

## MARYLAND STATE BAR ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

June 28, 1941

Atlantic City

**I**T is a high honor and a happy privilege to be here today. Candor compels the assertion that I consider it a tribute and distinction to be asked to address this Association. But the occasion is too serious for any personal considerations.

However, the only true and lasting value of the opportunity lies in its appropriateness for public utterance of seriously considered views upon the vital questions presented in this crucial moment in the history of humanity and the world.

To declare that a grave situation confronts Maryland and our sister Commonwealths of the Union is to state the obvious. To assert that the Bar at this time faces its greatest responsibility, yet also its greatest opportunity, is but to state a simple truism.

The Continent of Europe finds itself launched upon a program of self-destruction. No matter who wins the current objectives, desolation and starvation can be the only permanent victors. While the American people passionately love peace and order, we find ourselves drawn irresistably to the brink of European war and disorder.

But the most disturbing aspect lies in the threat to the most sacred and fundamental rights of mankind. While the issues are of deepest concern to all responsible human beings, they are specially so to members of the legal profession.

If we were asked—"What is the greatest gift our Nation has bestowed upon the world in the art of orderly living?," the answer undoubtedly would be our constitutional form of government.

The maintenance of that system throughout the world is in my judgment a prerequisite to the establishment of any permanent system of peace and security in war-torn lands.

In our American Constitution we have a document which has survived the restlessness of a changing world for 154 years. Under it we have grown from thirteen scattered colonies into the most powerful Nation on earth. Let us glance around us for a moment at some of the things that have transpired since that immortal document was drafted. It is difficult to recall any period in history in which there has been more restlessness and change in governments than during that period.

If anything is a keynote of the period, instability in government is the word for it. Thrones have tumbled all over the world. Dynasties have fallen. Constitutions have been written, torn up, rewritten and again scrapped. New empires, new republics, dictatorships have come into existence.