

John D. O'Brien, General Manager
Inland Manufacturing Division of the General Motors Corporation
Silver Anniversary Concert ~ Inland Children's Chorus
December 13, 1960 ~ Memorial Hall in Dayton, Ohio

From comments given at the 25th anniversary concert following one of the area's most damaging ice storms that left massive power outages.

Good evening! I've had the pleasure of welcoming an audience to the Inland Children's Chorus concerts on behalf of Inland Manufacturing Division of General Motors a great many times. But I don't think that I've ever stood before an audience that I wanted to say thank you to as much as I do tonight. You have all made a great effort and great sacrifices to come to encourage our children. And for that I thank you. We've always thought that the training the children got made them real troupers. And tonight, I think they have demonstrated that they are -- in the best tradition of the stage -- real troupers. There were 132 children that were scheduled to be here this evening for the concert. And we're awfully proud of the fact that there are 132 children here!

You know the Inland Children's Chorus is celebrating their Silver Anniversary. It was twenty-five years ago that it was formed. This is our twenty-fifth Christmas program. If any of you can recall twenty-five years ago, the economic outlook of the world was as dark as our outlook was tonight. It took great courage to start anything new. But we felt that there was a great value in giving an opportunity to the employee's children to become acquainted with good music, to learn and to recognize the importance of discipline and to recognize what could be accomplished by cooperating with effort with others and what the effort many combined and directed could do. We have not tried to make great musicians out of our children -- what we have tried to do was simple things: acquaint them with good music, subject them to discipline, and to teach them cooperation.

We have few traditions in this country, but you must remember our Constitution lacks sixteen years of being two hundred years old. Our Inland Children's Chorus is twenty-five years old. By European standards it would be ridiculous to speak of it as a tradition. But we're a new country. The Inland Children's Chorus was started forty-one years before the two-hundredth anniversary of our Constitution, so I feel that we can justifiably refer to it as a tradition. It may seem funny to you, but I hope you'll give a little thought to it. That a company dedicated making a product whose chief product depends upon dynamic obsolescence and change believe that tradition is important. Tradition of things that are basically sound and true is always important. We recognize that change for change alone is a fallacy. Change for improvement is what General Motors always recommended.

For the management of the Inland Manufacturing Division of General Motors, for the children, for Joe Geiger, Paul Jones, and all the Inland people who have worked so hard to make this concert a success, I have the privilege of wishing to all of you a Merry Christmas and thank you!

Complete audio available at InlandChorus.com[®]