

000669

000669

John Kennedy

M.K. Monroney
Sen. McCarthy
colleagues on all

my mother
my sister Frances

Mrs J. (Muriel)
up Kise

Testimonial Luncheon
Sheraton Carlton Hotel
12:30 P.M.
March 23, 1960

Wise

Indep. Businessman

Running

Against a
Chain Store!

Scrawl

All of you, ~~I know~~, are busy people, and I am grateful

that you have spared the time to meet with me here.

I have, as you know, been more than somewhat preoccupied

myself. But I shall never be too busy, I hope, for

quiet moments of sober meditation - meditation on the

place of this beloved nation of ours in the world and

in history.

These are troubled ~~thoughts~~ ^{times}, my friends. I see

distressing evidence that the confidence of other peoples

in our leadership - even that of our closest allies - is

ebbing. And I fear that this is because we lack confidence

in ourselves and in the future.

Problems
a
opportunities
Liberalism
Positivism

000670

It seems to me that we spoke out with more inner
certainty and a surer command of humanity's respect in
our early days as a nation - when a few million Americans
lived on the edge of a vast wilderness.

Some 134 years ago the people of this city were preparing
to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of
Independence. The elected mayor of Washington invited Thomas
Jefferson to be the city's guest of honor.

Note that I said the elected mayor. The people of
Washington then governed themselves, and I hope we shall soon
turn this particular clock back!

(This is one clock
we should turn back)

Jefferson replied that he was so "worn down with age,
infirmity, and pain" that he was "scarcely able to walk from
one room to another." But his faith in the principles of 1776,

Elected
Mayor

these Principles
his confidence that ~~they~~ were valid not only for America but
for the whole world, remained as bright as ever as he wrote
these words - the last that were to come from his immortal pen:

"All eyes are opened, or are opening, to the rights of
man. The general spread of science has already laid open to
every view the palpable truth that the mass of mankind has
not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few,
booted and spurred ready to ride them ..."

Here is
the theme
for
today

What a transformation it would work in America's position
in the world today if its living leaders had a fraction of the
faith and the eloquence of the dying Jefferson!

He spoke for change and progress - the very law of life.
He knew that the one thing in history which does not, which
cannot, endure is the status quo.

-4-

Now, after the dismal nightmare of McCarthyism, we Americans, heirs to the most dynamic tradition in the western world, seem to have fallen into a deep and all but dreamless slumber.

Like King Canute, we seem to feel that the tides of history will stop to suit our comfort and our status quo.

If we are unwilling to make history, others will write it for us - and they will be, for our children and our children's children, saddening pages to read.

Yet we have, as we have shown again and again, the capacity for greatness. What we lack is the leadership to arouse us and to rally our forces for the grave tests ahead.

The world, as you have rightly said, "cries out for bold and imaginative American leadership."

The greatest challenge in American political life is to offer such leadership.

In all humility, I take it that you have thanked me today for trying to - and I can think of no more convincing way to show my gratitude than to keep on trying.

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