

Allegany, and Garrett. It was a situation, I learned, that demanded prompt remedial action, and I accepted it as a responsibility of my office to act vigorously, and to full extent of my authority as Governor, to try to cultivate a climate that would create new job opportunities for the people of the three counties.

It is most gratifying to me to return to Hagerstown now and to see, first-hand, the important developments that have taken place and the significant advancements that have been made. In that five-year period, hope has replaced despair, and dejection has given way to confidence. Enthusiasm for the present and faith in the future are the order of the day. And while there may be reasons not to indulge in complete jubilation, at least in Hagerstown you are no longer "crying the blues."

I, of course, am not claiming the credit for the success you have had in getting your economy back on its feet. You, yourselves, deserve this credit. But I am pleased, nevertheless, that it has happened during the five years in which I have been privileged to serve as your chief executive. The great advances that have been made in the three counties of Western Maryland are apparent even to the casual observer. Nevertheless, before coming here today I asked our Department of Economic Development to supply me with some figures to support these observations. Unemployment has been the crux of your economic ills, and employment figures are the most reliable index of conditions.

I find that during a three-year period — from February, 1960, to February, 1963, there was a net gain in employment in the three counties of 2,720, of which nearly 1,700 were in the Hagerstown area. In February, 1960, 31,740 persons were employed in the Hagerstown area. That was 88.3 per cent of the civilian labor force of 35,955. By February of this year, the employment figure had risen to 33,428, which was 92 per cent of the total civilian labor force.

In the Cumberland area in February of 1960, 35,300 persons were employed, which was 89.5 per cent of the civilian labor force. Three years later this figure had jumped by 1,200 to 36,500, or 90 per cent of the civilian labor force.

Let's flip the coin over and look at the figures on unemployment. The rate of unemployment in the Hagerstown area in October of 1958 was 8.3 per cent. In April of this year, it was down to 6.4 per cent, which was much closer to the national rate of 5.5 per cent than five years ago. In other words, we have seen a 25 per cent improvement in the five year period. In the Cumberland area, which included