



MINISTER OF DEFENCE

Letter to the Scout Ball

Cleveland, May 11 2013

Ladies and Gentlemen, Debutantes, the Scout Community,

I wish to thank you for honoring me with your invitation to this marvelous event. Unfortunately, due to my official engagements I cannot be with you. Nevertheless, I should like to say a few words to greet this wonderful community, which has done so much for our continued existence and strengthening our solidarity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After the great dispersal, the flaring campfires surrounded by exiled scouts around the world did not go out. They did not go out, because the scouts believed in the words of Sándor Sik "in a few people holding hands, in brotherly words, in a comrade's grasp, in the creek which becomes first a stream then a river, giving life to a dead sea."

Your community translated the principle of faith, hope and charity into everyday practice in Hungarian. At one and the same time you served the life of the nation, the scout communities and each individual in these. It is no exaggeration to say that there are few such remarkable success stories in Hungarian history.

"Culture cannot be inherited. The tradition of our ancestors fades rapidly unless it is acquired time and again by each generation," Zoltán Kodály taught. This beautiful thought is one of the basic concepts of the "minstrel" scouts not only in Hungary but also here in the New World. The scouts spared neither their time, energy nor money to come together in the Hungarian language and Hungarian culture, to sing and recite poetry in Hungarian and to dance to Hungarian music. If need be, they travelled several hundred miles to take part in a jamboree or to organize camps to train scout leaders - to put it simply, just to meet. In the wake of these meetings the nation was no longer an abstract idea but a truly living community.