

Address delivered by Hon. John E. Fogarty, US at Flag Day Exercises, held at West Warwick, Rhode Island, Saturday, June 14, 1947 by the Fraternal Order of Elks.

As a brother I am proud to be here - to take part in these ceremonies which this Lodge of Elks has arranged to honor the Flag of our country.

The great fraternal order of Elks has done many fine things throughout its history - but none, in my opinion, has won for it more genuine respect among men and women of all classes of society - than the services which are being conducted annually throughout the country, to honor our flag - the great emblem of this great Republic.

There have been many flag days with all the glorious trappings which attend such National holidays - at which Americans from all walks of life have repeated the Pledge of Allegiance and have sworn their undying devotion to the emblem of the free and the brave.

Please God there will be many more Flag Days before the hand of fate writes finish to the last chapter of the story of this glorious land.

This day is really an ideal occasion for parades and celebrations and martial music. No where in all the land is there a heart so dead or a soul so calloused and embittered that it does not stir to the strains of marching feet and wild music. Hardly an eye in the land without a tear - however slight or swift in passing - as the Stars and Stripes sweeps by - clean and defiant - its colorful lines and bed of stars making a natural picture on the breeze which is eager to hold it out for everyone's appraisal.

Such an occasion warms the blood of every American and helps him to recall the valiant deeds of great men who have carved for themselves

a prominent place in the world's history, who have builded for their country a monument for all the world to see - and who have made their flag an object of love and hope for America's friends - and a cause of fear for her enemies.

It rouses our sleeping feelings of pride and boastfulness - and as we see the flag on display we walk with our heads a little higher - our chins thrust forward - and in our hearts a willingness to take on anyone who would dare refuse to kneel at its shrine.

All this the flag means - and well it might - if we recall but a brief outline of its history.

But - and I say this with all humility - I think Flag Day should be more than just an occasion for celebration and exhibitions of pride in our homeland. Flag Day, it seems to me, should be an occasion for stock-taking; for the examination, as it were, of our collective conscience - to see, honestly, where we have succeeded and where we have failed in measuring up to the duties and responsibilities imposed upon us by the patriots who founded the United States of America - and gave to it the emblem which we honor here.

It seems to me there is more than purely material ideas involved here.

We don't come to this place to honor the mountains and valleys which make up our land; or the millions of tons of steel which its mills produce, or the bullion and paper which comprise its tangible wealth.

It seems to me there is something of the spiritual stirring in all our hearts as we reverse this symbol of all this country means to us - and to countless millions the world over.

You and I who are gathered here on this Flag Day in 1947 - are not

much different from the men and women whom we honor when we honor the flag they gave us. We come from different walks of life - we have different political, economic and social ideas. But we have today but one love - the love of Old Glory.

The formation of this Republic was not simply the consolidation of several groups with a common purpose - and common notions about its achievement. It was the product of compromise and adjustment among men intelligent and courageous enough to launch an experiment in society.

You and I have our own notions about the functioning of our government, even about the place each of us should occupy in society; about the kind of society we should have and who should have honored places and who should move to a lower station. But when we honor the men who gave us this flag - we have to acknowledge - to be honest to them and to ourselves - that they set their feet on an uncharted path. Theirs was a government which was a departure - radical in the extreme - from the system which then prevailed here. It differed greatly from those governments which were then supposed to characterize the greatest possible development of nationhood.

You remember from your history books that they adopted as their guiding principle the fact that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights - among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

They set up a system of government designed to protect and advance those rights. That system still stands - but how often have we seen those rights of man compromised and weakened through a denial of the principles which are fundamental in our democratic system.

The great Empire whose troops were driven from these very shores - strove to regain her mastery of this nation - while it still struggled as

an infant among the world's family of nations. Though there were miles of trackless forests - inept communications - and little money or equipment, brave men who loved America more than they loved life itself - resisted and vanquished those attacks on the republic.

Internal strife - the most bitter of all human conflicts - sought to tear this little nation limb from limb. But from Bull Run - to Gettysburg - to Appomattox - there was but one thought - "The Federal Union - It must be preserved".

Financial panics - economic strife - with the confusion and disorder they always engender - have thrown their weight against the mighty foundations of the republic - but always she has stood and thrown off the attacks.

Through all the years this proud nation has grown more powerful - in spite of all the efforts to shatter her position. You know, and I know, it has thrived and prospered - not because it possessed potential wealth and power which staggers the imagination - This Nation has thrived and prospered because it enjoys a warm love and respect which is rooted deep in the hearts of the people it is designed to serve.

And serve it must - that people - if it is to continue to thrive and prosper during the years which are immediately before us.

That our system of government is threatened is a statement oft repeated of late.

There are those who fear an attack by some foreign power - with all the latest and most deadly weapons of warfare conceived by the mind of man.

There are those too, who see ominous signs on every hand and who proclaim economic disaster and panic is just around the corner.

This nation has resisted every attack of every foreign power. This nation has successfully ridden out every economic storm.

What threat there is to our system of government lies in elements far more insidious than a display of the force of arms - or the confusion and upheaval of financial panic.

Our system of government is always threatened - if the citizens of the Republic fail to be alert to every possible danger. For eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

The real attack when it comes will not be, I am sure, by martial means. It will be a surreptitious working on the minds and hearts of men - seeking to convince them that there is stability and comfort to be had under some other system.

Men may find - too late - that it is the stability and comfort of the slave who loves his chains - because he is thereby relieved of all worry; or the stability and comfort of the docile animal who welcomes his stall because there he finds the food his body craves.

But all men seek security - all men strive to remove from their own intimate circle the fear of poverty and misery - and it is the obligation of all who profess a belief in democracy, to make it possible for all Americans to enjoy the great magnitude of benefits which this great land affords.

In this great nation - over which still flies the greatest of all national emblems - there is no need of suffering, no excuse for want. There is no place for intolerance and bigotry. And no man can countenance bigotry and hatred, find excuse for want or condone suffering - and call himself a good American.

Yes, our land's greatest danger is one of which we can rid ourselves.

We can make this democracy again a positive, driving, progressive force - for the good and welfare of all Americans - for the hope and inspiration for all peoples who seek justice and liberty.

It will take our constant attention - our unflinching efforts - our aggressive determination. But the time and energy spent now in accomplishing that purpose - will reap a standard of life surpassing all the good things we have already known.

Then we can be prouder still of Old Glory - not content merely to bask in the reflected light from the brave deeds of others who fought for her honor and glory - but proud, and justly so, of what we have contributed to making it the emblem of red-blooded Americans, pure and clean of heart; working out their destinies under God's own Heaven - each receiving a helping hand and a word of encouragement from his brother.