

Yet in this period of great upheaval, our Country has carried on under essentially the same political system that it had in 1787. The United States of America is living today, and girding its loins for what may come, under essentially the same instrument that it adopted in the Constitutional Convention of that year.

If we should look at a map of the world of that time we would find all of South America under control of the Spanish and Portuguese nations, which themselves were in the hands of the Spanish. Today all this land is independent and self-governing under forms of constitutional systems. Then Canada was a British colony; today it governs itself under what is virtually a Constitution, the British-North America Act of 1867.

Looking towards Europe the change is more striking. The only governmental form which has survived the period is the British government, but even here the similarity is more apparent than real. For who could compare the personal monarchy of George III with the system in that country today? During 150 years France has seen three monarchies, two empires, three republics, a Directory, a Consulate, a number of successive constitutions and now a system of apparent collaboration with and subservience to the German Reich. Spain has gone through the metamorphosis of despotisms, republics, foreign interventions, dynastic wars and constitutions, down to its present system of apparent dictatorship.

In 1787 Italy was only a name and a collection of duchies and papal states. So was Germany only a group of small principalities; in sixty-five years it has been an empire, republic and Nazi state. Russia has shown the greatest change, from complete autocracy to a communistic society.

The Ottoman Empire has crumbled. The control of India has passed largely from the hands of its native princes to a British administration. China then had the Manchu Empire. Japan had an absolute Emperor.

Only Switzerland has remained a republic during these 154 years, but Switzerland's present constitution, it is significant to note, dates only from 1874.

In 1787 the ruling groups of Europe looked down their noses at our new little government. They were utterly contemptuous of any system based "on the consent of the governed;" yet throughout the years this system based "on in the vital task to be the most durable. I am reminded of a French curate who lived to be a very old man. His longevity spanned the French Revolution, the Napoleonic era, the coming of King Philip and the Third Republic. One of his associates once asked of him: "In all of your lifetime what would you say has been your chief accomplishment?" The curate mused a moment and replied "I have survived."

Doubtless the greatest tribute that can be paid to our American Constitution, to its inherent soundness and to its tremendous adaptability to changing conditions is that, like the curate, it has survived to this day. If we have contributed anything worth preserving at any cost it is this immortal document, representing a permanent endowment to the science of government and orderly living of men among men.

In this great work of building and safeguarding our constitutional form of