

(Address of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (Minnesota) at the 60th Anniversary Birthday Banquet in honor of William Parker Kennedy, President, Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen, held at Hotel Hollenden, Cleveland, Ohio, Saturday, April 5, 1952.)

Thank you very much, Toastmaster Steve Lush, for those fine remarks. May I say in some of it you are just a little overexuberant, but this is gratifying - particularly when it comes from a friend from Minnesota.

Dear friend and wonderful citizen of our State of Minnesota - William Parker Kennedy - and your very fine family, Mrs. Kennedy, your sons, daughter and grandchildren; Mrs. Mary Gorman, Grand President of the Ladies Auxiliary of one of the greatest labor organizations that America has ever known - the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen; Grand Lodge officers and members, and friends: I will let you in on a secret. I came to this meeting tonight with one of the best speeches that I ever hoped to write. Now I am going to give it to my dear friend, Parker Kennedy, and I am going to tell him to read it some time next week. I have had such a fine time here already and am so filled with the spirit of the occasion that, if I should need a manuscript to address you, then I ought to retire from the United States Senate.

I like nothing better than the friendly association which comes from gatherings such as this one. I am grateful for the privilege of addressing the friends of William Parker Kennedy, a great American. The story of William Parker Kennedy is a story which is symbolic of America. It is the story of a person who had humble beginnings, but was able to overcome obstacles. Parker started out as a news butcher on a train. Then he became a brakeman. He worked right up through the ranks of your splendid organization until today he is your International President. Not only is he your President. He is a foremost leader in America's civic life today.

It would be superfluous for me to go through the biographical background of my neighbor from Minnesota, your wonderful President. The very day that I heard that he was selected as your President, I was up on my feet in the Senate and told all 96 of them about the new President of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen.

Parker, I know that you realize that I am proud tonight to be able to extend to you my heartiest personal congratulations on your sixtieth birthday. Mrs. Humphrey would also like to extend her congratulations, and so would our four little Humphreys. They all extend their best wishes.

I listened to Congressman Kirwan of Ohio and marveled at how he knows the hearts of the people in this audience. I was interested to learn of the many years that he has been a member of your great organization. It is a tribute to democracy to have such men in the Congress of the United States - men who understand what it is to be a worker and know the dignity that comes with carrying a union card. This means a great deal for your welfare.

I am happy to be here tonight and I am happy to be associated with you. I am proud to proclaim the leaders and members of organized labor as my friends. I know this - I can honestly say that no laboring man has ever come to me and asked me to do anything that would have defiled my character or reputation. Never, I repeat, never has any laboring man asked me to do that. (Applause)

Whenever I have an opportunity to appear before great organizations of working people, their representatives and the members of their auxiliaries I take great and justifiable pride in paying tribute to them. We know the history

of your own organization. You know it far better than I do. But before I came here I "boned" up on its background. You are in the 69th year of your activity. You had a most humble beginning in a secret meeting of brakemen that was held in a caboose. The story of your union began with eight free men, back in 1883, who had to meet secretly. Today, because of your courage and faith, including your Auxiliary, you are almost 300,000 of America's finest patriotic citizens and you belong to one of the greatest organizations of our time. That is development; that is progress; that is the story of our ever-expanding democracy.

What I see before me is the result of free will, a voluntary association of people who wanted to lift themselves up from the degraded conditions of labor almost a century ago. Tonight I see you well dressed, well fed, well educated, and participating here as citizens. This did not come about by legislative fiat. This came about through the free and voluntary association of citizens for their own good and for the good of their communities. This spells democracy in the eyes of the peoples of the world. What could be more noble! What could be more American!

But something has gone wrong with America. We have lost some of our sense of values. We are being misled by suspicion and distrust of other peoples' motives. Some of us are forgetting about doing honest labor and conscientious service and are trying to cut corners and pick up fast money. And some are charging those who associate for the purpose of the betterment of all with alien doctrines. We must stand ever ready to defy these perversions of the American spirit. We must remain true to our democratic traditions. We must never forget what democracy means, for democracy is far more than a political creed. Democracy is a spirit of faith, of faith in God, in ourselves, and in mankind. Its pillars are the pillars of this faith.

The first of these pillars is the dignity of the individual. As I listened to the invocation by the member of the clergy, I could not help thinking: "Why does man have personal dignity?" and "Why is it that tyranny in any of its forms is an attack on God himself?" It is because we are created in the image of Our Father. We have His spirit in our hearts and because of His spirit we have a sense of personal dignity. Sometimes we may not act so dignified, but no person and no action can deprive us of this divine gift. We must never forget this.

The second pillar of democracy is freedom of conscience -- the right to worship God of our choice, the right to associate freely, the right to speak freely, the right to have a Trainman News to tell the stories which need to be told in behalf of those who toil. That right remains in very few areas of the world today. There are far too many countries in which human minds have become enslaved, in which God himself has been denied. We must restore this dignity and the freedom of conscience that goes with it, because without them men are only half-alive. That is the reason we stand at the helm of the free world.

What is the third pillar? It is the principle which this great organization symbolizes, the principle of brotherhood. Isn't it significant that at the time your organization was founded the term "brotherhood" was used? Brotherhood means something. It has a spiritual meaning, a social meaning, a moral meaning, and a political meaning. Brotherhood is as much a part of the American tradition as Bunker Hill and Valley Forge. It breathes through the Declaration of Independence. The principle of human equality is part of this great conception. So is the idea of cooperation, of working together to improve the conditions of all.

These may sound like platitudes to cynics, to the people who have stopped believing in democracy. But to you fellow Americans who have come to understand what democracy means, who understand this spiritual and moral concept I want to re-emphasize them. They cannot be repeated too often. This organization was built on the belief in democracy. It was founded by free men who loved it and had the courage to carry out their will and their desire for human freedom.

This same spirit must motivate the one hundred and fifty million of our people. We have not yet reached the pinnacle of our success. Our democracy, our freedoms, our lives are still expanding. We are now just beginning to touch the frontiers of a freer, better life. We have come a long way. Some of you may remember when there were no free schools. Today we have public, parochial and other educational opportunities. There was a time when working men worked twelve hours a day and child labor was commonplace, but because of the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and other organizations, that was changed to eight hours a day under the Adamson Act, and the principle of overtime was established. There was a time when company police, scabs, and goon squads tried to keep labor from organizing to get decent wages and working conditions. But a generation ago the railroad workers were able to get a great statute - the Railway Labor Act - on the law books of this land. This was a pioneer venture. Then came the Wagner Act and the Norris-LaGuardia Act which opened the way for workers to join together freely. Today 15,000,000 Americans are proud of their union membership.

This all came about because the people said we ought to have it. Men working on the railroads, in the shops, in the factories, and the farmers tilling the soil all knew that if the government was to be their government, then the people had to speak and had to be heard; and their voices filled the air until every one in the high places saw the inevitable and carried out their wishes. This is the history of our country. Unfortunately in some of our schools this "history" is not taught. In too many of the schools of our country the noble history of trade unionism is not taught. Without this story the public becomes confused. I would have every member of a school board learn the story and then tell the children of America the true story of the development of labor organizations and free trade unions. Unless they do, they have not told the true history of the American way of life.

We have lived through some eventful days, have we not? My first vote was in the year 1933. I shall never forget that. There was a great voice and a great spirit that attracted me as a young man amid the poverty and hopelessness of depression. Parker, you went. I believe, out into North Dakota as a young man. Well, I was born in South Dakota where every bank in the state closed its doors. In 1929, bankers were jumping out of windows out our way. I remember the farm mortgage foreclosures and I thought then that maybe America had cracked up - maybe there was no hope. All at once in our hour of darkness, in the moment when it seemed we were without leadership, when we seemed destined for chaos, we heard a clear voice, a clear voice from a clean mind, appealing to the great traditions of America and to the strength of America and saying that "all we have to fear is fear itself". I think that you remember that with those words a new spirit gripped our people. Millions of Americans, rich and poor, workers and business men, school teachers and all others, millions of them realized that here was a chance for them to be a partner in one of the greatest experiences of civilization, the unfolding possibility of democratic action. We went to work and what did we do? The railroads began to re-hire. Goods began to be produced. Carloadings started to go up. Lands were reclaimed and forests replanted, and young men and women were finding opportunities in schools, in colleges and in factories. And the Civilian Conservation Corps did a job of rehabilitation among the lands and

the forest of America. And then something else happened: We began to think decently. Instead of worshipping the stock market, we began to understand that prosperity was in the tilling of the soil and in getting down to hard work. We began to understand that this was a joint affair with the aged, the sick, the blind, the little ones, the children, that all should have a break in life. We got to thinking in a realistic way to insure for the unhappy day, to be prepared for something to tide over difficult hours. We got laws like the Social Security Act and the Railroad Retirement Act. The prophets said that this was against the Constitution and that it would ruin private enterprise and wreck the country and destroy the whole political system. But what happened? The people of America kept right on building and creating and seeking more jobs. We became more prosperous than ever before. The people became conscious of their future. We quit thinking about the yesterdays, and worked for today and planned for the future.

We injected a tone of hope into the moral life. We regulated the stock market so as to make it a fair and legitimate practice. We opened up the possibilities for new electric energy and the reclamation of our natural resources. It was a great period, but all during this period there were the rumor-mongers and the hate-mongers. These are people who never have had any faith in democracy and they have no faith today. I do have that faith because I have seen it work in my time. There is not a single thing that can be put before us or a program or a purpose that we cannot do, if we dedicate our lives to it. We have been misunderstood, even by ourselves. There was a mad man that thought America was weak - he was Hitler. This great Nation struck a mighty blow for human freedom when we went through the great struggle in World War II and it was a privilege that seldom comes to a great people.

But the struggle for freedom and democracy still goes on. Now there is another threat: totalitarian communism. We need to realize what we are up against here; we need to be realistic. But that doesn't mean we have to go around with long faces. These may not be easy days, but I am saying to everyone here in this hall, young and old alike, that the hope today for a better day ahead is far greater than when Hitler rose on the scene, or Mussolini, or Tojo. America today is active and vibrating, with over sixty million people at work, goods pouring out as we have never known, and the strength and courage and ability to carry on to greater dimensions.

Let me add up what our job is, and what we have done on it so far. After World War II, after proving that we could win a war, we did what people who have been brought up in Christian faith do: we forgave and we opened up our hearts and we bound up the wounds and we fed the poor and hungry and we led the blind and we practiced Christian compassion. We did it as a people and as a government. Now there are those who have criticized this, who have said it was wrong to help the victims of the most terrible war in history. Is it wrong? If it is, then everything I have been taught is wrong. What a privilege for us! How terrible it would have been if our own cities had been pulverized, our own families in concentration camps, with the babes torn from their parents! But we were privileged. We didn't have to go through these things. God Almighty placed his blessing upon us.

Other peoples are today starving; we have bigger crops on our farms every year. Other peoples can find no work; we have been privileged to have more people at work every year since 1935. Other peoples have to crouch in cellars or makeshift dwellings because their homes were destroyed and have not been rebuilt; our homes are intact, and we are building more each year. Other

peoples' children can't go to school, because the buildings were destroyed and the teachers killed; every year since the end of the war we have had millions of people in our schools. Surely we have been blessed as no other people have. And from these blessings we have poured out over \$55,000,000,000 of our capital - American savings, goods and services.

This is what some people continue to complain about, rather than worry about the needs of others. But have you missed any meals? Have you gone hungry? Are you the victim of malnutrition? Have you been pushed out into the cold without medical treatment because you sent medical and other supplies to those who were in desperate need of them? No, and neither has anybody else. We have cast bread upon the water, and it is coming back a thousand fold. Rather than complain, we ought to get down on our knees and thank God that we have been able to do it and can continue to live in a democracy. (Applause)

This is our foreign policy -- to help other people to freedom and economic well-being. We have had the Marshall Plan, which has helped the European nations get back on their feet. This was not just a hand-out. Neither we nor the Europeans wanted that. So we went to them and said: You have been hurt badly and we want to help you. Let's get together and make a plan. Let's find out what is needed to rebuild your cities, to reopen your factories, and to raise the standard of living. That's what the Marshall Plan did. That was America speaking and acting. That was cooperation. That was brotherhood.

But the Marshall Plan was not enough. As Europe became sturdier richer, she became more tempting to Communist aggression. So we joined together with other free peoples to prevent exploitation by the brutal powers of tyranny bent on overcoming the world. Let no one say that we are indifferent to the forces of evil which have 225 Divisions, 14,000 planes and 300,000,000 enslaved -- as surely enslaved as slavery itself. We know that Communism is more than a military force. It is a totalitarian force that affects everything. Communism means total domination, my friends. There is no religious worship. There is no school but the school which serves the purpose of the State. There is no literature that is inspiring because it must serve the purposes of the bosses in the Politburo. There is no love of the arts as we know them, but arts must serve the purposes of those in power. But in our way of life, we have the love of a union and solidarity. We have the love of our schools for everybody. We have a love of music because it represents the souls of men -- it represents God's people. (Applause)

We have resolved to meet this menace. We have become the custodians of freedom and the leader of the free world. But we do not stand alone. We know that freedom and democracy matter all over the world. We have taken the principles of the Declaration of Independence -- principles as eternal as the Sermon on the Mount -- and signed a great "Declaration of Interdependence". We have joined with other free people in one of the greatest alliances ever known, the North Atlantic Pact: one alliance of people who believe in the same God, who believe in the same customs, the same institutions of free trade unions, in children, in the home, church and family. This alliance pledges each to help defend all the others. That is the kind of an alliance your government is in, an alliance of peace-loving peoples, and it ill deserves the criticism it has received.

Of course, we have made some mistakes. I want to see any one who hasn't made a mistake. We have made some bad judgments and placed some bad bets. Maybe we have wasted some American dollars. We have done that in the past

as individuals, and as a nation, but it didn't kill our free enterprise system. Let's not look at the one or two tin cans and forget to look at the grandeur of the avenue. We have observed within the last five years, one of the greatest organizations for the defense of freedom in history. It means your life, that is what it means to you.

America was not built by weakness just as our unions were not built by weakness and fear. We need courage and imagination for the preservation and extension of democracy. I challenge those who would define democracy by identifying it with a system of double entry bookkeeping. I have read the newspapers. I know the public debt is large and the taxes high. But I would remind you that when the public debt was small, it looked to the American people as high as a mountain crushing out their hopes and energies. Yes, today your government has collected from you and from me more taxes than the total national income of 1932-1933. Today, the American people still have \$210,000,000,000 in their pockets to ride the railroads, the airplanes and build houses.

Our vitality is our strength. Our dedication is our strength. We need all of our strength to meet totalitarian aggression.

We Americans know that our struggle will not be won by power in the naked sense. We are spending billions to re-arm for we must have a shield to protect ourselves while we do the work of peace. We cannot ignore the naked power of Communism. The government is taking billions of our dollars, not to waste but to protect us. Those billions go for men, guns, arms, and bombs which are not to be used but to stand there ready as our protection -- a mighty wall to stand as a shield to protect men who love life and are imbued with a sense of freedom so we can build better conditions for all. We are trying to have enough strength so that we don't have to use our strength. We are trying to have enough power so that we don't have to win the war with brute power. But armed might alone cannot assure peace. We must have more than military strength. We must strike at the cesspools of social infections. Communism grows where people have become lost and it grows where there is illiteracy and poverty and misery of the masses.

To some people winning a war means to shoot, but that is the last thing we hope that we will have to do. We don't want to shoot bullets. We want to shoot ideas -- the ideas of free trade unions, credit unions, farmers cooperatives, public health, and universal education and ideas of free elections like in India where 93,000,000 people walked to the polls to vote. Some of those Indians walked for days, through swamps and jungles, in order to vote in their first election. They want to be free and it is our duty to see to it that they have a chance for their own good and for the security of the world. Your government is helping - you are doing it. We are sending more than our dollars. We are sending our doctors, our trade unionists, our county agents and our civil engineers - hundreds and hundreds of soldiers of peace to win the war against disease, poverty, illiteracy, and thereby steal from under the feet of the Kremlin the political ferment in which their vicious philosophies find root. That is the purpose of the Point 4 Program. Our government and the free United Nations the world over are cooperating to stamp out starvation, disease and poverty.

This question of aid to other nations is a simple matter of self-preservation, too. You can either have your sons go down and don a uniform and march off to war to fill the ditches of the Far East and the Near East with their bodies and drench the soil with the blood of their hearts and their arteries, or you can send over a limited number of your dollars in a spirit of American

compassion and generosity so that these peoples may plant anew their fields and their forests and build schools and hospitals and have a chance to live. We must remember that there are a billion and a half people who have not as yet made up their minds where they are going to go and they can destroy us. But if they are with us and we are with them, there is no power on this earth that can stop the forward movement of social betterment and progress.

The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen symbolizes these fine ideals - the ideal of human dignity, the ideal of peace but peace with progress and human freedom. That is what people want and they want it desperately. We have the job of giving it to them. We did not ask for it, it just befell us. We have the overwhelming task and job of bringing out of this mighty land the leadership, the genius and the spirit that can guide this world to wholesome decent living. If we fail, the holocaust of war will destroy us.

Rather than weighing your bank account, you'd better balance your heart. Weigh that goodness that is within you and decide whether you are willing enough to share the spirit of compassion so that we may still have a heart and a land of the free and the brave. I think you will do that because you are the kind of people who know how important it is.

I thank you.



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