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ADDRESS BY HON. W. G. McADOO, SECRETARY OF THE
TREASURY,

AT MADISON HIGH SCHOOL,
MADISON, WIS., OCTOBER 3, 1917.

Gov. Phillips, young ladies, and gentlemen: I esteem it a great privilege to meet you and to say a few words to you. It is an unexpected pleasure, because as I go about the country on the important mission which the Government has confided to me I find that my fate is wrapped up more with grown people than with young people, and, being an old person myself, I naturally want to get younger, so I am only too glad when I am thrown with the younger element.

As I heard that inspiring song you sang a moment ago with such spirit and enthusiasm, my heart swelled anew with pride that I am an American citizen. "On America," that is the cry: "On America," to save not alone America, but civilization in the world.

We have a great task before us, young ladies and young gentlemen. The burden of that task rests upon those who have attained their majority, but they are fighting not alone for themselves and for those who are older than they; they are fighting more for you than for anybody else. The eyes of a nation must always be to the future, and the future of a nation always rests upon the shoulders, as well as in the spirit, of the young who are coming on. America's fate lies in your hands. What we transmit to you, you in turn must transmit to succeeding generations. It is therefore of essential importance that the spirit of the Nation should always be kept at the highest elevation, that the ideals of a nation should be of the most superlative character, that America's idealism and America's principles should be transmitted by us untarnished and as pure as they came to us from our noble ancestors whose blood and valor and courage created this great and free democracy.

It is because that democracy is imperiled, that civilization itself has been thrown into the balance by the barbarities of one of the greatest and most despotic military powers ever organized upon the face of the earth, that noble America, free America, the quintessence of the spirit of modern democracy, in the face of a challenge from

the greatest military despotism of all time, is carrying forward with confidence and with absolute certainty of ultimate victory the banner which waves over the land of the free and the homes of the brave.

We want to carry our ideals throughout the world, but while we are doing that we want to make America safe for you, for the young people, for our children and our children's children. We must be animated in this war by the spirit of one of the noblest patriots ever produced an American, who gave utterance to the most immortal sentiment ever expressed, that splendid patriot of the Revolution, Nathan Hale, who, when standing in the shadow of an ignominious death, condemned by the enemies of his country as a spy, said proudly: "My only regret is that I have but one life to give for my country." That is the sentiment that must pervade America to-day. I know it is the sentiment that does pervade America to-day. I know it is the sentiment and the spirit of every boy and girl in this room. It must be the treasured sentiment of America, the slogan of its citizenship for all time. If we live up to it, America will be invincible!

And let me say to you that America will never enlist in any cause that is not a worthy one. She has never fought except for freedom. In 1776 we went to war with Great Britain to achieve our independence, and we won it after years of terrible struggles and hardships under the heroic Continental Army under the command of that greatest of Americans, George Washington. In 1812 we went to war again—and for what? To secure the freedom of the seas, a right so essential to America's independence and national security, so absolutely vital to her prosperity as a people, that we could never surrender that right without fighting to the death for it. That is the right that is being challenged in this war by the military despot of Europe, the right of America to the free use of the highways of the world. We can never surrender that right. We must fight for it if we in America would be safe. We must fight for it if we are going to transmit to you young people unimpaired the heritage of our forefathers. We must fight for it to vindicate the rules of humanity and international law, and while doing that, to restore the light of civilization in the world, a light which the barbarities of the German Kaiser have practically extinguished. In 1861 we went to war again—for what? Again for human freedom. We went to war to settle that issue, and again the side which espoused the cause of human freedom won. In 1898 we went to war again—for what? Human freedom. We went to war to disenslave oppressed Cuba. We had no motive but an altruistic one. We did not ask anything from Cuba. We expended American blood and treasure to liberate Cuba, and we set her up as an independent republic, and she is an independent republic to-day. The seed we planted in

the ~~heart~~ of the Cubans has borne fruit; the flower of liberty has since grown to full blossom, because no sooner had America been drawn into this war against military despotism, the very kind Cuba had suffered from and from which we had rescued her, than valiant, noble Cuba instantly declared war against the Kaiser and aligned herself with America, the champion of liberty throughout the world.

Again we are at war—for what? For liberty, for freedom; for the right of the smallest nation equally with the greatest to live its own life and to have that life determined by the will of its own people; for the freedom of the seas, so that all nations may have unmolested intercourse with each other in the peaceful pursuit of legitimate commerce. Because our liberties have been challenged and our rights as a people have been violated, we are again at war, and again we shall win this war for human freedom and universal democracy. Those are the things for which we fight; those are the things we must accomplish, that we must achieve.

The greatest sacrifice that any man can make for his country is to give his life for his country. It is the supreme sacrifice. We owe everything to our brave and glorious men who are now being marshaled in training camps and prepared for the supreme effort in this war. A duty devolves upon us who remain at home. That duty is to see that those men are supplied with everything that the great heart of America can provide to make them strong in the fight. We must support them no matter what the cost to us. If they are willing to sacrifice their lives upon the battle field for us, are we who stay behind unwilling to sacrifice something of our convenience, something of our comfort, to give up something that we enjoy every day, in order that we may give them more for the fight? No, ten thousand times No! We, the civil population, who stay behind, old and young alike, must devote ourselves daily and hourly to the task of saving, economizing, and sacrificing comfort, convenience, life itself with the same prodigality that our soldiers upon the battle field and our gallant tars upon our battleships are willing to make for us. That is the duty of the hour.

Every boy and girl in this room can do a noble part. The Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts of this country have been doing splendid work. Let everyone be animated by the thought that every penny you save that you would otherwise spend upon pleasure of any kind—pleasures of dress or of appetite—everything that you save of that character and put away for the purpose of investing in these bonds of your Government is a direct help to every soldier and sailor who is risking his health and all that is dearest to him in this conflict. You can all do that much.

There are other things you can do. You can maintain and uphold the American spirit. By your example you can make those who are

less fortunately situated than you imagine that spirit which is the part.

Oh, my young friends, can you think of what is happening in Europe now? As you sit here happy, contented, care free, without anything to disturb your repose or your comfort, can you think of what is happening in those desolated homes of Europe, in Belgium, in France, the horrors, the blackness of the night there, without food, without fuel in the terrible winters through which they must pass, men being blown to atoms by shells, others grievously wounded and being rescued by noble women of the Red Cross, gallant men driving ambulances into the jaws of death to drag the wounded from the battle fields and take them to the hospitals where they may receive the ministrations of angels of mercy. Many may be saved; but some will come out sightless, armless, legless, or tongueless, and yet compelled to live? To live for what? To live upon the satisfaction alone that they have sacrificed for liberty and civilization in the world. The blackness of night is upon Europe—brought there by whom? By a military autocrat—the Kaiser—who brought this terrible curse upon mankind. Isn't it a reflection on the civilization of this day that any one man should have the power to plunge the world into this horrible abyss of suffering and disaster? That is the thing—military autocracy—we have got to destroy, because democracies are incapable of that sort of thing. Where peoples are self-governing, where they are free, where they determine their own lives they are incapable of the commission of such colossal crimes.

Those stricken people in Europe, in the blackness of three years of night and suffering, with hope almost destroyed, with the talons of despair clutching at their hearts, are suddenly revived—by what? A light, this time in the West, instead of in the East. What is it? America—America to the rescue, holding aloft the torch of liberty again, dispelling despair and illuminating the dark recesses of the night and bring the assurance of peace to agonized humanity. That is our mission, a glorious mission for old America and young America; and, by God's help, we shall soon succeed!

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