

CAUTION - ADVANCE

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ADDRESS

of

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*Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission*

at the

Dedication of the New Post Office Building  
Columbus Junction, Iowa

10:00 A.M., July 4, 1941

It is always good to be back in Iowa to see my old friends and the countryside that I know and love so well. Today, I am particularly pleased to be with you here in Columbus Junction at the dedication of your new post office building and to join with you also in this Independence Day ceremony.

First of all, I want to congratulate you on this fine new building that has been added to your community. Such congratulations are in order not only because another useful public edifice adorns your lovely hills, but also because better business brought the increase in your post office receipts that justified the expenditure of Federal funds to construct this new home for your local post office establishment.

In addition to my natural neighborly feeling for the fine folks of Louisa County, I have a special and a personal pride in your new post office building because, during the period that I had the honor of representing you in the Congress of the United States, I sponsored the appropriation and allocation of Federal funds for its construction. All my life it will be a happy reminder for me of service that I was able to render to my constituents in return for the confidence which they had so generously manifested in me. The part played by Mr. Shearer and Mrs. Lewis in bringing the enterprise to a successful conclusion cannot be over-emphasized. They permitted no temporary set backs to discourage them, and without their persistent support I might more than once have given up in despair.

Also attached to this structure is the further significance that it was a part of a great program of public works launched by the President and the Congress during the depression period to help spread employment over the nation and to take up the slack resulting from the economic dislocation of the times. The meeting of these great depression problems represented one of the outstanding struggles of our day to save our democracy from disintegration and

to preserve it as a human and workable institution. We should not forget too quickly the severity of that struggle and in dedicating this new building we should look upon it as tangible evidence of the ability of our democracy to survive dark days and to come out victorious over any difficulties that may beset us.

The postal service has been described by the former Postmaster General, the Honorable James A. Farley, as "the most effective instrument of human democracy that exists in this country today". More than any other Federal Government agency it comes in day to day contact with, and is an instrument of constant use by, all of the citizens of our country.

In reflecting upon just what the postal service means to us, as individuals, as a community, and as a nation, I am reminded of an inscription upon the walls of the post office in Washington, D. C. It describes the postal service as "a messenger of sympathy and love, servant of parted friends, consoler of the lonely, bond of the scattered family, enlarger of the common life, carrier of news and knowledge, instrument of trade and industry, promoter of mutual acquaintance, of peace and good will among men and nations." These high purposes and the high order of achievement of this organization are rich with the meaning of democracy. They are a forceful reminder both of the value of our heritage and of the obligation that rests on us as a nation and as individuals to preserve it.

During the period that our nation was taking form, it was the author of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson, who foresaw the part the postal system would play in the expansion and unification of this nation. Constantly he stressed the need for speed and dependability of the post. He visualized the post as the artery of the states -- the bond of communication between those who were living in the states and those who were

pioneering westward. He advocated Federal control of the postal system as the surest way to make it an effective instrument for the promotion of commercial, social, and also political unity, in times of peace as well as national emergency.

Jefferson saw that only a unified Federal postal service could prevent barriers at state boundaries to that free interplay of communication that would permit the building of a strong and indivisible union. He likewise appreciated the enormous value of a Federal mail service in putting into practical application many of the ideals of the new democracy. Thus it was clear to his far-seeing mind that the Federal post would be an instrument of great public service which would promote not only the vital objective of national unity but would also encourage popular education through which a highly literate citizenry would be developed. He urged the substitution of postage stamp rates for the "courier-so-much-per-mile" rates and foresaw that such "postage stamp" rates would make uniform mail service at uniform rates available throughout the whole nation. He anticipated that as the cultural life of the nation expanded and matured, newspapers, periodicals and books would become available to all at lessening cost, and that through such service the cardinal principles of democracy -- freedom of speech, freedom of religion and the right to the pursuit of happiness, would become attainable objectives in the lives of all citizens, national life in turn being enriched through an enlightened public joined together by a common concern with national as well as local affairs.

We, whose fathers pioneered a state as yet unknown to white men at the time of the drafting of the Constitution, admire the wisdom of Jefferson who was among the first to proclaim the great contribution that a Federal postal system would make to the development and unity of the nation.

The expansion of the nation to the west was followed rapidly by the extension of the postal service, weaving each new state and territory into the social, commercial and civil life of the mother states to the east. Thus, the history of our entire country is inextricably bound up with the development of the postal service from the days of town criers and horse-back couriers down to the super airmail service of our times, across continents and oceans around the world.

In the local history of this, as well as every other community, the local post office stands out in bold relief as the center of the web of its business, social and political life. Likewise, much of the romantic history of the development of our own state and of the gradual extension of new settlements farther and farther to the west centers around the continuous efforts of the postal service to keep pace with the shifting frontiers and the onward march of civilization. The foot carrier, the post rider, the stagecoach, the star route, the railroad and the airplane -- each has written its own chapter in this history and each has contributed its share toward perfecting the unparalleled service that we know today -- service that is sometimes staggering when compared in retrospect with the modes of travel and communication of the days of the Revolution. The World has become our neighbor. Here in Columbus Junction with mail service by air, through the terminal facilities at Moline, we are closer neighbors to New York and San Francisco today than Concord was to Boston in the days of Paul Revere.

The postmaster or the local postman is the only representative of the United States Government that many Americans know or will ever know. To those people, just as to our forefathers and to us, the United States Mail has become a symbol of the ideals of the democracy.

This post office building is more than a unit in the postal system serving your community and serving the nation. It is a monument dedicated to the great principles of democracy announced by the Declaration of Independence in Independence Hall 165 years ago today. In this joint dedication and commemoration ceremony we should take inventory of the full meaning of democracy. We should remind ourselves of all the principles for which we stand and that should be especially significant to us today.

We should remind ourselves of the basic principles set forth by the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Again, we should remind ourselves that these rights are just as sacred in our lives today as they were in the lives of that small oppressed group of our colonial fathers who hurled these principles into the teeth of their oppressor and determined that America should be a land of the free. Further, we should remind ourselves of the struggle down through the years with forces from without and within to preserve an indivisible union based upon these principles. The struggle of 1917, and the more recent struggle during the depression period can never be forgotten by most of us here. And finally, today, we certainly should not need to remind ourselves that the Union faces perhaps the severest test of its ability to defend itself and to survive a relentless attack both from without and from within --

an attack more powerful and more cunning than any that has gone before and one that might have the result of changing the life and destiny of a nation of one hundred and thirty million people from freedom to abject slavery for a thousand years to come.

In taking up the torch of liberty and standing steadfast against the forces of aggression that are on the loose in our day, we find a strength and inspiration from the heroic action taken by the colonial fathers 165 years ago today. They had to decide whether they would take a stand against the inroads made by tyranny upon the freedom they had created in their New World colonies. Most of the inhabitants of the thirteen colonies had been victims of oppression in other lands. To escape this they had broken ties with families and with native lands to undertake the difficult and perilous journey to an unsettled wilderness. The outlook was dismal, but it offered them, in return for sacrifice and hardship, the right to be free, and, in combination with the children of oppression of other lands, the opportunity to build a new democratic nation upon a foundation stone of freedom.

The hardship and sacrifice that was involved in settling and surviving in the New World was the real beginning of American freedom and we as sons and daughters of the pioneers who pushed on to the west should remember and take courage and strength from their heroic effort. The importance of that mutual effort as a part of the winning of American freedom cannot be over-stressed. Such freedom is not just the Declaration of Independence nor the particular constitutional provisions which we quote as the safeguards of our liberty, but rather it is the growth across the years of a seedling cultivated by many hands and nurtured by the strength of the country itself into a mature "tree of liberty".

Successful democracy has ever been an unpopular competitor of autocracy and the history of the world contains many episodes of attempts by tyrants to eliminate democracies and to place their adherents in subjugation. A tyrant's constant urge is to enlarge his material grasp and to destroy any influence that may be tugging at the chains of slavery worn by his subjects. He feels safe only during periods of crescendo; never while in diminuendo. It is not surprising then that the New World eventually found itself at the parting of the ways in its relationship to the country of its mother tongue. There existed then even as today a strong natural tie between the people of the English speaking world. However, because the people of the mother country had not yet been able to shake off the tyranny of the Middle Ages and to win for themselves the freedom that had been established by those who had migrated to the New World, the affiliation between the two governments became unnatural and could not continue. The colonies were at first overlooked by the tyrants, but as they grew in size, in wealth and in independence, they became a challenge to the sort of gospel that preached the superiority of the state and the divine right of kings. America was deemed a rich prize to be brought into the folds of subjugation. There followed the series of incidents designed to take away, bit by bit, the freedom that Americans had won for themselves. The inroads of this campaign brought home to our colonial fathers first, the necessity that they unite, and second, that sooner or later there must be a firm stand against the demands of tyranny if the way of life they had created was to survive. Such a union of what theretofore had been thirteen more or less isolated colonies was brought about and in Independence Hall in Philadelphia 165 years ago today, they jointly proclaimed to their oppressor and to the world that they were



from that day forward a free and independent people and that such independence and freedom would be defended by them with all the force that they could command.

We all know the history of their struggle and we are gathered here today to commemorate their deeds as well as the brave deeds of others in other generations who fought to establish and to perpetuate our heritage of freedom,

It is good that we have special days to commemorate dates that represent milestones in the history of the Republic. In the deluge of our complex and changing world it is all too easy to drift away from the ideas for which our forebears have fought and to which we should hold steadfast during the period of our stewardship of American life. It is good to repeat to ourselves the question, "Whence come all our rights and privileges?" and to remind ourselves of the contribution of others in the eternal storm through which our ship of state has sailed.

But commemoration alone is not enough and it is a useless thing unless at the same time we gain additional strength through our renewal of faith. The renewed strength we should take from paying homage to our honored dead was recently expressed by our President in dedicating the birthplace of Woodrow Wilson in Staunton, Virginia, as a national shrine. Speaking of Wilson, the President said:

"He will be held in everlasting remembrance as a statesman who when other men sought revenge and material gain strove to bring nearer the day which should see the emancipation of conscience from power and the substitution of freedom for force in the government of the world.

"It is good for America that this house in which Woodrow Wilson was born will be preserved for us and for many future generations. In this valley of Virginia it will remind America that his ideals of freedom were wide enough to support democracy in all the world. He taught that democracy could not survive in isolation. We applaud his judgment and his faith."

Today as in Revolutionary days and in Wilson's day there are renegades at large throughout the world who, having launched upon a career of crime, are at bay until they have crushed all who are strong enough to arise as their accuser. During the last two years they have gradually enlarged their sphere of influence by blotting out isolated, unprepared, independent nations that have closed their eyes too long to realities and learned too late that they were no longer living in a world where human or national rights are respected and honor and decency prevail. Gradually, these renegades have become stronger while the forces of those brave men actively fighting for their national existence have become smaller and smaller. The cushion of non-aggressor nations in the world that has constituted America's first line of defense against the ambitions of tyranny and aggression is getting thinner and thinner, and ominously the combined forces of those aggressors move closer and closer to our own frontiers.

This combination of circumstances has brought America to the cross-roads and her course has been the paramount question before your President, your elected representatives in Congress and every other patriotic American interested in the perpetuation of America and its ideals. America's course cannot be charted by attempting to answer any single question, but rather it will be the result of decisions that we must make from time to time and step by step along the way. We cannot tabulate now all of the questions that will have to be answered or all the steps that will be taken. To do so would tie our hands against unforeseen contingencies and likewise disclose our plans to the enemy. But we do know that if we are united in our purpose to defend America, are sane and sacrificing in our planning of our defenses

and retain a firm hand in the affairs of the world, we shall survive, come what may, and we shall live to see the reestablishment of democratic principles in all nations and as between nations throughout the world.

In times such as these it is impossible to get a complete picture or to comprehend clearly the trend of world events. War throughout the world severs old relationships and obstructs free communication. Propaganda spreads and all information becomes suspect. We must realize that complete or accurate information on affairs throughout the world is not available to us. Because of this dearth of understanding of special situations and our inability to weigh incidents and trends properly, we cannot hope to foretell with clarity the world's news of tomorrow and the succeeding tomorrows. The State Department and the President are in constant touch with impartial, world-wide sources of information that are inaccessible either to the isolationist or the interventionist. It is only our duly constituted leadership, therefore, that is qualified to exercise reasoned judgment on the highly important questions of our international policy. If we are true to ourselves and recognize these limitations upon each of us as individuals we can only conclude that all contingencies must be measured and anticipated in the one gigantic effort that is being made to prepare America now.

To this end your President has declared a national emergency and the majority of your Congress has handled admirably the successive legislative steps that have been necessary to clear the way for the defense effort that the emergency calls for. And although we are in a state of unlimited national emergency and your President is daily exercising abnormal powers that he would not exercise in normal times, he remains your leader, elected

by, and dependent upon the will of the people. He needs your wholehearted support and he needs it now. During this emergency, remembering that partisanship must end at the water's edge, we must put to one side our American family squabbles and present to the world a united front behind our leadership, ready and willing to make any sacrifice to defend our native land.

We are at a moment in history comparable to that which faced the colonial fathers in 1776, that faced the nation during the invasion of 1812, the disintegration of '64, the War with Spain, and in 1917. The resounding cry of "Union Now," which went up from the North during the War Between the States needs repetition at this moment as never before for the fortification of our spiritual, our industrial and our military lines of defense. The early citizens of our Republic, preponderantly of English stock, did not hesitate to resist the government of their native land when it was necessary to protect their democratic way of life in 1776 and in 1812. There is even less excuse for Americans of Axis nativity or extraction to be disloyal to America and its institutions in 1941.

In a democracy such as ours where freedom of speech is among our most highly prized and most carefully guarded rights, every citizen has the right to his own opinion as to the proper course for the nation to pursue and has the further right to express his convictions freely and openly. These are basic concepts in the recognized rights of a democracy. It is to defend such rights that we are preparing ourselves, if need be to fight. It is through the exercise of those rights that full hearing has been given to our fellow-citizens who have been urging a policy of isolation, and their arguments have been given due consideration in the council of your nation's leadership.

We should like to be convinced by their arguments. We should like to be able to retire to our storm cellars and wait out the tornado that is whirling round and sucking in the world. Regrettably, this cannot be done, because it is no two-day or two-year storm that can be waited out. Hitler's treacherous repudiation of his scarcely 20 months'-old solemn non-aggression pact with Russia can leave no loyal mind unconvinced of his criminal resolve to pursue the "Mein Kampf" blue-print to the bitter end of complete world domination. If we were to adopt a waiting-out policy now, it could only result in the total destruction of our sister nations that are now attempting to hold in check the mad winds of conquest until they have played themselves out. Any attempt to isolate ourselves voluntarily can only result in isolation enforced upon us from without through taking from us the freedom of the seas and the right to trade in the markets of the world at large. It is likely also, should the other countries that are fighting for the right of self-determination fail in their efforts to check the evil influence that is attempting to break over the walls of Europe, to bring war to our very doors.

"Fantastic," the isolationists cry, but we are living in a fantastic world where possibilities of the day were beyond the realm of imagination less than a year ago. Project for two decades into the future, if you can, the but recent developments in communication, transportation and in the art of war and you will see a world that has become very small - a world that may be the scene of a single universal battle, fought by the outposts of democracy against the combined forces of the dictators. Imagine if you can

the English fleet, no longer protecting us by its control of the Atlantic Ocean, and instead being used by victorious conquerors against us. Imagine future developments in the airplane corresponding to those that we have seen up to now. The possible limits of such development are indeed fantastic when today a bomber is in production that has been built to fly 7,750 miles under a gross load of 82 tons.

We need soberly to ponder also the fact that our neighbor to the north is at war with the Axis and that if England should fall, invasion for reprisal or subjugation is by no means inconceivable. Any foothold that the Axis powers might gain to the north would place them within striking distance by bomber of our very homes here in the heart of the nation.

If a campaign from the north were launched against America there is reason to believe that the Middle West might find itself the opening target. This section feeds the Nation. It is the scene of our greatest modern industrial development and of much of our defense production. It is the nerve center of all communications of the country, and the invaders would not overlook the psychological effect of a bombing in the heart of the Nation. Such a campaign would be the logical pathway of the usual Axis strategy of divide and conquer.

Not since the days when warring parties of Sioux and Sacs roamed through our peaceful valley of the Mississippi has there been the knock of war upon our very door. Even now it seems and is far away. But the rumblings can grow and the conflagration can spread like the wind until it engulfs us all. In our sheltered Middlewestern life we find it difficult to anticipate and appreciate what can happen in this fantastic world. Fantastic as it may seem, however, patriotic common sense commands that we anticipate and prepare for it now.

The case against isolation was cogently stated by Wendell L. Willkie in an address delivered to Canadians in March of this year, wherein he said:

"We in the United States, I am proud to say, have now with only a few dissenting voices, pledged ourselves to help remove that curse from effective leadership in world affairs and we have made this resolution not for academic or sentimental reasons but for very hardheaded and practical ones.

"We know that our way of life - the right of men to be free in their civil, religious and cultural life, to aspire and to achieve, without the control of an all-powerful government - we know that that way of life cannot survive in a world where Nazism reigns supreme.

"We also know that the well-being, the standard of living and the very liberty of our people are inescapably dependent upon large areas in this world where men of all nations may trade by economic laws and the rules of commerce and not by the mandates of military minded dictators.

"We know, too, that democracy thrives when the areas of liberty are expanding and dies when they are contracting."

Isolation as a national policy has already been repudiated by your leadership and by the country, and a program of all-out preparation for defense and for protecting ourselves by aiding Britain and the other nations that are resisting aggression has been launched.

That objective we must ever keep before us. It is binding upon every individual who enjoys the protection and freedom of this Nation. To claim otherwise is an anarchistic repudiation of the established processes of our representative form of government. The cross currents from within that have been set up and are being fanned both by the well-meaning but blind and those who purposely would do us harm through disorganization from within, run counter to this objective. Such cross currents must cease now if we are to prepare ourselves against all emergencies.

We should ask ourselves what particular service we as citizens of this country can render that will help assure the success of the mighty defense effort that is under way from coast to coast. Our answer to this question should be a forthright resolution to abandon the false tranquility of pacifism

and our habits of ease, and to prepare ourselves for long hours of work, heavy taxes and the sacrifice of luxuries. This is an individual responsibility, but if assumed by all collectively it will make our spiritual line impregnable. It will overcome the subtle propaganda that creates popular distrust of government and it will render ineffective the paralyzing menace of the isolationists, the pacifists and the Nazi sympathizers.

It is all important that we appreciate the need immediately for a great reservoir of material defenses. The war has taught the hard lesson that liberty can no longer be defended by a brave man with a rifle, but that rather there must be armies, navies and air corps of highly trained men, all playing their allotted team position in a highly mechanized game. The democracies that have already fallen and Britain that is fighting for her life, all know the fatal error of lack of timely and ample preparation. We who have been fortunate enough to have time on our side must not let ourselves fall victim to the same error.

This danger of fatal inertia toward adequate preparation in a nation like ours that is so confident in its courage is illustrated by a story that I heard told in the Congressional cloakrooms about Bob Toombs, a member of Congress from Georgia just before the Civil War. In his campaign speeches before the War, old Bob several times boastfully said: "We can lick the Yankees with cornstalks." In the course of one of his campaign speeches after the war when he was again running for re-election to Congress, an unkindly voice in his audience interrupted him with the question: "Say Bob, didn't you tell us before the War that we could lick the Yankees with cornstalks?" "Yes, I did," Bob replied, "but the hell of it was the damyankees wouldn't fight with cornstalks."

My friends, if war should come, as come it may, it will not be any cornstalk, rabbit-shooting affair. It will require all the



mechanical and physical resources that we can command. We have already started to put our house in order and the vital necessity of doing this cannot be over-emphasized. It is all important that each of you understand and appreciate the seriousness and the urgent necessity for this preparation, and if I could leave but one message with each of you today, it would be to awaken to your country's plight and give her aid.

Adequate preparation for defense will take much of the material wealth of this country and it is going to mean sacrifice of individual pleasures and great personal hardship to insure its success. But we know, just as our colonial fathers knew, that this is something that has to be done. When principles of common humanity and the right of our citizens to live as free men and free women are at stake, no material or physical sacrifice can be too great.

The great program of peacetime training of a wartime army that is under way has been felt in every community. In time of war the sacrifice paramount to all others is that made by the young men who give up their civilian life for the necessary discipline and training of the armed forces to prepare themselves to defend their country if need be with their lives. Go down the roster of any camp and talk to these boys about where they came from, what they were doing, what their plans were and what of their families, and you will come away with the feeling that others are making a sacrifice which dwarfs anything that you can possibly be called upon to do.

Out of one of our training camps has come a story about a volunteer from the hill country, who had offered his services to his country, which is so full of this sacrifice that it should warm our hearts to the readjustments with which all of our boys are faced and the patriotic service they have so willingly undertaken. It is said that this young man on his second day in camp was found eating a lunch of crackers and a candy bar in the post

canteen and when asked by his officer why he did not eat in the mess hall he replied that he did not think he could afford to on just \$21 a month.

It is easy to laugh at this story, but it is hard to forget the sacrifice that it implies, a sacrifice of their homes, their families, their business and their ordinary pursuit of happiness which encompasses all of the rights and privileges that our democracy affords. They submit to a discipline which takes away from them the major portion of the very rights and privileges of democracy for which they are preparing themselves to defend. They do this willingly because they realize that in a time of great emergency there is a necessary retreat from liberty to discipline and because they realize that the concession must be made today to save freedom for themselves, their families and their country in the years to come. Theirs is the greatest sacrifice and to them all the honors that a democracy reserves for its patriots are due.

Beside this great and growing army of the brave, as well as alongside other great armies that are fighting the battles against aggression today, we must align ourselves, willing to make any and all sacrifices to protect our native land and the way of life it represents.

As I stand here today on this anniversary of our country's freedom, I like to think of your new post office building as a symbol of the torch of liberty that is now in our charge. It is the privilege and duty of our generation to hold it high and to keep it burning for those who are to follow. Let us give thanks for the priceless heritage we enjoy of living in the greatest country and under the most humane and just government in the world. And how can we more fittingly dedicate this structure to its beneficent uses and purposes, than by re-dedicating ourselves here and now to the cause of freedom, and by declaring that we, a united America, are prepared to defend and preserve our principles, our ideals and our institutions that they

may live to bless our own and succeeding generations? To this high purpose let us join with every loyal citizen in the land in the words of the covenant subscribed by our founding fathers on the natal day of the Republic; "For the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance upon the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor."