

THE KIWANIS CLUB

Emerson Hotel, September 12, 1940

Baltimore

IT seems particularly fitting that a group of substantial citizens such as compose the Kiwanis Club should on Defenders Day pause and give thought to certain vital considerations. Under ordinary circumstances, you could do worse than make an annual custom of stock-taking, as this anniversary presents itself on the calendar. But, particularly during such extraordinary times as these, your membership can do nothing more important than to focus its attention upon those questions relating to the security of our Nation and of our State. In addition, it is timely to counsel among ourselves as to the pressing internal problems which affect the daily lives of our people.

No living person can remember when Defenders Day held such significance. As far back as any Marylander can remember this anniversary has been an occasion to commemorate an event of the past. It has been an occasion which has always seemed romantic and remote to this generation which has become, if not soft, at least complaisant in the assumption of security. Who of us has actually believed that it would ever be necessary for citizens of Baltimore to take up arms in her defense? Who has not enjoyed his holiday on Defenders Day and let it go at that, with little thought that the stirring events of 1814 could be enacted again? Who has not—until this very year—considered invasion of America to be a thing of the somewhat incredible past—a thing entirely too fantastic to consider in modern terms?

And yet, what a difference this past year has brought. What a change our thinking has undergone since the last 12th of September. Democracies have fallen; our isolation has been reduced to a myth; the remote and romantic stories of 1814 have become the realistic threat of 1940. Unfortunate but true, Defenders Day now puts off its costume of knee breeches and powdered wigs and frock coats to become a pageant in terms of steel helmets and tanks and aircraft. This year we should observe Defenders Day in three dimensions of time; first, with veneration for what it has meant in the past; secondly, with a knowledge of what it means at present; and, finally with a determination for what it shall mean in the future.

In times such as this the Chief Executive of a State undertakes duties which, generally speaking, are peculiar and unaccustomed to the office. It is especially true that a Governor of a seacoast State and one which adjoins the National Capital has responsibilities beyond the normal functions of his office. Realizing that you have a right to know what is transpiring and, also, because it will afford an opportunity to obtain suggestions and assistance in further developments, I might review certain of the moves which have been made by our State in regard to National and State defense.

We have actively participated in the joint Federal-State conferences in Washington, held under the sponsorship of the Department of Justice, with the approval of the President of the United States. These conferences, looking toward a coordination of activities of the State and Federal Governments, have resulted in the definite segregation of those undertakings which are to be handled exclusively from Washington and those which are properly for the handling by Maryland. A third class of activities relate to those matters which