

THE OMAHA GUIDE

EDITORIALS

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

To the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands—one nation, Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for All.

FLAG DAY REMARKS

Address by Atty. Robert J. Webb Past Commander of Omaha Post No. 1 American Legion. Given on June 11, 1939 at Hanscom Park on Elks Flag Day Services.

We are assembled today to show our respect and reverence for our beloved stars and stripes, the flag of our country. Of course it is not the texture of the material contained in our flag or the novelty or artistry of its design that brings us together in this observance of Flag Day, but the principles, ideals and traditions of which our flag is symbolic. The flag, sometimes affectionately referred to as "Old Glory," symbolizes our national constitution, the law and order which our constitution guarantees, and justice and individual rights. Truly the flag represents all that good citizenship means. To me it is a privilege to be a participant in this program and I am sure each and everyone of this audience likewise consider it a privilege as an American citizen to so participate.

It is altogether fitting and appropriate that this program should be under the sponsorship of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. The Elks is a thorough American organization. It was founded in the United States. It is definitely a patriotic order and its fundamental teachings are equality of mankind, tolerance, charity and love of ones fellowmen. In fact its principles closely parallel those of our country, and its membership is a true cross section of the citizenry of this country. Wherever the stars and stripes fly you will find organized Elksdom, and no where else.

If there was ever a time when we as citizens of this country should give serious thought to the principles of Americanism that time is right now. No words of mine are required to acquaint you with the present situation. Screaming headlines in the daily papers and the voice of the radio are constantly bringing to your attention events and conditions which we cannot afford to ignore. Well do we know that the continents of Europe and Asia and practically all of the world except our Western Hemisphere, is a seething caldron of hate and intolerance, and only by a strict adherence to the principles of Americanism and the preservation of the heritage from our forefathers can we avoid being drawn into a conflict which seems inevitable, or sharing in the consequences of it. It is exercises like these in which we are taking part that can bring us to a true realization of the value of our form of government and its principles, ideals and tradition.

The greatest danger, it seems to me lies in the fact that we are prone to take our priceless heritage, and the rights and privileges which we enjoy, too lightly and too much for granted. The world for some time has been rapidly dividing into two schools of thought as to forms of government. On the one hand we see the so-called totalitarian state, whether its basis be Fascism, Nazism or Communism, under which form of government the individual exists only for the state; and on the other hand our own form of government, under which the state exists only for the well being of the individual members composing the state, and to insure to them their God-given rights and privileges. The tota-

litarian state is maintained by the control of press and assemblage, thereby restraining free expression of thought and by the molding of youth according to the pattern desired.

Anything that stands in the way, religion, family life, fraternal or other organizations with philosophic principles of their own is brushed aside and suppressed. Just the opposite was true in the beginnings of our beloved country. Religion, the family, and social and fraternal contacts with our neighbors are the very cornerstones of our nation. In using the term religion I do not mean any particular creed or denomination, but rather a belief in a Supreme Being, a Divine Master who guides us in our daily lives and deliberations. Our forefathers were God fearing men. Of that there can be no question. The deliberations out of which grew these United States were held in a deeply religious atmosphere. Too often this is lost sight of in these latter years, and a great deal of loose talk and assertions are heard which might lead one to believe that exactly the contrary was true.

Too often we forget the Declaration of Independence, and if we have not forgotten that such an instrument existed, we are rather hazy as to its contents. Some quotations from that document might be helpful in acquainting us with the atmosphere in which the birth of this nation took place. That Declaration, promulgated long before we had a constitution contains this truism: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with a certain inalienable rights; that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Is there any doubt as to the philosophy of life of the architects of our form of government.

Many of you have doubtless seen an inscription carved in the stone on our Capitol Bldg., at Lincoln, as follows: "The salvation of the States lies in the watchfulness of its citizens." In that sentence there is contained, it seems to me, a great deal of food for thought at the present time. All of us are aware that for some time, and at this moment, a campaign is being carried on by various organizations sewing the needs of dissatisfaction, intolerance and hate in our own and other countries of the new world, with the hope that by such implantation this country also may be turned from its present form of government. It is perhaps a paradox that in order to preserve our form of government we must permit, under the principles of freedom of expression, assemblage, etc., this insidious propaganda to continue, which would not for a moment be tolerated in the very quarters from which it has its source. The only effectual way in which we can combat and overcome these sinister forces which seek to destroy our form of government and deprive us of our precious liberties, is to constantly inculcate in our citizens, and especially in our youth, by every possible means, a reverence for the principles, ideals and traditions of our government. We pause in our daily life on occasions such as this and seriously review the events which led to the founding our our beloved country and brought it to its present greatness. We must reflect upon the hardships, the toil and the sacrifices of our forefathers, as soldiers, statesmen, and pioneers, and builders, that they might transmit to us the blessings which we now enjoy.

Our strength lies in the intelligence of the mass of our people. When the mass-mind is infantile and unreasoning it is ripe for the demagogue and self-seeker. It is therefore of paramount importance that all good citizens and all patriotic organizations in this country stress on all possible oc-

casions the study of Americanism. We must realize that the teachers of our schools today make up the front line of our nation's peace time defense; that our schools must go forward; that our youth must be given an opportunity of educating themselves, and that the keynote of that education must be Americanism.

Let us just briefly review and contrast what each of the two general opposing forms of government have to offer their citizens. Under our system there can be no law restricting the establishment of any particular religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. There can be no abridgment of freedom of speech, of the press, or of the right of assemblage. In all of the totalitarian states, however freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the press and the right of assembly have been suspended. In one of these countries the government controls the church, dictates its policy and doctrines, and harasses and persecutes those who worship God according to some other creed which their conscience dictates; and at least one other of these countries aims at the destruction of all forms of religion, is intolerant of the worship of the Supreme Being in any form; in fact actually teaches hatred of God. In our country the right of the people to be secure in their persons, papers and effects against searches and seizures is constitutionally guaranteed. In the totalitarian states organizations of secret police can make arrests, raid private homes, or seize private property, without warrants or other legal documents. In American no persons can be held to answer for capital or other infamous crime except on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury. And in all criminal prosecutions the accused enjoys the right to a speedy and public trial by an impartial jury, and no person be twice put in jeopardy of life and limb for the same offense. We provide that excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines be imposed, nor cruel nor unusual punishments inflicted. In dictator countries the secret police can hold persons without trial or public hearings as long as they please. Trial by jury is not guaranteed. Many trials are held secretly and the judge does not consider the rights of the individual, but the will of the doctor. Ruthlessness is considered a powerful weapon in the hands of government agencies and is approved under the totalitarian form of government. With us, the right of citizens to vote may not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude. Everyone is equal before the law. In some countries ruled by dictators, persons of certain classes, races or creeds do not enjoy the same rights as others. (If actually it can be said there are really any rights for anyone.) Elections in those countries are mere formalities. Everyone votes as directed. It is dangerous to life and property to dissent.

Let us just briefly carry on this contrast from an economic standpoint. America is the most powerful nation on earth; has an industrial system that revolutionized world trade; mass production that made possible the highest standard of living in the world; national resources that make other countries look poor; inventive genius that has ushered in most of the miracles of the ages in which we live; the electric light, the electric motor, the internal combustion engine, automobiles, movies, airplanes, radio, telegraph, telephone and countless other amazing inventions. We contain only 6% of the world's area and 7% of its population, yet consume normally about 50% or more of the world's coffee, tin, rubber, pig iron and copper; about 75 per cent

of its silk and crude petroleum; about one fourth of its sugar and over one third of its coal. We operate 60 per cent of the world's telegraph facilities. We have one telephone for every seven persons, compared to one for every 18 in the country which most nearly approaches us. We own 80 per cent of all the motor cars in use in the world. If our people and those of other countries had to pack up and move by automobile tomorrow, in the country which most nearly approaches us, one would ride and ten would walk. In another country one would ride and 20 would walk, and still another, one would ride and 150 would walk. All would ride in America. We possess approximately one half of the world's gold supply. America has two thirds of all civilization's banking resources. The purchasing power of our people is greater than that of the 500 million people in Europe and much larger than that of one billion Asiatics. In 1938 we consumed 260 billion pounds of food, an average of one ton a person. No other country's people were fed in like manner? We have in America in abundance almost everything that anyone anywhere wants; liberty, opportunity, wealth and security. We have the best government in the world. Every citizen in America has the privilege to kick, squawk, complain and protest about everything he doesn't like. He can criticize the government and government officials wherever — whenever he feels the urge, and as many times as he feels the urge. He can give effect to his remonstrances by voting at the polls as he wants to. Where is there another government which gives its citizens such leeway?

One could continue for hours to enumerate the advantages of our citizens over the people in other countries. Yet there are those in this country, many of them, who have never stopped to count their blessings as American citizens. These things are taken for granted. Never is a thought given as to how it happened that they are enjoying these blessings, and worst of all, many give no thought to the preservation of these blessings. Let us place our faith in this. Each succeeding generation has carried on, has been true to the trust imposed upon it, and through fidelity to the ideals of our fathers this republic has survived. Down through the years of this country's existence the offspring of the founding fathers, in war and in peace, have been true to the principles, ideals and traditions of our government, and have steadfastly followed the trails blazed for them. And just so long as this succession continues, the safety and preservation of our beloved country is assured, but if the day ever comes that a generation is unwilling to defend and preserve with all of its energy and to its last breath, this country and heritage of ours, that day our forefathers will have toiled, suffered and died in vain.

HISTORY IN THE MAKING

For the first time in the history of Elksdom in America, the Officers of Omaha Lodge Number 39 BPOE Elks in person extended an invitation to the IBPOE of W. Lodge Number 92, to join them at 27th and Leavenworth Sts., in a parade from there to Hanscom Park to commemorate Flag Day Services.

Hats off and in hand to Omaha Lodge Number 39 BOPE. Elks for showing their spirit of tolerance in this commemorated services for a new day and a more fully cooperation in the great principles for which these two of America's own lodges stand for.