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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1954

MESSAGE OF WELCOME BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

THE HONORABLE HERBERT BROWNELL, JR.

At The Opening Session

NINTH ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CITIZENSHIP

Hotel Statler, Washington, D. C.

Wednesday, September 15, 1954

It is a heart-warming pleasure to join Mr. Miller and Miss Walker in welcoming all of you to this Ninth Annual National Conference on Citizenship. Please consider this not just an official welcome but a pleasant opportunity to extend my warmest personal greetings.

The fact that we have the largest number of delegates to attend any of these meetings; the fact that they represent hundreds of wholesome organizations from every segment of our life is indicative of the vitality of our way of life. It is a tribute to the millions who came to this land in search of freedom. It is proof that the heritage of all mankind has been brought to its greatest fruition here where people of every race and culture and creed have real opportunity for exercising their skills and talent, their courage and faith.

You will, in these three days, fully explore the role of each of our branches of Government in the efforts of the people to protect and perpetuate the principles and ideals upon which this Nation is founded.

Let me, for a moment, discuss the remainder of the theme -- "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow."

Our freedom from tyranny was proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence. Our government of law was established in the Constitution. Our guiding principles of duties and privileges were set forth in our Bill of Rights. Through the years these documents of yesterday have remained the untarnished symbol of hope for all freedom-loving persons everywhere.

Today our material, as well as our spiritual, wealth has grown immeasurably. Our citizens enjoy the highest standard of living in the world. People of other lands who haven't seen the factory worker or the farmer with his own auto, his own phone, his plumbing, his electrical appliances, even his family's clothing, just can't conceive that an average person can live so well. There are those, of course, who say that we seek only the material things of life; that we are only an arsenal for the free world. I only wish that those persons could see this gathering with its earnest devotion to the ideals of human dignity. It is conferences such as this which today spell out the real answer to the Godless tyrants who would, if they could, return the whole world to the slavery and misery of the Dark Ages.

We need have no fear of tomorrow if we remain alert, if we maintain this passionate interest in our ideals. If we are to win the grim

struggle for men's minds and souls, we must demonstrate to all the world that we are interested only in freedom -- in the right of people anywhere to choose their own way of life; the right to speak their mind, to hold their own religious beliefs. We can do this best, of course, by practicing these ideals in our every action; in our every relation with each other and with other free peoples.

During the course of this conference, men and women from other lands will receive the most precious gift this Nation has to offer -- citizenship in the United States. Let us strive always to keep the ideals of that citizenship burning brightly.

Thank you -- and may your exchange of ideas in the coming sessions be both pleasant and fruitful.