

government, *lawyers have ever been the leaders*. There have been many critical moments, none so great as those which arose in the Constitutional Convention itself, but through them all the vigilance which is the price of freedom has resolved every such crisis in favor of a sturdier, stronger and more acceptable fundamental government.

The Bar as a whole, and particularly its courageous leaders, can take pride and credit in the development and growth of this document. The Bar today must shoulder manfully its responsibility so that these achievements of its predecessors may be not lost or impaired but kept bright and lustrous through the years to come.

Gazing back to the days of the Revolution we remember that lawyers and laymen, too, gathered around the conference table at Independence Hall to append their signatures to that great paper which in another week we shall commemorate again in celebration throughout this land—the Declaration of Independence.

When the war was successfully concluded there is no doubt but that the several independent colonies would have lapsed into weak and disunited groups had it not been for the patience and statesmanship of those great American lawyers who framed, fought over, amended and finally passed the Constitution of the United States. No reference to that document would be complete in any presence, much less in this body, without a tribute to a great Marylander whose dogged fight for the rights of small states resulted in the form of government we have today. I refer, of course, to that early leader of our Maryland Bar, who for twenty-nine years served as Attorney General of our State and took part in all famous trials of his day—Luther Martin.

It was as a lawyer, probing the pros and cons of the matter, that he perceived the inherent weakness of the Virginia plan sponsored by Governor Randolph and his associates in the Constitutional Convention. He fought this plan bitterly. At one time he stalked out of the convention in disgust and headed for home. In the end he was victorious.

The plan put forth by the Virginia statesmen was not so much a union of states as it was a complete nationalistic government. The most ardent of our statesmen today would be perhaps somewhat startled to know that the original draft of our Constitution would have given them much more power than they now seek.

The gentlemen from Virginia pictured a Nation exercising all the powers of government, with the states merely administrative districts or branches of the national government. State barriers would have been practically eliminated.

If it had prevailed we would today have a House of Representatives elected by the people, a Senate chosen by the House and a President appointed by a "national legislature." Their supreme court was modeled on the Privy Council of England. On all acts of the national legislature this court was to possess the veto power. But it was not a judicial but a political veto, a veto based upon the court's idea of the desirability of the law as a matter of public policy.

Luther Martin's fight was directed against this plan and in the fight he had the support of a number of the small colonies. He pointed out that the