

ADDRESS, REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF JUDGES

BALTIMORE

January 10, 1964

It is both a privilege and a distinct pleasure for me to be here this evening in my official capacity as chief executive of the State of Maryland to extend to all of you a very hearty welcome on behalf of our State. I am also very happy personally to be present because, although I am neither a judge nor a lawyer, I have nevertheless had close association with both lawyers and judges all of my adult life, beginning with the time many years ago when I served as clerk of the circuit court of my home county, through my long service as Comptroller of the State of Maryland and continuing during nearly two terms as Governor. In addition, I am glad to say that I count many prominent lawyers and judges among my close friends and advisers. And so I feel quite at home in this gathering, this being one of those rare occasions when the head of one of the three great branches of our government can invade a meeting of another of those independent branches without being suspected of a dire plot to have the executive branch usurp the functions of the judicial branch.

My real interest in this group, however, lies in the fact that I have always believed that the efficient administration of justice is the bulwark of our freedoms and indeed the keystone of the arch of the many liberties upon which our democratic free society rests. But effective administration of our judicial system in turn depends upon the judges who must dispense justice and in doing so must make the machinery of the judicial process operate not only smoothly, tirelessly and continuously, but also fairly, promptly and justly. We cannot possibly have justice fairly administered between man and man unless we have judges whose integrity is beyond question, whose abilities are of the highest, whose dedication to the public good motivates them always, and whose every action instills in the public, respect for our courts and our system of laws and complete confidence that those laws are being administered by our judges and our courts with complete impartiality and without fear or favor.

As Governor of the State of Maryland for the past five years, it has been my duty to appoint many judges of all our courts, from the highest to the lowest. More than a few of the judges here this evening have been appointed or reappointed by me during my term as Governor. I have always felt that these judicial appointments are the most important a Governor has to make, and, in discharging this function, I have always