

Another, after citing teacher pay increases and a broadened school construction program, all from the additional State aid, had this to say:

“. . . Despite the increased cost of operating the government and the public school system, (we) have been able to reduce the county tax rate from \$1.96 to \$1.92 per \$100 of assessable property.”

And then he added: “. . . We feel that this money will greatly improve our present education system and the general welfare of (this) county.”

Generally speaking, our efforts to improve the financial conditions of local governments by extending to them additional State aid were commended.

One Board wrote:

“We again thank you and the 1961 Legislature for making these funds available so that we could grant necessary requests, particularly in our schools, and at the same time not have to increase our tax rate.”

Another said:

“The Board wishes to thank you and the members of the Legislature for your cooperation in bringing about this program of much needed relief to the counties of our State.”

And still another wrote:

“Let me take this opportunity to compliment you as the Governor of Maryland in pursuance of recognizing the responsibility of the State of Maryland to take the leadership, in providing an intelligent partnership between State and local government, the benefit of which will inure to the citizens of this State.”

In my requests for information, I was not courting pats on the back and praise from local government officials. It nevertheless was most gratifying to observe that proper recognition is being given to the sincere effort we have made to relieve local governments of some of their financial burden.

I think the keynote of this program is sounded in the words of the letter I have just quoted—that what we seek is “an intelligent partnership” between the State and its local subdivisions. This is my aim and my purpose as the chief executive of the State. I know that I can expect the cooperation of the fiscal officers here assembled in our effort to make this partnership work.