

STATEMENT OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT

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British West Indies

I AM deeply sensible of the honor conferred on me and of the goodwill shown me by the gentlemen who have announced themselves as delegates to be elected in my interest in the Massachusetts presidential primary. Nevertheless I must request, and I now do request and insist, that my name be not brought into the Massachusetts primaries, and I emphatically decline to be a candidate in the primaries of that or of any other State. Months ago I formally notified the authorities of Nebraska, Minnesota and Michigan to this effect.

"I do not wish the nomination.

"I am not in the least interested in the political fortunes either of myself or any other man.

"I am interested in awakening my fellow countrymen to the need of facing unpleasant facts. I am interested in the triumph of the great principles for which with all my heart and soul I have striven and shall continue to strive.

"I will not enter into any fight for the nomination and I will not permit any factional fight to be made in my behalf. Indeed, I will go further and say that it would be a mistake to nominate me unless the country has in its mood something of the heroic—unless it feels not only devotion to ideals but the purpose measurably to realize those ideals in action.

"This is one of those rare times which come only at long intervals in a nation's history, where the action taken determines the basis of the life of the generations that follow. Such times were those from 1776 to 1789, in the days of Washington, and from 1858 to 1865, in the days of Lincoln.

"It is for us of to-day to grapple with the tremendous national and international problems of our own hour in the spirit and with the ability shown by those who upheld the hands of Washington and Lincoln. Whether we do or do not accomplish this feat will largely depend on the action taken at the Republican and Progressive conventions next June.

"Nothing is to be hoped for from the present administration, and the struggles between the President and his party leaders in Congress are to-day merely struggles as to whether the nation shall see its governmental representatives adopt an attitude of a little more or a little less hypocrisy and follow a policy of slightly greater or slightly less baseness. All that they offer us is a choice between degrees of hypocrisy and degrees of infamy.

"But disgust with the unmanly failure of the present administration, I believe, does not, and I know ought not to, mean that the American people will vote in a spirit of mere protest. They ought not to, and I believe they will not, be content merely to change the present administration for one equally timid, equally vacillating, equally lacking in vision, in moral integrity and in high resolve. They should desire, and I believe they do desire, public servants and public policies signifying more than adroit cleverness in escaping action behind clouds of fine words, in refusal to face real internal needs, and in complete absorption of every faculty in devising constantly shifting hand-to-mouth and day-to-day measures for escape from our international duty by the abandonment of our national honor—measures due to sheer dread of various foreign powers, tempered by a sometimes harmonizing and sometimes conflicting dread of various classes of voters, especially hyphenated voters, at home.

"We must clarify and define our policies, we must show that our belief in our governmental ideals is so real that we wish to make them count in the world at large and to make the necessary sacrifice in order that they shall count. Surely we, of this great republic, have a contribution to make to the cause of humanity and we cannot make it unless we first show that we can secure prosperity and fair dealing among our own men and women. I believe that in a crisis so grave it is impossible too greatly to magnify the needs of the country or too strongly to dwell on the necessity of minimizing and subordinating the desires of individuals.

"The delegates who go to Chicago will have it in their power to determine the character of the administration which is to do or leave undone the mighty tasks of the next four years. That administration can do an incalculable amount to make or mar our country's future. The men chosen to decide such a question ought not to be politicians of the average type and parochial outlook; still less should they be politicians controlled by sinister influence

from within or without. They should be the very best men that can be found in our country, whose one great mission should be to declare in unequivocal terms for a programme of clean-cut, straight-out, national Americanism, in deeds not less than in words, and in internal and international matters alike, and to choose as their candidate a man who will not merely stand for such a programme before election, but will resolutely and in good faith put it through if elected.

"These men should be men of rugged independence, who possess the broadest sympathy with and understanding of the needs and desires of their fellows; their loyalty should be neither to classes nor to sections, but to the whole of the United States and to all the people that dwell therein. They should be controlled by no man and no interest and their own minds should be open.

"June is a long way off. Many things may occur between now and then. It is utterly impossible to say now with any degree of certainty who should be nominated at Chicago. The crying, the vital need now is that the men who next June assemble at Chicago from the forty-eight States and express the view of the entire country shall act with the sane and lofty devotion to the interest of our nation as a whole which was shown by the original Continental Congress. They should approach their task unhampered by any pledge except to bring to its accomplishment every ounce of courage, intelligence and integrity they possess.

(Signed) "THEODORE ROOSEVELT."