colleagues. For a bank is more than an institution and it is more than simply a structure that provides security for funds. A bank is an integral part of the community and the administration of its affairs determines to a very large degree the future welfare of the community.

From a population of slightly more than 23,000 in 1950, Charles County has grown to almost 39,000 citizens. This growth in the population of Charles County could only have taken place because institutions such as the Waldorf Bank manifested confidence in the people who live here. The funds to purchase a new home, the operating capital for the small businessman and the investment requirements for new and existing businesses form the lifeblood of any community and this lifeblood is pumped into this area to a very large degree by the Waldorf Bank.

But while it is satisfying to review the accomplishments of the past, it is even more rewarding for us to contemplate the challenges of the future. The growth potential of this region, with its proximity to the nation's Capitol staggers the imagination. With the new sewage facilities for which a bond issue is now being planned, with the new highways linking Southern Maryland to the Nation's Capitol and, via the new Beltway, to Western and Northern Maryland, and with new awareness of the benefits of economic development programs, I am confident that the growth of this area in the next decade will dwarf what we have witnessed in the past 14 years. It is only when we consider these things, can we then begin to realize and understand the importance of the Waldorf Bank and, indeed, of all financial institutions, to the growth of this area. When this bank first opened its doors in 1950, it began serving one generation of Americans. Now, with its expanded facilities, it will begin serving another generation, and subsequently, another and another. Frankly, it would not surprise me in the least if, within the next few years, a future Governor of Maryland were to receive a message cordially inviting him to attend ceremonies marking still another expansion of the Waldorf Bank.

Having served as director of a bank and having had the privilege of serving as Bank Commissioner, as State Comptroller and, now, as Governor, I understand and appreciate the importance of the many services performed by our banks. Strong healthy banks indicate strong healthy communities with prosperous, thrifty but progressive residents. I can assure you that, during the remainder of my term of office as governor, I will continue those policies that serve to promote the business growth and financial stability of our State.