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Speeches*

REMARKS BY GOVERNOR JAMES B. EDWARDS

OSPAC FIFTH ANNIVERSARY LUNCHEON ADDRESS

My good friend Dr. Krogh, other friends on the Board, members and guests. It's been with a great deal of regret that I have not been present at our last two annual gatherings. I am delighted, however, to be back home with you on this occasion.

**Degen - 3F Speech

I have tried to stay abreast of our specialty's progress through reading the ASOS Forum, The Journal of Oral Surgery and the Newsgrams. They have kept me informed and I have used a lot of the material in my talks to different groups around the country.

The progress we are making is most important, but I am particularly impressed with the statesmanship that has been exercised in furthering the purposes of the ASOS. This stands out as an example for other organizations to emulate.

As an elected official who has not forgotten the challenges involved in the daily delivery of oral surgery care, I would like to offer some comments. I am convinced that we must continue to expand our society's activities in the legislative arena, both at the state and National levels. This political arm (OSPAC) is only a tool to help carry out our efforts. It is up to each of us to devote some personal time to furthering our cause.

****We should be leaders - Education/Preparation**

In a way, I feel like I'm talking to the wrong group of our society members, because I suspect that virtually all of you in this room have supported OSPAC. Those of our ranks we need to reach are the "Not present," who don't understand OSPAC and don't support its purposes.

It's like the preacher preaching to his congregation. Those are probably the ones that need it least. (Preacher - widow story)

May I ask each of you to make a special effort to contact our members in your areas and ask them to support OSPAC - - tell them of its activities and how important it is - - And the great work we've done.

Neither the ASOS nor the ADA make the laws for our respective states and nation, but as members you have to practice under those laws, and more - importantly under the socio-economic pressures that those laws create. These often lead to results that are not in the best interest of our patients - - or our profession.

Resolutions may be adopted by the ASOS House of delegates all day long, but they have a limited influence on legislators. They are too often transmitted by men to those who have no personal relationships or often any understanding of each others problems.

Our future is not at all bright, unless practicing Oral Surgeons - - individually and collectively, in an organized and knowledgeable manner, begin to actively participate in politics.

Many of us look upon politics as dirty, and beneath the dignity of our professional status. We shy away from being active in political action committees or holding membership in a political party of our choice.

Let me remind you that there is nothing in Federal or State statutes, the ADA's Principles of Ethics, or the Code of Professional Conduct of the ASOS that prohibits you from political participation of any kind.

OSPAC is bipartisan and composed of members interested in awakening their colleagues and others to legislation that effects our profession and our ability to serve the public.

It has promoted better relations with our lawmakers, through personal contact, and support of those candidates that first have been made aware and then become interested in Oral Surgery and the best interest of the public.

OSPAC because of its structure has more freedom of action as a separate non-profit corporation. By involving our members at the local level, we have stimulated a keener interest and developed in our membership a better understanding of how the political system actually works.

Unless Oral Surgery and Dentistry continue to develop an army of politically interested and involved members, the thrust and understanding of the dental professions, and the challenge involved in delivering health care will continue to be misunderstood, ignored, or simply passed by, because of ever growing

pressures on the legislators' time, by powerful organized efforts from groups such as unions.

** (Union lobby story)

OSPAC has been successful in its efforts within the policies made by the ASOS, and it has had a remarkable influence in obtaining interest and understanding by many members of congress, relative to our legislative goals. Our record has been outstanding; however, for some reason, I can't understand, fewer than 60% of our membership contributed to OSPAC. Because of this apathy, our political arm has regrettably been limited in its capacity to provide contributions that your OSPAC Board knows would be highly desirable.

It's true, each of us have this engrained "posture of professionalism" which must be maintained in our communities. But need this self-imposed image encroach upon our becoming involved in the political process?

Whether we like it or not, ladies and gentlemen,
the political process is directly responsible for the
way things are. May I ask each of you - - are you
happy with the way things are in America?

Are you happy with the responsiveness (or should
I say lack of responsiveness of government at all
levels)?

Are you happy with the manner in which your
tax dollars are being spent?

Or are you concerned by the fact that
government today owes over \$840 Billion. The interest
on this money comes to \$84 Billion/Year which consumes
nearly 81% of all the capital in America - - leaving
only about 19% of our usual capital for our great
industrial nation to operate with. Is there any wonder
that interest rates are so high, or that industries
can't afford to borrow money to expand their plants,
their processes, their new techniques, thus creating

new jobs and new products for an improved life style and a better all 'round economy. ** (Balanced budget Amendment to Constitution).

Are you happy with the irresponsible over-regulation by Government, not only of our profession, but of every aspect of our lives? Over-regulation caused by 63,000 bureaucrats in Washington in regulatory agencies alone. Over-regulation that has led to severe domestic energy shortages that have required this great nation to depend on the whims and fancies of foreign powers for future energy supplies. Over-regulation that is responsible for about 4% of today's inflation.

Are you happy with the debate going on as to whether we're number one in the world militarily. So far as I am concerned - if there is even a question in this field - we need to go to work and correct it - today. *(Military expenditure is double dollar)
(Priorities - - to human needs)

Are you happy with the arrogance of our elected officials in the Congress who continue the same growth of the bureaucracy and the same irresponsible expenditures of our tax dollars - - and at the same time - - using our own money, continue to pass laws that erode our personal freedoms at an astonishing rate?

I know I'm not happy about these things, and I don't believe you are either. The only way to change them is for each of us to get up off our apathy, and become involved in the political processes at every level. (Po II those present - who participated?)

Soltzhenitsyn, the great Russian philosopher, and writer, who I refer to as a latter day Paul Revere, has tried to warn us of today's dangers.

He says "you would think that democracies would last forever, but democracies are like small islands in an immense river of history. The water is always rising." He also said that if America is to survive, we must develop a new National Resolve , a new determination - - -

As we leave this meeting, and as we close out the last half of this our 200th birthday, let's rededicate ourselves to those great principles that brought our nation out of a wilderness to what it is today - - the greatest nation in the history of mankind. Fervent political activity created America, sound political activity has guided her through the turbulent years and only responsible political activity can keep her strong, free, and vigorous.

Let's arise to the challenge, for this is indeed a year of National destiny.