

Since the reorganization of the State Roads Commission under its Chairman-Director, John B. Funk, vast programs of reconstruction have changed Route 40 from a tortuous—yes, even dangerous road into a wide, safe highway. The narrow, winding lanes have been straightened and broadened, ample shoulders have been provided. On grades moving gracefully over the mountains, separate lanes have been provided for trucks so that motorists may pass without risking their lives. Travel time west of Frederick has been cut nearly in half, and drivers are no longer completely exhausted at the end of a day's travel.

But this is not enough. The State of Maryland is growing at a pace never before equalled in our history. In fact, we have come to accept growth as an ever-present fact in this State. We have dedicated ourselves to the principle that this growth should be extended to every corner of Maryland. It should be enjoyed by every citizen. To insure our Western Maryland counties their fair share in this growth, we have embarked on accelerated freeway programs. Today, Interstate Route 70 is being opened from this point into Clear Spring. Construction is already underway to Route 40 east of Hagerstown. Next year, construction will begin on the freeway from Hagerstown to Frederick. After that, the road from Frederick to Baltimore, already dualized, will be brought up to freeway standards. The upgrading of Interstate 70 S from Frederick to Washington is already nearing completion.

These projects, moving along in high gear, will be a great boon to our economy. With the final section of I-70 in Pennsylvania being opened today, motorists from the Midwest will find it a pleasure to move through Maryland, enjoying the many benefits which we have to offer. But we are also looking westward. The regions of Appalachia must be developed. And this can only be accomplished through the construction of high-speed modern highways.

The Appalachian program was born in Maryland. The first conferences which brought the plight of economic underdevelopment to the attention of the federal government were held under this State's leadership. The Appalachian Bill was introduced into Congress by Maryland. Its passage approved the expenditure of over a billion dollars in a nine-state area. Already, the State Roads Commission has drawn preliminary plans for the construction of a new freeway from Hancock to the West Virginia line.

Building the Appalachian Freeway has become of prime concern. When the project is completed to Morgantown, the commerce and industry of the Ohio River Valley will find Baltimore their closest port.