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Address of Honorable John E. Fogarty, Congressman, Second Rhode Island District, at the 49th Annual Convention of the Rhode Island State Branch, American Federation of Labor - at Providence, Rhode Island - Sunday, October 30, 1949

Having appeared before American Federation of Labor conventions on so many previous occasions, I am aware of the danger that my expressions of appreciation for your invitation may sound trite. I do, however, wish - with all the earnestness at my command - to assure you that I am most grateful for your kind invitation to address this convention.

Deep in my heart I am conscious today, as I am every day, of your unstinting support and, above all, of your unwavering loyalty in the years past. The fact that I number among you so many personal friends and intimate associates has always been a source of great pride. Few men in public office have been able to count on so many tried and true friends. I am sure that it will always be so and I want to assure you again that I welcome this opportunity to spend a few hours with you.

During these convention days, I know all of you are concerned for the welfare of your members and for the stability and success of the trade union movement in Rhode Island and in the United States. I know that your time and your thinking are devoted to appraising the many problems which face all of us as we seek the twin goals of freedom and security. And the problems are many and varied.

What is to be done about unemployment? Why are business enterprises leaving the area? What about pensions, housing, medicine and health, education and many others? Now, none will question the fact that these problems must be solved. What concerns many people today is the apparently growing and recurring tendency to turn to the Federal Government as the best agency and the only agency which can effect a solution. When something comes up the cry

is "Let the Government take care of it".

The recognition and acceptance of the responsibility for the solution of these problems by the Government is viewed with alarm in some quarters. From the pulpit, the microphone, and from the pages of the press come the warnings that we are moving toward statism, and the welfare state. We are told that this extension of State responsibility into all areas of our social activity is a radical departure from our American way of life.

Now if there is a departure from the American way of life, it is plain common sense to ask, "From what are we departing?" What is the American way of life.

The American way of life, as I understand it, is based on certain principles or rules of action which guided the founders of our Government in its creation and which they bequeathed to us as a heritage so that we could maintain the greatest amount of freedom compatible with God's moral laws and the needs of the people. The more important of these principles, I believe, are these -

1. That man is a creature of God made to God's own image and likeness.
2. That as a creature of God, all men are equal.
3. That as a creature of God he has certain rights or freedoms which cannot be arbitrarily restricted - freedom of speech, press, religion, assembly, petition. Freedom of job opportunity and adequate pay to provide himself and his family with decent food, clothes, shelter-and adequate medication, education and recreation.
4. That only by possessing these freedoms can man exercise

his initiative and develop fully his physical, mental and spiritual capacities and exercise the independence commensurate with human dignity.

5. That the possession of these freedoms imposes on men the responsibilities or duties which go with freedom - duties to God, himself, his neighbors, and his Government.
6. That the failure to recognize and accept these responsibilities will mean the loss of his freedom, and the degradation of his nature.

These then are the basic rules of action which govern our way - the American way of life. Even the slightest examination of these principles reveal they have but one purpose - to protect and insure the rights and freedom of each person. All of us will admit that if these principles guided our actions, the rights of all would be secure. The founding fathers - motivated more by the respect for the God-given dignity of man, than by purely political considerations - were guided by them in their preparation of the two most important documents which civil society had yet devised - the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the new Republic. If these principles were universally applied there would be no reason for the Government to extend its power, control and responsibility, for as self control diminishes, State control must increase or chaos will ensue.

If, as some think, we have detoured from our traditional American way, it seems to me very important to inquire why have we done so? Why has the Federal Government been compelled to assume more and more of our individual and social responsibilities which go with Freedom? Let us consider some examples.

Back in 1887 and 1890 - our Government was compelled to pass laws

regulating the railroads and monopoly business enterprises. Why did the Government do it? Because the railroads and monopoly businesses failed to recognize the rights of others. When business failed to control itself, the Government had to set up controls. The people denounced it.

Now we are all familiar with the Wagner Act of 1935, wherein the Government gave legal recognition to man's natural right to associate in trade unions for the protection of those natural rights. Why did the Government have to extend its control into the area of labor-management relations? The answer is obvious - industry, through its management, failed, and in many cases wilfully fought against, the right of the working man to join unions to ensure these rights.

What about the Social Security Act of 1935? People have a natural right to provide against the day when, through the hazards of illness, accident or old age, they are deprived of the means of earning a livelihood. That definitely is the responsibility of the individual if his pay and resources are such to warrant it. But if his pay isn't adequate or if, through circumstances beyond his control, he can't provide, upon whom does the responsibility rest? When we, as free agents, failed to do our duty in this respect, the Government stepped into another area of our life. Management, which in 1935, tagged the Social Security Act as socialistic, today considers this legislation as having definite merit.

And then there is the Unemployment Insurance Act, which provides some means of support - inadequate though it might be - to workers who, as a result of business conditions are separated from their jobs. Why did the Government intervene here? It is good business practice in industry to insure machines against periods when, because of conditions which cannot be controlled, the machines cannot function. This is machine unemployment insurance and such

insurance is considered a cost of production. Then what about the man who operates the machine, who because of uncontrollable circumstances, is forced to cease work, is he not entitled to some insurance against the loss of food, clothes, shelter? Was not that, equally, a cost of production? Who failed to assume the responsibility here?

These are but a few instances - from many which could be cited. In each example, the Government was compelled to assume the responsibilities and duties which individuals or social institutions shirked. As individuals failed to fulfill their obligations and exercise self-control, the Government was compelled to assume these duties and exercise State control.

Now, all of us realize, that our form of Government to survive must be responsive to the needs of the people. If it does not respond to their needs, the people will change it. It is not the Government that is departing from the American way of life - if there has been a departure - but rather that we, the people, have changed our concept of what actions the Government should perform.

This Administration has earned the confidence of the American people only for the reason that it, among the other parties, has been most responsive to the people's needs. It does not seek power through the extension of controls. It acts on problems only when individuals fail to solve their problems or lack the resources for their solution. And so it will be in housing, health, and education, - and other areas.

If our form of Government and our capitalistic system of free enterprise are to survive, they cannot be maintained by only one group of people. Management alone can't do it; nor can labor alone; nor the Government alone. Only by the strong, close and cooperative effort of all three following the basic principles of the American way can we secure the freedom and security we all so earnestly desire.

Certainly in many respects, our trade unions with the cooperation of industrial management, actively through the basic American principles of collective bargaining, have achieved higher standards of living, more freedom, a greater sense of security for the American people without Government intervention than could be achieved through Federal dispensation. If so much has been done in these areas through voluntary recognition of rights and duties, no one will question the gains still to be made through the same processes.

Every forward step - along the road of social progress - has been marked by the efforts of Labor in America, and it is a source of great satisfaction to all of us that we have played such a prominent role in the development of our concept of American democracy.

But there is still much to be done - and the lasting success which is genuinely strong and reliable will come only when all members of our society are willing to forget for the moment - personal gain and concentrate rather on the welfare of all other members of society.

We who are proud to be among the ranks of American labor will have to make sacrifices it is true. We have made many sacrifices in the past in the interest of the future good of our cause and the future good of our country.

Management too must make sacrifices, and the American scene shows many examples of far-sighted business leadership which, through the promotion of the welfare of labor, has promoted an expanding economy with greater and greater markets for industry's output.

Corporation profits are not the sole mark of a prosperous society. Of far greater importance, particularly today when our society is under constant attack, is the well-being, the peace and contentment, the knowledge and security, of every last member of that society.

Organized labor in the United States has always distinguished itself

for its educational activities. I pray those activities will continue and be broadened - to the end that all men will know their rights and responsibilities; to the end that all men, in the ranks of labor and management will resolve to close ranks and accord to each other the respect and justice which is his due.

We must close ranks. There is little time left for petty selfishness and meanness. Those who seek the end of our ideas and ideals are constant in their fault-finding; and in the exposé of our every weakness. Labor can lead the way to a better country and a better world, if it will be always honest and honorable in all that it does. Strive ever to promote the welfare of your people - and remember always, that your people are all the people of the world.

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