

But the chief beneficiary of this bill in the long run will be the property owner, who has carried a disproportionate share of the cost of local government for many years. By allowing local governments to tax income at up to 50 per cent of the State's rate, this legislation will provide them with a second major revenue source to meet the mounting costs of schools, police protection, parks and recreation, and other services of government.

In fact, of the \$120 million additional revenue to be derived by the State in the fiscal year starting July 1, almost \$100 million will go immediately back to local governments—mainly in direct grants for education and police protection. This should provide immediate relief for the homeowner who has seen his real estate tax bill rise steadily over the years, or at least it should enable holding the present line on that bill.

I take this occasion to again thank publicly the leaders of the Maryland Legislature and the members of both political parties, who turned aside the temptation of political expediency and voted in overwhelming numbers to meet the State's problems forthrightly through enactment of this bill.

All of us realize it is not the completion of tax reform. Our business taxes remain a hodgepodge of inequities and our highway and motor vehicle taxes need a careful reevaluation. This will be accomplished in the months ahead by virtually the same bipartisan committee which produced this bill. And if its work is received with anything approaching the same degree of fiscal responsibility, we will be back here again next year to mark another major step in Maryland's progress.

STATEMENT ON SIGNING SENATE BILL 354

(THE AIR QUALITY CONTROL ACT)

April 14, 1967

It gives me great pleasure to sign Maryland's Air Quality Control Act, Senate Bill 354. In our time, air pollution has been a seriously underrated threat to health and comfort. With this Act that will change. Although it will take vigorous action, not merely a new law, to clear the air over our cities, Senate Bill 354 gives us the legal basis to commence effective action.