Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Oct. 23, 1948
I think a presidential campaign is one of the most important elements in our democratic process. It's a chance to get things out in the open and discuss them and make decisions.

I am an old campaigner, and I enjoy it.

I would enjoy it even more, if my opponent had the courage to discuss the issues. The American people have the right to know where I stand and where my opponent stands on the issues that affect every person in this country.
The people know where I stand,

But the Republican candidate refuses to tell where he stands,

My opponent is conducting a very peculiar campaign.

He has set himself up as a kind of doctor with

a magic cure for all the ills of mankind.

Let's imagine that we, the American people,

are going to see this doctor. It's just our usual routine

check-up which we have every four years.

We go into the doctor's office.

"Doctor," we say, "we're feeling fine."

"Is that so?" says the doctor,

"Have you been bothered much by issues lately?"
"Not bothered, exactly," we say.

"Of course we've had quite a few. We've had the issues of high prices, and housing, education and social security, and a few others."

"That's bad," says the doctor.

"You shouldn't have so many issues."

"Is that right?" we say.

"We thought that issues were a sign of political health."

"Not at all," says the doctor.

"You shouldn't think about issues. What you need is my brand of soothing syrup. I call it 'unity'."

Then the doctor edges up a little closer.

"Say, you don't look so good," he says.
We say to him, "Well, that seems strange to me, Doc. I never felt stronger, never had more money and never had a brighter future. What is wrong with me?"

Well, the doctor looks blank and says,

"I never discuss issues with a patient. But what you need is a major operation."

"Will it be serious, Doc?" we say.

"No not very serious," he says. It will just mean taking out the complete works and putting in a Republican Administration."

That's the kind of campaign you're getting from the Republicans. They won't talk about the issues, but they insist that a major operation is necessary.
Take this vague talk of the Republican candidate
about the "failures" of the present Administration.

That puzzled me for a bit.

I thought of the fact that our national income
is now running at the rate of over Two Hundred and Twenty Billion
Dollars a year - over Five times as much as it was in
Nineteen Thirty-two.

Is that what he calls a failure?

Or, perhaps he was worried about the profits of
corporations. In Nineteen Thirty-two, corporations lost
Three Billion Dollars. Now corporate profits are running
at the rate of Nineteen Billion Dollars a year.

Is that what he calls a failure?
Or, perhaps he was thinking about our mighty undertakings to assist the free nations of the world to protect themselves against the inroads of Communism. These efforts are proving successful.

Is that what he calls a failure?

In his speech here in Pittsburgh just a few days ago, the Republican candidate pretended to be upset about the way my Administration has treated labor — about the terrible condition that labor was in in Nineteen Forty-six. That's the excuse he gives for the passage of the Taft-Hartley law.

All right, let's examine that.
In Nineteen Forty-six more people had jobs than ever before.

Unions were healthier and had more members than ever before.

And the working men and women of the United States produced more goods in Nineteen Forty-six than in any previous peacetime year.

The world wasn't perfect in Nineteen Forty-six. But before any Republican begins complaining about that, he had better take a look at Nineteen Thirty-two — the last Republican year.
The Republican candidate talks about the work-days lost from strikes in Nineteen Forty-six.

Our industrial production in Nineteen Forty-six was three times as much as it was in Nineteen Thirty-two.

And the days lost from strikes in Nineteen Forty-six were less than one and one half per cent of the total days worked that year.

Republicans don’t like to talk about Nineteen Thirty-two — and I don’t blame them. But it is a good year for you to remember when you start out to vote on election day.

When the Republican candidate finished telling you here in Pittsburgh, how labor had suffered under my Administration, he told you who had come to the rescue.
Who do you guess it was?

It was the Republicans.

And how do you suppose they did it?

They did it with the Taft-Hartley Act.

Yes, sir. The Republican candidate marched up proudly and embraced the Taft-Hartley law—lock, stock, and barrel. No working man can have any doubt about that any more.

And in praising the Taft-Hartley law, he displayed his characteristic tendency of claiming credit where no credit is due. He tried to tell you that it is the Taft-Hartley Act that is driving the Communists out of labor unions.
If you want to know how much truth there is
in this claim, ask Bill Green — ask Phil Murray.

They'll tell you who is cleaning up the Communists
in the labor unions.

It's being done in the good American way —
by the unions themselves.

Now in this speech he made here in Pittsburgh,
the Republican candidate admitted, with characteristic modesty,
that he was going to lead the country — and, indeed,
the whole world — out of all our troubles.

And he made a lot of promises.

He opened his mouth and closed his eyes, and
swallowed the terrible record of the Republican 80th Congress.
Four years ago this same Presidential candidate went around the country saying that he was in favor of what the Democrats had done, but he could do it better. He said he was in favor of the National Labor Relations Act, the Wage and Hour Act, the Social Security Act, and "all the other Federal statutes designed to promote and protect the welfare of American working men and women" - but he could do it better.

For some reason or other the American people did not believe him in Nineteen Forty-four.

This year the same candidate is back with us, and he is saying much the same thing; that he likes our Democratic laws, but that he can run them better than we can.
It sounds like the same old phonograph record,
but this year the record has a crack and the needle
gets stuck in it.

The crack was provided by the Republican 80th Congress.

In Nineteen Forty-eight, every time the candidate says,
"I can do it better" - the crack says, "we're against it."

So the sounds coming out of the Republican Party
this year are not very harmonious. And they are even less
believable than they were in Nineteen Forty-four.

The candidate said: I quote,
"The present minimum wage set by law is far too low
and it will be raised."

That's fine,
We’re right with the candidate on that.

In fact, we are way ahead of him.

Time and time again in the last two years I urged the Republican 80th Congress to raise the minimum wage from the present forty cents an hour to at least seventy-five cents an hour.

But the Republican Congress – the crack in the phonograph record – said, "Nothing doing – we’re against it."

And the minimum wage stayed where it was.

Let’s look at another song on the record the candidate played for you here in Pittsburgh.
The candidate said: "We will overhaul the Social Security System for the unemployed and the aged, and go forward to extend its coverage and increase its benefits."

That sounds good, although it's a little vague. But that's the candidate speaking.

Where do the Republicans actually stand on social security?

As your President, I made every effort to get the Republican 80th Congress to extend social security coverage and increase social security benefits. What did the Congress do?

They took social security benefits AWAY from nearly a million people.

What do you believe - campaign promises, or the plain facts of Republican action?
Again the crack in the record gives them away:

It says, "we're against it."

In my recommendations to the special do-nothing session of Congress in July, I pointed out the desperate need to increase old-age insurance benefits by at least fifty per cent. At the present time the average insurance benefit payment for an old couple is less than forty dollars a month.

The Republican Congress did nothing about it - and neither did the Republican candidate.

He was silent as the tomb while the Congress was in session. Now while he's campaigning, he suddenly takes quite an interest in increasing social security benefits. Now, I ask you:

"Can you believe that kind of campaign promise?"
Take another promise in that Pittsburgh speech.
The Republican candidate said:  I quote,

"We will make the Labor Department equal in actual Cabinet
status to Commerce and Agriculture.  It will make an
important contribution to the national welfare."

That promise is ridiculous in the face of what
the Republicans in the 80th Congress did.

The Republican 80th Congress stripped the
Mediation and Conciliation Service from the Labor Department,

The Republican 80th Congress stripped the United States
Employment Service from the Labor Department,

The Republican 80th Congress cut the appropriations
for the Bureau of Labor Statistics almost in half - apparently
to prevent the Bureau from showing what's happening
to the cost of living.
That's the plain factual record of what the Republicans have done to the Labor Department in the last two years.

Remember, the Republican candidate has said he is proud of the record of the 80th Congress.

That is the crack in the phonograph record that gives them away.

Here's another one of his promises.

Here in Pittsburgh, the Republican candidate said: I quote,

"We will bring a new and vigorous leadership to the Federal Conciliation and Mediation Service so that major disputes are settled before they become strikes."
Now that's a very peculiar promise.

The present director of the Mediation Service is a well-known industrial leader named Cyrus Ching.

Mr. Ching has been widely praised for his work in mediation.

I think the Republican candidate is a bit confused here.

Let's take another campaign promise.

Here in Pittsburgh the Republican candidate said:

"We will encourage unions to grow in responsibility and strengthen the processes of collective bargaining".

I know it's hard to believe but that's exactly what he said.

And he said it in the very same speech in which he went all out for the Taft-Hartley law.
In this case, the candidate has fallen in the crack

with the Republican Congress. He makes a promise,

but the record says they’re both against it.

Here’s another promise by the Republican candidate;

quote,

“...will vigorously and consistently enforce

and strengthen our anti-trust laws against business monopolies...”

Now that’s really fantastic. The Republican Party

is notoriously favorable towards big business monopolies.

The record of the Republican 80th Congress furnishes

plenty of proof. They passed over my veto a bill to exempt

the railroads from the anti-trust laws. And, at the same time,

they refused to pass, as I recommended, the O’Mahoney-Kefauver

bill to plug loopholes in the anti-trust laws.
In the face of that record, the candidate now claims that the Republicans will strengthen the anti-trust laws.

How can the Republican candidate say such things with a straight face?

But here's another. Here in Pittsburgh he said:

"We will break the log jam in housing so that decent houses may be provided at reasonable cost for our people."

For two solid years I tried in every way I knew to get the Republican 80th Congress to break the log jam in housing by passing the Taft-Ellender-Wagner bill.

But the Republicans would not act.

In the face of pleading and urging from Governors and Mayors, from veterans and plain people all over the country, the Republicans in Congress refused to pass the housing bill.
But now — now in the middle of the campaign —
the Republican candidate has the gall to promise that the
Republicans will take action on housing.

I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it in print.

Let me quote just one more campaign promise
from that incredible Pittsburgh speech,

"We will make sure," said the Republican candidate,
"we will make sure that soaring prices do not steal food and
clothing and other necessities from American families."

That one stops me.

Everybody in this country knows that the Republican
80th Congress refused, time and time again, to pass the laws
we need to stop high prices.
In November, Nineteen Forty-seven,
In January Nineteen Forty-eight,
In July Nineteen Forty-eight,
I asked that Republican Congress to act against inflation.

They did nothing!

And neither did the Republican candidate!
All through the time when the Congress was in session,
stalling and blocking anti-inflation legislation,
the Republican candidate was silent as the grave.

But now - now that he's trying to persuade people
to vote for him - the Republican candidate says the Republicans
will do something about high prices!

It looks to me as though it's a little late in the game
for that promise.
The candidate says, "Me, too."

But the Republican record still says "We're against it."

These two phrases "Me, too." and "We're against it." sum up the whole Republican campaign.

This soft talk and double talk -

this combination of crafty silence and resounding misrepresentation

is an insult to the intelligence of the American voter.

It proceeds upon the assumption that you can fool all the people -
or enough of them - all the time.

In this campaign you don't have to rely on promises.

This time you have the record.
You don't have to play just the Republican side
of the record.

Turn it over.

Our side - the Democratic side - doesn't say -

"We're against it."

It says, "We can do it."

Our side of the record in the Victory March -
a victory on November second for all the people and
for the people's party - the Democratic Party!

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