

These men were not theorizing; they were attacking evils and righting wrongs which had come to their attention first hand. Reference is made to such bills as compulsory collection of wages, various amendments to the workmen's compensation and child labor laws, changes in the laws in the field of domestic relations, necessary amendments to the laws pertaining to children generally and juvenile delinquents in particular, waiver of court costs in certain cases, the enactment of the retail installment sales bill and the legislation re-organizing and modernizing the People's Court, commonly known as the Small Claims Court.

It was a privilege to take some part in these movements because of the confidence reposed in those initiating the various reforms, and the recognition that they were motivated only by the desire to improve the lot of the under-privileged. Further, it was realized, too, that they were in a position to estimate the necessity of the legislative measures they proposed. After all, one must remember that the under-privileged are, generally speaking, without anyone to advance their cause in the matter of legislation.

Today is Constitution Day, the anniversary of the completion of that famous document by our ancestors to whom equality was so vitally important. It is significant that this National Legal Aid convention starts its three day conference on this date, because legal aid means equality before the law.

It is an inspiring thought that because of the existence of a legal aid office in a community, the guarantee of the Constitution can be carried out literally, namely, that justice is available to all and that poverty is no handicap in invoking or enforcing the law. And it is a comforting thought to know that all members of the community, irrespective of creed, color or economic position, can receive legal services even though they may not have the money to pay for them.

As a lawyer, one must feel tremendously grateful that organized legal aid work is being carried on so ably throughout the Country. Every lawyer in the Country can share that feeling of gratitude, because the work that the Bar is pledged to perform is being done for the Bar by the legal aid bureaus at little or no cost to the Bar as such.

The Bar should take a more active interest in legal aid work, and of late this has been the trend. It is possible therefore, to take pride in the cooperation of the local Bar Association in the work as evidenced by the fact that they are sponsoring various events of the conference program. It has also been called to my attention that this is the 20th anniversary of the creation by the American Bar Association of a standing committee on legal aid. This is, of course, a very wholesome sign, recognizing as it does the responsibility of the organized Bar to the cause of the indigent.

In bringing the greetings of the people of Maryland to delegates to the Convention of the National Association of Legal Aid Organizations, it is appropriate to thank you for this your first visit to Maryland, and to express the hope that as a result of your deliberations among us, the splendid work that you have been carrying on in the past may be effected even more ably and more widely in the future both in Maryland and throughout the Nation.