

REMARKS ON RECEIVING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL
GOLD COIN
ANNAPOLIS

March 11, 1964

Mr. President; Mr. Speaker; members of the General Assembly of Maryland; President Bussard and members of the Francis Scott Key Memorial Foundation; Mayor Magaha, of Frederick; Mr. Wrenn, President of the Frederick Board of County Commissioners; Mr. Weil, of the Economic Development Commission, distinguished visitors, ladies and gentlemen:

I am deeply moved by the high honor I have received here this morning. It was most gracious of your foundation to arrange this meeting and to select me as the recipient of this gold coin symbolizing *our nation's* observance of the one-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Star-Spangled-Banner—our national flag and our national anthem. I shall guard it and cherish it, always with the memory of your kindness and your thoughtfulness on this day.

Let me offer my profound appreciation and highest commendation to the Francis Scott Key Memorial Foundation and to the many other individuals and organizations which are laboring so tirelessly and *unselfishly* to make a success out of Maryland's observance of these great events of our history. Plans are underway that the writing of the Star-Spangled Banner, and the many significant events which surrounded it, shall be properly memorialized—at Fort McHenry, where the battle took place; at the World's Fair, where Maryland will have a splendid exhibit; at Frederick, where the great Key lies buried, and at other appropriate places throughout our State. I encourage all Marylanders, those who are here this morning and those who are not here, to support actively and forcefully these programs of commemoration. We can, with honor, do no less, knowing that it was our State that gave our country its flag, its song, and yes, for that matter, its capital.

The naming of our flag and the creation of our song emerged from what was perhaps the greatest single emergency our nation has ever faced. To realize the seriousness of this emergency, we only have to contemplate the situation that existed 150 years ago. The British had burned and sacked our capital city. Our President and important federal officials had fled into hiding. Our Capitol Building was a heap of rubble and ashes. Our Republic was only 30 years old at the time, and it looked as if the end was near. The British felt they had only one move to make—