

## NEWS CONFERENCE ON THE BUDGET

February 9, 1968

## Opening Statement by the Governor:

Gentlemen, I called this regular fullscale press conference as a basic request I had to answer questions from reporters concerning some stories that appeared in the afternoon papers and on one of the wire services and also on radio. I'm going to ask only to make one introductory comment regarding those stories. Although the Legislature is composed of two parties, the Governorship of necessity, resides in one party. We share a common objective, and that objective is to be fair and to be accurate. When unfairness and inaccuracy occur aside from partisan considerations it becomes necessary to straighten the situation out. In this regard I have with me the House Majority Leader, Mr. Thomas Hunter Lowe, who has something to say concerning these stories.

Mr. Lowe: Thank you, Governor.

Gentlemen, let me say this. Customarily when you appear before a television camera you are asked to be brief. But unfortunately brevity, the attempt to be brief, the attempt to say something in a little space apparently brought this about.

First of all, let me say if I didn't think this was an *extremely* important issue, I certainly wouldn't come here as the Democratic majority leader of the House to defend the Republican administration on an issue as significant as this. I think to preface it I should read the first sentence of this headline article that says Attorney General Francis B. Burch ruled today that Governor Agnew's billion dollar budget is unconstitutional because it does not include funds to continue the State's scholarship program as required by law. Now this statement is, of course, completely wrong. First of all, Attorney General Burch did not say that. And secondly, the Constitution expressly says the contrary. Let me read you two sentences, one from Attorney General Burch's opinion: "It is immaterial in our view whether such appropriation be in the original or a supplemental budget so long as it is in a budget submitted to the General Assembly." And, then let me read you an excerpt from the Constitution of Maryland which affirmatively makes provision for just such an issue such as this: "The Governor may, with the consent of the General Assembly, before final action thereon by the General Assembly, amend or supplement said budget to correct an oversight, and such amendment or supplement