

has been brought to a high level of efficiency and persons, like yourselves, not only need offer no apology for being public employees but it is an indication of merit to be included in such a system as Maryland enjoys.

My understanding and appreciation of the importance and value of your services have not been the result of only ten months observation, since I assumed the Governorship. As a result of years of observation of the work of our State employees, during which period I have worked in connection with many of your number, I have long since realized that you have made a distinct contribution to the successful operation of those agencies designed to serve the people of our State.

During my campaign for the Governorship I made a detailed statement as to my views on the Merit System and told the people just what they could expect of me in this regard, if I were elected. I quote from an address I delivered at Ellicott City, during the campaign, as follows:

"This (Merit) System was established in the State Government for the purpose of eliminating politics and substituting demonstrated fitness as the only test for employment in the classified service of the State, \* \* \* \* \* The Merit System properly administered will save the taxpayers of the State many thousands of dollars each year and promote the usefulness to the public of every department.

"Employees who are qualified and faithful in their services to the State must be encouraged to remain in the service of the State; they must be paid adequate and reasonable compensation; they must be spared the anxiety of dismissal without cause,—of salary reductions for political reasons; they must be given the security of permanent employment as long as they render efficient service and there is need of their employment by the State."

Following my nomination the Party, which honored me as its nominee, went on record at its State-wide convention as follows:

"We favor an extension and strengthening of the Merit System to include a number of positions now in the field of political selection, and to improve the administrative efficiency of the service as a whole. We pledge ourselves to a permanent retirement system for State employees, set up on a sound fiscal basis, as a long-range program. We pledge our continued support to the Merit System in the selection of State employees."

The voting public by a decisive majority elected us on that platform and I accepted their verdict as a mandate to carry out the pledges of the platform. Following my election, a Commission appointed by me and headed by Dr. Isaiah Bowman, President of the Johns Hopkins University, stressed the desirability of adherence to the Merit System and of its extension in the interest of the general public.

It is to be remembered that the State of Maryland was one of the first in the Union to adopt a Merit System. Today, Maryland is one of the 18 states with Merit System administration. We can therefore, find pride in the fact that ours is one of the progressive states in this field, and let me say right now that I would consider it a backward step if we were to repudiate the Merit System, or any of its essential particulars. Not only that, but I would consider it a breach of faith with the public, after our campaign pronouncements, to fail to live up to a pledge. I have not failed to undertake any other betterments promised, and I do not intend to fail in this one.