

correct predictions about the future. We plan a picnic weeks ahead and then it rains. We invest in a company that makes a particular product and people start buying a different one. Time after time we find that our predictions are incorrect.

Many of us who lived through the days from 1929 to 1931 remember vividly how there was hardly a month in which some great business or financial leader did not declare that the turning point of the depression had now been reached and the boom would soon return. Yet the downward progress continued. The country was in the grip of forces beyond any one man's control.

In 1932 Roosevelt was elected president. Congress was ready to obey him on almost everything. Great federal works were begun and large sums of money pumped into the economy. Gradually the rise began and the New Dealers claimed that prosperity was rapidly returning. But after a few years a very considerable recession occurred and people began to doubt the efficacy of the New Deal in restoring prosperity. Later things again turned upward, and then Roosevelt made his famous statement. "We planned it that way." Doubters of the efficacy of government planning of economic life would feel more convinced of the truth of this statement if he had predicted the recession in advance. If government can really control economic situations, it should be able to predict the turns ahead of time.