

I've been Governor now for almost six years and one of the questions that reporters and others constantly ask me is: "Governor, what's the most difficult problem you have to face as Maryland's chief executive?" Well, the question itself is difficult to answer simply because all the problems presented to me are difficult. If they were not, such problems would never reach my desk but would be handled by one of my assistants instead. As former President Harry Truman remarked when he was asked about the duties of the Presidency: "the buck stops here." Well, in Maryland, the buck stops at my desk. But one of the toughest problems constantly facing me is how to provide increased and improved services to the people of Maryland without having to increase taxes. Wives and mothers face this same sort of problem day in and day out for, in these days of rising prices, they have to put the same good food on our tables for the same money when the dollar today no longer buys what it once did.

We all have one thing in common—we're taxpayers and we dislike having to pay more taxes to finance the costs of the local, State and federal government. But if we take all the taxpayers and break them down in different groups, the result might be interesting. You'll find that some are watermen, interested in the State's oyster shell planting program and anxious to have the State appropriate enough funds to support it. You'll find another group active in local parent-teachers associations and vitally interested in education. This group will be campaigning for additional funds for public education. As a matter of fact, the support of various groups interested in public education was instrumental in securing the enactment of a bold new educational program at the 1964 session of the General Assembly, including substantial increases in teachers' salaries that will keep Maryland in the forefront among states in this particular field. Still another group will be sportsmen—hunters and fishermen and other groups interested in outdoor activities—eager for the State to continue to acquire and develop acreage for camping, hunting, picnicking and fishing. The purchase and development of such areas as Shad Landing and James Island State Parks and the construction of marinas such as the one we have in Crisfield are important to the people of Maryland and to those of us who live here. But the, so are highways, public education, health, mental hygiene and economic development.

When I took office nearly six years ago, Maryland did not have a single mental institution that met the standards of the professionals in this field who must pass on accreditation. Today, we have an outstanding program in mental health; three of our institutions are accredited and Maryland is considered a leader in the field of mental hygiene.