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AN ADDRESS

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I am genuinely happy to have the opportunity of addressing you on this occasion when you are considering matters so vital to the building of better citizenship in our country.

These are subjects in which I have both a personal and official interest.

Many people associate the Office of the Attorney General with such actions as trust-busting, prosecution of tax violators and war against the Dillingers and Capones.

The Department of Justice, it is true, does have a grave responsibility with regard to those who violate monopoly or tax laws. It must ever be vigilant to deal with the Dillingers and Capones. These are jobs that have to be done, and that will be done.

But the Department has a wide range of other activities that strike a more positive note. Some of these give me a real inner satisfaction.

In order that you may see the pattern and better understand my interest in youth, it seems appropriate that I tell you of some of these activities.

The Department is responsible for safeguarding the civil liberties of all Americans.

Those recently returned from the battlefields of Freedom learned that no artificial barriers - racial, religious or economic - separated men on the fighting front.

Yet some people now act as if good will, understanding and friendship among men belong only to wartime.

They would deny to others the rights that they themselves enjoy under the fundamental law of the land.

They would strike at the very vitals of the Constitution itself which guarantees rights and liberties to all of us.

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They endanger their own liberty of action when they trample upon the rights of their fellow Americans.

The organization or group that turns the hand of one man against another because of differences in race, color or creed delivers a grievous if not fatal blow, to the workings of democracy.

The Department of Justice, even though operating on a thin thread of law, must be constantly alert to make sure that they do not succeed in their harmful intent. If they did they would strike at the very heart of the institutions upon which our liberties rest.

I expect to use all the laws at my command, and all that the Congress deems fit to give me in the future, to stamp out any movement that aims at the extermination of our priceless civil liberties.

At this point it should be mentioned that we have been heartened in the fight to preserve our civil liberties by the action taken recently by the President.

On December 5, President Truman announced the creation of a committee to be known as the President's Committee on Civil Rights. This Committee, composed of 15 outstanding citizens who will serve without compensation, is authorized on the behalf of the President "to inquire into and to determine whether and in what respect current law-enforcement measures and the authority and means possessed by Federal, State, and local governments may be strengthened and improved to safeguard the civil rights of the people."

All information on this vital subject in possession of the Federal government will be made available to the Committee. The Committee is to report to the President upon its studies and to make recommendation "with respect to the adoption or establishment, by legislation or otherwise, of

more adequate and effective means and procedures for the protection of the civil rights of the people of the United States."

The preservation of our basic freedoms rests in the power of public opinion, this we must never lose sight of.

It is therefore the duty of every true American to remain steadfast and to make his voice heard in defense of these freedoms.

The Department has many duties affecting those who come from other lands to seek American citizenship - the most precious gift this country has to offer.

It is significant that 27 percent of our present population are foreign-born, or the children of foreign-born parents or parent. All races and nationalities make up America, contribute to its progress and enrich its life.

This is well illustrated by the fact that during the recent war about 109,000 soldiers in American uniform were naturalized, approximately 11,000 of them while on duty overseas. These American soldiers were natives of 122 different nationalities and their possessions.

Because the Department is responsible, not only for selecting those who fill our immigrant quotas, but also for preparing the new-comers for citizenship, I recently initiated a comprehensive citizenship program.

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This program will be one of continuous effort to emphasize the worth of American citizenship. Beginning at the time of entry of a potential citizen to the United States, it will stress the ideals of this country from then up to the moment, and even beyond, when citizenship is granted him by the court.

I believe this program has importance for the new citizen, since it is designed to help him understand the American way of life and better play his part in it.

I am convinced, however, that the program has even greater significance for his children; since the gap that normally exists between generations is often widened by differences in the customs, traditions and attitudes of the old and new worlds.

The Department of Justice is immediately responsible for those juveniles who come into conflict with Federal laws.

Soon after I was appointed Attorney General I became concerned about this group. I wanted to know what had brought them within the Federal jurisdiction, what the Department was doing for them, and what would happen to them when they passed from our care. I wanted especially to know how best we could deal with them while they were in our charge.

I soon learned, however, Federal juveniles, like state juveniles, are victims of community failures.

They come from all parts of the country.

They get into the Federal jurisdiction merely because they happen to violate Federal law.

The Federal problem cannot be isolated from the local problem. It is inextricably bound up with the conditions in the homes and communities

of the juveniles, and with the local resources for normal, wholesome, happy life available to them.

I realized that the Department of Justice would succeed in meeting its immediate responsibility only as the states and local communities succeed in carrying out their responsibilities for juvenile delinquency.

Finally, I realized that each and every community must marshal all its social forces in the war against delinquency. The extent to which a juvenile receives a socialized type of treatment should not depend upon whether he lives in the North, South, East or West, nor upon whether he is a State or Federal offender.

The decision to see what could be done to mobilize the country's resources through the medium of a National Conference on the Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency was reenforced by a personal experience.

I had occasion, when first entering upon the duties of the Attorney General, to visit with some of the youngsters in training schools near Washington. One has only to be thus exposed to the personal and public tragedy of these young lives to realize the full extent of the loss, to the youngsters themselves and to society.

The National Conference for the Prevention and Control of Juvenile Delinquency, which was held in Washington on November 20, 21, and 22, was an expression, in tangible form, of those in the country, who, like myself, are concerned over the personal and public tragedies of young people in their neighborhoods, and who desire to do something useful and concrete.

All groups in the country, dealing with the juvenile problem were represented; including Federal, state, county and municipal agencies; private welfare agencies and organizations of all kinds; and farm, labor, business,

commercial and recreation groups, Judges, police, social workers, teachers, churchmen, administrators in training institutions and others - all met together for three days to thrash out practical solutions to the many phases of juvenile delinquency which are the concern of this country.

The Conference, was, as it should have been, a working-conference and an action-conference. Prior to the Conference, representatives of the various groups had been meeting together and preparing tentative reports for consideration. At the Conference itself, some 16 working groups met simultaneously in conference rooms scattered around Washington and, on the third day of the Conference, presented to the plenary session final reports, which, with minor amendments, were accepted by the Conference.

All this tremendous effort representing, literally, thousands of man-days and woman-days of hard, voluntary labor was directed to a single end, namely, the helping of individual boys and girls of this country to become good and useful citizens, to reclaim them where they have gone astray, and, at the same time, to protect society against the very small percentage of youths, whose attitudes and methods constitute a menace to life and property.

The Conference has left behind it an important Continuing Committee, composed of the able Program Committee, the Chairmen of the 16 working panels with the Vice Chairmen to serve as their alternates, together with 9 young people, boys and girls, who are to represent, to the utmost extent practicable, all races, creeds and colors, in this country.

This Continuing Committee, it is hoped, will act, for such a period of time as is useful and necessary, as a clearing house of resources and information regarding the Recommendations of the Conference, to the single end that activities of all agencies and organizations, governmental and non-governmental in the field, will be intensified and made even more fruitful than they are today.

The reports of the Conference - some 19 in number - will be printed in full within the next month or so. In the meantime, in order that the momentum of the Conference may not be lost, the sections of each report, covering specific "Recommendations for Action", are being printed in a small volume. This Document is to be given the widest possible distribution and, it is hoped, will serve to initiate immediate action in carrying out the Recommendations.

It was universally agreed at the Conference and before, that, in the words of President Truman, "the roots of the problem lie in the homes, the schools and churches of our nation. If results are to be achieved, it must be through the citizen and his community, with State and local officials also having a vital stake in the operation."

In this description of some of the activities of the Department of Justice, I have endeavored to express my recognition of the fact that our youth constitute an integral part of our democracy - youth dependent upon democracy and democracy dependent upon youth; that democracy cannot permanently survive if its citizens are not prepared to discharge their responsibilities as members of a free society.



Never in the history of America has it been more important than now that this country produce good citizens -- citizens who are mentally, morally and physically equipped to meet their responsibilities as Americans.

The future of America is in the hands of youth. Only a few years from now, all the key positions in this land will be filled by the youth of today. Every law, every program will be brought to them for consideration and decision.

Young people are preparing now for their job in the future. On how they prepare depends the contribution they will make to their country. With certain cardinal principles to guide them they will succeed; without them they will fail.

If the ideal of citizenship is to be realized, no one of us can live selfishly and alone.

The good citizen does his part to make democracy work for all instead of expecting it to work for him alone.

He concerns himself about the welfare of all the people and recognizes that the happiness of each is bound to the welfare of all.

He respects the worth and dignity of human personality and has faith in his fellow men.

He cherishes the principles of honesty, fair play and good sportsmanship, and all the other principles and values that are essential to growth into wholesome, healthy and ethical human beings.

He believes that personal integrity, acceptance of responsibility and team work among citizens are vital in the building of the community, the state and the Nation.