

ing of the Department of Employment Security which is under construction and is soon to be finished. In the first place, it has succeeded in consolidating into one area—and for the most part into one building—the several departments and agencies of State government which heretofore have been scattered in wild disorder throughout the city of Baltimore. This was a situation which had badly needed correction for many years. Secondly, in the pursuit of our main purpose we were able to render a valuable service to the city of Baltimore in its program of urban rehabilitation. These buildings, with their tastefully landscaped grounds, rise out of what just a few years ago were some of the worst slums in the downtown area of Baltimore. It is a most commendable undertaking, and all who had a part in it are deserving of the highest praise.

I shall not attempt to recite the history of this project, but I do recall that one of the first matters brought to my attention when I was elected Comptroller in 1938 was a proposal for a State Office Building in Baltimore. Through the years as I sat as a member of the Board of Public Works, a great variety of suggestions and plans were offered to solve the problem of housing our State governmental agencies. There was talk at times of buying downtown office buildings, among them the Standard Oil Building on St. Paul Street and the Mathieson Building. Numerous commissions had been set up to study the problem and make recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly. It was the State Office Building Commission of 1950, headed by Hooper S. Miles, which recommended that a building be built in Baltimore and suggested several sites, including this one. Others on that Commission were John B. Funk, Albert D. Hutzler, Walter N. Kirkman, William J. McWilliams, S. Page Nelson and James G. Rennie. It was a good Commission, comprised of some of our finest citizens and public officials. Eventually, this site was selected. It was, in my opinion, a wise decision.

The primary purpose of this building project of course is to provide for the citizens of Maryland a more efficient and more effective State government. We should never lose sight of that purpose. In no other way can we justify the cost involved to the taxpayers of the State. In my mind, it was a good investment—a project that will pay for itself in a very few years. The accessibility of our State agencies one to another will make for a much smoother operation of all of them. I sometimes wonder how we functioned as well as we did when the agencies were so carelessly strewn about the city. Just to learn the location of the more important ones was a task most of us found difficult to master. A great saving in time, energy and money will result from bringing these