

ADDRESS OF HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, U. S. REPRESENTATIVE SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND AT THE NATIONAL BIENNIAL CONVENTION OF THE ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS AT THE SHERATON-BILTMORE, PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND, TUESDAY MORNING AUGUST 5, 1958

The story of the Ancient Order of Hibernians over the years needs no elaboration from me. Its traditions go back to the 16th century in Ireland when it set for itself the high and noble purpose of service to God and country. Since its incorporation in 1836 in the United States it has continued to pursue them faithfully. It is a splendid story of high ideals and achievement in which we can all take pride. While we think back with affection and respect on all the past generations who participated in the great work of the Order, let us express also our grateful acknowledgment of the meritorious work of the present membership, both officers and members, upon whose loyalty and enthusiasm the success of this great Convention depends. Their unflagging selfless work is beyond words of mine adequately to praise. Let it stand as an example and inspiration for the coming years.

Periodic meetings like this Biennial Convention are important for any organization for they afford opportunities

for review and deliberation, for seeing in a larger perspective how effectively the group is functioning, and for charting a course of future action that is better fitted to contemporary needs and better defined in its directions. I should think it well if we take this opportunity of glancing around briefly to see whether in the swiftly changing circumstances of our days, the Order is now as closely geared to the needs of the present as it assuredly was to the times of our fathers and grandparents. Our Organization was founded in the first half of the last century to help our immigrant forebears in the worthy but arduous task of winning a place for themselves in this, the country of their adoption. That it succeeded, and succeeded admirably, is witnessed by the pattern of our American society today. If there should be anybody who has doubts about the preciousness of the contribution made by successive generations of Irish Catholic immigrants, let him but read the history of these United States of ours, and learn therefrom of the development of what the world has come to recognize as the American spirit.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians was founded in a period which for the men of our time has become remote and unfamiliar, so revolutionary and vast has been the scale of intervening developments. In the retrospect of history we are awed by that immense drama of the 19th century in which over 30 millions of people from every part of Europe poured into this country. From our condition of present well-being, from the equitable and benevolent state of American society today, we can now perceive how in all truth this great migration was an advent of new life to the distressed, the maltreated and the unrecognized of Europe. Of these heterogenous multitudes, 5 millions came from Ireland, and they shared with the rest the status of fugitives seeking in exile those previous and vital things that were denied to them in their homelands. They knew that the conditions of justice, of tolerance, of equal opportunity existed here but the guarantee of them for themselves and their children had to be won, and not without effort. Nobody with any knowledge of history will assert that entering America in the 19th century denoted for the immigrant his arrival in another Eden.

As you know, it was fraught with tensions and struggles of extreme bitterness and passion. But out of these great conflicts, which inflicted incidentally so much suffering because the deepest convictions of opposing groups had taken issue with each other, there emerged a way of life that took account of the needs and aspirations of all protagonists who had the will to endure. In that development of a new society, and in the prodigy of the opening up of this continent, lie the greatest achievements of our country. It was there that the American spirit was reformed and the genius of the American community reformed. That American spirit is characterized by justice and fair play, by neighborliness and the helping hand, by tolerance and charity. It is these great Christian virtues that we all unceasingly endeavor to ensure shall imbue each of the manifold aspects of our American life today, that we concern ourselves shall be the motivation of our public authorities, our institutions, our organizations of voluntary endeavour, our community and family life, and our relations with the free countries of the world.

The Irish role in the development of the American spirit has been an exceptional and exalted one. Out of the sweat of their brow successive Irish generations have studded our country with works that breathe their love of God and of their fellowmen, with churches and schools, with hospitals and homes and houses of fraternal service; they have come in due time to participate in the leadership of our country, in its national life, its administration, in the professions. They have fought and bled and died to make secure their ideals of American society and its precious values. One of the marks of the Irish everywhere is idealism and at the heart of that idealism is goodness. When I say goodness I mean the love the Irishman has for the good God who out of His infinite goodness created each one of us in His own image and likeness and wants us to come to Him in eternity. Sheer goodness of this kind has always held for the Irish heart an attraction that has been literally fatal and has set the Irishman apart from others. It is the explanation of what appears

to others as otherworldiness, inconsequence, irresponsibility; it explains much of what passes variously for temperament, his mood of joy, his unconcern, his steadfastness in adversity, his enthusiasms, his offhandedness, his friendliness, his humour. In its ultimate analysis, the paradox of the Irishman is the paradox of all who follow Christ as St. Paul urged "to be in the world and not of it." Of all his gifts to American life, the one of unique quality was that which each Irishman bestowed when he gave himself and his goodness of heart. While we acknowledge with profound gratitude, as must every section of our national community in its own specific way, the great debt we owe to these United States of ours, it is not amiss for us to point with due humility to what our forefathers contributed in the only way that was available to them -- in nobility of spirit. Because we are in the middle of it in our everyday lives, that quality of American life which drew so heavily on Irish goodness is taken by us Americans for granted and goes unnoticed. To foreigners, however,

it is apparent and admirable, and much of the benevolence that exists abroad for our country today is the outcome of it.

If the purpose of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in the last century was to help the Irish immigrant to find his place in American society, that task today is no longer paramount nor does it now present itself in the same form. The contemporary problem is not how to help its members be good Americans, but to be the best Americans, examples to our fellow countrymen at home and to the world, pillars of strength and guiding lights. There can be no conflict between our profession of Christianity and our loyalty to our country, because our greatness as a nation can only be in the precise measure that we are Christian both in spirit and in action. The strength of the Church does not reside in political influence nor in possessions, not even in a mighty apparatus of institutions, important and valuable as all these things may be in given circumstances. It is fundamentally and primarily in the Christian quality of the individual lives of its members. There is

no other basis for Christian strength than in the excellence of our individual daily life, making holy the routine of our duties and of our obligations to ourselves, our families and our neighbors. It is doing this that gives to life its Christian perspective and unique value.

In the last decade one of the major means of United States foreign policy to combat the spread of communism has been to give economic and technical assistance to underdeveloped countries. We spend great sums of money each year in this way, but very few people stop to consider the magnitude of Ireland's contribution to the betterment of these very areas or to reflect that it has been going on for a much longer time. Last year almost one thousand Irish missionaries, priests, nuns and brothers went to the mission fields of Africa and Asia. They are teachers, doctors, and nurses to staff schools, hospitals, training centers of many kinds in these primitive areas, in which at present 15,000 other Irish missionaries are working. Try to imagine the total value of the work involved in



**all this. It goes on every minute of the day, year in, year out,**

**and -- please note this -- is always expanding. It cannot be**

**measured in terms of money because only dedicated men and women can**

**possibly perform it. We could estimate, however, that the cost of**

**maintaining the same number of lay men and women in the same areas**

**would run, I am sure, to not less than 10 million dollars a year.**

**Yet these Irish missions are maintained by a country of 3 million**

**people with a per capita income one fifth that of the United**

**States. I mention this single example of Irish international**

**activity because so few of us think about it, and because it**

**is so characteristic of the great-heartedness of the Irish people.**

**The peoples of Nigeria, of Ghana, of Korea and China, of India**

**and Ceylon know of the benign Irish presence in their midst**

**with affection and gratitude.**

**It seems to me that in our preoccupation with our own**

**problems here we may have permitted our relations with Ireland,**

**that great motherland of the Christian millions, to have become**

remote and nebulous. If that is the case, it is a calamity that it should continue for we can only impoverish ourselves thereby. Few of us can define what it is that determines the appeal of Ireland for us, many of whom are now three and four and more generations away from it. We do know that even the mention of the name Ireland causes an excitement in our hearts and though we do not succeed in giving expression to the emotion, we are in some way conscious of a mystic bond uniting us by reason of a common origin and joining us to a common destiny with that island of our forebears. If we cast our minds back over a century, we may well be startled by the analogies that appear. I have indicated the success of the Irish in helping to build up in this country a new society attuned to the Christian ethic, a society that even today constantly is striving toward a truer harmony and a surer orientation. But also remember that the brothers and sisters of our forebears, who remained behind in Ireland, were

faced with problems much the same in character but considerably greater in intensity. A little over a hundred years ago the Irish people were emerging from the ordeal of their experience in the eighteenth century. They stood prostrated by famine, yet they were not daunted to start on that arduous road to build up for themselves a society after their own wishing. You know very well the milestones that mark their path of struggle -- first the winning of religious and civil freedom, then the gaining of the rights of property and ownership of the land, the struggle for an educational system, the founding of the great literary and cultural movements, and finally, as a result of the never ending political struggle in 1921 they succeeded against seemingly impossible odds in regaining control of their own destiny in 26 of the 32 counties of Ireland. That triumph still lacks completeness for the partitioning of Ireland, by which Britain retains control of 6 of the 9 counties of the ancient province of Ulster, still continues.

Since the time of St. Patrick - more than fifteen hundred

years ago -- the nationhood of all Ireland has been an accepted fact and has been recognized as a fact by Europe and later by the New World.

It could not have been otherwise, for the marks of Ireland's nationhood are incontestable -- a geographic unit, a national language, a separate culture and code of laws, a homogeneous people, a distinctive national tradition. Her churches and religious bodies -- Catholic, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, the Religious Society of Friends, the Jewish Congregations, and other denominations -- are now, as in the past organized on a national all-Ireland basis. Her learned bodies, her major universities, her sports organizations are, and have been, nationwide. The people in all parts of the country are, and speak of themselves, as Irish.

A little over a year ago I was in Ireland and on my return to this country I made a statement to the press, which many of you may have read. I shall recall part of it for you.

". . . After my visit to Ireland -- and I visited both parts of that divided country -- I am more than ever convinced that the

country ought to be united."

"I believe that would be in the best interests of all the people of the island, without distinction of politics or religion."

"Unity can only be achieved by peaceful means. The Irish Government and the opposition there, recognize that. Friends of Ireland in this country -- and there are quite a few of them -- ought to cooperate along those lines."

"One way we can help is to make known America's interest in Irish unity. That is the object of the Resolution which I have sponsored in the House. This Resolution, H. Res. 27, simply provides for a declaration of the House of Representatives that the people of all Ireland should have the right to determine the form of government under which they desire to live. It follows the basic philosophy and the statement of principle which is the bedrock of our nation's foreign policy when applied to every other country throughout the world. The United States government pleads for a united Germany, a united Korea and a united Indonesia. My resolution calls for consistency in our foreign policy by urging a united Ireland."

When the opportune time presents itself I shall take all the steps necessary to reactivating my House Resolution Number 27. In the meantime I shall continue to avail myself of every opportunity to focus attention on this great international scandal. I urge you too by means of statements and resolutions to continue to press for action by public men and organizations for the remedy of this injustice to the dear country of our forefathers.

The past 35 years have been witness to the measure of success which has attended the efforts of the Irish people to build up a modern state that will be capable of sustaining the manner of life which they wish to lead. Many of you who have visited Ireland in the last 10 years will have seen the fundamental changes that have taken place in the economic, social and cultural pattern of Irish life. The progress made has been significant and when one thinks of it in relation to

the available resources of the country, impressive. But it is not enough for economic stability and advancement, and leaves unremedied the great problem of emigration, which for the last few years has been on a menacing scale. What is happening in Ireland is happening also in every country in Europe and we have it here in our own country as well. The surplus rural population has to leave the land to find a livelihood elsewhere. In countries like our own, because of an expanding industrial economy, this population is absorbed by the urban cities and towns. In Ireland, industrialization for historical reasons started only in the last 30 years. It has not been at a sufficiently fast rate and is providing only a third of the additional jobs which each year are needed to absorb the natural increase in population. That in a nutshell is the Irish economic problem. Will it be solved? From what I know of Ireland and the many people I have spoken to there, the answer is assuredly in the affirmative. There are a number of simple ways in which we can all help, without strain to ourselves and with decisive benefit to Ireland.

1. Take a vacation trip to Ireland. If you are going to Lourdes or elsewhere in Europe, plan a few days in Ireland. Now you can even fly across the Atlantic on Irish Air Lines.
2. The menu for your St. Patrick's Day dinner might well consist of actual Irish foodstuffs. A friendly gift of a piece of Waterford glass or perhaps Irish whiskey can be of benefit to Ireland.
3. Some of you might even be interested in making an investment in Irish industry or developing an Irish gift shop in your own community.

These are a few practical things which you can do as individuals, while your order continues its steadfast support for complete Irish Unity and Freedom.

We can take this active interest in the welfare of Ireland because it is of such primary consequence to our country



that she should flourish. It is an interest that can commend itself to any clear-thinking American. For the members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians it is reinforced by many associations of lineage and tradition. Let us quietly resolve here and now to take some practical steps such as I have suggested. They are simple means within the capacity of us all to perform. In giving effect to them we can well use as our motto the words written by the great Franciscan Michael O'Gleary on the dedication page of the "Annals of the Four Masters" just over 300 years ago.

Do chum Gloire De agus Onora na h-Eireann

To the Glory of God and the honor of Ireland

We can well take this motto to ourselves and adapt it as our own so that all our actions may be for the Glory of God - to the benefit of Ireland - and the honor of America.