

Thus it was last week when I presided at the 1966 Southern Governors' Conference: thus it is today as I come to Frederick to have lunch with my friends of the Rotary Club and attend the great Frederick Fair. For in a few months I shall be leaving the Office of Governor of the State of Maryland, and the remarks I make on most occasions are final messages as the Chief Executive.

In his letter inviting me here today, your President-elect noted (I needed no reminder) that I had been coming here for the past eight years and that traditionally I have used this forum to review the conditions of your State Government. His suggestion that I follow the pattern this year was heeded, and in fact it would be unthinkable to do otherwise. In view of the fact that this is indeed a valedictory message, however, I have taken the liberty of varying it somewhat and will undertake to review some of the highlights of my two terms as Governor of the State. During the heat of the recent Democratic primary, this Administration in Annapolis was subjected to some rather harsh criticism. And while I fully understand the nonpartisan nature of this organization and this gathering, I hope you will allow me, for the purposes of background, to quote from a speech I made in Ocean City—a frankly political speech. From time to time, the Administration which I head had been described as “tired,” “unimaginative,” “lifeless” and “leaderless.” And I asked the audience these questions:

“Are all the new public schools, the community colleges, the unparalleled progress in the expansion and development of our University and our state colleges examples of the performance of a ‘tired’ administration?”

“Do all the many hundreds of miles of new highways that this Administration has built—roads stretching into all parts of our State and giving Maryland one of the best highway systems in the entire country—do these reflect an ‘unimaginative’ regime in Annapolis?”

“Are our programs of industrial development, oyster rehabilitation, mental hygiene, improvement of the condition of older people the handiwork of a ‘lifeless’ State government?”

“Do the reforms that have taken place in our judiciary and the well-laid plans we have made for revising our State constitution and modernizing the administrative machinery of State government appear to you to be products of public officials devoid of ‘leadership’?”

These, as I have suggested are questions I propounded in a political atmosphere, and I cite them here today only because I should like to