

area of our country. It is, for the most part, a new problem for, although the trend toward centralization of this authority and this responsibility has been evident for many years, the great acceleration of this trend has come about only within the past few years. Within the memory of some of us here, local school districts bore virtually the entire responsibility not only for operating, but also for financing the public schools. Gradually through the years we have seen this authority and this responsibility moving away from local communities toward Annapolis, here in Maryland, toward Washington for the country as a whole. So that, today, in Maryland, your State government has assumed a greater share of the burden of operating the public schools than ever before in history. There is no indication that this trend will be halted, in fact, there is evidence that it will become more pronounced.

You know, of course, of the strong movement for greater participation by the federal government in the overall program of public education.

Last June, in carrying out the wishes of the General Assembly as expressed in a resolution adopted at the regular session, I, together with the President of the Senate, appointed a commission to restudy and re-evaluate the financing of public schools in Maryland. This joint resolution pointed out that in 1947 basic changes were made in the financial arrangements for the public school system, these changes including an increase in the amount of State aid, an increase in the salaries of teachers and an alteration of the equalization formula. Since that time, it was noted, there has been no comparable restudy and re-evaluation, with the result that existing formulae and figures in all probability have become outmoded as a result of the great economic and social changes which have occurred during the past few years. During the decade of the 50's, and extending into the present decade, many proposals have been offered for changing these relationships.

We have seen plans for expanded State aid, for increased salaries, for changes in the formulae for the equalization fund and for those shared expenses which are paid through the cooperation of the State and its several political subdivisions.

It would be idle for me to speculate on the outcome of the studies which this commission is making, but I would certainly hazard the guess that many changes in the existing system will be recommended. But whatever changes are effected in the financial relationship, I hope and I believe that every effort will be made to concentrate as much of the authority as possible in the local communities. Most Marylanders, in my opinion, believe that public education fares best when the authority