

But it seems to me that what has happened is that we now in our elections tend to confuse local and state or national policies. We do not have any political party, program or platform for local affairs. Instead, we are called upon to elect our county officials along with our state officials and the only program which is presented to us in elections is on state questions, questions of state bond issues or questions of state road policies, but with no attention paid to what is going on or what has been going on in the counties. Or, we elect our county officials because there is a man of some glamor running for the position of governor or U. S. Senator or U. S. Representatives. It is time I think we divorced local affairs of this nature from the state party political programs and put the local governments, local units, and local people strictly on their own in consonance with their power.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Byrnes.

DELEGATE BYRNES: Mr. Chairman, what is my time residue?

THE CHAIRMAN: I think you have about eight minutes.

DELEGATE BYRNES: I would like to yield four minutes, if I may, to Delegate Hanson.

THE CHAIRMAN: Delegate Hanson.

DELEGATE HANSON: Mr. Chairman, I think it is very important that the amendment offered by Delegate Byrnes be adopted by this Committee of the Whole. He and others who have spoken have already pointed out the importance to turn-out of combined elections. Let me emphasize another aspect of the turn-out problem. That is, that as turn-out as a gross number of voters declines, the declines is greatest among the voters of the lowest income and the lowest on the social economic scale. This means that separate county elections hurt most the lowest income people in our communities. They are inclined to participate the least in these elections.

Secondly, I should like to point out that if we are going to solve the problems of this State and the communities in this State, we need the cooperative and integrated action of the state government and the local governments. We do need to make local governments strong and responsive, and we do need to make state government strong and responsive. But an important part of the political process in this or in any state is to so structure the political process that state officials have to consider

in their politics local problems and to so structure the government and the political system that local officials must take into account state considerations when they run for office.

It would be a tragic mistake to freeze into the constitution an isolation of local politics from state politics. Politics is not something that can be neatly subdivided by geographic boundaries so as to say that this is local, and this is state. This is particularly true when we deal with the problems of our burgeoning suburbs, conservation problems, natural resource problems, and human resource problems. We need the coordinated political action of officials at both the local and the state level of government.

This, I think, is a most important aspect of the present political system in Maryland. The present political system in Maryland has considerable advantage over a system which says we will just vote on local questions this year, and we will not pay any attention to state questions and next year we will just vote on state questions and we will not pay any attention to local questions.

I have enough faith in the electorate of this State that they can distinguish candidates for local and state office. I ran twice in campaigns in which we combined either state and federal officials or local and federal officials and to my immense chagrin, the people in my county have been able to distinguish between these levels of office.

While I may feel that I have unjustly suffered by the system, I believe the system is nonetheless correct. I think we should maintain it because I think it brings together those things which ought to be together in a government.

THE CHAIRMAN: You have one-half minute, Delegate Hanson.

DELEGATE HANSON: I think that this Committee of the Whole should very carefully consider this proposition. For us to favor the Recommendation of the Committee is to encourage a disintegration of the political system of the State. For us to favor the motion of the minority of the Committee is for us to encourage to the highest extent possible consistent with the political traditions and practice of this State a close working relationship between State and local government. This relationship is, I believe, fundamental and essential to the solution of the problems of both the State and the localities.