

LINCOLN LORE

Bulletin of the Lincoln National Life Foundation - - - - - Dr. Louis A. Warren, Editor.
Published each week by The Lincoln National Life Insurance Company, of Fort Wayne, Indiana.

No. 336

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

September 16, 1935

THE CONSTITUTION FROM LINCOLN'S VIEWPOINT

Constitution Day has been recognized in Lincoln Lore for the past two years by presenting some of Lincoln's contacts with the famous instrument which this day commemorates. This year a compilation of a few references which he made to "The Supreme Law of the Land" are presented in the following paragraphs:

I hope I may say nothing in opposition to the spirit of the Constitution.

In a government of laws like ours we must sustain the Constitution as our fathers made it.

Through all (the debates) I have neither assailed nor wrestled with any part of the Constitution.

One of the declared objects for ordering and establishing the Constitution was to form a more perfect union.

Will not the courts . . . find a remedy for the evasion of a right guaranteed by the United States Constitution.

I am exceedingly anxious that this Union, the Constitution, and the liberties of the people shall be perpetuated.

Continue to execute all the express provisions of our National Constitution and the Union will endure forever.

I hold that in contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these states is perpetual.

To the support of the Constitution and laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor.

Think, if you can, of a single instance in which a plainly written provision of the Constitution has ever been denied.

What is the frame of government under which we live? The answer must be "The Constitution of the United States."

It is in the Constitution, and I do not for that cause, or any other cause, propose to destroy or disregard the Constitution.

We are determined to give you, as far as lies in our hands, all your rights under the Constitution, not grudgingly, but fully and fairly.

Nothing in the Constitution or laws of any state can destroy a right distinctly and expressly affirmed in the Constitution of the United States.

I take the official oath today with no mental reservations, and with no purpose to construe the Constitution or laws by any hypercritical rules.

One duty paramount to all others was before me, namely, to maintain and preserve at once the Constitution and the integrity of the Federal Republic.

There can be nothing in the words "Support the Constitution" if you may run counter to it by refusing support to any right established under the Constitution.

I freely acknowledge myself the servant of the people, according to the bond of service—the United States Constitution—and that as such I am responsible to them.

The Constitution itself is not altogether such as anyone of its framers would have preferred. It was the joint work of all and certainly the better because it was so.

No one who has sworn to support the Constitution can conscientiously vote for what he understands to be an unconstitutional measure, however expedient he may think it.

If by the mere force of numbers a majority should deprive a minority of any clearly written constitutional rights, it might in a moral point of view, justify revolution.

The people of these United States are the masters of both Congresses and courts, not to overthrow the Constitution, but to overthrow the men who pervert the Constitution.

The Constitution provides, and all the states have accepted the provision, that "the United States shall guarantee to every state in the Union a republican form of government."

The Union we intend to keep and loyal states will not let disloyal ones break it. Its Constitution and laws made in pursuance thereof must and shall remain "the supreme law of the land."

Amending the Constitution . . . No slight occasion should tempt us to touch it . . . New provisions would introduce new difficulties and thus create an increased appetite for further change.

The United States Constitution is the supreme law of the land. This guarantee of property is expressly given in that Constitution, in that supreme law; and no state constitution or law can override it.

All the vital rights of minorities and of individuals are so plainly assured to them by affirmations and negations, guarantees and prohibitions in the Constitution that controversies never arise concerning them.

It was in the oath I took that I would, to the best of my ability, preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. I could not take office without taking the oath. Nor was it my view that I might take an oath to get power, and break the oath in using the power. I understood, too, that in ordinary civil administration this oath even forbade me to practically indulge my primary abstract judgment on the moral question of slavery. I had publicly declared this many times, and in many ways. And I aver that, to this day, I have done no official act in mere deference to my abstract judgment and feeling on slavery. I did understand, however, that my oath to preserve the Constitution to the best of my ability imposed upon me the duty of preserving, by every indispensable means, that government—that nation, of which that Constitution was the organic law.