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LOUISIANA'S RIGHTS

SPEECH

OF

HON. HUEY P. LONG

OF LOUISIANA

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

July 19, 1935

Mr. LONG. Mr. President, yesterday I was away from the city when I read an announcement in the public press, sent out by the news agencies, confirming what had been sent out the day before while I was in the city of New Orleans. The announcement was to the effect that President Roosevelt and his Secretary of the Interior, Mr. Ickes, had sent me word that I would have nothing to do with spending any P. W. A. money in Louisiana. I do not know just how the President sent me word. According to the newspaper headlines, this is my official notice. I do not know why the Secretary of the Interior should continue to address me in communications through these circumlocutious routes, but, nevertheless, that is their privilege apparently. I have no direct diplomatic contact with the gentleman, and I am not seeking any, and, therefore, since, apparently, these pronouncements are intended for the public, I will undertake to respond in kind.

The State of Louisiana, Mr. President, does not bow low, particularly, in order to get funds distributed by the Government; and I do not see why the President continues to make these announcements; I do not see why Mr. Ickes continues to make them. Several weeks ago on the floor of the Senate I made answer to one such pronouncement. It has already been stated that I have nothing to do with the funds they spend in Louisiana, that they will not spend any money in Louisiana, and that various and sundry dire consequences will be visited upon the people of Louisiana unless something is done, I presume to me or somebody else down there.

Now, as we approach the period of only 5 months before an election, we receive the statement that the State of Louisiana is to have none of the P. W. A. funds. That is not a gracious answer or gesture to the generous attitude we took last year, when we allowed 5 of our 8 Representatives in the other branch of Congress to come back, on the ground that they had deserted me and had hooked up with Mr. Roosevelt. We allowed those gentlemen to come back under the understanding that, inasmuch as they were avowedly anti-Long and pro-Roosevelt, they could get money from

the Public Treasury which otherwise would not be available to Louisiana.

Now, he has announced that these five deserters, unlike Judas Iscariot and Benedict Arnold, are not to get their 30 pieces of silver, and, therefore, we will have to remove the five of them from public office unless he changes his attitude between now and election day. It is very unkind. Judas Iscariot was paid; Arnold was paid; I have received nothing about which I can complain; but my colleagues in the other House, who have deserted on the ground that they were going to come back with the loaves and fishes, lo and behold, on the very eve of the election, appear with their hands empty and their faces blank, and with nothing to give their constituents as a reward for their infidelity to the party that elected them to the office they now hold. They have my sincere sympathy but will not have my help in the political campaign, and a lack of votes will be the answer for having trusted the gentleman whom I myself trusted once too often.

Our State, however, has had more things than this to stand. We do not need the help of the Government to borrow money. The P. W. A. would only let Louisiana and the municipalities in Louisiana have money on bonds issued by the State. We do not need the United States to borrow money for the State of Louisiana. If the State of Louisiana wants to borrow any money it can borrow without having to sell bonds to the United States. It has better credit than the United States. The only way the United States can sell a bond is to make a bank take it. The State of Louisiana sells its bonds at a premium without having to compel any bank to take them, because our revenues exceed our expenditures. We have money in the bank. We have money in the treasury, millions of dollars of it. I almost feel affluent when I come back here from the State of Louisiana, knowing the condition of our treasury as compared to the one in this citadel.

However, yesterday the State of Louisiana sold some bonds. They sold for \$103.80, \$3.80 above par, so I do not suppose we are afflicted. As to the money we spend, we receive a dollar in value for each dollar of expenditure. We are not going to come to Washington, D. C., and put up our bonds, which the whole world is crying for an opportunity to buy, and then have the Federal Government go down there and supervise the expenditure of the money and get about 3 cents' worth of value for each dollar of money expended, like the Federal Government is getting elsewhere.

We do not want the leaves swept from one side of the street to the other, and then swept back again from the other

side of the street to where they were in the first place. We do not want any dirt removed from one side of the railroad track to a hole on the other side, and then have the hole dug out and the dirt moved back to the first side. Whenever we spend a dollar of money for which the State of Louisiana has given a bond, or for which a subdivision of the State has given a bond, it will be spent in a sane way for something the State needs, and the State will have a dollar there with which to pay off the obligation it has incurred for a public improvement.

Let these gentlemen discontinue for a while their statements that Louisiana has been cut off the credit list of the Federal Government. We are very sorry we ever had anything to do with them—I mean in connection with their loan program. Awhile back we sold them \$7,000,000 of Louisiana highway bonds, which today sell on the public market at \$1.04. They have taken those \$7,000,000 of bonds every time we have started to float a public issue of bonds, and let the word go out that they were just about to put those bonds on the market, to try to suppress and depress the price of Louisiana bonds. Let them go out and sell their \$7,000,000 of Louisiana highway bonds. There is a market for them. They paid us \$1 and the world is bidding \$1.04. We have a good financial condition, we can get along financially without them, and we shall be glad to wait until the coming fall of 1936, when they will be glad to do business again with Louisiana.

The public press reports that only the doubtful States are to be favored by the Federal Government. Our State is not a doubtful State. Louisiana could not be put in the Roosevelt column with \$5,000,000,000. The State of Louisiana will never vote to send Franklin Delano Roosevelt back to the Presidency of the United States. I make that statement 4 months from the eve of my campaign for reelection in the State of Louisiana, and I am not yet opposed. Let them get out an opponent for me down there if they want to find out how Louisiana stands, and we will put the issue up away in advance as to whether Louisiana under any circumstances will stand for the tyrannical and unconstitutional form of arbitrary, ransacking government which has been foisted on the people by this administration. Try it out in advance, I say to those who want to try it. Louisiana is not a doubtful State.

Mr. President, I undertook to give the administration very good advice. I gave it good advice. I advised the administration on banking. Later on they saw fit to take some of my advice. I advised the administration on the McCarran amendment. It was voted down. Today I picked up a newspaper clipping and remarked to my friend the Senator from Nevada [Mr. McCARRAN] that I find the administration has concluded that we who fought here for the prevailing wage on public employment have now been sustained by the same administration which used the force of its power to try to vote us down in the United States Senate, which even caused gentlemen in this body to switch their votes from one side to the other in support of the administration, who now come out and announce their belief in the principle of this kind

of a program. To the junior Senator from Nevada, who carried the brunt of the great fight for the prevailing wage, to his courage and foresight, belongs the credit for the victory now accomplished through the belated act of the President. The toilers of this country may well give credit to Senator McCARRAN if in the future the wage structure of this country is maintained and American labor is kept out of peonage. I am happy that I joined with the junior Senator from Nevada in his progressive fight.

I referred once before on the floor of the Senate to the tea party held in Boston. This country has observed its results ever since. One was that those paying the taxes should receive their share of the taxes. No tax that is not to some extent justified by the representation of the country should be levied. Louisiana pays, in one little item, a tax of \$24,000,000 a year into the Federal Treasury. I understand that in income taxes alone \$24,000,000 last year was paid in Louisiana.

Does the administration in Washington mean to say it is going to use the State of Louisiana as a tax-gathering ground and that it is going to deny the State of Louisiana the benefit of the expenditures of those taxes in that State? I say that will not be the case. Not only do I say this administration will not be permitted to do it; but, if it is necessary that we wait until another administration, the State of Louisiana can afford to wait. We are so much better off than the supposed-to-be favored States—those that are supposed to have remained in the good graces of the present administration—that we feel well enough alone without having to ingratiate ourselves to this particular administration at this time.

Fall is coming when the Supreme Court will reassemble. I have been advised by the authorities of our State that Louisiana will file a suit in the Supreme Court of the United States, where we will test—and successfully, without any question in my mind—the right of the Federal Government to go into a State and set up boards and bureaus to carry on business not authorized by the Federal Constitution. They have set up an educational board in the State of Louisiana far apart from our State board of education.

They have not only set up an educational board but they have set up this board and that board and some other kind of a board. They have every kind of a board in that State, none of which is authorized by the Constitution of this country. We are going into the Supreme Court of the United States when October shall have reached us and there, as a sovereign State, ask that Court for its permission to file a suit to enjoin this usurpation of State functions.

Louisiana has done a great deal to preserve the integrity of this country and to preserve the integrity of the other States. In 1803, or soon thereafter, we were the ground of the Burr conspiracy. Many of our citizens and their families have been condemned for nearly a century because of the efforts they made for what was the American country at that time.

In 1815, when the British Army was in charge of Washington, D. C., and when it had whipped the whole United States, it did not have anything but Louisiana left to fight. Our

envoys were in Belgium negotiating for surrender, and the peace treaty of Ghent was no more nor less than a surrender.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The time of the Senator from Louisiana on the amendment has expired.

Mr. LONG. I shall take my time on the bill.

It was the army of General Pakenham, which had been led by the Duke of Wellington in the Peninsular campaign, which came to America for the purpose of taking charge of the United States when the peace treaty was made. The peace treaty was made so that they would take the United States with the exception of the 13 little States which were in existence at that time. It was the army which Wellington had in the Peninsular campaign that met the Louisianians and two companies of Tennesseans under Jackson at New Orleans. They repulsed that army, veterans of the Peninsular campaign, and it left the State of Louisiana, but it still was able to go back to England, and it whipped Napoleon at Waterloo. It was the army which Jackson whipped at New Orleans with Louisianians that whipped Napoleon at Waterloo. It was the same army that had defeated the French in the Peninsular campaign. Little has been said of that.

Back in 1860 Louisiana undertook to prevent the secession of the Southern States. If it had not been for the fact that Texas on one side, Mississippi on another side, and Arkansas on the top, seceded from the confederation of the United States, there never would have been any secession by the State of Louisiana.

Before that, in 1836, when the Mexicans had been successful over the Texan troops in battle after battle, Sam Houston came to New Orleans and raised an army which went through the old road by Fort Jessup and went by the old route through Galveston and up to San Jacinto, and it was largely the Louisianians who whipped the Mexicans at the Battle of San Jacinto, reenforced by soldiers and stragglers from Texas and other States. [Laughter.]

Some of those things are not mentioned. Nevertheless, that State stood for the preservation of the individual rights of States. It stood for the preservation of the Constitution of the United States as long as it could. It stands today, with all these ravages, practically united. There is hardly a voice of political opposition in the entire State of Louisiana that can be heard, there is hardly a whisper that can be heard today in defense of the kind of outrages that we hear hurled at us from Washington, D. C. A lone, solitary character undertakes to draw a salary, the mayor of the city of New Orleans. He will be there until the next recall election, perhaps; and what is heard from that discredited source is the only thing that sounds a single whisper in Louisiana in defense of the ultimatums that are hurled from the President's chair and from that of the Secretary of the Interior, if the newspaper accounts correctly report what they say. As to those I have no means of verification. I must accept them as they come repeatedly, and there never has been any denial of them in the past.

Now, gentlemen of the Senate, this little case has recently happened: Louisiana State University was promised a loan

by the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. I want Senators to listen to this little statement of fact so that they may glorify themselves and their stand with or against this administration.

Louisiana State University applied to the Reconstruction Finance Corporation for a loan. They came back the other day and said, "We have been given the loan. It has all been signed, sealed, and delivered. The engineer is with us here. We are fixing to begin the work."

I said, "Hold on. Have you got the money yet?"

"No; but they told us the money is ours. They sent the engineer with us. We are letting the contract tomorrow, and we are going ahead."

I said, "Just a moment. When are you going to get the money?"

They said, "All we have to do is to send our bonds up there to get the money."

I said, "Well, I should like to advise with you and the Governor for just a few minutes. Let me tell you something: Do not announce that you have that money. Do not announce that you are going to do that work. I know those men. I know this administration. I have had their word. Do not think you are going to get that money until you have every dollar of it here."

"Oh, no; we can go ahead."

I said, "You had better not." I said, "Do not announce it." Finally they were persuaded by the Governor and myself not to announce that they had the money; but the Reconstruction Finance Corporation itself announced that it had completed the lending of \$1,700,000 to Louisiana State University for needed improvements at Louisiana State University. Still I said to them, "Do not turn a shovel of that \$1,700,000 of work. I know that outfit up there. You will never get a dollar of the money."

They thought those men would go out and let the contracts, and the State would be embarrassed; but, oh, no; they did not do any such thing. Lo and behold, on yesterday the Reconstruction Finance Corporation called up and said "there was a little something about it that they had to look into for a little while." [Laughter.]

The people of the United States are entitled to know with whom they are dealing. That is the kind of government with which they are dealing. That is the kind of faith they can have in the Government; and we are not going to mingle and mess ourselves up with that kind of a flimflaming outfit which calls itself a government. Louisiana will run the affairs of Louisiana. The 2,300,000 people of that sovereign State, one of the 48 stars of the flag, will run the affairs of the State of Louisiana through the elected representatives of that State. It will not be subjected to the domination of autocrats or bureaucrats. It will not stand for the fiat that come from Washington. It will not be run over by the agents of sabotage and plunder, nor will it allow itself to be enslaved and put under financial obligations for money to be wasted wantonly, as the funds that they have spent in that State have been wasted in the days recently past.

As far as Mr. Roosevelt's announcements and Mr. Ickes' announcements are concerned, I suggest to those gentlemen, if they have any messages to deliver to me, that they send them to me in person. If they have any ultimatums to deliver to me, let them send them to me through the regular channels. I always write them letters when I wish to tell them anything; and usually, in order that the letters may reach them, give the letters out at the desk of the Senate in order that they may not fail to reach the hands of those for whom they are intended. Thus do I attract their notice.

I will say this to them: I am not afraid of them in any political campaign of any kind or character. Louisiana has set an example to the other States. I ask the other 47 States and the politicians of the other 47 States to take notice. I ask them to follow us. Defy this kind of autocracy! Defy this kind of tyranny! If you want to be politically powerful, so much that they cannot even oppose you in your own State, then I say to every politician in the United States, follow the example we have set. Tell that gang of scuttlers that your State runs the business of the State and that the politicians of your State will have nothing to do with the untrustworthy characters who are placed in charge of the dispensation of funds, who undertake to give their pledge one day and to withdraw it the next day, and to keep everyone suspended in a state of uncertainty so that their ravages and their plunder may menace the welfare of the citizen who most of all would expect the Federal Government to be stable and trustworthy, at least believable.

Mr. President, how much time have I left?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator has 16 minutes more.

Mr. LONG. I will not take 16 minutes; I will not have to take that long. Now, I can talk a little politics. Mr. Roosevelt will remember one thing to his dying day; he will remember to his dying day that he was warned along certain lines by men who were absolutely sincere in the Democratic Party. Among those lines was the principle that he could not enter upon a bureaucratic system of running the American Government on the Hoover order without wrecking the Democratic Party and without wrecking himself in doing it.

Mr. President, I am a citizen of the United States Republic first and a follower of Almighty God, who allowed its creation. To them I owe my first allegiance, to my people next, and last to my party.

The party which undertakes to shield this kind of a situation commits itself to the bowwows for eternity. The party that raises the flag of waste, destruction, bureaucracy and autocracy, the party which allows to be seated in its high councils men who defy investigation, and about whom there dare not be an investigation, men who allow millions and billions of dollars of funds to be pilfered willfully through the advertised pronouncements of agents in these

States that it is done only for the sake of political monstrosities—the party which rears itself behind that sort of thing; the party which rears itself behind an organization which has spent more money to bring this country to where it is now than was spent by the Government from the day of Washington up to the day of Woodrow Wilson; the party which sees a \$28,000,000,000 deficit grow and grow and grow, which undertakes to take a Nation, a union of States, and bond them for all the millions and billions of bonds now issued by the Government, and then send their “heelers” and others to misuse and squander and waste that money—the party that raises that emblem invites destruction, it invites wreck, it invites ruin, and I am for the wreckage of that party before I will be for the wreckage of the United States.

Mr. President, what kind of a party have we, which I contend we ought to save from ruin? Who is it that now says that the United States Supreme Court ought to be censured for its rulings? I understand from the public press—I have no other means of acquiring my information—that the Court is roundly condemned for its rulings on N. R. A. and other high courts for their rulings on A. A. A. If courts say that A. A. A. is unconstitutional and un-American, the courts are condemned.

But who was it who first said that this system of restricting production of agricultural commodities through any kind of process other than the Sabbatical law was un-American? The President of the United States stood on the front steps of the capitol at Topeka, Kans., and he is the man who sounded the warning to the United States that everything that is contained in the A. A. A. is un-American and void on principle. Yet, if the Supreme Court and the inferior courts of the United States set at naught these very things that were condemned in the course of a political campaign, it is urged that these be the basis of a campaign for recognition in order that the Court may be repudiated for having decided against such a law.

Let me give this warning: When you go before the people of the South, the North, the East, and the West, pointing up the spearhead of this Democratic fiction and amalgamated fiction of government, with the blue eagles and screaming emblems of all kinds and characters that are supposed to haul down the Stars and Stripes and the Constitution, you are going to find out that the people will uphold the Constitution of the United States before they recognize such emblems of any party.

Louisiana is going to take that stand. Louisiana is willing to lead in maintaining that position. That is where Louisiana will be found, and it is not within the power of all the finances that a Government can bring into a State, or all the Presidential power that can be exerted, to change the votes of the people of Louisiana to the surrender of State sovereignty.