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Speech by Francis Mairs Huntington-Wilson and James T. Dubois, November 27, 1912

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REMARKS OF
THE HONORABLE HUNTINGTON WILSON
AND
THE HONORABLE JAMES T. DUBOIS
AT THE SMOKER GIVEN IN HONOR OF
THE HONORABLE ALVY A. ADEE
ON THE OCCASION OF HIS SEVENTIETH BIRTHDAY,
NOVEMBER 27, 1912.
Mr. Adee has asked me to explain that, owing to a very severe cold and sore throat he will not be able to make any remarks this evening, so we shall have to place him in the position of the man who was once given a banquet and that man listened to one speech after another each eulogizing one or another of his qualities, eulogizing them to the sky and not being able to speak and being very embarrassed he finally saved the situation by rising and saying, "Gentlemen, I have listened to all of these remarks and I can only say that every word is exactly true". (Applause). In the case of Mr. Adee, we can go as far as we like with no fear that it will not all be true. I think it a very fitting and natural thing that this midweek on which Mr. Adee's birthday occurs should have been designated by the President as the occasion for thanksgiving. Certainly so far as the diplomacy of the United States is concerned there is ample cause for thanksgiving for Mr. Adee. I am happy to know that Mr. Adee had a very happy year, the one just past, because one can easily perceive that from the general tone of the thanksgiving proclamation this year. (Applause). And indeed after a careful perusal of the Thanksgiving Proclamations of the last twenty-six years, which I have just been through, I have reached the conclusion that Mr. Adee is having a very happy life. As I was one of the signers of the petition addressed by the gentlemen of the Department of State to the Society for the Prevention of
of Cruelty to Animals, after one of these sessions when we heard about twenty speeches, I feel it my conscientious duty to make a brief speech. I have, however, prepared a written address, seeing gentlemen moving nervously. There may be among us individuals who do not feel the thanksgiving spirit of this mid-week and I happened to hear today a thanksgiving story which I will pause a moment to recount to you. The scene was laid in a grocery store out in Kansas in a year when there was a drought and a pest of locusts. Three farmers were seated by a stove of a grocery store with a sardine box for a seat and it was raining, the night being thanksgiving, the first rain in months. It came now that it was too late to be of any use. One of them sighed heavily, and said: "Well, I suppose that everyone has something to be thankful for. Now take my case, this year my son was put in the penitentiary for forgery, my daughter eloped with a drunken farmhand; the crops were destroyed, there was nothing to feed the horse; the horse died of starvation, but I thank God from the bottom of my heart that this year is nearly over". So far as our individual cases may be concerned, we can all be thankful for our dear friend Adee. (Applause). We cannot be too thankful for our dear friend Adee, and I think it very fitting that we who are connected with American diplomacy make an anniversary, almost an official anniversary, of Mr. Adee's birthday, because the biography of Mr. Adee for the last thirty-five years that he has been in the Department could not be written without being the history of modern American diplomacy, just as the secret history of American diplomacy could not be written without
it's being or including the biography of Mr. Adee, and could not
be written at all for the simple reason that it would involve
the transplanting of so many reputations. If there is a cloud on
this thanksgiving occasion for Mr. Adee, I suppose it may be the
thought that very soon he will have to undertake his quadrennial
of breaking in a new lot of people in the Department of State.
(Appause). I came under Mr. Adee's tutelage about sixteen years
ago, and I tried very hard to be a worthy pupil, and now that I am
about to go out into the cold world, enriched by my experience under
his tutelage, I want to take this opportunity to wish him good
luck with the new class. I will speak one or two minutes more
only. Mr. Adee is so very young, really his example has helped
me sometimes to keep young myself, and I think it would benefit
some of the younger of us to study somewhat his methods. I think
we might learn wisdom from his quality of having valuable interests
in life outside of his work, like his wonderful studies in Shakes-
peare and his scientific study for developing his mind and con-
tributing to the sum of wisdom, and exercising his mind to take it
off his work and keep him young without wasting his mind. There is
one other especially instructive thing. We did not know what a
serious person he is until the other day some one was talking about
indispensable people and it struck me that there are two ways of
being indispensable; one is the common way, the other the uncommon
way. The common way of trying to be indispensable usually means,
if you are in any kind of an organization, to centre your attention
rather upon your personal relations with different pieces of work
and to seek the best way of advancing the work. People who adopt
that common method always lose in the long run, and that is the
usual kind of would-be indispensable men. Mr. Adee is a really indispensable man because he has never thought of himself or of what credit he might get for this or that piece of work. He has forgotten himself utterly; his happiness has been in true service,—in always thinking of the good of the Department,—and there is no more important lesson for any government servant to lay to heart than that.

I shall have the honor of calling upon one or two other gentlemen to say a few words, but I am going to have the great pleasure of proposing the first toast and I am very proud to have this task to pledge to Mr. Adee the proved regard and admiration and the warm affection of every single man of the Department of State.

Mr. Wilson (after toast).

Mr. Adee was really feeling so ill this afternoon that I did not think that he ought to come here tonight and I do not now think we should keep him out late a cold night like this and, therefore, I shall proceed at once to call upon the other gentlemen who will say a few words.

Mr. DuBois, of the Diplomatic Service, is a man, one of those foreign service men, who can act toward the Department of State in a fairly indulgent attitude. That is not always true, but as he has been at this end we can count upon this. Mr. DuBois' mind has been so occupied in the difficult posts from which he comes that I do not know what he will talk about because the great alleged problem of that post is so extremely difficult that it has come to be known as "How to unscrew the inscrutable," but I think Mr. Adee would immediately pull the regulations on us if he tried to talk about
that. I have now the honor to call upon Mr. Dubois.

Mr. DUBOIS.

The honor conferred upon me by our worthy Chief, the Chairman, for whom we certainly have the highest respect and admiration, somewhat embarrasses me because I am conscious of the fact that there are a great many others here far better able to perform this pleasant duty than myself, and yet, like the good soldier, I believe that whenever we are requested by our superior officers to do something we should act promptly and do the best we can. For this reason and because we are here to pay tribute to a distinguished public servant, I gladly accept Mr. Wilson's kind invitation to say a few words. Perhaps they may be consular, perhaps they may be diplomatic, and perhaps they may be otherwise.

I remember that several years ago the Society of Pennsylvania invited me to deliver an after-dinner speech at their annual banquet in New York City, and when I was told that there would be seven hundred guests at the table, and four or five hundred ladies in the boxes, I got frightened and refused to come. But finally I was prevailed upon and accepted, and the very next morning the Chairman of the Committee on Arrangements came in to dear old 104 where I have had so many happy days with my good old friend, Harry Bryan, and he said to me, "What do you think, the Secretary of State, Mr. Root, is going to speak at the same banquet?" I asked him please to take my name off the program, because I did not think any clerk should speak from the rostrum where his distinguished superior appeared. Well, I finally consented to go, as they persistently urged me to do. I arrived in New York, and when I was called upon after Mr. Root had made one
of those famous and splendid speeches and John Brown Hay of Penn-
sylvania had replied to him, my fatal hour arrived, and I turned
and flung a glance at Mr. Root, and he gave me one of those penne-
trating, piercing, glances that every chief in the State Depart-
ment knows, for you well know what it means, and he seemed to say
as much as, "Mr. DuBois, you make good tonight, or your name is
Dennis", and I turned to that great audience and said in a timid
sort of way, "Ladies and Gentlemen: I shall be very brief tonight,
for I do not want to put myself in the position of the small boy
who was sent home from school with note to his father saying,
'Your boy talks too much.'" When the father read it he smiled, and
sent this note back to the teacher: "My God! But you should hear
his mother". Another glance at Mr. Root and I found him laughing
with the audience and clapping his hands with applause, and while
I was not quite certain whether he was applauding my story or my
promise to be brief, at the same time, the applause of my superior
at that moment was an inspiration for me and helped me finish my
task in good form.

Now it is a strange thing that when we subordinates appear
in the presence of our superiors we have sort of a strange kind of
feeling; we always feel somewhat embarrassed and therefore if you
find that I am embarrassed, gentlemen, you will know where to lay
the blame.

Three years ago our toast-master in that way which is his
native ability made for himself a firm and lasting place in his
nation's history. He sent for me one fine Sunday afternoon and
he said to me: "DuBois, the Secretary of State, Mr. Knox (Mr. Knox,
gentlemen,
gentlemen, who shall live in our hearts for ever and pay no rent)
Mr. Secretary Knox wants you to go to Singapore as Consul-General. Now, I have always been very good on geography but rather weak on location, and I said to myself, "Singapore? Singapore? Where on earth is Singapore?" Then Mr. Wilson stepped up and unrolled the great map with Mr. Carr and while they were searching for Singapore I remembered an incident that occurred in the Department of State several years ago that was told me by Secretary where a fellow, a consular officer, had gone to Zanzibar and was gone a year, the Department not having heard from him in that time, when he suddenly appeared in the Department and cried out, "Where in hell is Zanzibar anyway." (Laughter) The Secretary, after some search found Singapore on the map and I looked at it and it looked good to me and I accepted the place and the next morning when the papers made the announcement, a friend called me on the telephone and said "Dubois, are you going to Singapore? I see Congress has appropriated five thousand dollars for bringing home consular remains and you may need a good proportion of that." Another friend came in with life insurance. He said in a very quiet way "my company is the only company that will take insurance on a man going to Singapore". Well, I went and I want to tell you I found it hot and frightfully humid. The fact is I had to change my suit twice a day and my pajamas once at night in order to keep comfortable. I was surrounded by bubonic plague, cholera, leprosy, and a few other interesting Oriental attractions. Just as I got so that I had become fairly used to that climate, then the State Department kindly and generously elevated me to the hermit
city of Bogotá, twelve hundred miles from the Atlantic coast and
nine thousand feet above the level of the Pacific Ocean,—took me
from Singapore where my pores had been doing all the work and my
kidneys nothing and planted me where my pores had to do nothing
and my kidneys everything. They transplanted me from the region
of the burning sands of farther India and took me up and placed
me on the roof of the earth where love for America is so sweet you
can fairly taste it; where the heart strikes one hundred a minute
and where you have to reach out a yard to get an inch of breath,—
the only place, my friends, that I know of on the fact of the earth
where you have to put on your overcoat when you go into the house
and take it off when you come out. And yet, in spite of the heat
and the humidity and the plague, cholera, small-pox, and leprosy
I returned to you last year five pounds heavier than when I left you
and in spite of the altitude and the rarity of the atmosphere and the
short breath and heart beat and the experience at Bogotá I am here to-
night weighing just ten pounds more than when I left you.

My friends, I need not tell you that I am mighty glad to be here
amid this circle of charmed surroundings and tried and trusted friends
who are enjoying the honor and supreme pleasure of paying tribute to
one of the most faithful men in the United States or that has ever been
employed in the public service of any country. (Applause) Mr. Adee
has made much history for the Department of State and we older men who
are here tonight know when that history was made and know what that
history is. We are not like the man who stood before the gigantic
ruins of the ________________________ of ________________________
and asked the question: who did this mighty thing; what is its history, and waited and waited for an answer that never came. For if you ask what this man has done that we have come here to honor tonight we do not have to wait a minute for an answer for his work is an illuminated part of the Department's splendid history,—so definite, so tangible, so clear and so distinguished, that "he who runs may read." For this reason, my friends, it is a great privilege to be here tonight to pay our simple tribute to our distinguished friend who has served our beloved Department of State and our country so long and so well, and I know that you will all agree with me when I repeat this little German verse with which I am sure you are all quite familiar:

(German)

Gentlemen: these hours are very well worth our while and we all know that an inscription of praise on a monument means nothing to the worthy dead. Therefore, if we have any good to say to or of our friends, don't let us wait until the fateful hour has come—but say it now, as we are doing here tonight, while they are alive and here and enjoy our appreciation. In other words, in our garden there are many roses; some are white and some are red. Really, Mr. Adee is very fond of roses but he wants them now, not when he is dead. Why wait until his toil is ended and the turf lays above his head. Really, he is very fond of roses and we will give them now, not when he is dead. Why wait until his labors are over? Would it not be better if we said "Please accept this little bunch of roses, you need
them now, not when you are dead?" And, gentlemen, I would simply add this, that administrations may come and administrations may go, but our good dear friend may go on forever, for he is a man who has always known just how to "do" a foreign nation when they deserved it, but has absolutely been incapable of "doing" a friend since he was born.