

**The Wit of Franklin Delano Roosevelt**

**Lead: One of the frequent targets of Franklin Roosevelt's wit were his political opponents, particularly hapless Republicans.**

**Intro.: *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.**

**Content: Few would accuse FDR of excessive humility. His ego and self-confidence were enormous. They had survived a rocky marriage, electoral defeat, years in the political wilderness, and above all, the deep depression after poliomyelitis gave him a pair of almost useless legs. His**

**supreme confidence in the face of adversity was a powerful source of encouragement to many in a nation people felt was handicapped by the Great Depression. One of the ways he lifted peoples' spirits was through humor. Often the targets of his humor were conservative Republicans.**

**In 1940 Roosevelt ran for a third term. No President had attempted to serve longer than eight years. To deflect attention, he went after reactionary political leaders who had opposed the New Deal and at that point were resisting his attempts to challenge Hitler. Speaking before the Teamster's convention on October 30, 1940 he turned the names of three**

**Republican congressmen into an alliterative chant:**

**When he ran in 1944 he attacked the Republican's for passing on a false rumor that a Navy destroyer had been sent back at great taxpayer expense to pick up his missing dog:**

**Roosevelt's humor endeared him to millions. They laughed and they voted.**

**At the University of Richmond, this is Dan Roberts.**

## Resources

**Leuchtenberg, William Edward. *The FDR Years: On Roosevelt and His Legacy*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995.**

**Morgan, Ted. *FDR: A Biography*. New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1985.**

**Tugwell, Rexford G. *The Democratic President: A Biography of Franklin D. Roosevelt*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1957.**