

54 Remarks on Receiving the Boy Scouts' Annual Report to the Nation. *February 22, 1973*

I WANT to express my appreciation to all of the delegation here, the outstanding representatives of Scouting in the United States, and I am glad you have finally recognized the importance of having some girls in Scouting, too.

Also, I want you to know that your projects are of very, very great interest to me personally and to all in the United States, I can assure you, including those who cover us in the press, because they have heard us often discuss the problem of drug abuse. They heard the speech, for example, last week of the problems of the environment. They, of course, are enormously interested in physical fitness. Our young people generally, and Scouts throughout this country, 6 million of them, and all of those who support them, are working toward those goals individually and voluntarily.

We, as a government, can do a great deal, but unless the people of the country cooperate, we can accomplish nothing.

I think there is no other organization—certainly there is none larger in the United States—which enlists more volunteers for these great goals than this one here.

The other thing I would like to say,

which I am sure all of you will appreciate, and particularly your mothers and fathers: This is the fifth time I have received this group, because, as you know, the President is the honorary president of the Boy Scouts of America. But this is the first time as President I have been able to receive you at a time when I could say to you, you no longer are confronted with the draft. You can have a choice now as to whether you want to enter the armed services. I hope some of you may, because it is a very honorable and important profession.

And also, it is the first time that I can meet with you, and I can say that the United States is at peace with all nations in the world. My greatest hope for you, in addition to progress on all of these fronts, which are so important at home, is that you and your brothers and your sons may grow up in a world of peace.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Norton Clapp, national president of the Boy Scouts of America, introduced a group of 16 Scouts who presented the 1972 report and emblems of Scouting to the President.