

A manifesto for law reform

"In an age of confrontation our social problems become our legal problems."

Excerpts from a recent lecture by John N. Turner, the Canadian Minister of Justice and Attorney General, at the University of Windsor, Windsor, Ont.



It is not surprising that some have called the 'Sixties the Age of the Apocalypse. Nations stockpiled weapons in the name of peace. Political leaders yawned the rhetoric of brotherhood while waging war. Governments destroyed cities in order to save them. Economies accumulated wealth and distributed poverty. Technology controlled man rather than released

him. Corporate bureaucracies denied individuality while proclaiming it. The gross national product become Marcuse's One Dimensional Man.

And so the paradigm model for the relationship between man and society became the conflict between freedom and authority. Freud referred to this once as the major "discontent" of civilization. Indeed, authority and freedom seem now to be on a collision course everywhere. This conflict has become the brooding concern of the political commonwealth. The law is caught in the crunch. For, on the one hand, the law represents itself as the symbol of authority. On the other hand, it holds out the promise of freedom. And so this discontent, haunting our civilization, disturbs the roots of the law.

We are witnessing today what has been called a "crisis of legitimacy," or as some would have it, a "crisis of authority." All our institutions—the state, the university, the family, and of particular concern to us tonight, the law—are being challenged. The challenge reaches not only the laws but those who make the laws. It strikes at

the very legitimacy of the legal order itself. In a revolutionary climate, the law is considered the antithesis of revolution. In a mood of alienation, the law is regarded as a false consciousness. In an impatient world, the law is perceived as the curator of reaction.

I believe, however, that the law is still relevant—and can be made more relevant in contemporary terms; that authority and freedom are not contradictory but complementary; that they need not be opposed but juxtaposed; that law is not the enemy of revolution, but that "revolution" can be made possible through law. Indeed, in an age of confrontation our social problems become our legal problems. The problems of the 'Sixties are now the legal challenges of the 'Seventies. Society itself has become the lawyer's client, and society will hold the law to account.

The faith that must move us, then, is the creative and even revolutionary role that law can play in the building and restructuring of a new society. For law is not just a "technical body of rules"; it is the organizing principle for the reconfiguration of society. Law is not just an agency of social control; it articulates the value by which men seek to live. The business of government, then, is the making of laws, and the process of law reform goes to the core of defining the kind of society we will have as a Canadian people and the kinds of rights which we will enjoy as individuals.

"Symbol of esteem and goodwill"

Stage curtain is gift for Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington

A Canadian-made curtain presented as a gift by the Government of Canada will be raised when the first performance is staged in the Eisenhower Theater of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D. C.

The design of the theater curtain with its red and black interlaced crenels is a symbol of unity; unity of natural forces and unity of all nations in friendship and progress.

It is also intended to demonstrate

Canadian esteem for the late President and the close and cordial relations between Canada and the United States.

The curtain, 34 feet high and 44½ feet wide, is the design of Mariette Rousseau-Vermette, who also designed the theater curtain in the National Arts Center in Ottawa. It is being fabricated under her supervision in Huntingdon and Sainte-Adèle, Québec.

Colors and textures were chosen to bring in a note of warmth and light.

Edward Durell Stone, architect for

the Center, and Oliver Smith, the noted stage designer and consultant to the Center, have praised the originality of Mme. Vermette's work, her imaginative use of material and her splendid sense of color.

The Eisenhower Theater is one of the Center's main auditoria. It will be finished in a dark walnut paneling with an undulating ceiling covered in red velvet. The seating is limited to 1,100 people, considered ideal for dramatic performances.

