

I will give you one example of this irrational attitude which I observed recently. About a year ago, my Administration decided to embark upon a new program of State aid to local government to improve our system of public education. The plan, substantially increasing State government support to allow higher salaries for teachers and other educational improvements, was made a part of my legislative program for the regular session of the General Assembly early this year. The plan, endorsed by our State Department of Education, teachers associations and other groups interested in education, I accepted without hesitation. But I made it clear that I would expect the program to be properly financed. This was in keeping with a policy from which I have not deviated. Accordingly, the legislation for increased State aid for education was submitted with a companion bill for an upward tax revision. The education bill met with almost universal approval, inside and out of the General Assembly. But the tax bill evoked cries of disappointment and outrage. Indeed, the education proposal became too hopelessly embroiled in the controversy over the plan to finance it that most people lost sight of what they were being called upon to support.

In the end, with the support of teachers, parent-teacher associations, civic organizations and others, the two bills passed the Legislature, with the important provision that the tax measure would be modified or repealed if at the end of this year it appeared that the additional revenues were not needed. As a result of the general economic prosperity, which we all are enjoying, it now appears that the total tax which we thought we would need, beginning next January 1, may not be needed and therefore will be reduced or repealed at a special session of the legislature. But this happy turn of events in no way diminishes my point that people in general seem reluctant to pay their government for the services they demand.

The crux of the problem seems to reside in adequate public information, for I cannot believe a public, adequately informed, can be so stubbornly uncomprehending that it will demand something for nothing. From my point of view, it involves, on the part of public officials, complete candor and the strongest possible effort to explain all facets of a proposition to the people. It involves also a full utilization of all the resources of communication that we have at our disposal. For my part, in budget messages and elsewhere, I always try to put a bold price label upon every government service that is offered. And I always insist that every new service, and every improvement of an existing service, be accompanied by a plan to finance it. I do not believe that people resent paying taxes so long as they are sure they are getting their money's worth. And I am