

The inability of the old constitution to envisage growth and change is indicated by the two hundred and three amendments which have been grafted to the original document. Even the fundamental construction was beset with flaws, not apparent when State government was small, but obstructive now that it has grown to impressive height. So distrustful were our predecessors of political authority that they created checks and balances *not only between* the three traditional branches of government *but within* them — not merely hindering administrative action but virtually strangling the implementation of bold solutions.

Thus we have become a static State drifting from a state of indifference to a state of emergency. Maryland is not alone in this. Other states, perhaps even the majority of them, have suffered the same breakdown of their political nervous systems. The Federal government, forced to fill the vacuum created by the strangled state, has grown out of all proportion to its constitutional purposes. In turn, the cherished constitutional balance between Federal and state governments has been disrupted, and unless we act quickly and responsibly, it could be permanently destroyed.

State government has a special role as the sovereign government closest to the people. It is immediate and intimate. It is the laboratory for political experiment, the instrument to test and apply new political solutions to new and old problems. State government, tempered by its unique constitutional safeguard of referendum, may yet become the most creative, imaginative and dynamic form of political expression.

In little more than three decades we will enter the twenty-first century. By the year 2000 we will be six million citizens. Traditional political boundaries will be obscured by one vast metropolitan corridor between Baltimore and Washington. Rapid rail and air transportation will be commonplace. The atmosphere we breathe will be cleaner, our water will be purer, and our people will be more educated and enlightened. It is not for today, but for tomorrow, that you write this constitution — the sinew, soul and spirit of the Maryland to be.

As you reflect on this singular task, know that you write for not one isolated or estranged people but for a Maryland which is itself the very microcosm of America. In the geography of our State, the geography of our nation is cast in miniature. In the thoughts of our citizens the great philosophical cross currents from north and south, east and west, city and suburb meet, mix and merge.