

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE JOHN E. FOGARTY, REPRESENTATIVE,  
SECOND CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND, TO THE  
MEMBERS OF THETA CHAPTER OF DELTA EPSILON SIGMA, NATIONAL  
CATHOLIC SCHOLASTIC HONOR SOCIETY, AT PROVIDENCE COLLEGE,  
APRIL 2, 1962

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Reverend Fathers, laymembers of the faculty,  
members of Theta Chapter of Delta Epsilon Sigma,  
friends and guests of Providence College.

Your invitation to speak here this evening  
and the citation which you have so generously  
given to me are both distinctions which I wish to  
acknowledge with sincere gratitude. And I would  
like to take this opportunity to congratulate  
those students of Providence College who have  
won the right to be chosen members of this society,  
which is dedicated to the promotion and recognition  
of scholastic excellence. As you are leaders in  
your college work, I am sure that you will help  
to fill the increasing need for leadership and men  
of ability in the complex world in which you will  
pursue your future careers.

It has been well said that "Mountains culminate  
in peaks, but nations culminate in men." Without  
those who combine talent and hard work in order to



reach their goals, no great nation could keep its position in the world for very long. This has always been true, but it is even more so in these days of rapid change and recurrent crisis. Shortly before his death, Pope Pius XI said to a friend: "The crisis we are experiencing is unique in history. It is no longer permitted to anyone to be mediocre." Certainly these wise words of a great and holy man should be taken to heart by everyone who is concerned with the future of freedom and the preservation of peace. Everyone in America has a special obligation to try to make the most of his abilities so that the whole country can raise the standards of its performance in the competition with Communism.

We all can admire the spirit, the discipline, and the wonderful talents of men like our astronauts. But it is not enough for a few outstanding Americans to set their eyes on the goals of space travel. A landing on the moon, important as that is, cannot solve the question of the future destiny of freedom.

x The poet Browning says: "The reach should be greater than the grasp or what is heaven for".

Too often the  
desire to excel  
competition has  
been taken out  
of the classroom  
Result a dead  
level of achievement  
A confusion  
of mediocrity  
with democracy  
A mis-  
understanding  
of "equality"



I seem to recall that after Columbus discovered America, the world had most of its old problems still unsolved. The historians present might wish to correct me on this point, but I think that they would probably agree that experience tends to prove that great explorations and revolutionary technical advances raise quite as many problems as they solve. Progress always has its price, and its price is getting higher all the time.

We in America have always believed, however, that the price of progress is well worth paying. And I am not just talking about dollars and cents. My long association with federal support for medical research has, of course, made me well aware of the fact that we cannot push forward the frontiers of knowledge in any area without large expenditures of money. I have, on a few occasions, wished that this simple fact could be more widely appreciated. But even more important is the need for widespread popular understanding of how vital it is for our country to press forward in every area of national

*with a proper careful  
use of it in terms  
of the common good.*



life. Scientific progress should be marked by an accompanying advance in the social, economic, and cultural fields.

This progress cannot be made on the basis of false or out-moded standards of judgment. Back in the middle ages it was, for example, believed that a man had a right to certain positions of power and privilege simply because he had been fortunate enough to be born in a family which had held a role of leadership for countless generations. The mere accident of birth generally determined the individual's opportunities in life. This false notion was rejected by our Founding Fathers and the principles of equal opportunity set forth by Jefferson were adopted as the American ideal. Yet, Abraham Lincoln in 1859 found it necessary to write the following words:

"The principles of Jefferson are the principles and axioms of free society. And yet they are denied and evaded with no small show of success. One



dashingly calls them ' glittering generalities '....

And others insidiously argue that they apply to

' superior races. ' These expressions..... are

identical in object and effect-- the supplanting

the principles of free government, and restoring

those of classification, caste, and legitimacy....

We must repulse them, or they will subjugate us. "

Lincoln had in mind the evil of slavery. That issue was settled by the Civil War, and I believe that we are now making good progress in making full civil rights a reality as well as an ideal for all Americans. Yet, the evil of group prejudices has by no means disappeared. In some areas it has, in fact, been increased as a direct result of the struggle for full civil rights. And although the election of President Kennedy showed that religious intolerance does not have the power which it once wielded, we are

True in politics than in government. I was told by Pres. Gargi There is a national organization that has one of its objectives "the preventing of Catholics from holding administrative positions in Public Education."



still a long way from being free from every form of bigotry. Far too many Americans still judge a man's worth by the color of his skin or by his religious preferences.

It is not, however, with these very obvious kinds of group prejudices that I am concerned in speaking to you this evening about the way that false or out-molded standards of judgment can harm the forward movement of our country today. Instead, I would like to spend a few minutes to discuss with you the discriminatory test of ancestry which has come to be applied to candidates for positions of public responsibility, not only here in Rhode Island but in other large metropolitan areas as well.

Commenting on the Republican ticket in last year's New York City elections, the Times had this to say:

"Once again it is crystal clear that religious and 'national' ticket-balancing played a major part in determining the selections. We are sick and tired,



and we believe the voters in this city are sick and tired, of party leaders paying as much attention to religious or ethnic background as to ability, and often more."

To me you need both

In our representative form of Gov't does not this become necessary.

I believe that there are a great many people who share these feelings. The truth is that what the Times referred to as "national" ticket-balancing should become a thing of the past, because the conditions which originally caused it have largely ceased to exist.

Have they ceased to exist?  
You say No on page 16

The story of the United States, up until very recent times, was one of a series of waves of immigration. Here in Rhode Island the first settlers were mostly from the British Isles. Later, especially in the years between 1837 and 1857, most of the immigrants came from Ireland, and they played their part in building the Blackstone Canal and the railroads. Soon they also found a place in the local textile industry, where they were joined by many French Canadians.

Late in the last century, our state witnessed a rising tide of immigration from many parts of



Europe, but in the years between 1890 and 1920 the greatest number came from Italy.

Each new wave of immigrants always experienced some discrimination. All were looked down upon by those who thought of themselves as the "original Americans" -- a title which really belonged to the Indians. It is not hard for anyone to see how group-thinking and group-feeling grew up here. Housing was generally segregated along national lines, so that one section would be called an Irish neighborhood, while another was supposed to belong to the French, the Italians, or the Portugese. The so-called old "Yankee" families had little or no social contact with other groups. Until 1928, when Rhode Island's property restriction on the right to vote was repealed, most of the political power in this state was in the hands of the descendants of the earlier English settlers. They controlled much of the economic and professional life as well.

*We are exercising group pressure on groups in order to spread Democracy*

*Yes and they did not relinquish power until a group or groups forced them to.*



All this, however, is largely history. I am sure that many who may be in this audience tonight are grandsons, or possible the great-grandsons, of people who, because of their own experience of immigration, still naturally thought of themselves as representative of some distinct national group. But I am quite certain that no one in this room gives much thought to such group differences as once so clearly divided the immigrants from one another and from the descendants to the earliest settlers. The process of assimilation has created a country which is on its way to achieving a deeper fundamental unity of all groups.

The average American voter of today reflects this process of assimilation. Educated in our free society, he is not inclined to think of himself as a member of a special ethnic group. There are, unfortunately, those who suffer discrimination because of race or color. They are most certainly justified in their group efforts to win their due rights. But the descendants of the

Yes unity  
 But not  
 uniformity.  
 I have always  
 disliked  
 the "melting  
 pot" with  
 loss of  
 identity.  
 I prefer  
 the "tapestry"  
 analogy.  
 with strength  
 in variety of  
 light shades  
 colors of race, creed  
 and color.

Yes but  
 still not  
 loss of  
 identity.  
 Democracy  
 founded  
 not on  
 sameness  
 but variety.



vast majority of the immigrants to America no longer need or desire special forms of ethnic representation in government.

*I don't go along with you!*

Consequently, it is true to say that a political ticket that is "balanced" in terms of ethnic differences is as out of date as the horse-drawn fire engines that once rumbled over the cobblestones of our cities.

*No sole basis of choice as long as qualifications are present.*

In the past in Rhode Island, as elsewhere, immigrant groups gained equality of opportunity for their children by using the power of their numbers to gain group representation. Political leaders recognized that this was necessary. Out of the various ethnic groups in Rhode Island there have come many distinguished men who, by their own accomplishments, helped their groups to gain their rightful place in the life of the community. Public service was an important path by means of which each wave of immigrants achieved their goals. It can be said that ethnic group activity in politics has done its work so well that it has now become unnecessary.

*Very important  
The individual  
then has an  
added  
responsibility  
representing  
the group*

*There are groups still  
without recognition.*



A group-bound mind is, in fact, a real handicap to a man who seeks to understand today's changing times. For over a hundred years, America was in many ways dependent upon Britain and Western Europe, not only for manpower but for ideas. Many who came here for a new life still depended upon their European cultural heritage. This is no longer true, for America now is not only more politically advanced than any other country of comparable size, but it is also recongized as the defender of Western civilization. Free men look to a united America as the leader in the struggle against Communism. In that role which history has assigned us to play, we can simply not afford to allow ourselves to be divided into competitive ethnic groups, whose very reason for being belongs to the past.

James Madison spoke prophetically when he said, "Our country, if it does justice to itself, will be the workshop of liberty to the civilized world, and do more than any other for the uncivilized." Madison's words, projected into the twentieth century, have a most

*I don't think this hurts.*

*A main tenet of Communism is "the classless society" — no groupism.*



appropriate application. We stand before the world as the standard of what men can hope to achieve together under democratic government. New nations in Africa and Asia may well see in our federal republic the answer to their own problems of unity in diversity.

*A groupism*

Standing in the spotlight of free world leadership, and teaching the doctrine of equality of opportunity for all, we cannot afford to permit ourselves to be swayed by ethnic considerations in choosing men for positions of public responsibility. Equality of opportunity for public service demands that our political parties, our voters, and those who have the authority to appoint office-holders should not be swayed by group prejudices and group pressures. The test of fitness for public service in a democracy is the merit and proven ability of the individual candidate. To pose the test of membership in some ethnic group is, in effect, to deny the individual his right as a citizen to be considered on his own merits.



In an age when organizational and group activities are as important as they are today, a democracy needs to remind itself of the importance of the individual and of his rights to opportunity for personal advancement as an individual. We in America have always believed that a man should be able to rise by his own efforts to a position of leadership in our society. This is still our faith. As Dr. Henry M. Wriston put it: "Democracy is the political aspect of the assertion of the supreme importance of the individual....Once the individual is put at the center, the acceptance of tyranny...and the readiness to exploit the poor and ignorant have been made impossible." In a democracy, each man has the right to be judged on his individual character and ability without regard to the question of who his ancestors may have been.

We are fast approaching the time when the great majority will recognize this truth. In another generation, the old group feelings of the great era of immigration will have largely disappeared. This

Yes true enough  
I often tell  
a story of a  
father and son  
working at a  
jig-saw puzzle.  
Having difficulty  
father left and  
when he returned  
son had assembled  
the puzzle - a  
map of the world.  
Father  
asked son how  
he managed - on  
reverse side  
was a picture  
of a man  
When  
the man took  
the world together  
care of itself!



does not mean, of course, that cultural societies dedicated to preserving the special contributions which the various national groups have brought to America should disappear. It would be a great misfortune if this should happen. Our country is a far richer place to live in because of the music, the literature, the customs, the art, and the ideals which have been brought here from many parts of the world.

Individual Americans have every right to be interested in the cultural heritage which their forefathers brought to this country. Those organizations which are dedicated to preserving the memory of the early colonists and the many places of historical interest such as we have here in Rhode Island are performing a valuable service. Equally important are the fraternal and social clubs that concern themselves with the special traditional interests and activities of the many ethnic groups that have made their historic contribution to the progress of this nation.

*This to  
me is  
Democracy  
"E pluribus  
unum"*



No country that lacks knowledge and respect for its past can possibly understand the path it must take into the future. A nation without a sense of history is like a man with the disease called amnesia: he cannot tell where he is going because he does not know where he has been. The loss of memory means the loss of personal identity. Consequently, a nation whose people are not mindful of their history is a nation that really does not know what it is or what it should stand for in the world.

But a nation cannot live on memories. We cannot expect our ancestors to solve our problems for us. In choosing those who are to frame public policies for our own times, the question of who their grandfathers were is, therefore, not relevant as a contemporary issue.

The audience gathered here tonight undoubtedly contains a large proportion of young men who have real potentialities for public leadership. I feel confident that they will not wish to be judged as

I agree  
but  
even with  
Kennedy  
it helped.  
John -  
you and  
I could  
have used  
the same  
kind!



but I think an individual loses something if he thinks he can break that ~~tie~~. Let his Americanism subliminate but not replace.

Good

candidates of an ethnic group. As members of a national scholastic honor society they already belong to what is an All-American team. In professional or public life they will want to keep it that way.

And those of us in public life today who believe, as I do, that no candidate should be either chosen or rejected on the basis of his ancestry are looking to the educated youth of America for help. I do not believe in sitting around and waiting for history to take care of the problem. I believe that we can do something about it right now. We can speak up and say that so-called "national" ticket-balancing does not truly represent the kind of community we want for ourselves and our children. We can and should object when appointments to public office are clearly made on the basis of ethnic pressures from well-established groups. And at the same time we can lend our support to the effort to bring full equality of opportunity to those groups in our society that are still the clear victims of discrimination.

I would not go so far

nothing wrong if the individuals are qualified

Condemning and approving groupism



It is vital for us to do so, for social mobility, -- or the opportunity to advance on the basis of personal accomplishment -- is the life-blood of our free society. As Woodrow Wilson said, real democracy "releases the energies of every human being." When those energies are misdirected or blocked by ethnic group classification, the strength of the whole nation is diminished.

This has always been recognized in one way or another by our greatest national leaders. They have likewise understood that what George Washington called "inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachment for others" should, as he said, "be excluded" from American life. In his speech of retirement from public life in 1796, Washington reminded his fellow-countrymen of this basic truth: "citizens by birth or choice, or a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of American, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations.....



You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together; the Independence and Liberty you possess are the work of joint councils, and joint efforts, of common dangers, sufferings and successes."

I believe that today, even more than in Washington's time, this great and richly complex nation needs to "concentrate" its "affections" in the name of American. Our common cause and our common danger as the leaders of free men in the nuclear age are considerations which must make us speed up the process by which ethnic group competition in public life will disappear and become entirely a thing of the past.

*I like your talk but I think you beat down too hard on the group. Perhaps I am disturbed by a prevalent thinking in the man of education that narrow minded. In other words I think the individual man just does not exist independent of ethnic influence and strong ties. Let him prove himself but not deny his heritage.*