

000669

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John Kennedy

my mother
my sister Frances

Mrs J. (Muriel)
up Wise

M. K. Monroney
Dine McCarthy
colleagues on all

Testimonial Luncheon
Sheraton Carlton Hotel
12:30 P.M.
March 23, 1960

Wise
Indep. Businessman
Running
Against a
Chain Store!

Scrawl

Problems
a
opportunities
Liberation
possession

All of you, ~~I know~~, are busy people, and I am grateful
that you have spared the time to meet with me here.

I have, as you know, been more than somewhat preoccupied
myself. But I shall never be too busy, I hope, for
quiet moments of sober meditation - meditation on the
place of this beloved nation of ours in the world and
in history.

These are troubled ^{times} ~~thoughts~~ ~~my~~ friends! I see
distressing evidence that the confidence of other peoples
in our leadership - even that of our closest allies - is
ebbing. And I fear that this is because we lack confidence
in ourselves and in the future.

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It seems to me that we spoke out with more inner
certainty and a surer command of humanity's respect in
our early days as a nation - when a few million Americans
lived on the edge of a vast wilderness.

Some 134 years ago the people of this city were preparing
to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of
Independence. The elected mayor of Washington invited Thomas
Jefferson to be the city's guest of honor.

Note that I said the elected mayor. The people of
Washington then governed themselves, and I hope we shall soon
turn this particular clock back!

*(This is one clock
we should turn back)*

*Elected
Mayor*

Jefferson replied that he was so "worn down with age,
infirmary, and pain" that he was "scarcely able to walk from
one room to another." But his faith in the principles of 1776,

these principles
 his confidence that ~~they~~ they were valid not only for America but
 for the whole world, remained as bright as ever as he wrote
 these words - the last that were to come from his immortal pen:

"All eyes are opened, or are opening, to the rights of
 man. The general spread of science has already laid open to
 every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has
 not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few,
 booted and spurred ready to ride them ..."

*Here is
 the theme
 for
 today*

What a transformation it would work in America's position
 in the world today if its living leaders had a fraction of the
 faith and the eloquence of the dying Jefferson!

He spoke for change and progress - the very law of life.
 He knew that the one thing in history which does not, which
 cannot, endure is the status quo. !!

Now, after the dismal nightmare of McCarthyism, we
Americans, heirs to the most dynamic tradition in the
western world, seem to have fallen into a deep and all but
dreamless slumber.

Like King Canute, we seem to feel that the tides of history
will stop to suit our comfort and our status quo.

If we are unwilling to make history, others will write
it for us - and they will be, for our children and our
children's children, saddening pages to read.

Yet we have, as we have shown again and again, the capacity
for greatness. What we lack is the leadership to arouse us
and to rally our forces for the grave tests ahead.

The world, as you have rightly said, "cries out for bold
and imaginative American leadership."

The greatest challenge in American political life is to offer such leadership.

In all humility, I take it that you have thanked me today for trying to - and I can think of no more convincing way to show my gratitude than to keep on trying.

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