

*Text of Remarks 2/16/54*

MR. FOGARTY.

Mr. Speaker, I can speak with some authority about the characteristics of the Lithuanian people. In my State of Rhode Island, where men and women of so many racial strains live and work together in peace and mutual respect, descendants of the ancient race of Lithuanians make a splendid contribution to our common culture.

We who know them see daily the evidence of intelligence and the industry for which they are reknowned. They are a rugged people, able to withstand hardship--and in the happy life of America, their sons excel in every field of endeavor.

But more than their intellectual prowess, their willingness and ability to do hard work well, more even than their ancient valor for which they are reknowned, they contribute to America in an outstanding way because they prize as sacred the things of the home. To them the family is the center of life. Children are brought up in the fear and love of God. They are good neighbors. They are good Americans, and America is the richer for having them with us.

Today, February 16, 1954 persons of Lithuanian extraction are celebrating the thirty-sixth anniversary of the independence of their mother country. This sturdy and freedom-loving people proclaimed their independence during the First World War on February 16, 1918 ending generations of oppression by the Russian Czars. Today, after another world war against tyranny and in defense of freedom, Lithuania is again under the iron heel of the oppressor. It is a sobering thought that for the people of Lithuania, this day cannot be other than a day of sadness. We in America, who so rightly cherish our own Independence Day can well realize the feeling of sorrow that all Americans of Lithuanian birth must have at the realization that that great nation has been denied the very right to exist as an independent nation under a government of their own choosing.

The regime imposed upon Lithuania by communistic Russia has violated every man's individual freedom. It has persecuted religion, enslaved labor, and destroyed democratic principles.

It has endeavored to instill hatred in the hearts of the Lithuanian people toward the western democracies. That they have not been successful is due only to the strong inborn love the Lithuanian people have for the cherished principles of freedom and liberty. Although the people of this nation are held in subjection by the ruthless Soviet power, the spirit of freedom imbedded in the hearts of all patriotic Lithuanians continues to carry on its fight for liberty.

It is more than a decade since tragedy struck Lithuania but history will assuredly show that this valiant nation cannot long remain in subjection. Tyrants can destroy men and institutions, but they can never destroy the love of liberty which springs eternally in men's hearts. The Lithuanian cause is not just a matter of concern for the people presently residing in that country. It is the equal concern of all freedom-loving peoples. Please God, may the day soon come when Lithuania can throw off the shackles of her oppressor and take her rightful place once more in the family of free nations.