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AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

One Hundred and Fourteenth Annual Festival
of the New England Society

IN THE

CITY OF NEW YORK

ON

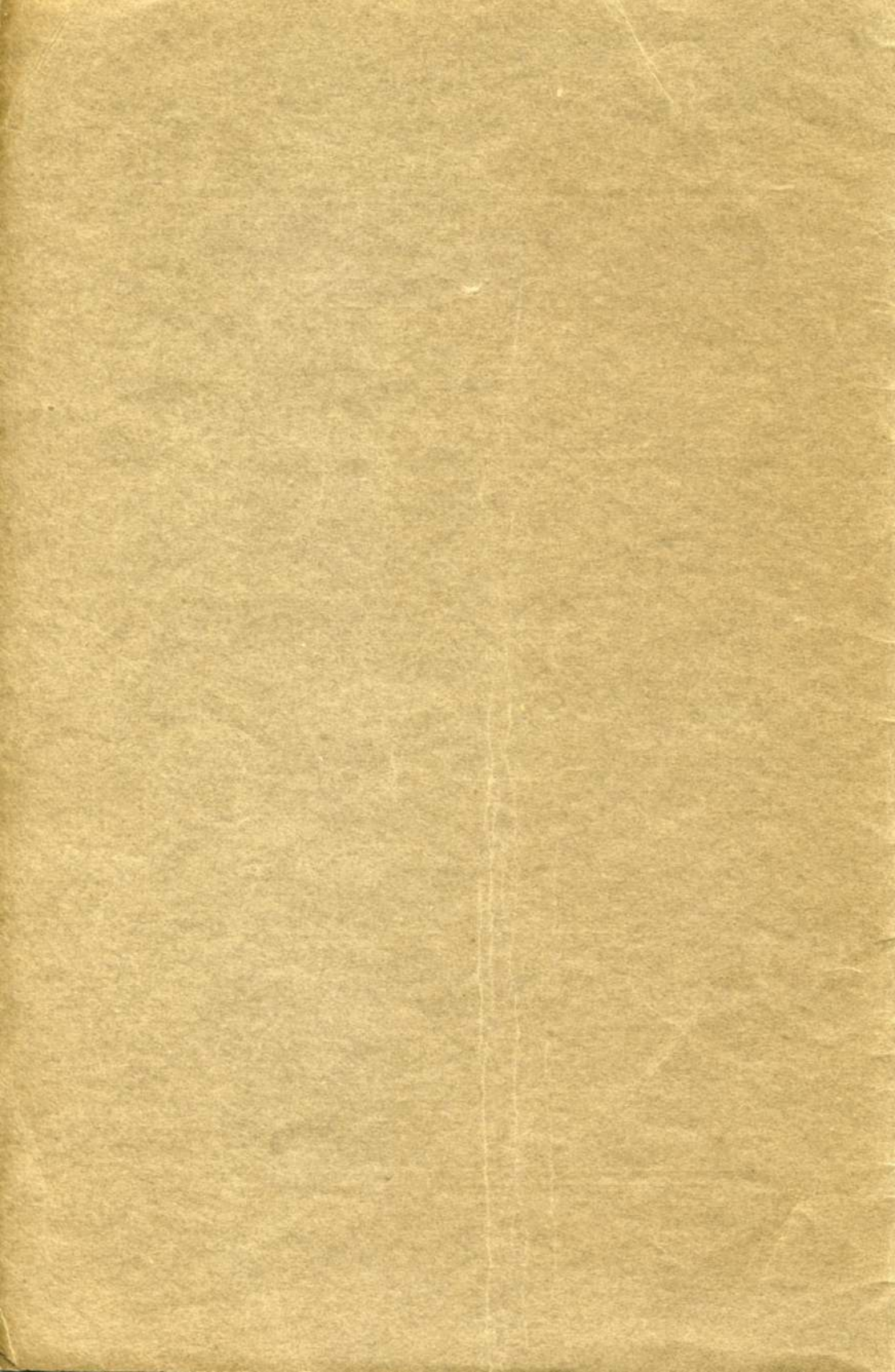
December 22, 1919

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Governor John J. Cornwell

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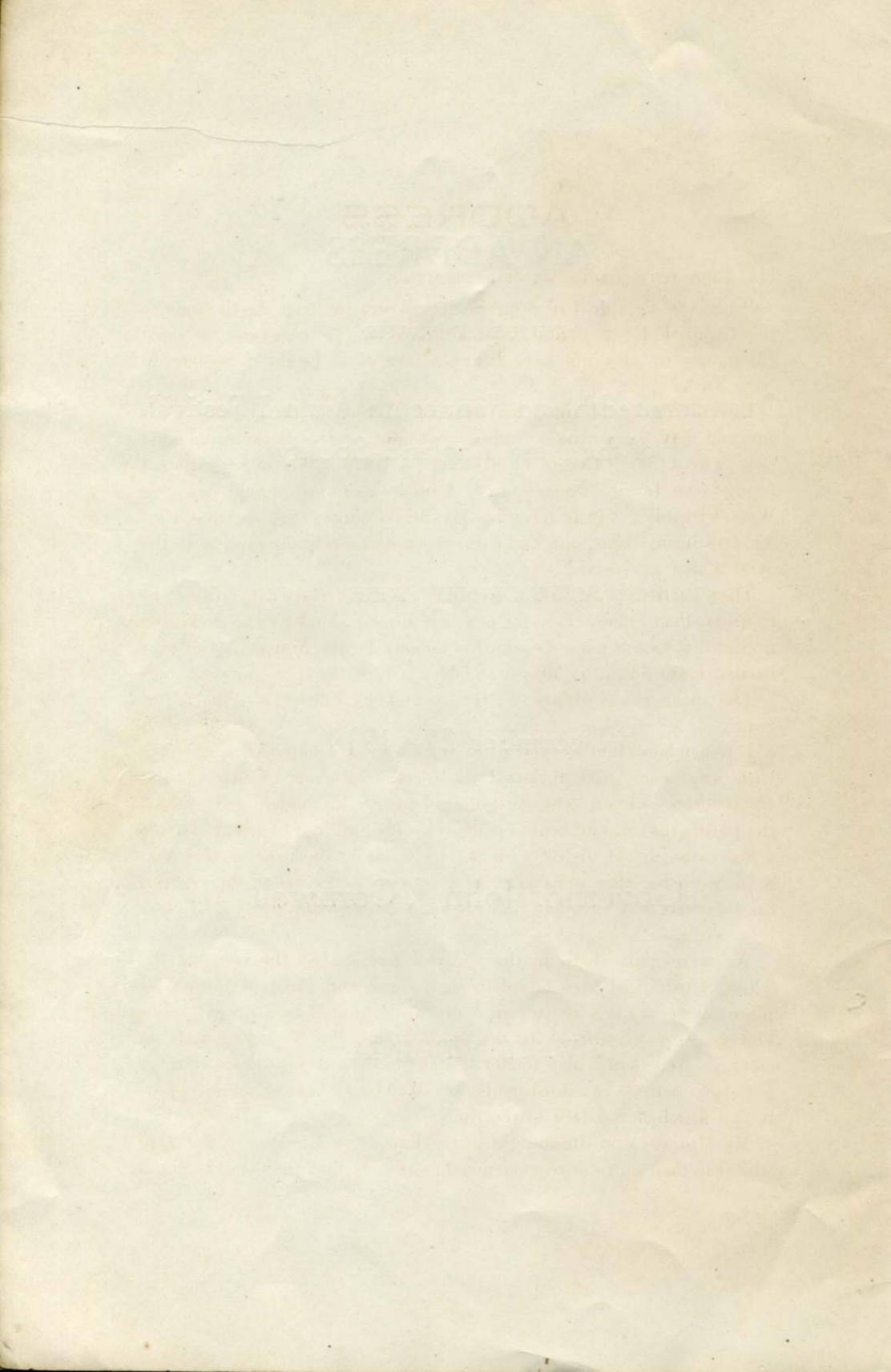
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ADDRESS

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

When the President of your Society wrote inviting me to come to this Annual Festival and take a place on the program he said: "You may or may not have heard of the New England Society in New York."

In replying I told him I first read of the Society thirty-three years ago and may I say that my mind, just now, reverts to that occasion?

It was a cold, December evening in 1886. We were gathered around the family fireside, in a humble mountain home down in West Virginia. I was teaching my first Country School, that winter, still in my teens, and had come to spend Christmas week with the "Old Folks at Home."

That particular Saturday evening, when the mail came from the Country Post Office, three miles away, I read aloud by the flickering firelight, a speech made before this Society by the first man you ever invited from South of Mason and Dixon Line, to speak to you.

The speaker was Henry W. Grady and his subject was the "New South."

I remember vividly, even after the lapse of a third of a century, with what emotion I followed the picture he drew of the footsore Confederate soldier, who buttoning beneath his faded grey jacket the parole that was to bear testimony to his children of his fidelity to a lost cause, lifted his eyes for the last time to the hills of Old Virginia, dotted as they were with the graves of his comrades, then turned his footsteps Southward to find his home destroyed and his land desolated.

We were glad, there in that humble home, that the voice of the "New South" had been heard in such frank and brilliant fashion as placed it before the country in a proper light and in a proper spirit and we were unanimous in the opinion that the New England Society in New York had rendered the South and the whole country a distinct service in affording Henry W. Grady that splendid opportunity which he utilized to the limit.

My Mother, who sits tonight in the Executive Mansion in the Cap-who was then quite unreconstructed, was sure that the New England

Society was composed of some of the "good Yankees", otherwise they would not have cheered Grady's utterances so enthusiastically.

By no stretch of the imagination did we foresee that I should ever be invited to sit at your board, much less given the opportunity to speak to your Society.

Being here, however, I repeat the thought expressed to your President in accepting his invitation: That I do not come with the hope of being able to utter any words that will strengthen the love of the members of this Society for the land of their fathers, for the country those fathers helped to carve out of the wilderness, for the Government and its institutions their sons were so potent in founding, knowing how deep-rooted is your devotion to these things, but I come rather with the more selfish thought that my association with you will stimulate me to stronger and better efforts in the discharge of my duties as a public official and as an American citizen and strengthen my determination to defend this Government, its institutions and its ideals so far as in me lies, at whatever cost, from the flood of alien ideas and false philosophies that are threatening to overwhelm and destroy us.

I do not come bringing any new theories of government. I have no patent political nostrums to put upon the market. I was made the Chief Executive of the State wherein I was born, not upon a promise to secure legislation that would enable people to live without work or to avoid paying taxes, but upon the promise I would endeavor to apply common-sense business methods to handling public affairs and eliminate some of the petty partisanship with which the State had been sorely afflicted. Those things I have honestly striven to do. How well I have succeeded the people of West Virginia, alone, have a right to say. But whatever that answer is I do not hesitate to say that the purposes were right.

I would really like to emphasize the suggestion that I have with me no cure-alls and have no sensational national program to launch upon a helpless and unsuspecting public.

On the other hand it is my firm belief that one of the ailments from which the country is suffering at present is that it has been gorged with undigested and indigestible political, social and economic theories during the past few years. The people have been educated toward the idea that they can live by legislation rather than by work; that they can prosper on theories and statutes rather than on production.

Your President, in his letter of invitation to me, made another significant remark to the effect that these are times when old-fashioned folk who still believe in the Constitution and the principles upon which the Government is founded, should get together.

I quite agree with him. I think he knew it, otherwise I would not be here, unless invited under a misapprehension. Were this Society imbued with the Socialistic and Alien philosophies running riot throughout the country it would not have honored me with an invitation to speak to it.

If our Government and its ideals are to be preserved; if our country is to continue to grow and prosper and if its people are to remain secure in their lives, their liberties and their property, it is indeed high time "old-fashioned folk" who believe in the Constitution and its guarantees, get together and stay together, regardless of section, creed or political affiliation.

The forces that are working for the overthrow of the Government; that are striving for the substitution of Class rule for Democracy, are being coordinated and are showing symptoms of unity which we cannot safely disregard.

It is wholly unnecessary for me to attempt to portray to you the situation which confronts this country, generally, today. You understand it.

It is equally unnecessary that I attempt to discuss the causes. I have done that down in my own State when I felt such discussion might be helpful. Nothing could be gained by going over them here or now. You gentlemen, business men as you are, have watched the development of present conditions and the present tendencies and you fully understand them.

It may be worth while for us to consider, for a few minutes, the possible remedies.

Some people were skeptical, down in West Virginia, when, on the day the steel strike began, I asserted in a public address that the radical labor leaders of the country were deliberately planning to lessen production in all essential lines of industry. It seemed to me then to be apparent that the men who were planning the steel and coal strikes were bent upon disorganizing industry and stopping production for the purpose of discrediting the wage system, trying to prove it a failure and to convince the people of the necessity of nationalizing all industries. Events which have since transpired, no-

tably the demand of the United Mine Workers for the nationalization of coal mines and the strike precipitated on November 1st, have certainly proven the truth of my assertions.

It has been quite hard to get the average citizen to understand or to bring him to appreciate the fact that the struggle the radicals have precipitated is not an economic one. It is not a fight, in reality, for a fair wage in return for an honest day's work. Nor is it a fight to reduce the cost of living or for bettering living conditions. It is a social and political onslaught upon our form of government and upon the system of individual ownership, of private property—private ownership.

It matters not to the men directing this struggle that all attempts at common ownership; that all efforts and trials at socialization and nationalization of property have been failures, no matter where, when, or by what people they were tried.

It matters not to them that the right of a man to earn, acquire and possess property, real and personal, as his own, his individual holdings, was a stimulus for the Pilgrim Fathers and their descendants to battle with savage men, to conquer the wilderness, to establish homes and to build cities and towns; that the same incentive builded this great City-by-the-Sea, put the ships upon the ocean which sail from this harbor to ports in all parts of the world; that it built the great trans-continental railway systems over which are carried to you fruits from the Pacific Coast and which take back in return the products of your mills and factories.

Despite the fact that it was the incentive of private ownership under which all those things were done, under which, in incomparatively brief time, this country has been transformed from a vast wilderness into a mighty Republic of one hundred and ten millions of people; into a country where the inventive genius of man has been stimulated to its highest point; where civilization has reached its highest standard and where every man's success in life depends upon himself and his own efforts, those gentlemen who are seizing control of many of the labor unions are bent, nevertheless, upon substituting public for private ownership of all industry, in fact of all property.

All the things that have been accomplished under our present system count for naught with the Alien agitators who fled to this country from those in which they were born, attracted here by our boasted freedom and the splendid opportunities that this country offered

them. They and those native-born persons who have imbibed those Alien philosophies, are proposing to take his property from the man who has accumulated it through work, through thrift and often through privations, turn it over to, or at least divide it with, the professional agitators, the loafers, the lazy, the shiftless and the ne'er-dowells.

That doctrine, foreign-born, is the product of a German Mind. It appeals mightily to those who are unwilling to tread the long, steep road to economic independence, marked as it is by the slow and plodding steps of most Americans who are carrying on the trade and business of this country today.

Many honest and patriotic American workingmen have become enamored of and confused by the propositions put forward by their leaders, such as the "Plumb Plan," for nationalizing the Railways, but not all of them have been fooled, by any means. I am firmly of the opinion the number of members of the Railway Unions who favor the Plumb Plan are actually in the minority. You will find the Railway men are Americans and that they will not follow Mr. Plumb and his Nationalization Plan into that new political party launched at Chicago a few weeks ago. When that crowd wrote into their preliminary platform a demand for the repeal of the Espionage Act and for the release of the Anarchists and traitors who were aiding Germany and stabbing in the back the American soldiers, it revealed the spirit of its sponsors. It hung out a sign the American workingman will see at long range and he will avoid that party as he would a pestilence.

It is not unnatural that some members of labor organizations should be led astray and inveigled into supporting socialistic and communistic schemes put forward by ambitious and designing leaders who are getting control of some of the organizations. Have not some of us supported candidates and platforms of political parties either because we did not expend the time and labor necessary to thoroughly understand the questions involved or were unwilling to break away from the Political party with which we had been affiliated? We did not want to be branded as deserters or bolters.

How much harder is it for the member of labor unions to break away from them? He feels that the organization has brought him better wages and shorter hours. He has been educated into distrusting everybody except his own organization members and officers. Those officers and leaders of the more radical type have persistently impressed upon

them that all public officials, unless elected out of the labor organizations and controlled by them, are venal, corrupt and dominated by the corporations and capitalists. Those leaders have sought to convince the members of their organizations that by standing together they can control elections and make public officials do their bidding. Those leaders, backed as they claimed to be, by the votes of their members, have gone to your State Legislatures and to Congress and cowed the weak members into most disgraceful surrenders. You have seen those leaders sit in the galleries of the Senate and House of Representatives, with pencil in hand, noting the votes of members of those bodies, and frighten the members into passing the Adamson Law under a threat of tying up all the Railroads in the country. You have seen them intimidating Congress into writing into its Acts a provision exempting Labor Unions from the operations of the Statute and force into an appropriation bill a provision withholding the use of public money from the Department of Justice in the prosecution of labor unions or a labor conspiracy.

In my own State when I suggested to the Legislature the passage of an Anti-Red-Flag law I incurred the enmity of a lot of the radical leaders and when the bill actually came before the Legislature a great mass meeting was held by these radicals in the Capital City, addressed by Mother Jones and placards were displayed in a parade with appropriate threats and abuse—all on the theory we wanted to suppress free speech. The Legislature refused to be intimidated, for once, and the Anti-Red Flag measure became a law—the first in the country.

When I asked the Legislature to create a State Police Force, our National Guard having all been drafted into the Regular Army and sent abroad, the indignation of the Radicals knew no bounds. They came in droves and we were charged with wanting to Prussianize the State. The Lower House of the Legislature invited me to come before it and discuss the measure. I faced the galleries filled with Labor Leaders who were there to intimidate and bulldoze the Legislature into refusing to provide any military or police force with which we could quell a riot or suppress an insurrection. They wanted the State left absolutely without police protection. Again they failed, but this time politicians and crooked politics got into the fight and the margin by which law and order won—after a long-drawn out struggle, was entirely too small.

Those are the kinds of things that have been going on in many other States and in all too many instances politicians and public officials, afraid of the votes the labor leaders have claimed to control, have yielded humbly to their demands.

The leaders having thus demonstrated their power over public officials; having shown their followers that they can compel Congress and the State Legislatures to do their bidding, is it any wonder they can carry along many of their members when they put forth a plan to confiscate other people's property for the benefit of the Unions? Or when they propose to mortgage one hundred millions of people to the extent of twenty billions of dollars to turn over the railroads to two million employees?

Is it any wonder that the United Mine Workers should follow their radical leaders into a demand that we mortgage ourselves five or ten billion dollars more to buy for them the coal mines and in the meantime go on strike to enforce a demand for an increase in wages and a shortening of hours to thirty per week, which, if granted would either have meant confiscation of the mines or a burden of a billion dollars a year on the public in an increase in the price of coal?

And who is largely to blame for this condition—for this general situation?

Does not the largest share of the responsibility rest upon the heads of the public officials who have lacked the moral courage to stand against the threats of the radicals?

The average citizen, in the past, was sympathetic with the demands of labor, made so by corporation wrongs and abuses, in the old days, with which you are perfectly familiar and which I need not discuss now. The average citizen had put his foot down upon the public service corporations, which were chief among the offenders, and he put it down so hard that he just about stamped the life out of many of those corporations. The average citizen—representing the great American Public, will do the same thing to the labor unions if they persist in their attempts to run the country exclusively for their own interests.

Labor autocracy can no more be tolerated in this country than Corporation autocracy or German autocracy, to blot out which thousands of patriots young Americans yielded up their stainless lives.

So, when we reflect upon who has brought us to the present pass, should not all the people who love this country, all who believe in the Constitution and all for which it stands, make a solemn compact

among themselves that they will not support any man for a public position who is not for America and pure and unadulterated Americanism first, last and all the time? And who does not possess the courage to defy those, under whatever name they masquerade, who are seeking to destroy our form of Government no matter whether that destruction be planned by force or through the enactment of laws, State or National, repugnant to our Constitution, our form of Government, its institutions and its ideals?

Nearly one hundred years ago a great Virginian, James Monroe, in a message to Congress announced to Europe that she must keep hands off this continent. Though this nation was then in its infancy the autocracies of Europe knew better than to defy the Monroe doctrine. America, North and South, from that day has been free from European interference, except when Maximillian set up shop in Mexico, at a time when this country was involved in a great Civil War.

Not being able to tear down our governmental structure set up by Washington and Adams, Jefferson and Hamilton and their compatriots, the agitators and theorists; the Bolsheviks and I. W. W.'s. that have been spewed upon our shores by the Old World, aided by their converts here, have started out to wreck it by "boring from within." They came here to find freedom and get big wages. They have decided they want license instead of liberty, and your property instead of work and wages.

While the true Americans have been busy at their work these foreign-born agitators and their converts have been pouring a stream of poison into the veins of organized labor and getting their Fitzgeralds and Fosters at the heads of some of the unions. So persistent, so ingenious and so adroit have they been that they were making some headway toward the accomplishment of their purpose before Americans began to get awake and look around. They are waking up now, however, and beginning to take a hand. They have slept so long they can't undo in a day all the enemies of Americanism have done in the past ten years. But when the American people do once start they do a job well and they do it quickly. Germany can give evidence on that point.

Now, gentlemen, being aroused to what is going on, every true American, whether he be a public official or a private citizen must be outspoken and active in counteracting the enormous amount of dan-

gerous propaganda that is being carried on, the hatching places for which are here in New York and in Chicago.

It is our duty to remove all Governmental, industrial and social wrongs, not only because they are seized upon to prove the case of the agitator, but because they are wrongs.

Justice, Righteousness and Fair Dealing must be our rule of conduct, collectively and individually. Reason and logic, if pressed and persisted in, will counteract and overcome Sophistry, Demagoguery and Bolshevik teaching among Americans.

Employers should not seize upon mistakes of labor organizations in an effort to break down and destroy the unions. Such attempts would prolong the social unrest and industrial disturbances from which the country has been suffering because of innumerable and unnecessary strikes. Collective bargaining does not necessarily mean the closed shop any more than it means the socialization or nationalization of industries. The closed shop is collective bargaining carried to the extreme—union autoeracy.

Labor Unions have come to stay. There is nothing to be gained by closing our eyes to that fact. They are just as much a part of our economic and industrial life as are corporations and combinations of capital. Nobody disputes the right of men to put their capital together, much or little, in the shape of a partnership or a corporation, but when they create a concern so big that it constitutes a monopoly and becomes a menace to the public; or when it begins to hamper or restrain commerce, the Government, through the orderly processes of the courts, steps in and calls a halt. It has done that not only in dealing with Railway combinations, but with industrial combinations as well.

Labor combinations should and must be dealt with in the same way. It is all right not to regard or treat labor as a commodity in the ordinary sense and under ordinary conditions. The rights of workers to organize for their mutual protection and benefit can not be denied. The right of a man, or of several men, to quit work is inherent, but when any combination of men, whether investors or workers, is so large and powerful as to become a public menace; or when, by their acts they threaten the public welfare, the Government is bound to step in and deal with them. Not to do so is for the Government to abdicate or surrender to a corporation or a labor union, as the case may be.

There can be no fixed standard or measure to judge when a corpora-

tion or a labor union becomes a menace or evolves into a conspiracy. That can not be settled by Statute nor by any arbitrary rule. The "Rule of Reason" is the only rule applicable and it is just as applicable in the one case as in the other.

The members of Labor Unions must come to understand that no other rule or policy can be tolerated. The fact is they never would have misunderstood it had not their leaders intimidated Congress and State Legislatures into passing exemption statutes that have led some of them to believe they are above the laws entirely; that their organizations are supreme.

As for the Aliens among us: No matter whether they are numbered by the hundreds or by the thousands, if they don't like our form of Government they should be shipped back in short order. It seems to have been the practice to send them down here to Ellis Island and turn them out on bond, allowing them to go on with their Revolutionary work while their cases were finally determined. I observe that men under indictment for criminal anarchy have been holding mass meetings here in your city.

That won't do. **If our laws are not sufficient to deal with those gentlemen, whether they be few or many, we must enact others.**

Then, with these enemies within our gates, we must not only strengthen our military forces, but we must pay our soldiers and sailors commensurate with the work they do. It must be made attractive for high-class, native-born Americans to join our Military and Naval forces. Despite the fact our millions of American soldiers served us in the Great War at a mere pittance while slackers were striking, dissatisfied with the enormous wages they were receiving in safety, here at home, yet these soldiers who made that great sacrifice are banding themselves together into the American Legion as the great bulwark of protection of our liberties and our freedom. The officers and men in our Army and Navy are so grossly underpaid it is a wonder there is a single recruit. This country will have need of them before the menace of Bolshevism has been dispelled. Congress should see to it that our Military force is made not the biggest, but the best paid and best treated in all the world.

Who are to do these things?

Your public officials, you say?

But they will do them only if you and the other Americans put aside

partisanship and pick men of courage and of patriotism. Then, having done that it is still not enough.

You must stand behind those public officials when they are right and protect them against the onslaughts of the enemies of your country and of society. Some of these attacks are very adroit and very deceptive. They are calculated to deceive the people. Many good men in public office, unsupported, weaken under fire of radical propaganda.

Above all, true Americans, those whose forbears made this country habitable; those whose ancestors fought for its freedom and to establish its Government, whether they be the descendants of the Pilgrims, the Puritans or the Dutch of New Amsterdam, on the one hand, or the descendants of the Cavaliers and the Mountaineers of Virginia or the Huguenots of the Carolinas on the other hand, must get together in spirit and in purpose if not in body and swear by the memory of our forefathers that this Government and its institutions will be preserved—a Democracy pure and undefiled—and that class rule, whether by rich or poor will not be instituted or permitted here in this land of freedom for all.

