

enable motorists to enjoy the beauty of Maryland's countryside as they travel.

Just one more thing about Maryland highways I should like to point out. The year 1965 saw this Administration break through the half-billion dollar mark in converting dollars into roads. This money has been returned to the motorist as a direct benefit for his gasoline tax dollar. It is a record of which we can justly be proud.

In the time I have allotted myself for this message, it will not be possible to review the activities of the many other departments and agencies. But you will observe from your examination of the detailed budget and the printed message that funds commensurate to their needs for efficient and effective operation have been allowed them. Before leaving the departments, however, I would like to comment just briefly on the Insurance Department and its broadened and intensified activities. Under a new directorship, great steps have been taken by the Department for a more rigorous regulation of insurance companies doing business in the State and for greater protection of Maryland insurance policyholders. To carry on its stepped-up activities, more personnel, in particular, is needed, and of the total increase of \$112,836 recommended in the budget, all but a small amount is earmarked for new positions.

#### TRAFFIC SAFETY

The 695 persons who lost their lives on our highways last year weigh heavily upon the consciences of all of us. Unfortunately, in death-dealing traffic accidents we have a social malady for which no cure, and no real remedy, has been discovered. But the lack of an effective cure should not deter us in our efforts to do everything that is possible to reduce accidents and lessen their deadly effects. In our continuing effort to combat the rising death and accident toll, there have been some significant developments in the area of public safety and motor vehicle administration. As I have done in other budgets which I have presented, again I am proposing that the strength of the Maryland Police be increased by 40 men.

In accordance with legislation you enacted at the 1965 session, the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles has promulgated regulations making Maryland the first State in the nation to adopt the Vehicle Equipment Safety Compact. In cooperation with the State Police, the Department of Motor Vehicles has taken the necessary steps to implement the motor-vehicle inspection law and the dealer and salesman licensing and bonding law which you passed last year.