

common to all, which are to be found in your fellowmen from every part of the world, if only one takes the trouble to look for such traits and qualities.

I said before that our Nation is fortunate in having at any time, organizations like yours. Doubtly fortunate are we as Americans to have in this time of crisis, when above all else National Unity is the first requisite, an organization which makes and always has made unity one of its first objectives.

Since that day in February, nearly 75 years ago, when the first members of your Order foregathered in fraternal communion, the Order has made a contribution to American life and progress, the value of which becomes even more notable in times of crisis like this.

The light held aloft by these first members of the Elks attracted men from all walks of life, men fleeing from hate, from guile, from bigotry, and above all, from luke-warm patriotism; to the avowal and open practice of the ideals which we have inherited and which bespeak for us complete spiritual, as well as physical, unity.

That light still shines. To the general public perhaps it is best revealed in the spectacular undertakings with which the Elks have been identified nationally, such as your National Home, your relief work in the World War and in national calamities; your National War Memorial Building, in Chicago, admittedly one of the most beautiful War Memorials in the world; and your National Foundation, devoted exclusively to educational and humanitarian purposes.

To those of us privileged to enjoy membership in Elksdom, however, the light glows most strongly upon the continuing, unheralded charitable work performed by our lodges everywhere, as well as upon the character and patriotism of the individual members who make up what we affectionately call - "The Order".

For nearly seventy-five years the candle has burned, while The Order has grown from the modest to the magnificent, has increased in membership from a parlor group to a half million, all prototypes of the serious-minded, idealistic founders who sought to pace in the offered friendly hand the very clasp of the human heart.

Seventy-five years hence, the light of our cardinal precepts will still comfort and fire human emotions and impulses, because, social-conscious, self-perpetuating, our Order must be regarded as the leading American patriotic, fraternal organization today, a perennial force for good.

Merely to be here this evening and to have this session in absolute freedom and with never a worry as to immediate attack from a hostile force is in itself striking evidence of what it means to be an American, and further, of how necessary it is that our American rights and freedoms be preserved.

To do this we are embarked in the greatest war in all history. We are faced, as a Nation, with momentous problems and with the necessity of preparing ourselves adequately to defend our land and our free institutions against