much either way, and we are ~~pretty well~~ ^{ESPECIALLY} particularly hard up, since we no longer have those beautiful monthly fictions which were known as the Copper Producer's Association's Reports. You probably know that this is the great copper producing country of the world; that in Arizona, and in Utah particularly, of late, and in Montana, that we have the greatest copper mines in all the world. The Utah proposition has ^{is} ~~been~~ particularly and

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especially one of the great developments because of the method of treating porphyry rock in an economical way.

In ^{center} iron mining it is at a low ebb, whether at Minnesota or in the great deposits of the Birmingham district. In passing let me say - and when I prophesy I always have in mind what Coco said in "The Mikado," speaking of prophecy. He was told about his decapitation. He said it was a very difficult and dangerous, not to say dangerous, operation. Nevertheless, when the South develops, as it is going to develop, - for it is the land of opportunity in this country to-day; the Birmingham district has the iron and the coal, and the limestone in such proximity as cannot be matched elsewhere in all the world, and you are going to find in time it is going to be the great iron center of all creation. There are also a great many mines all over the United States of low grade ore, in Missouri, Kentucky and Iowa, and in time they are going in to vogue.

Manufacturing is also in a very bad way. The unemployed are many, but I hear constantly stories from our salesmen who cover the whole space of the United States, and I follow it up by personal travel, that the mills are opening up. They are more and more, slowly, gradually, taking men into their employ. The cotton mills especially, and particularly in the South, seem to be quite busy; and in passing

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let me say that the Southern cotton mills have wrought one of the most economic changes of which you can think. They have taken the "poor white trash", the ^{CR} "packers" and mountaineers, and they are making dependable mills hands of them, because the Negro is not a dependable worker in the mill.

The lumber business seemed to be dead, but it seems now as if it was only sleeping. It is the heart and soul of the building business; it is the heart and soul of the hardware business. Do not be fooled by those stories you hear about building statistics. The lumber business is the last thing to catch on.

The wool proposition is a joke on the Democratic party and on the high protectionist at the same time; for wool before the embargo was higher than it was for fifty years, and I think at the present time if either a high protectionist or a low protectionist tells us the tariff is the whole ^{STORY} ~~problem~~, ^{IN ANY} ~~not the economic factor~~, ^{PROBLEM} we ought to tell him to go and climb a tree, for we know better.

^{THE STORY OF}
I would like to tell you on the question of hogs ^{IS ONE OF INCREASE} ~~that they are increasing~~, despite hog cholera which yearly takes about six million of them away. Multiply that by five or six and you have some forty millions of dollars annually lost in this country. But the United States Govern-^{lc}ment and the State Agricultural College are fighting that

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by sanitation and by serum. If they only add money enough it will come to an end much quicker, and there is a growing thought in the West and in the South that the United States Government had better spend a little more money in constructive things like that than in that insane folly of battleships which in the course of a few years are only fit for junk, if the submarines do not get them meanwhile.

(Applause.)

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The cattle industry is in high fetter, although they are not numerous, because they bring ^{HIGH} prices. I have not time to go into the reasons why cattle have not increased in the past ten years, for they are numerous. There are also reasons why you hear the story that after awhile only the predatory rich are going to have beefsteak, but you need not believe a word of it. It is an economic question that is solving itself, and one of the solutions is the destruction of the cattle tick in two thirds of the South, which is the ideal cattle country of the world, because of its climate, its water, and the great grazing facilities. Also, if the Government had more money there, as Secretary Husen ^{quoton} told me last year, it would wife out the cattle disease in two years instead of ten.

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That very great, honest, honorable and ancient business of agriculture overtops them all, ^{BUT HERE} and whenever you are

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busy in the East or in New England, you place a price upon
 manufacture. England to-day is paying the penalty, and if
 her Navy ~~were in any blocked~~ ^{WAS DESTROYED THE COUNTRY} it would be on the ragged edge
 of starvation. The West believes in agriculture and so
 does the South, and that is why they are not suffering in
 this great ^{DIS} stress as the great centers of the East.
 The crops in general ~~are~~ ^{WERE} rather above the average. They
 must be judged not by money prices - that is very delusive -
 but by the actual ^{TONNAGE} ~~volume of business~~, the actual volume that
 is produced. For instance, it would have been very much
 better to have had six hundred more million bushels of corn
 at twenty cents a bushel less than the present prices, because
 corn is not a money crop.

Among the many things in the West that are making for
 prosperity, dry farming is one of them. It is a simple
 proposition. You work the ground and kill the weeds, and then
 you keep a little dust-mush ^{LEH} on top of the ground and that
 confines the water underneath the ground and prevents it
 evaporating. Water runs uphill despite what you read in
 the school books. If I ^{DIP} put that ^{MY HANDKERCHIEF} down in the glass, the whole
 handkerchief will be wet directly. This little dust mush ^{LEH} on
 top of the ground three or four inches deep prevents the
 water coming up, because there are no capillaries ^{LE} that it can

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come through. Dry farming was once exploited as a fancy, then ~~it was~~ denounced as a fad, and now it has found its place; and in a very large area of the country westward from the ninety-sixth degree longitude, which runs through the State of Kansas, dry farming is being rapidly developed and they are learning there to conquer nature. They are planting there, with the help of the United States Agricultural College, and also is aided by the United States Government, whose drought-resisting plant, such as peanuts and dry peas - do not despise the humble peanut. We produce twenty million dollars worth ~~a month~~ ^{ANNUALLY} ~~and the "Federipe"~~ ^{There there is FETERITA}. I venture to say there is not a man in this audience who would know ^{FETERITA} "Federipe" if he met it coming down the street, and ^{YET} there were one hundred million bushels produced last year. It is one of the Indian ^{MAIZES} corns, and in those regions where formerly they planted Indian corn they are now planting these drought-resisting plants which the United States Government has brought from Africa, and they are making a success of it. Man is out there to stay. He is not going to break his heart any more because of the weather. We have learned also that the weather is the same as it always was, and that the stories about the changing climate have no other foundation ^{whatever} than the memory of the oldest inhabitant. There is no reason to believe that the climate of Egypt is any different now than it was when

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Moses led the Children of Israel through the desert; so that they have learned to farm intelligently and they have learned to plant there the things that God and Nature intended they should plant. There is agriculture out there in Western Oklahoma and Western Kansas and throughout there, and the cattle and people are there to stay. There is business because they sell goods to people, not to cattle.

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There is also the great empire of irrigation which is growing up all over the West, and in actual wealth in the things that it produces, it is going to make the ancient empires of Egypt, of Babylon, of Nineveh, and of Carthage seem as of small worth. You may have heard of the Imperial Valley of California. It is only about twice as big as the State of Connecticut. It was a horrible desert a few years ago. They turned the water of the Colorado in there and they raise fifty thousand bushels of cotton and twenty thousand carloads of cantaloupe and all that kind of thing. It is

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right across the river from Yuma, and you remember Yuma as the place where the man died and went to Hades and sent for his blanket. (Laughter.) Throughout all the countries it has added to the food products in the shape of all quantities of garden truck of all kinds and descriptions, and that is why you have lettuce all the year round. South Texas has done that with irrigation, and some of those irrigation plans,

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COUNTRY IRRIGATION

AND OTHER VEGETABLES

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as in new Mexico and Northwest Texas - a dozen places I could name - ~~those~~ ^{THE} wells will irrigate two hundred thousand acres ~~at a time.~~ ^{OF FORMER DESERT} ~~THE~~ It is a wonderful thing of recreating life from death, and if you want to know what is being done in some of the districts, go to the first fruit stand - and it is true of every large city east of the Rocky Mountains - and buy an apple and ask the Italian where it comes from. Not from your own state here, not from my own state if ~~I am in St. Louis,~~ not from Pennsylvania if ~~I am in Philadelphia.~~ It comes from Oregon and Utah and Colorado, because those men out there are a whole lot smarter than the fellows further east. They have learned not only how to raise fruit, but they have learned that in raising fruit or garden truck for commercial purposes the thing is a question of transportation and finding a market rather than raising it. And they sell their stuff all over creation, and they pack them and crate them. You buy a hundred Oregon apples; you get every one of them perfect, and if you buy a barrel of New York and Missouri apples you get fifty-seven different varieties in the barrel. (Laughter.)

Among the many things which make for the uplift of the people of the West are the great State Universities. You have not anything just exactly like them or the exact counterpart in the East. You have some state institutions

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 and you usually treat them with the utmost indifference and give them some beggarly little appropriation a year, and then wonder why they do not do something. They have one in Massachusetts, Amherst College, and they give it a dinky little appropriation of two hundred and fifty thousand dollars a year. Illinois gives its college two millions and a half. In their agricultural colleges they teach everything in connection with the State University. You can learn there anything from how to milk a cow to the latest interpretation of the nebulous ^{AR} hypothesis, and they teach them all with equal impartiality and like thoroughness, and they save money to the state every year, ten times over what they cost.

(Jc)
 The State of Missouri saves over a million dollars a year by its agriculture college, in the use of hog cholera serum alone, and the agricultural college at Ames, Iowa, makes about two million dollars a year more for the farmers of that state because it has taught them how to select seed corn. It would require the capacity of an adding machine to tell you all they do in material things .

But beyond all that is the democratic education which they give without money, without price to the boys and girls of the state, for they are all co-educational. They are making American citizens of those people there, and they are filling them up with all sorts of constructive thought.

DESTRUCTIVE
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The thought of the West is not wisdom, except as they run across some old hoary conditions that ought to be killed, and which unfortunately is honored in the East because of its extreme age. (Laughter.) The man of the West cannot fill his belly with the husks of bygone institutions and thought. Men and institutions are to him not what his father thought about them or his great-grandfather, but what they really are in themselves, and how well they are fitted for the times, and how well they comport with the necessities of the passing age. He does not care very much whether his father or rather his ancestors came over in the Mayflower or in the steerage, or whether they fought with ^{" MIT SIEGEL "} ~~Sickles~~ or were merely bounty-jumpers, or whether his mother stood for votes for women or just the cook book and the Bible. I know to the untravelled thought of the East that the men of the great plains states, ~~the inhabitants there,~~ especially of Kansas and Oklohma, are often looked upon as inhabitants of plains, wind-swept ~~always,~~ buried in Arctic snows in winter time, burning under sun in summer time, when, as ^{ELIJAH SAID} ~~the writer says,~~ the sky is as brass and the earth is iron underneath, and that those uninhabitable ^{STRETCHES} ~~places~~ are really inhabited by ^{UNLOVELY} ~~illiterate~~ women and ^{ONE GALLUS} ~~by callous~~ men who raise corn and hell with equal impartiality. (Laughter.) Now, as a matter of fact, if you want a low percentage of illiteracy, if you want free

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thought and progressive thought, if you want the home of idealism you have only to go west of the Mississippi River, and if you are looking for states that do things for their people in a progressive way you would probably take such states, say the State of Indiana, and of Kansas, of Wisconsin, of Oregon and California, and you would find they are all ~~TIED~~ ^{TIED} matched for first place, with a batting average of nine ninety-nine.

So, in the constructive era which I say awaits us in the near future, we have the ~~"race horses"~~ ^{MATERIAL ADVANCEMENT} and we have the spirit of the people. Remember that the man of the West, the ~~man and the family,~~ ^{ON THE FARM} the man in the small town is not worried about those cobwebs of trouble which keep the man of many affairs in the East walking the floor at night. The ordinary man has a large measure of common sense and he takes things as he finds them. He is normally interested in his local things, - whether ~~his credits~~ ^{CROPS} are good, what ^{IS} the state is of the village in which he lives, and all those homely things, and that is what he is working for to-day.

Most of all, there has been all over the West, due very largely to the teachings of the state universities, an awakening of local pride. Let me give you just one instance, because it is solving the problem, I think, of the congested city and keeping men in the small town and on the

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farm. But that, after all, is as much a social as it is an economic problem: there is a small town in Southwestern Missouri that you would not recognize by name. It has five hundred people in it and they have a Chataqua there like every little town in every other part of Missouri, and they gave three entertainments the last year at the Opera House - and it is not like your Opera House, by the way. They had there two distinguished ^{SPEAKERS} people of International and National renown, and a great violinist. They scoured the highways and byways over that part of the world, and they had an audience of fifteen hundred people at every one of those ^{ENTERTAINMENTS} ~~plays~~.

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That, I think, will show you what local pride is doing, and how the working of that local pride is making for the development of the country. The spirit of the West is the spirit of the pioneer, because he is fighting nature and conquering nature. It is the spirit that made America, and kept us sweet and pure, and I believe is going to keep us sweet and pure despite the troubles that come to us in our great congested centers. Along with that has gone the ^{ENVIRONMENT} environment that makes a man. ^{MEN} ~~The things that a man does are largely those of~~ ^{AS} ~~his environment and his traditions.~~ ^{THEIR} ~~THEIR OCCUPATIONS~~ ^{AND ESPECIALLY} In many parts of the West they have a magnificent climate, ^{GREAT} ~~In the plateaus of the mountains and the valleys of California all the "white ways,~~ and the ~~great white ways,~~ and the lobster palaces and the

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cabarets, and the Plates dansants all beckon you in vain when you have known the glory of sunlit days, and those nights that are an invitation to that sleep that ~~is free of care~~, and ~~that is why people sleep out West.~~ *which is free of care*



Among other things, however, which I think have given great confidence to us in the future is that, I believe, we have the very best financial ~~now~~ ^{SYSTEM} in all the world. The average man does not know anything about the details, nor is it necessary that he should. He knows, however, that the bankers have been democratized; he knows that banking has been democratized, and he has an implicit faith that it will prevent the "John Smith" check that happened in 1907.

The one thing that might hurt us would be European ~~friction~~ ^{COMPLICATIONS}.

It is well not to minimize that. I trust it is not likely; it may be possible, but the average man feels that the same cool head that guided us through the Mexican trouble will take us through this one if it be possible for a man to do so.

(Applause.) Along with that feeling, without any partisan bias on my part, ~~toward~~ ^(NAME) the men generally throughout the West and the South, ~~is~~ ^A the great implicit, deep confidence in the sincerity, the sagacity and the single-mindedness of that distinguished man in the White House. (Applause.)

So I think we can afford to be optimistic on facts.

We haven't prosperity with us, despite much foolish talk

to the contrary. But it does seem to me, barring the unexpected - and the only trouble threatening us in the horizon ^{and} ~~is~~ ^{is the European friction -} that we shall surely get better, gradually, because there are going to be the greatest crops planted this year that were ever known in the United States. The winter wheat crop has an acreage already twelve and a half per cent greater than last year, which in turn was the largest. They are planting more corn and winter wheat, winter oats in portions of the South that they never planted it before. I feel that in time we shall probably have a prosperity that will recompense us for all of our troubles.

(Applause.)
