

had not the faintest thought that the organization they had in mind would ever play any part in another war. But, as we know now, to our great disappointment, the "War to end all Wars," did not and could not accomplish that much-to-be-desired end. We have only to give thought to what is happening, and threatening, all about us in the world tonight to be convinced of that.

This evening, with America and all the world vastly disturbed by the events of the past few days, events that seem to be shaping up to a climax to the world rumblings of the last few years, the people of this Country realize that the American Legion stands but a step behind the Armed forces of our country as a bulwark of defense against aggression, and as a guarantee that American ideals will be preserved. America can sleep easier these nights because of the American Legion. And, naturally, America has a keener appreciation of the American Legion these days, because our Country like all the world has cause for anxiety.

It was a happy thought of your officers, and your programme committee, that they selected "Toleration" as the theme of this annual State gathering. It is a term that always has had a more pertinent application here in the "Free State" of Maryland than in most other places in the world. It is a word that we understand infinitely better here in Maryland than do the people in other countries and lands.

Nothing could be more appropriate than to give expression to the spirit which is Maryland. This spirit, basically and foundationally, is "Toleration." That vital force has been acquired by the oldest law of possession, which is the law of inheritance. It is the very birthright of Maryland people. Intolerance is intellectual and spiritual poison. Whenever it is practiced to a considerable extent, charity cannot thrive and justice is undermined at every turn. When intolerance holds sway, let our people recall, no person in free America is secure as long as any other man is persecuted or hounded because of his race or religion. The keynote of your convention therefore, is a warning to misguided persons who may be disposed, under the cloak of the word "Americanism," to create division and separation of our people on the ground of race, creed or color. Those distinctions have no place among an united people where patriotism and love of country weld and cement our joint allegiance to the Country we love so ardently.

In the face of the war clouds that are hovering ominously over Europe and the entire world, anyone privileged to view this spectacle from where we stand must be impressed forcibly by the nature of the audience gathered before this table, and of its countrywide implications. Here before us we have representatives of a great American organization, made up of all classes of our citizenry, a volunteer body of America's patriotic manhood and womanhood. Here is no compulsion of any kind, yet this great organization continues to strengthen its ranks and broaden its influence by taking into its membership other patriotic Americans who believe in, and are anxious to have a hand in, the important work the Legion is doing to safeguard our liberties and our free American institutions.

Several months ago I accepted an invitation of our Department Commander to participate in a mass initiation of the Legion, and to talk on the topic, "What the American Legion means to the United States." As the Legion has never meant more to the United States than it does at this very moment, it might be well to review this question of such countrywide importance and