

Speech before
Polish National Alliance of Brooklyn, New York
New York City
February 12, 1939

Believe me I am really pleased and really happy to be here with you this evening.

I am happy because I can personally extend my congratulations to your organization as a whole and to each and every individual member as well as your officers and at the same time express my best wishes for your continued activity in the interest of our future welfare.

For me it is always a pleasure to meet people - particularly to meet people who have an unselfish purpose in what they do.

How true - that there is so much to be done - and yet there are so few to do it that in order that we may really succeed we must work together - we must work with others - and in harmony.

We can all admit that no individual should isolate himself. We can all admit that we must be a coherent part of one whole. We also know that to solve our problems we need cooperation - effective cooperation. We need a quiet but steady giving of ourselves - of our physical, mental and moral energies.

I don't want to become oratorical - I don't wish to be carried away by sentiment and repeat the same old truths that you and I have heard so often. Rather I want to be frank - realistic. I know that to give, beautiful and commendable as it is in itself, is not always as easy to do as it is easy for the after-dinner speaker to say.

We all know that life is a struggle, but on the other hand, we also know that struggles really build men. The more difficult it is to attain a certain goal - whatever it is - and the more we have to exert ourselves and use our faculties, the stronger these faculties become, and the satisfaction that finally comes to us - to you and me - when we have attained this goal is not so much in the attainment of the goal, but in the mental and moral strength we have gained as we fought obstacle after obstacle, always cooperating with others - always aiding others.

We have much to work with. For example we point with pride to our United States citizenship. This pride is justified. We point with pride to our ancestors. We need make no apologies for either.

As a matter of fact we all play a part in the economy of this country, Yours is a very important part. You make your contribution by physical, mental and moral effort each day in order that you may live happily and in order that others may benefit by the results of your efforts, and finally in order that your sons and your daughters may succeed, and in order that each generation may go higher - higher than the preceding generation. Those that follow us must begin where we leave off, otherwise all that we do is wasted.

We have so many problems that are yet unsolved. Perhaps your son or your daughter will help in the solution of these problems. Perhaps some one here present will some day - perhaps soon - go to high places and assume great responsibilities and thus aid in the solution of these problems.

Isn't it inspiring to see your sons and daughters striving to make a place for themselves in the ranks of our social, economic and political life?

After all, the truth is that you look for the realization of your dreams in your son and in your daughter. It is plain, therefore, that nothing should be left undone to aid them in their search for knowledge, for the more they know, the more they can accomplish, and the more they accomplish, the greater the monument to your memory!

It is not sufficient for them to know, for education is not enough. Hard and unselfish work is required. There are trials and there are tribulations, and when these come they must be overcome; for, as you know, there are times when each of us feel that we just can not go on, and it is then that we have to show what we are made of. Let us give youth a chance to assume responsibility and make contacts in all spheres and strata of life.

Many people start out well, but only a few - passing all obstacles - finish well, and therefore each individual, each young man, each young woman is entitled to that chance to show what they can do.

By doing what we know is ours to do, we create within ourselves a feeling of contentment, which is a great comfort to us in our daily struggles. It was written that -

"Contentment lies not in the enjoyment of ease - a life of luxury - but comes only to him that labors and overcomes - to him that performs the task in hand and reaps the satisfaction of work well done."

I am afraid that I have been carried away by feeling, but again to return to the realistic, may I suggest that we re-dedicate ourselves to serve others - re-dedicate ourselves to our own work, whatever it is - re-dedicate ourselves to the education of the youth and re-dedicate ourselves to a loyalty to these United States, a loyalty that will never be questioned by even the most extreme critic. Let us also re-dedicate ourselves to the ideals of our fathers and mothers and their fathers and mothers - a way back - for generations - for they, or their spirit, if no one else, always protect us and guide us from our cradle to our grave.

Having done that we can easily continue our everyday work - striving constantly, but going higher and higher.