

For Release on Delivery

ADDRESS OF
HONORABLE TOM C. CLARK
ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

at

36th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
GREATER NEW YORK COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

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How do you do, ladies and gentlemen.

I am honored to be able to take part in the program of the 36th birthday of the Boy Scouts of America. It's not quite so old as myself but it's getting quite mature.

To those of you attending this luncheon in the Grand Ballroom of the Commodore Hotel and to those of you of the radio audience, I bring my deep congratulations. I too am a former member of the Boy Scouts of America. My son is now a member.

I took with me from my younger days to my present position in the President's cabinet a deep appreciation of the moral and physical value to America and to the world of the movement which we familiarly call scouting.

I am constrained today to eliminate from my few words any undue emphasis upon the glories of an organization which for thirty-six years has been contributing a vast moral uplift to this and other nations.

I would prefer to emphasize in this post-war problem period the fact that humanity seems to be struggling across the face of the earth to some set of solemn agreements which will render us secure from these recurrent and devastating wars.

We have men and women exerting every effort today to perfect the United Nations organization. We have had conferences upon international problems at Dumbarton Oaks and at Bretton Woods. We have had conferences upon military problems and upon the future of atomic energy.

Through all these devices we are attempting to get down on paper, in black and white, agreements which will be sensible, fair and binding upon all nations.

Yet, and I am not in the least cynical about these matters, unless we have some basis of international fellowship, understanding and good

will other than formal documents or legalistic phrases, it does not seem to me that the real work of international settlement will be accomplished.

President Truman, in opening the nationwide observance of Boy Scout Week with his message to more than 1,950,000 members of the Boy Scouts of America, said, and I quote: "Above all, cooperation helped you win through in your various campaigns."

He was referring to the fact that the highest percentage of winners of the Congressional Medal of Honor in this war were former Eagle Scouts. He was referring to the fact that approximately forty percent of our soldiers were formerly connected with the Boy Scouts of America. He was referring to the almost endless tasks which the present Scouts -- too young for active service -- the Junior GI's of World War II -- performed to aid in the winning of the war.

The President was referring also, to the determination of the Boy Scouts of America to help fellow-Scouts in other lands less fortunate than ours.

For my part, I believe that the extension of youthful hands across the borders and across the seas is evidence of a real cooperation which will implement the various agreements that nations are seeking to make among themselves. It will bring mutual tolerance and respect. Lasting peace must be based upon mutual respect. The Boy Scouts of America has the respect of the world for its thirty-six year record in war and in peace.

There were other governments in other lands which, realizing the strength of their youth, built up organizations of young thugs and terrorists far different from the wholehearted and highly moral concept that we have in the American Boy Scouts. These organizations of young Nazis and Fascists at times tried to masquerade as organizations similar to those which in the democracies foster causes of peace.

The reason I intensively dwell upon the great potentiality of scouting for world peace is that more mutual international understanding is required.

The boy of today is the man of tomorrow. Today's foundation supports the building of tomorrow. In the great array of positions of importance which we see in government and in private business, one by one we of the older generation will depart and our places will be taken by those who follow in our footsteps. Once international understanding is fostered among our young men, however, the sooner it will exist in the heads of the governments of the future and in those who make national and international law. I do not believe that I understate, and I know I cannot over-emphasize this. I repeat again, the boy of today is the man of tomorrow, and if we give that boy the strong foundation of training within the Boy Scouts we build for tomorrow, Yes, we build a better boy, a better man, a better citizen, a better husband and a better father. We build a better America and a better world.

We of the generation which is responsible for this condition of affairs in the world today, with its manifold problems resolving themselves from the greatest war in history, can leave behind a priceless heritage if we do but appreciate and support organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America, fostering ideals which are cooperative and principles which are unselfish.

Upon the latter, let me say a few words. We see upon every hand the result of persons and parties and organizations and blocs aligned to further their own interests regardless of the interest either of the nation or of humanity. Contention, which seems to be the order of the day, springs from this self-commitment. This one-sided solo thinking arouses class against

class, faith against faith, man against man, and woman against woman. The possibilities of the age of selfishness are unending—possibilities for more and more contention.

The Code of the Boy Scouts teaches, in the third line of the Scout Oath, "To help other people at all times." This is in direct contradiction to the code of selfishness and indifference. We would be remiss, indeed, in our duties as Americans if we neglected to mark well the fact that this organization can bring about, in a matter of months or years, some change, however small, in the human concept of one's duty to one's fellow man.

Of tremendous value to America, yes, of vital importance, is not only the welfare of the Boy Scouts but of all the young people who will someday inherit this land of ours. I ask you to remember that they will inherit not only the vast mountains and the plains, the hills jeweled with ore, the great valleys laden with crops, the industries which cover the landscape like man-made volcanos; they will also inherit our debts and traditions; our weaknesses and our strengths; our frailties and our temptations.

For some time I have taken a deep interest in juvenile America because it seems to me that we must not neglect them out of respect for the future of America. The Boy Scouts, in my belief, form one of the strongest hopes for the elimination of juvenile delinquency. The example of the Boy Scout is a restrainer upon hundreds of thousands of other boys who are not members. The characteristics of leadership which are inculcated in the Boy Scout permeate the class rooms of our schools and the places where young folks meet. Thus I truly believe that the organization has a power for good in the juvenile field far beyond its numbers.

I do not believe that I am an alarmist when I say that the juvenile problem is one of the most important today. Some recent figures furnished

me by my honored and able assistant, Director J. Edgar Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, indicate that 21 percent of all arrests are of persons under the age of 21.

More persons aged 17 are arrested than in any other age group.

It is a terrible spectacle to see the rise of youthful crime in our country, especially after we have fought and won a great world war.

Not only the Boy Scouts, but the school and the church and the home must unite in a solemn covenant to save the erring boys and girls and to attempt this human reconversion which is so important for the America of today and tomorrow.

The figures that I reported to you above are only a few. But, lest they appear innocuous, let me ask -- Did you know that the arrests of girls under 18 years of age have increased 198 percent since 1937? This is a distressing record and everything I can do and everything that every decent citizen of America can do to alleviate this condition should be done.

I point out to you again that the Boy Scouts organization is one which has done much and will do much to make the future America a better America.

One of the great characteristics of the returning veteran which we in the Department of Justice have observed up to now is a solemn respect for law. With so many former Scouts in the armed forces, it is no wonder that this respect has taken root. These veterans who are returning daily to their homes can and will set a great example for the younger generation. Our faith is upon them and following them our faith must be upon the still younger generation.

Somewhere in the past of scouting, in the minds of those who so wisely formulated this organization, the motto "Be Prepared" was emblazoned, just

as the knights of old emblazoned their heraldics on their shields.

This motto has stood America in good stead in the long years of war and peace that have passed over us in the past thirty-six years.

This motto can also assure us a better world if it is followed by the Boy Scouts and is supported by all American citizens. Let us be prepared, and fully prepared, for the tasks of international cooperation to come. Let us be prepared, and fully prepared, for the tasks which we have facing us in our communities, our states, and in the nation.

For this accomplishment, on this 36th anniversary I could wish no better thing for America than that every boy in her boundaries should be a Boy Scout.