

dent it will find our younger generation prepared in every way to undergo every other privation rather than to permit the ideals of democracy, that have been such a boon to all mankind, to go down to oblivion.

DINNER MEETING OF ITALIAN-AMERICAN BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL MEN

On Occasion of Visit to Baltimore of Hon. Adolf A. Berle, Jr., Assistant Secretary of State, and Hon. Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Mayor of New York City

June 17, 1940

Baltimore

THIS Country of ours, conceived by our gallant forebears, who had felt to the fullest the heavy hand of oppression, is the grandest conception of government ever known to man. Through it, oppressed humanity was restored to self-respect; under it, man for the first time enjoyed the rights to which he was by his very nature, entitled. For more than one hundred and fifty years the American system of free enterprise, under which everyone was encouraged to work out his individual destiny as he preferred, spurred our forefathers on to make this what it is today, a nation without parallel in the history of the universe.

Just to look about us this evening, and to realize what America has given to all of us here present, is to be confirmed for ever in the realization that American citizenship, under our present form of government, is the most valuable civic possession obtainable in the world today. Nowhere else in the world, I submit to you, would it be possible to gather together a group like this, of citizens who have been able to achieve outstanding prominence and success in their various lines of endeavor, not by reason of class or birth, but entirely through their own ability and effort.

Anyone familiar with the history of Maryland's progress and development appreciates the splendid part played by men and women who had the initiative to come here from Italy, and by their descendents, right down to the present time.

I believe, and every person here believes with me, I am sure, that to permit American ideals of government to be laid aside would be an everlasting blot upon the conscience of every American. The American system with its recognition of the individual as the sole cause of government is the truest realization of an ideal of government that exists in the world today. It is little wonder our forefathers found it such an inspiration, it is little wonder that throughout all the years Americans were ever ready to give their all to defend it. Surely today with conditions as they are throughout the world we should be poor Americans indeed, if we did not measure up to the high standards of national conduct set by those who preceded us. It is a wonderful thing to be so privileged in a national sense as we are. It must not be forgotten, however, that every privilege enjoyed entails a corresponding response. We have enjoyed our privileges to the fullest; now we must not shirk our responsibilities.