

As Governor of Maryland, I have been privileged to have escorts of varying kinds at ceremonial functions, but I can say without a moment's hesitation that I have never had one quite like this. To be flanked by such beauty — Miss Universe on the one hand and her counterpart, Miss Maryland, on the other — is, I must confess, an exciting experience. I hope the photographers taking pictures here today will resist the temptation to label the pictures "Beauty and the Beast."

When I stood here on this spot — or hereabout — some thirteen months ago, I did not envision a project so elaborate and so vast as this, although at this cornerstone laying I had been thoroughly briefed that it was to be one of the finest regional shopping centers in the country. I know that all of us here are deeply impressed by its magnitude and its magnificence. And as Governor of Maryland, I am heartened and encouraged to see the development of an enterprise which reflects so much confidence in the future of this area of our state.

Last week, I received from our Maryland State Planning Department a copy of a booklet entitled, "The Counties of Maryland and Baltimore City, Their Origin, Growth, and Development." In its chapter on Prince George's County, this study by our planners had this to say:

"There is no doubt that Prince George's will continue to grow as fore United States government facilities are added and new industry moves into the county. Population projections estimate that 527,800 people will be living here (that is, in Prince George's County) in 1970."

And then it adds this sentence:

"Like its neighbor, Montgomery County, it has come a long way but its growing pains are far from over."

Well, growing pains we have to expect with growth, and I am certain that Prince George's County, along with other rapidly growing areas of Maryland, will be able to endure the pangs of growth and development. Meanwhile, to those of us who cherish progress and welcome prosperity, the signs that we see about us here in this suburban area are most satisfying. As just one example, this Capital Plaza Shopping Center is convincing evidence that the economy of Maryland is healthy and prosperous.

In its decision to build this modern shopping center here, Capital Plaza, Inc., has exemplified a confidence in the future of our state.