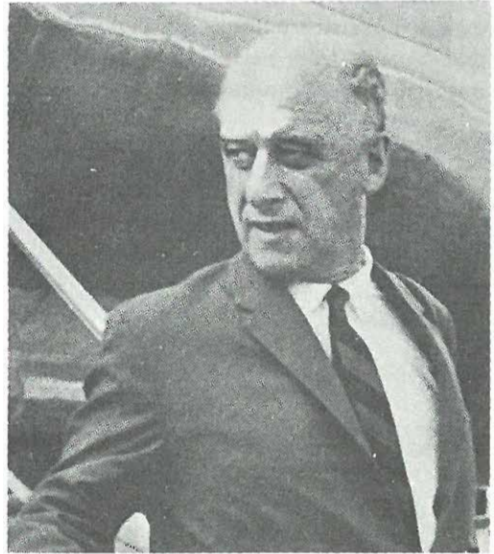


# FINNISH BICENTENNIAL GREETING

Greeting by Dr. Jorma Pohjanpalo, President of the Migration Institute Advisory Council and Vice-President of the Suomi-Seura, to the Finnish American Festival on 20th June 1976 at the Statue of Liberty, New York.

Twenty years ago, when I had the opportunity to look at the original parchment of the Declaration of Independence in Washington, I could not imagine that some day, in connection with the Bicentennial festivities of this mighty nation, I would have the honor to participate in the Finnish-American Festival, giving greetings from Finland. For Finns the U.S. Declaration of Independence is especially memorable because, among the signatories to this unique document of everlasting value, was one John Morton, a man of Finnish origin. Already in the early years of the American experience some Finns arrived in the United States primarily in search of a better living and of a brighter future for themselves and their descendants. Large scale emigration from Finland to America began only after the middle of the last century, and reached its peak in the beginning of the current century, before World War I. Contacts with Finland were maintained by lively correspondence. Gradually Finns in America subscribed to Finnish newspapers and magazines. At the end of the last century an agency for the sale of Finnish literature was also established. Church activities were of great importance in the social lives of the immigrants, particularly in the earlier times. It did not take long before temperance societies, workers' associations and other associations were established for maintaining and developing their various interests. American Finnish publishing activities, in which the press forms the



mainstay of literature, for a long time has played an important part as cultural factor and link between the two countries.

Suomi-Seura, which next year will celebrate its 50th anniversary, is a non-political national organization. It has about 70 000 members, of which a great number live in the United States. The main task of this active society is to maintain close and strong ties between Finns in Finland and abroad. For example, we run charter flights between Finland and North America. Last year we operated 39 flights and carried 7 500 people.

I feel most happy and honored to be able to bring you, dear friends, our most cordial greetings on this splendid occasion, and the very best wishes for all your future activities. It is notable indeed that you, in greater numbers than ever before, have assembled today at this memorable festival, which fittingly is being held at the foot of the Statue of Liberty.