

Remember the doubts and fears of the men who wrote it — doubtful that their work was perfect enough and fearful that it might not long endure.

And yet our national constitution has endured. For it was limited to an *expression of great principles*; founded upon the *faith* and *confidence* that the *righteousness* of these principles would suffice to provide security and direction for all future generations.

It is the most eloquently simple statement of principle ever inspired to direct a government and protect a people. Its relevance persevered through the recognition that, while institutions will change, great principles will endure.

The Constitution written for America one hundred and eighty years ago comes to us today unspoiled — yet the constitution written for Maryland eighty years later must now be edited anew. Like those immortalized federalists who wrote the law of a nation, those who framed the constitutions for states were determined to rise above prejudice and write true to principle. But perhaps they rose too little and wrote too much.

Yet, we must not be too harsh with our State's constitutional forebears. We must understand that in 1867 Maryland had not yet recovered from the agonizing impact of the Civil War, that the wounds of conflict ran deep, that the memories of past political abuses were still vivid. We must remember too that in that early year Maryland was a rural, gentle and complacent State with but a single small commercial center, and barely over a half million residents — a people who sought little from their State government but to restore the *peace* and permit them to recover *in peace* from the exhausting war.

They could not foresee the Maryland of today with its population seven times the number for which the constitution of 1867 was framed, with its urban concentration embracing seventy-three percent of our citizens — a Maryland where the profound barriers of transportation and communication would no longer be obstacles to people and progress.

If the transition between clipper ships and jet propelled aircraft seems phenomenal, even more startling is the very speed of incessant change. Our commercial, industrial and population growth has not been gradual but *explosive*. And its impact on government has been no less dramatic.