

Yet, we must not be too harsh with our State's constitutional forebearers. 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 per cent 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.

The inability of the old constitution to envisage growth and change is indicated by the more than two hundred 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, be 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.

Maryland reflects the diversity that gave to America its greatness. We are many people. We are many races, religions and national origins. We are a tidewater people and a mountain people. We are a people born to rich farmlands and a people reared in the teeming tempo of city streets. We are different kinds of people, each individual and unique, but united in our common love of freedom, our common respect for human liberty, our common passion for law and order, and our common faith in the future. A constitution for the State of Maryland is in every respect a constitution for each of the states united.

So now begin the great work knowing that what you attempt has been tried before and that what you will accomplish must serve as law and letter to a society yet to come. Let principle be chapter and verse of the new constitution and let brevity attest to the clarity of its pronouncement.

Let every political passion be expressed, but let logic, compromise and principle prevail.

Let remembrance of the past give direc-