

ADDRESS, WASHINGTON ROTARY CLUB

WASHINGTON, D. C.

November 13, 1963

May I begin by expressing my gratitude to the members of the Washington Rotary Club for the warm hospitality I have received here today. I welcome this opportunity to speak before such a distinguished group of Rotarians whom I consider to be the leading business and professional men of this city. I share your pride in Rotary membership for I have been a member for 41 years.

All Americans have a deep sense of pride and strong feeling of affection for this great capital city which is core and kernel of our nation. I come here quite frequently and each time I do I experience anew the exhilaration I felt as a high school student when first I saw the stately dome atop the Capitol Building and the towering monument to the father of our country. While in their hearts all Americans feel that this is their city, we in Maryland believe we enjoy ties with the National Capital that are stronger than those of others. It is not just that we are closer to it physically than most others, but is our continuing awareness of the historical, cultural and economic inseparability of Maryland and the Federal District. The interest of Maryland in the establishment and maintenance of a national seat of government dates from the very earliest years of the republic.

We recall that the United States in the years immediately following its victory in the War of Independence was both homeless and impoverished. The Continental Congress, exercising both the executive and legislative authority of the Confederation of States, moved about from place to place at random—New York; Philadelphia; Princeton; New Jersey; Lancaster, Pennsylvania; Annapolis. In 1783, the Congress was grossly insulted and unhappy in Philadelphia and decided to move to Princeton. There it was compelled to work in intolerably cramped quarters and it set about to find a meeting place of safety and suitable dignity.

Where to turn? Where to move next was one of their pressing problems. Well, Maryland supplied the answer to that question in a very generous way. Maryland had just completed its handsome new State House, the building in Annapolis which today houses the Executive and Legislative branches of our State government. The Maryland General Assembly offered to donate to the Congress as an outright gift the State House and the surrounding public circle. And