Mrs. FINE. Mr. Speaker, under leave granted me by unanimous consent, I include the following address made by Hon. Oscar R. Ewing, the Federal Security Administrator, on the occasion of the dedication ceremonies for the Hebrew Home for the Aged, 5901 Palisade Avenue, Riverdale, Bronx, N. Y., on Sunday afternoon, September 16, 1951.

I am truly honored to be with you this afternoon. In recent years, since I have been in Washington, I have become more and more interested in the problems of aging in America. But I have an even more personal interest in this institution here in Riverdale. I live in Riverdale, too. My home is only a few blocks from here. So I welcome the Hebrew Home for the Aged, and its residents, as neighbors. I am sure they will be good neighbors, and I am proud to have them here.

This new home is a symbol of the quiet revolution that is going on in the make-up of our Nation. Our population is changing swiftly and inexorably. People live longer today than ever in our history because the great advances in science and the progress in human well-being have made longer lives possible for us. We have more older people in the United States than ever before. And this is even more important: the proportion of older people in our population is steadily growing.

It is still too early for us to fully aware of what this great change will mean to our country. But we do know this: that it will have an effect on our whole way of life, on our work, our production, our leisure time, our family relationships, and on all of the other things, big and little, that make up our lives.

We have stood before the world as a young and vigorous nation, taking from the Old World the best it had to offer and fusing in this New World a new and youthful civilization of our own. Now we have grown out of the American adolescence. We are mature today.

Throughout our history we have been a lucky people. When we went through the birth pangs of the Republic we were fortunate enough to have the leadership of a remarkable generation of great men—Washington and Jefferson and Madison and Hayn Salomon and Adams and a host of others. In the travail of fraternal warfare we produced a great humanitarian President, Abraham Lincoln. In the depths of the depression we found new hope and new confidence in the leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt. These were personalities who made their mark on our times; we produced them in the very nick of time.

But now our country is faced with a new responsibility, heavier and more far-reaching than ever before. We are confronted with the necessity of taking the leadership of the free world in a world-wide struggle of ideologies. Not till 10 years ago had history thrust us so squarely into the very middle of the maelstrom of international tensions. Now we are engaged in a great battle for peace, a battle that calls upon all our resources—material, physical, intellectual. The whole world of freedom—and of men who yearn for freedom—looks to us for mature leadership.

And once again we have been the benefactors of good fortune. In his own inescrutable way God has granted us the great gift of maturity even as we became launched on the most difficult, most dangerous, most significant period in all our history. The nature of our population has changed, and, with the increasing level of maturity, of stamina, of experience, of calmness, we face the complexities of our time better fortified than ever in all our history.

But this revolution of the birthdays has also raised many problems which we have yet to solve. Mostly, they are human problems. We have not yet learned how to adjust ourselves to the new age structure of our population. We have not yet succeeded in adapting ourselves to the needs of older people or in helping them adapt in turn to the society in which they live. To find the answers to these problems is one of our greatest challenges, and particularly for those institutions which are devoted to the welfare of humanity.

I need not tell you that Americans of the Jewish faith have earned for themselves an enviable reputation in the humanities. Your fellow citizens know that American Jews have for generations been in the forefront of the philanthropies, the humanitarian movements, the organizations for human welfare, that are so plentiful in America. It is hardly surprising that Jewish groups should also be among those working hardest on the problems of aging in America. National organizations like the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds and...
Of course, people didn’t live as long as they often have a problem about the old folks. Daism and which we who are Christians call not a monument, but a vessel of love, a living symbol of that great precept which an tho Golden Rule: Do unto others as you wish to be like this. We made them that way.

But when we see old people who live listlessly, drawn into themselves, silent, utterly dependent, vegetating until death seems like mercy, then we must say to ourselves, “They did not wish to be like this. We made them that way.”

But when we see older people, overcoming the infirmities of advancing years, happy and active, with a continuing interest in the life around them, busy at tasks that are congenial to them, devoting themselves earnestly to their prayers and their families and their everyday activities, then we have a right to say, “We helped them find the satisfactions of the later years. We have learned from them, and we have taught them. They are a part of us, and we of them. Here, in this lovely Hebrew Home for the Aged, we have searched for the way in which the new years that we have added to our lives may be long, fruitful, happy years. Here is a place where we can fulfill the bright hope that lies in every human heart, the hope that the best years of our lives lie in the future, not in the past.”

In this spirit, we dedicate the new Hebrew Home for the Aged. We dedicate it, in all humility, as a house of hope, a house of promise, a house of fulfillment. May all who come here discover new life and new happiness. May they find here that greatest of human aspirations: peace of mind and peace of soul.