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ADDRESS

BY

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at

Seventh National Conference on Citizenship

Hotel Statler

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As we assemble for the Seventh Annual National Conference on Citizenship, I am happy to join Mrs. Caldwell, President of the National Education Association, in extending friendliest and warmest greetings to you at the beginning of three historic days.

I speak to you as one grateful for the honor and the privilege of taking part in the first official observance of the newly established "Citizenship Day," commemorating as it does, - the signing of the Constitution on September 17, 165 years ago.

Pursuant to a joint resolution recently adopted by the Congress and approved by the President, "Citizenship Day" offers an opportunity for all citizens to rededicate themselves to the ideals and principles of our Nation, to re-emphasize the full meaning of United States Citizenship by honoring those who reach voting age and those who, having come to us from foreign shores, have attained citizenship through the naturalization process.

As I welcome you today, I am deeply aware of the inspiration enkindled by this magnificent assemblage of American citizens representing organizations comprising a membership that can be counted in the millions. You have come together with a single objective - to advance the welfare of our country by improved techniques for the perpetuation of its principles.

This session will soon be honored by the distinguished presence of our beloved President of the United States, who has taken an active interest in the Conference since its beginning.

In our midst at this moment are sixty men and women from numerous other lands who are anxiously counting the seconds until they can attain American Citizenship - one of the most precious possessions in the world today.

The theme of this Conference is fittingly, "The Constitution and the Citizen," each necessary to the other, and mutually dependent for continued survival. The correlative rights and duties of good citizenship flow from this sacred document and their proper observance constitute its truest safeguard. Hence, this Conference, aptly called a "Working Meeting in Citizenship," pauses to deliberate on the meaning of the pact - which is at once the framework and the soul of the republic.

When the 39 delegates signed the Constitution in 1787, they made the American people a Nation. Events since then have given eloquent testimony to the enduring greatness of the document venerated not only by Americans, but by freedom-loving people the world over. It is the American Ark of the Covenant: it is the symbol and the warranty of our freedoms.

In civilized society there must always be means to adjust relations between man and man, and the rights of the individual must be protected from trespass. The framers of our Constitution appreciated and understood this concept: their written expression gave the breath of life to our republic and enabled it to grow in vitality and in fruitfulness until it has become a promise to the world that peace among men of good-will can be achieved under God.

The democratic ideals which we cherish, and which have given us the blessings of the best life on earth, were woven by Jefferson into the Constitution. It provides a system of Government which, though vested in the representatives of the majority of its citizens, nevertheless protects the minority against the possible tyranny of the majority. Every individual is guaranteed inalienable rights endowed upon him by his Creator - rights that cannot be taken away.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land. All law-making bodies are subordinate to, and all the enactments by such bodies must conform to, the supreme law. The recognition of the supremacy of the law is a basic cause for the enduring vitality of our American constitutional system.

Order depends on respect for the law. Where the State is all-powerful, and where its power is not subject to law, there can be no lasting freedom for any individual. Without liberty there cannot be peace which is the tranquility of order; for slavery comes when men ignore the Will of God and bow to the whim of man.

The complex world of today could never have been foreseen by the drafters of our Constitution, and yet their document founded on eternal principles has served to adapt itself to every possible economic and social upheaval that technology and the inventiveness of man have wrought. Its flexibility, born of far perspective, has enabled it to prevail while fantastic changes have come to our civilization, socially, politically and economically.

Under our Constitution, we have demonstrated to the world that people of varying creeds, national origins and beliefs can work together harmoniously.

We have found a way of working together and providing the richness of life which is born of variety, for we have remained ever conscious of our common human origin, human nature and human destiny.

This gathering is a ringing answer to the enemies of democracy at home and abroad---yes, a positive answer to those who would subvert the republic and attempt to destroy our democratic way of life.

In the Seventh Annual Citizenship Conference we reach another milestone in human relations and in activities to further study of the highest concept of the citizen.

In this land that we love, as we meet in her Capital City - there is no fear -- no hate -- no suspicion. Here class is not pitted against class - nor faith against faith. Only good will prevails -- the brotherhood of man and the eagerness to do some good for our community, our State and our Nation.

With our good will, we are mindful of a need to be vigilant and to be militant in defense of our well-loved country; and ever ready to combat Communist threats to freedom, justice and opportunity. Against the atheistic ideology, we gird ourselves, not alone materially, but spiritually.

May I take this opportunity to tell you that the Department of Justice is alerted to guard and to aid in maintaining our American way of life. The administration of justice is the keystone in the arch of liberty. Solemnly - we have dedicated our lives and honor to the integrity of such administration.

We shall prosecute the guilty with all the zealousness at our command, but we shall be equally zealous in protecting and defending the innocent. Let

me emphasize that we are determined that the inalienable rights of our citizens shall not be infringed. The civil rights of all will be given protection.

Keenly aware of the Communist threat to our form of Government and to the freedom this Government guarantees to all men, we have strengthened and intensified our prosecution of subversive activities by means of the new Internal Security Section in the Department of Justice. This will result in more swift and hence more certain action upon evidence. Prior investigations continue to be efficiently and vigorously conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation under the inspired guidance of Director, J. Edgar Hoover.

Your interests and ours unite in our common devotion to America and to her long expressed ideals.