

or another a new agency made its appearance in different states of our Country. This agency is the Legislative Council. Its purpose has been to afford a more continuous and more studious system of law-making by setting up special committees, or commissions, usually assisted by a technical or research staff, to meet between sessions of the Legislature and to consider and assemble data upon the important questions that were to be presented to the ensuing session.

Here in Maryland the people in years past faced the same situation as confronted other states in the field of legislation. Recognizing this fact, we advocated several years ago a Legislative Council for our State and, after becoming Governor, I sponsored the idea wholeheartily and made it a part of the Administration Program.

The General Assembly of 1939 enacted the law establishing the Council. The set-up of the Maryland Council is a fortunate one, because its membership is limited to elected representatives of the people of one or other house of the Legislature. The Council is composed of key members of the Senate and of the House, the presiding officers, floor leaders of both parties, the chairman of important committees and representatives of the general body of both houses. Composed as it is of representatives of both the majority and minority parties, assurance is present that an opportunity will be given to all interests required to be heard. It must be understood that no power was taken away from the Legislature in the creation of the Council. The General Assembly still retains and will continue to exercise all the powers and rights it has enjoyed heretofore.

After the adjournment of the regular session of the General Assembly, the Legislative Council proceeded to get down to business in a very workman-like fashion. In a period of fourteen months, twenty-eight regular meetings have been held with morning and afternoon sessions and sometime with night sessions. In addition, there have been numerous meetings of sub-committees.

Because, as above stated, the Council is composed only of members of the Legislature, I, as Governor, am not a part of this agency. Consequently, I can speak freely as to the manner of which it is operated. I want to say now that the members of the Legislative Council deserve the thanks of the people of Maryland for the conscientious discharge of their duties. There has been no division along political or sectional lines. Rather, the members have devoted themselves energetically to the study and consideration of various and far-reaching State problems, with a determination to get at the bottom of the questions and have ready for their colleagues in the regular session definite proposals for them to consider. I am firmly of the belief that the Legislative Council has already justified itself by the painstaking care it has exercised in the treatment of disputed matters coming before the members.

In view of the fact that the Governor is not a member of the Council, I have consistently refrained from taking any part in the deliberations of the body. However, every cooperation has been given through the State departments to make effective the work of the Council. For instance, the heads of every important State department have appeared before the Council, have reviewed the workings of their respective divisions, and have in most cases made definite recommendations for improving the functioning of the departments under them. This was an absolutely necessary background for the work of the Council, and it is a background that will prove invaluable, no