



Message of Governor Rafael Hernández Colón, Before the
Puerto Rico Council, Boy Scouts of America, Hotel San
Juan, November 27, 1973.

(Note: The Governor will be introduced by Mr. Peter J. Serrallés,
President of the Puerto Rico Council.)

Thank you, Peter. Good afternoon fellow members of the Council.

As you are all very well aware we are undergoing a serious energy shortage here in Puerto Rico and on the mainland and elsewhere. Early this morning, with this thought uppermost in my mind, I was watching my children dashing about and literally bursting with energy. Naturally, the thought came to me that if we could possibly convert "children power" into electric power our troubles would be over. I am sure that in my own family the conversion of "boy power" alone would light La Fortaleza for at least the rest of this century.

Mindful of this meeting today, I also remembered this morning a young man who replaced me as Governor one day last February.

And I understand that this Scout Governor For A Day -- Juan Lorenzo Martínez -- has had an excellent record as an Eagle Scout and has since received national recognition.

It has come to my attention that there are new dimensions to the anniversary program this year, involving a great opportunity for the council, with my help, to acquaint the community at large of the importance of our outstanding scout training program.

As parents, we are all concerned about our children and the kind of world they are going to live in. Scouting has been recognized for many years as being the vanguard of helping the home, the school and the church to teach these ideals. As you know, I myself have been associated with the Puerto Rico Council for several years.

The boy scout movement has revamped its entire program, giving much more latitude for operation and making scouting more relevant to our times. The National Council of the Boy Scouts, for example, is assisting the Puerto Rico Council in securing translations of training courses and basic manuals.

I want to congratulate council president, Peter Serrallés, and the members of this board, the operating committees, commissioners staff, and all those who work at the district and unit levels for the great job being done here in Puerto Rico.

The fine record of this council has placed it near the top of the 540 councils in the United States. Last year, for example, 17.1 new units were organized per professional in Puerto Rico, compared to 1.6 units per professional on the mainland.

Another measurement of success is the amount of program material purchased by the scouts and the effectiveness of the program on the boy and his family.

The team of volunteers and professionals in the Puerto Rico Council are obviously doing excellent work in this area.

The Council has also doubled its membership in less than three years and it is important to know that it plans to more than double it in the next three years. Today, one out of 40 boys are involved in scouting.

By 1976 the goal is to have one out of every 10 boys registered in scouting.

Another achievement of the Puerto Rico Council that should not go unnoticed involves one of our foremost members. I am told that the cubbing program is one of the few events that can lure Manuel San Juan away from the cockfights.

Let me touch for a moment on the exploring program. It is the fastest growing teenage program in America. If you have not noticed the exhibition on exploring here, take a good look at it and see what these young men and women are doing. Last year the Explorer Olympics had to be closed three months ahead of deadline for entering because the facilities had been completely filled. Explorers from every state in the union participated in this physical fitness program.

Then there is "operation soar" (save our American resources): Since its beginning, scouting has been in the vanguard of conservation and to this day is the leading participant in the conservation projects that are completed each year. The Puerto Rico Council has one of the best ecology conservation programs for young people.

I have read also about the many "Boy Scout Clean-Up projects" and also a tin-can recycling project that over-produced their fondest expectations. When we see scouting doing these kinds of projects, we will remember to use our litter bag instead of the highways, beaches or parks to deposit our refuse.

An explorer program that has my special interest is "operation reach".

Operation Reach is an anti-drug program, with a "person-to-person" contact factor that is the key to the success of this program. It is a program that was developed by explorers and operated by explorers.

On November 9 this program was brought to my attention by Peter Serrallés and Delbert R. Hanks, the Scout Executive.

Yesterday, November 26, a contract was signed to provide the two professional directors necessary to start the program in the Puerto Rico Council. The project is funded by the Administración de Acción Juvenil. It will provide \$18,230 for the first half of 1974 subject to renewal next fiscal year depending on the availability of funds.

I have pledged to these gentlemen my full support for this project, and I urge the council to set the same kind of growth records in exploring as has been accomplished in other programs.

The Secretary of Education, Dr. Ramón Cruz, has pledged full support to the boy scouts council to take this program into every school. We must and will succeed with this kind of cooperation.

The Council has plans to establish a sound financial program for the future. I have agreed to serve as honorary chairman of this development campaign, which is to be launched after the first of the year. I shall be more than happy to help.

The meeting today is to establish the goal and make some

important decisions. All financial campaigns are difficult, but the citizens of Puerto Rico realize the tremendous value of scouting and I am sure they will support it.

In closing, let me address myself, not only to those here assembled, but to the many scouters who are not with us .

You are carrying out a vital task in preparing our children to best serve themselves and their communities both now and in the future. And your efforts and your concern are very much appreciated.

You have stimulated a great many people in scouting and because of your efforts you have helped to build a better tomorrow for Puerto Rico. It is a most important contribution.

Thank you.