

AMERICANISM MEETING
BENEVOLENT AND PROTECTIVE ORDER OF ELKS

April 28, 1941

Cambridge

IT is well that we are gathered here this evening in a patriotic effort devoted to the furtherance of Americanism, for certainly there never has been a time in all the long history of our land, when Americanism of the highest order is required of all our citizens.

So blessed are we here in Maryland, so wonderful a place of beauty and abundance is this Eastern Shore of our State, particularly touched as it is now with the hand of Spring, that it seems difficult to evaluate the full meaning of recent world happenings that so vitally affect us and all our Nation.

It was only last week, for instance, that President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his capacity as Commander-in-Chief of the Army and Navy of the United States, decreed that henceforth our sea forces would patrol an area extending, to quote the President's own words, "A thousand miles from the Eastern Shores of Maryland." Surely such a statement as this should bring home to everyone of us the proximity of dire happenings. For the only meaning of such a decision by the Nation's Chief Executive is that there is danger of enemy activities over that period of ocean, within one thousand miles of the shores of Maryland.

The President's announcement, and the unfortunate developments of recent weeks throughout Southeastern Europe are tending, I believe, to overcome the apathy with which all too many of our people have been viewing the world struggle now going on. Now, at last, our American people are beginning to realize that Democracy, as we know and value it here in America, is fighting for its life, is making a desperate stand against the onslaughts of dictator-led undemocratic nations.

As we contemplate all these developments, we should be brought to a truer appreciation of what it means to be a citizen of the United States; what it means to be privileged to live and speak, to act, to worship exactly as we wish.

More than ever, in the light of what has happened throughout the world recently, is there reason why America and its principles should be a living thing, in the hearts and minds of every citizen. No other nation on the face of the earth has so much that is definitely worthy of being proud of, and definitely worth protecting. As has been rightly said, however, "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," and America will continue to be free just as long as you and I, its citizens, are vigilant to protect it. Because this is a Democracy, you and I are the government as well as the people of America, and our Country will continue to be the "land of the free" only as long as we safeguard our lives, if necessary, the principles upon which this government was founded.