

The Speech of **Prime Minister A.K.Cajander** at Espilä Restaurant in Viipuri (Viborg) on August 12, 1939 at the end of large-scale military exercises of the Finnish Defence Forces.

Foreign guests: Swedish defence minister (1938-1945) Per Edvin Sköld and foreign military attachés in Finland.

The President of the Republic has asked me to extend his warm greetings to the army and its respected officer body.

Speaking on behalf of President Kallio, who himself has through radio and newspapers followed these large-scale military exercises, I extend his wish that these exercises have provided us with excellent lessons to be utilized in future as well as important suggestions for further development of our defence capability. Speaking on behalf of the President I present his wish that the maneuvers have been the pertinent tool in strengthening the trust and confidence in the army's ability for the defence and how it is prepared to the future and how it will develop itself even more deeply in its most important primary task, defence of the Fatherland.

Dear guests.

The people of Finland loves peace, quantitatively perhaps even more than someone who just cherishes this word on his or her lips instead of what we do. But the destiny has given us a country, where we don't have had a permanent peace. On the contrary, as far back as the history books tell, we have constantly within short intervals suffered from wars. The frontiers bear a constant memory on what it means to live close to the border, and how the war then has devastated half of their population. But despite of this, their people have been able to stand up again.

Our geographical situation has neither changed now. A threat for war still exists, especially in the present international situation. But now, after centuries, an important change in the situation has come true, we ourselves can decide how much, how strongly we prepare us against this threat of war. It is futile to deny that also we have ourselves been naive like most of the other peoples, who after the end of the Great War lulled themselves into a belief that some sort of everlasting peace and brotherhood between peoples has started. During the whole first part of our independency – if I may extend my criticism from the present point of view – we in great numbers neglected our defence. Only gradually the reality, where the world was heading for, dawned on us.

Fortunately, we did not wasted those years, not even from the defence's view-

point. We did not idle the years away, instead they were efficiently used to consolidate foundation of our independence. There were not many peoples, who have been able to show such a huge development almost on all sectors of human activity as the Finnish people has done during this short period of full independence.

So, this period of time was used to build a strong economic basis for our people. Rye production did grow two-fold during this period of time, wheat – well, a sort of newcomer at us - made it 34-fold, which means that on that sector we are nearly self-sufficient, the increase in dairy butter was 3-fold, cheese 4.5-fold, eggs more than 5-fold. The production value of pulp industry grew 6-fold in 20 years, in domestic industry production 3-fold. These are imposing figures that show what the independence means for a people. Also in the very region, where the maneuvers have now ended, the local economic base has been strengthened with so effective measures, that it is perhaps even stronger than in other parts of the country. With the word 'here' I especially mean the Vuoksenlaakso industrial site. But a huge development is going on also elsewhere in south-eastern Finland. This is the way to create opportunities for businesses in the borderlands. The huge upward trend in our economy has its base in free enterprise. Not even the best planned economy could have reached better results than this or to be able to surpass the self-operated free activities of ordinary citizens. But even so, however, we still have a lot of possibilities, even substantial ones, that still are inadequately utilized.

If we had been forced to accelerate our military preparations from the very beginning, we probably would have been now a nation in great need. We are not either now an especially wealthy nation, far from that, but anyway our wealth is now despite the years of depression completely different from that of 1918. Our national wealth is now at a level, where we have been able and are able to acquire military material totally differently in numbers from those times, and furthermore, we have a substantial capacity to manufacture them in our own country, which capability we then didn't have. And, the equipment – airplanes, anti-aircraft instruments, tanks etc. - if purchased then would have now mainly turned obsolete, or even very close to be totally ready to be scrapped. Furthermore, our capability to stand even a long-lasting war is totally different from those times, as our economy has developed strongly and is now better ready, when needed, to be adjusted for mobilization.

There is also another aspect for which we should be grateful for having this extra time to take breath. In 1918 we were a split broken nation, with extremely restricted ability to fight against any serious foreign threat. Now we are, on the whole, an unbroken nation, with nearly every member of it equally recognizing Finland as his own fatherland and is moreover ready to defend her. The value of this should not be overestimated but neither underestimated. A

unanimous nation without arms cannot work wonders but neither, even if armed to the teeth, can it resist external pressure, if it lacks internal coherence. Most important in this is that the integration found its way with trust without any external coercion or pressure. It would be naive to argue that the national unanimity has now reached its ultimate stage. It demands like armed preparations to be continuously strengthened. Both those defencenihilists, who are presently spreading their idealistic pacifism on our people, as well as those who desperately are trying to keep the 1918 sore open, are taking the heaviest responsibility of ever.

We should also keep in mind the enormous rise in general education level in our country. In 1917 there were less than 200,000 pupils in the general lowest level schools but 20 years later more than 400,000; likewise the number of pupils in secondary level schools and those passing the matriculation was doubled in twenty years. The rise of the general educational level and students attending institutions of higher education goes hand in hand with the increase of the national wealth. The significance of education among our people is indisputable. It is simply so that each citizen should be able to take advantage of his personal skills instead of being someone with no own will and acts only following the herd. This is important in the ordinary, may we say civilian life. No less important it is in the modern war in which every single soldier needs much more ability for individual judgment on various situations than before.

Also sports belong, in a way, to education. It is so popular in Finland that here, among this audience, it actually could be left without mentioning. In military education its significance is self-evident. Its worth mentioning that in 20 years the number of members in gymnastics and sports clubs has become 5-fold, as the number of sports grounds did, too. When speaking about the sports it might not be completely inappropriate to mention that the number of cars has grown from 1923 to 1937 12-fold, and lorries during the this period of time 19-fold despite number of horses has simultaneously grown considerably. For the defence point of view the numbers are not insignificant, the same applies to the substantial improvement of our road network, or the fact that interurban telephone lines have grown 38-fold in 20 years, and the number of radio listeners 4-fold in 10 years.

It still should be mentioned in the field of the country-wide social security the measures that aim at making tenants independent, getting tillage to the landless, better housing and livelihood for the underdog, employment and income for the unemployed, economic security for the elderly, and disabled people, are all aiming at getting rid of shortcomings and discontent in society, or if we examine this more from the viewpoint of defence policy, making the rear in a case of coming a "total" war more resistant against a break-up, especially at the border areas, so that people feel all this worthy of defence. We remember

the words of a great power man of stature: this means that we do not only have an army front on land, navy front on sea and air force front in the air but we will also have our domestic front internally. The longer the war endures, the more challenging the internal front might become. May Providence spare us from any domestic dispute in Finland at times of our destiny. - Much is done on the field of social reforms but there is much more to be done.

It may have sounded unnecessary to speak about this kind of things in this context. The way to harmony is simply not enough to defend the country. If we have just resorted to this, we might have rested with it very pleasantly – until we might suddenly wake up in front of the reality. But even this is true, we should not underestimate this enormous social development, which creates for an efficient defence policy essentially and totally different possibilities in comparison to those we had twenty years ago. But we should not leave it halfway. Under the present strained world situation we have to be prepared first of all with arms. I consider it not to be proper to evaluate this more here. I only say that it is wise to keep a cool head also in matters of rearming.

After describing our nation's way towards unanimity and integrity I will also emphasize our way to find a common policy in foreign affairs, or perhaps to be able to say that our opinions are now crystallized into a common consistent policy towards Scandinavia, a policy that Field Marshal Mannerheim personally advocated. Nothing seems to be permanent at least on the field of foreign policy but one thing is sure, strict adherence to neutrality, casting no eye to this or that great power, and a close mutual understanding and cooperation with Nordic countries, particularly with Sweden, offers us the best exit from the current situation in the world right now but only if we simultaneously keep in mind that to help oneself is the best policy, which means doing also by ourselves whatever we can to secure our own position. However, in some circles, the latest events may have cast doubts on suitability of the present trend and may have given occasion to seek other approaches but on the basis of those statements recently given by those in charge in several countries, it must be considered as having removed the factual basis from that kind of thinking.

The maneuvers now ended have been a national feat of strength. In this role they have been able to increase the army's fighting capability, and to show, where there are gaps in it and where it should be developed. In this way they have been able to increase the nation's trust in its armed forces and thus to itself.

I wish the best success to the Army of Finland and to its officers' skill and strength in this responsible task.

[Swedish as in the original text:]

För oss är det en synnerlig tillfredsställelse att bland oss se en av de högsta representanterna för det vördade Sveriges försvarsväsende, försvarsministern, Statsrådet Sköld, såsom ett övertygande bevis på det nära samförstånd och den vänskap, som råder mellan våra båda folk. Erfarenheten har ju också redan tydligt ådagalagt, att inträffande tilldragelser icke mera förmå rubba samförståndet våra två folk emellan.

Grunden för gemenskapen lades, om jag får citera skaldens ord, på Polens sand, på Narvas hed, på Lützens kullar, den beseglades i strider, där finnen stod sida vid sida med svensken, då Sverige-Finlands storhet skapades. Rätts- och samhällsordning, frihetskänsla samt karaktärsläggning och tänkesätt i övrigt länka våra folk samman sig emellan och med den övriga Norden. En hundraårig formell skilsmässa var ej heller i stånd att i sak skilja Finland från Sverige och Skandinavien.

Ett självständigt, fritt, med avseende å alla stormakter neutralt Finland, som samarbetar med de övriga nordiska folken och upprätthåller vänskapliga förbindelser med alla stater, isynnerhet med grannstaterna, motsvarar enligt vår övertygelse också bäst de varandra motsatta stormakts-grupperingarnas livsintressen.

Herr Statsråd! Jag hoppas, att Ni skall medföra angenäma minnen från Edert gästbesök i Finland samt en fast övertygelse om det allvar och den oböjliga uthållighet vi äro beslutna att bruka för bevakandet av vår rätt och för upprätthållandet av vår självständighet och vår neutralitet.

Messieurs les Représentants militaires étrangers, je tiens à vous saluer tres cordialement, en adressant mes salutations, en même temps, surtout aussi aux Etats scandinaves, représentés ici par des officiers supérieurs.

En qualité de spécialistes, vous avez suivi, avec connaissance de cause, les manoeuvres, qui, j'en suis persuadé vous ont offert quelque chose, de nature à vous intéresser.

J'espère que vous garderez un agréable souvenir, de ces journées d'été, dans la nature de la Carélie.

In conclusion I would like to extend my sincerest respect for Field Marshal Mannerheim, who despite his advanced age has tirelessly followed all the phases of the army maneuvers, the army, the nucleus for which he himself created at the dawn of our freedom and for the development of it to full battle worthiness he has devoted all his efforts in recent years.

[Translation from Finnish into English by Pauli Kruhse]