

THE AMERICAN LEGION—DEPARTMENT OF MARYLAND
BANQUET

Emerson Hotel, August 14, 1941
Baltimore

THE people of America are profoundly grateful for the expressed readiness of the American Legion to render all possible aid in any emergency which might confront our Nation. Obviously this assistance is invaluable because the Legion not only represents the best in American life but has the benefit of actual experience in defending the honor and integrity of this Country.

What tomorrow may bring forth, no man can say. Certainly, however, it is only American common sense for us in this Country to be prepared for the worst, in a world where the worst has been the rule of late, rather than the exception. Having more to defend than any other Nation on the earth—more in spiritual values as well as in economic wealth, we must be better prepared than any other nation to defend those valuable possessions.

There are those amongst us who are opposed to any assistance in the present world turmoil, unless we are attacked on our own soil in the United States. They would risk the sacrifice of any or all our outlying possessions, they would suffer economic reverses of the most devastating nature rather than have this, our Country, take official notice of the battle for Democracy. And they are foolish enough to believe that by such un-American methods we may prevent embroilment of our people in the terrible conflicts now raging throughout the world.

The isolationists-at-any-price will tell you that anyone who is not with them is a jingoist, a war-monger. They bury their heads in the sand and refuse to read the lessons that recent history in Europe and the Far East have made plain for anyone to read and understand. And that lesson, so plainly evident to all who do not blind themselves to the truth, is that the more weakness a nation shows, the more of its prerogative and national rights it yields, the more it is called upon to yield.

A desire for peace is inherent in the makeup of every right thinking man and woman. Of course, we don't want to see our young manhood sacrificed needlessly. Of course, we would prefer to continue living peacefully and prosperously, free from the national hates and nationalistic ambitions that are rampant throughout the world today. But just simply because we do want to continue living in peace, must be prepared to defend to the fullest those free institutions and economic advantages that are ours, as the result of the courage and determination and far-sightedness of our ancestors.

This is a time when all loyal Americans instead of resisting the efforts being initiated in Washington to bolster our defenses, must line up solidly behind our duly elected officials, and must put our collective shoulder to the wheel of defense wholeheartedly.