

PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Maryland Constitution makes it a declaration of principle that this Legislature "ought to encourage the diffusion of knowledge and virtue" by the "extension of a judicious system of general education . . ." Under this mandate, therefore, we are charged with the responsibility of providing educational opportunities for all the people. And, as I have said before, it should be our aim and purpose to offer Marylanders the best education that is available in our time. Last year, you will recall, we effected a sweeping change in our program of State aid to local governments for the operation of their school systems, which, among other things, resulted in sizeable increases in pay to Maryland school teachers. This move, I am convinced, will go down in history as one of the outstanding achievements of this General Assembly and this Administration. The revised program is reflected in the budget for fiscal 1966, which calls for increased appropriations for State aid to education amounting to more than \$10 million. In addition to the State's share of current expenses, increased assistance is provided for important items in the overall expenditure for the education of our youth, such as school construction, the education of handicapped children, libraries, vocational education, adult education and driver training.

I think we all recognize that one of the knottiest problems we face — and in all probability will face for years to come — is that of providing adequate college and university facilities for the education of the youth of Maryland. It is a twin problem in that it involves a tremendous expansion of plant to accommodate the population growth and the ever-increasing demand for more education and at the same time calls for a continuing upgrading of the quality of education to meet the educational standards of our modern age. It is, as it has been said elsewhere, a quantity of quality that we seek, and this is not easy to come by. In the budget for next year, we have moved ahead in that direction by increasing appropriations for just about every phase of the activities of the institutions of higher education which the State supports or assists.

Public higher education is our most critical area insofar as capital outlays are concerned, and it is significant that 73 per cent of the capital budget which I am recommending for next year is earmarked for improving the plants of the University of Maryland and the State colleges. For the University of Maryland, I am proposing an operating budget of \$51.1 million, which is \$6.6 million more than was appropriated in fiscal 1965. Provision is made in both the operating