

citizenship. Certainly, no people in the world are more richly endowed with the fruits of life than are we in this United States of America. We live in a land of unsurpassed beauty and unparalleled material abundance. We have a plentiful supply of natural resources which we have developed with an excellent economic system to give the people the highest living standards ever attained in the known history of mankind.

But our material advantages are only a small part of our American inheritance. More rewarding than any of these is the legacy of freedom and justice handed down to us by our noble and illustrious forebears. The dignity and self-respect that the individual American citizen enjoys in the democracy we have set up enhance his life far beyond the measure of material wealth.

It is a little surprising, then, that we should need a reminder from time to time of the responsibilities of citizenship. But we know that man is mortal and frail, and among the frailties which possess him are ingratitude and the tendency to take for granted the gifts and blessings which surround him. To fulfill himself, to attain his potential, he must constantly struggle against this tendency to become complacent and ungrateful. Freedom and human dignity are tangible things, but unfortunately most of us are incapable of assessing their true worth until we are threatened with the loss of them. We, therefore, need to be prodded frequently, just as you are doing here today, by the fact that our freedom is something that we cannot keep permanently without guarding it against the pressures which assault it continuously. Respect for the principles and ideals which are the foundation of our democratic way of life must be renewed by every generation of Americans if these principles and ideals are to survive.

There are probably as many definitions of good citizenship as there are persons who have commented on it, and I shall not undertake to construct another here. A good definition, from my point of view, is implied in a statement made by the French philosopher, Rousseau, whose thoughts on political economy influenced so many of the early statesmen of this Republic. Said Rousseau: "As soon as public service ceases to be the chief business of the citizens, and they would rather serve with their money than their persons, the state is not far from its fall." The great Frenchman knew, as do we, that a nation will not long survive without good citizens. And a good citizen is one who makes the service of the public his "chief business." Moreover, he must serve with his person and not just with his money. In other words, if we expect to be good citizens, all of us must dedicate