

In the years immediately preceding the Declaration of Independence, self-government had become so fully ingrained in the residents that on occasion they offered resistance not only to the proprietary, the Royal Governor and the King, but also to what they considered the "unwarrantable encroachments" of the Continental Congress. Maryland's delegates refused to sign the Articles of Confederation until certain states claiming territory between the Alleghenies and the Mississippi should surrender their claims. Their opposition caused those other States to yield and measurably strengthened the Union because it brought into the possession of the United States the first territory in which all of the States had an interest and out of which new States could be created.

The settlement here, then, was a pioneer expedition toward the frontier of human liberty. Here was laid down the guaranteed right to every man to think and believe as he pleased. This spirit of Maryland has come down to us by the oldest law of possession - the law of inheritance. It is our legacy and our birthright. It is a spirit which has permeated the Maryland way of life.

Throughout three centuries the descendants of Kent's settlers have guarded that which was brought to this continent - the Anglo-Saxon sense of justice. This justice is the very pillar of Democracy. It is a mighty fortress for the defense of what we know as ordered liberty. Where there is justice, there is freedom. Where saboteurs and outlaws fear to tread, there the honest man can prosper; there he can raise his children in the fear only of God and in the light of truth.

Admittedly, changing conditions through the centuries brought about new and diverse problems, but the same basic spirit has prevailed. The Anglo-Saxon sense of government, which has come to America, in sailing vessels, proceeded to extend itself over America by covered wagon and oxcart. The progress made in the development of this experiment in government has been attributable in no small part to the ideals fostered here in Maryland and which, through the decades, were fortified by the people of the Eastern Shore.

But, just as your forebears were jealous to protect the principles and ideals implanted in this soil, so must the present generation be just as eager and as active to preserve them for future generations. The present threat to the American structure is the greatest our Nation has ever faced in all the years of its existence. In a world where brute force and treachery have become the chief weapons of the war-mad dictators, no greater duty could be assumed than that of giving all-out assistance in the war to defend the rights of the individual and the principles of liberty.

We must admit that serious defeats have been suffered by the nations united against the onslaughts of the aggressors. Military preparations and almost limitless supplies of material and manpower, amassed by the Axis power while civilized nations were pursuing the paths of peace, have enabled them to gain distinct headway in their mad seizure of the possessions of other nations. Nor will this effort be resisted successfully unless there is