

RELEASE

For Morning Papers

Thursday, August 27, 1936.

REMARKS

by

HONORABLE HOMER CUMMINGS

C. C.]

ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES

as

Presiding Officer

at a

MEETING OF THE AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS.

Wednesday, August 26, 1936.

at

8 P. M.

President Ransom, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen:

This is a day of profound significance in the history of the American Bar. The two subjects which have been most on every member's mind, during this Convention, bear witness to that fact.

For years this Association has sought to achieve greater unity in its purposes and a more effective measure of leadership for the professional activities of the bar. Beginning with a small group of men, a little over a half-century ago, there has gradually developed a more coherent program in which an increasing number of our brethern have participated. For a long time the highly individualistic philosophy of the profession permitted only a very loose organization; but gradually there came recognition of the importance of cooperation, teamwork and structural organization to make possible the coordination of parts, the meshing of wheels, the timing and synchronization of spark, combustion and power in driving ahead under control, instead of functioning casually, albeit with occasional success, like the versatile Joe E. Brown in "An Earthworm Tractor."

Today we have seen the beginnings of a cohesive organization, bringing together national, state and local bar associations as an effective means for the revitalization of the traditional leadership of the bar in public affairs and the general concerns of men.

The other matter to which I refer is the achievement of a uniform system of procedural rules for the federal courts. For years this association has labored to that end. Today the desired result is in process of glorious realization.

You will pardon me, I am sure, if I confess to a sense of personal satisfaction in the attainment of this goal, because I was able to lend a helpful hand, in the final stages of the battle.

These two illustrations reveal distinct accomplishments, both internal and external - internal as to purpose and structure, external as to the dynamic effect of intelligently directed action in shaping the judicial and procedural system of our government.

Who can forecast the extent of our future development! We have so far to go, we have such a solid foundation upon which to build, that if we are able to preserve a reasonable balance of tolerance and good humor and keep everlastingly at it, we may hope to occupy a constantly widening area of useful service.

In pride of accomplishment as well as in genuine hospitality and willingness to learn, we have each year welcomed to our deliberations outstanding representatives of the legal profession from other lands. Tonight we are grateful for the presence of two such men.

Our first speaker, The Honorable Henry Hanna, K. C., Judge of the High Court, Irish Free State, was educated at the Belfast Royal Academy, Queen's University in Belfast, and London University. He was called to the Irish Bar in 1896, to the English Bar, Middle Temple, in 1913. He became a Bencher of King's Inns, Ireland, in 1915, a Sergeant at Law in 1919, and Judge of the High Court, Irish Free State, in 1925.

Judge Hanna was for a time President of the Photographic Society of Ireland. I may say in passing that it would be difficult indeed to imagine a more beautiful place in which to follow such an avocation. He is now

President of the Irish Kennel Club; and when he sits in dignity upon the Bench, amidst the contentions of counsel and the cries of litigants, he must often be reminded of Shakespeare's lines:

"The little dogs and all,

Tray, Blanch and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me."

He is also a member of many other clubs, whose names are more usual among lawyers and judges, but much less revealing of the man. If one desires a more intimate knowledge of his literary and judicial style, that information can be obtained by reading, in addition to his able opinions and legal treatises, such publications from his pen as "The War and Suspension of Legal Remedies" and his admirable historical record of the 7th Royal Dublin Fusiliers during the campaign at Suvla Bay in 1915, entitled "The Pals at Suvla Bay."

I present to you, Honorable Henry Hanna, who will speak upon the subject:

(Lapse of time for address of Judge Hanna.)

The lighter passages in the very able and learned address to which we have just listened reveal that our distinguished guest has experienced early and continued contact with the sparkling wit and wholesome humor of his fellow countrymen. No doubt he will recall that delightful anecdote, which is told concerning a portrait of Henry VIII, hanging within view of the Master's seat at the High Table in the dining hall of Trinity College. "What would you do," asked the Master, of a visiting Jesuit historian, "if the King suddenly stepped down from his frame?" "I would advise

the ladies to leave," was the prompt reply.]

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We look to England with respect and grateful appreciation because of the solid foundations she has laid in jurisprudence and political organization, of which, in large part, we have been the distinct beneficiaries. In many ways we have sought to show that appreciation. Surely no British lawyer who witnessed our coming in 1924 can doubt the depth and warmth of our good will.

The second of our distinguished guests whom it is my pleasure to introduce is (and I say it with some degree of trepidation) a professor. In England fortunately (or unfortunately, as you wish), there has been a longer acquaintance with professors than in this country - at least a longer conscious acquaintance. Possibly some of the more vehement and irreconcilable members of our bar would be shocked if reminded that Sir William Blackstone was a professor. In these days when the cap and gown have become current material for political cartoons, we keep it as dark as we can that four members of our Supreme Court were once in that category. Chief Justice Hughes and Mr. Justice Van Devanter share the honor with Mr. Justice Stone and Mr. Justice Roberts.

Our speaker, Sir Maurice Sheldon Amos, K.B.E., K.C., Quain Professor of Comparative Law, University of London, has had a rich experience in many activities of life. He has been an Inspector of Native Courts under the Egyptian Ministry of Justice, a Judge of the Cairo Native Court of First Instance, a Judge of the Native Court of Appeals, and a member of Lord

Balfour's Mission to the United States in 1917. He has also served as Judicial Adviser to the Government of Egypt and as Chief British Delegate to the International Committee of Experts on Private Aerial Law.

His writings reveal his breadth of interest, wide knowledge and scholarly approach. Such subjects as "The English Constitution," "An Introduction to French Law," and "Problems and Exercises in the Law of Egypt" are typical of his more ambitious works; and such periodicals as Contemporary Review, Law Quarterly, Empire Review and New Statesman have enjoyed the privilege of printing his shorter articles.

It is sometimes difficult to say what apparently trivial incident or peculiar tradition may have played an important part in the development of a great personality. Perhaps, our distinguished guest may have acquired a valuable trait of character through attempting, as a student, to perform that traditional test of athletic ability - sprinting a distance of three hundred and eighty yards on a cobbled track, with sharp corners, around the Great Court at Cambridge while the clock was striking midnight, thirty-two strokes in all, over an elapsed period of forty-three seconds.

I present Sir Maurice Sheldon Amos, who will speak to us upon the subject:

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Concluding Remarks

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The two extraordinarily able and inspiring addresses to which we have just listened have once more made us the debtors of our friends from across the seas. We salute them and, from the bottom of our hearts thank them, for the invaluable contribution they have made to the success of our deliberations.

There being no further business the meeting will stand adjourned.