## UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

For Release to PM's, SEPTEMBER 17, 1962

REMARKS OF ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR JOHN A. CARVER, JR., AT NATIONAL SHRINES ADVISORY BOARD LUNCHEON WITHIN THE GREAT DOME ROOM OF FEDERAL HALL NATIONAL MEMORIAL, NEW YORK CITY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1962, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 175th ANNIVERSARY OF THE DRAFTING OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES

On the steps of the Federal Hall, this morning, we met to commemorate the 175th Anniversary of the Drafting of the Constitution of the United States. Now we meet again on this historic day to determine how best to meet our obligations as patriotic citizens of the Twentieth Century.

This American Constitution we honor today has received the highest form of tribute throughout the world. It has been the model for new democracies through most of its life. How can we explain this phenomenon? What is there in this Anglo-American document conceived in a frontier society that has appealed to such a variety of people living in wholly different cultures half a world away from these shores?

Quite apart from the fundamental spirit of liberty which it symbolizes, perhaps three things explain its unique appeal. First, the very concept of a written constitution establishing a system of equal justice under law in all-inclusive terms was a novel departure from the prevailing despotism and an improvement upon historic democracies. Second, the precise description of a system of government with defined and limited powers constituted an appeal to all free men--and those who aspired to become free.

But most of all, this Constitution undertook to create a sovereignty out of the consent of individual free men. It thus defined the relation of the commonwealth, the government, to the individual. Practically all of the changes in this fundamental law since its original framing have been in this area—the Bill of Rights, the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, in particular. It is, therefore, the bulwark of individual personality, carefully balanced against the general welfare.

It is most fitting, therefore, that individuals be prominently involved in all undertakings which honor and preserve our patriotic heritage. The same balance of collective society and individual dignity which is personified in the Constitution should be reflected in our efforts to preserve the shrines which remind us and our children of the irreplaceable legacy left to us out of the wisdom, the fortitude and the sacrifice of our forefathers.

Three of the great National Historic Shrines depicting our heroic past are located in this pulsating city. Less than two years hence your World's Fair will becken to millions of Americans, many of whom will never have another opportunity

to visit and be reminded of the deeds and the traditions symbolized by the National Memorial in which we meet, or the Statue of Liberty, or Castle Clinton National Monument. The task of completing these shrines so that their maximum impact may be realized is a large one, requiring an expenditure of \$5.2 million. In this effort, the Federal Government is authorized to match the contributions made by individuals and other private entities. Through this partnership of government and individual effort \$3.6 million has already been contributed or pledged. The sooner we can complete the task of securing the necessary donations and appropriations the more time we shall have to complete the work to a high level of excellence.

I therefore appeal to you to participate in and support an intensive campaign to complete this most urgent task. The great accomplishments of our historic past are the foundations of future deeds. Let us dedicate ourselves to the cooperative endeavor of preserving for future inspiration the most significant wellsprings of our American heritage. There is still time for our generation to act--our children may not have the opportunity if we pass it by.

 $x \times x$