

PUBLIC EDUCATION

When the history of this General Assembly and this Administration is written, I should not be surprised if the advancement we have made in public education is not set down as our greatest single achievement. The school-aid bill, passed here in 1964, sharply revising the formula for State aid and increasing substantially the State's assistance to the local school systems, has been labeled a milestone in Maryland education. It was called, with justification I think, the greatest stride forward in education in 40 years and earned the generous applause of educators and the general public alike. The progress in the field of public higher education has been no less pronounced, and I think our successors in the administration of the affairs of State will be grateful to us for years to come for leaving them such an excellent system for the operation of Maryland's public institutions of higher learning. With a great State University as the nucleus, supported by a strong State-college and flourishing community college system, Maryland not only has provided for the higher education of the youth of this generation but has laid the foundation for the education of the youth of the future.

All this is not to imply that we have reached a plateau, so to speak, in our educational advancement. Education is an investment in our human resources, and we must move always upward if we are to meet our responsibilities to society. This ascent toward a better educational system — an educational system capable of providing education of the highest quality for every boy and girl — is reflected in the budget which I am submitting to you today. By far the largest single expenditure in general funds in the budget is the allotment to the State Department of Education — \$167,888,550, or an increase of \$15,471,373.

Comparable increases in appropriations were required to carry on our program of higher education. The University of Maryland and the other State-supported educational institutions received substantial increases for their operational needs, as well as capital funds for the expansion of their plants. It is worthy of note, I think, that 54.1 per cent of the total capital budget which I am proposing is earmarked for higher and special education. The figure for that purpose is \$19,906,500. In total funds, the University of Maryland will receive \$60,142,054, an increase of some \$8 million over the current budget. Proportionate increases are provided for the continued strengthening and improvement of the five state colleges which