

DEDICATION OF INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS
HOME FOR ORPHANS AND AGED

October 5, 1941

Frederick

WHILE much of mankind's energies today are being devoted to destruction, and while the sum total of misery among the orphans and aged of the world is being increased daily by the brutal acts of militaristic forces, we privileged citizens of free America are gathered here this afternoon to commemorate peacefully the establishment of an institution whose primary purpose is human charity.

It might seem a discordant note in the very commendable exercise of this afternoon to mention the horrors that are occurring throughout so great a part of the world today and every day. However, it is only by reminding ourselves of what is transpiring elsewhere, as opposed to the thousands of occurrences of similar nature to this that are taking place regularly throughout these United States, that we can get a true picture of what America means to everyone of us, and of how necessary it is that this appreciation of our American freedom be in our minds at all times.

Your splendid Order, established for humanitarian purposes, of which this very fine home is a sterling example, is permitted to exist in this Country simply because we are free and because there is no self-constituted dictator to whose every whim we must be subservient. Even though the aims and purposes of our Order are of such a lofty nature that they add stature to the citizenship of everyone of your members; even though the achievements of your members throughout the United States in the field of social endeavor and of charity will be recorded in gold letters in the book of human charity; even though your every ceremonial and your established ritual teach the lessons of patriotism and obedience to authority, and inspire you to a greater love of your fellowman; even with all this, I say, you still could not continue to exist in any but a free country such as this, except at the pleasure of a domineering ruler.

All this is emphasized and should be emphasized, in this gathering and in every gathering of public-spirited citizens throughout the United States, that we may keep continually before us the dangers that threaten our Country. . . . For there is a very real danger in that spirit of complacency that would tell us that the things that have happened elsewhere, that have enslaved France and Poland, that are causing the purges of hundreds of patriotic citizens in conquered Europe today, could never happen here. We must realize that they *could* happen here, they *will* happen here unless the people of America lay aside their factionalism and indifference, and achieve that spirit of national unity that is essential to the successful defense of this grand and glorious Country.

It was the lack of such a spirit of unity that brought once-proud France to her present unenviable position of serfdom. Two years ago, the people of