

I would think that most of you have learned already that this operating budget of approximately \$520,000,000 is the largest in the history of the State, but I hope none of you have concluded from its size that those of us responsible for its creation have been wasteful of the money you pay to maintain your government. Maryland is one of the most rapidly growing states of the Union. Its population increased by 30 per cent from 1950 to 1960, and there is every reason to believe that this growth will accelerate in the years ahead. This growth in population is accompanied by an ever-expanding economy and drastic changes in the social complexion of the State, including a transformation from a mostly rural to a predominantly urban society. Seventy per cent of our people now live in the metropolitan areas of Baltimore and Washington. Under these circumstances, it would be extremely unwise, and probably disastrous, to think in terms of reducing the State budget or even of maintaining it at a constant level. Even if we forsook progress and advancement—and heaven forbid we should ever do this—a sizable budget increase would be required merely to maintain the status quo.

The budget we adopted in Annapolis this year supports the programs we have undertaken and allows for a healthy expansion of many services deemed essential to the well-being of the people. Schools, hospitals, mental institutions, correctional institutions, parks, nursing homes, highways—institutions and services too numerous to list—benefit under its provisions. Apart from the money it spends for its own housekeeping and maintenance of services, the State has assumed the responsibility for financing much local-government activity. As a matter of fact, counties, cities and towns of the State next year will receive more than half of the money the State collects from you in taxes. Moreover, as a result of rather serious financial straits in which some of them found themselves this year, the State in the budget for next year boosted its assistance to Baltimore City and the twenty-three counties, particularly in the areas of public education and public welfare.

To sum this all up, if you live in a period of dynamic growth, it is unreasonable to expect your government to remain static, whether it be at the federal, the state or the local level. So much, then, for the fiscal program formulated at this session of our General Assembly.

What about general legislation affecting the State? It is not possible, in the time allotted me here, to discuss at length or in detail the great quantity of legislation handled by the General Assembly at this session. I can do no more than give you what I consider to be some of the highlights of the session. Two legislative acts bring under regulation for the first time in Maryland the non-federally-regulated building and loan