

NEWS CONFERENCE

February 27, 1967

Gentlemen, I have good news for you. Today I'm not going to make any statement. I'm just going to throw myself upon your tender mercy to see what's on your minds.

Q. Governor, Mayor McKeldin announced in Baltimore that if they do get the tax program through and if it does give the City 47 million dollars, Baltimore property owners will still have to pay 35 cents more in property tax. Is this the opposite of what you intended to do?

A. Well I certainly don't want to see Baltimore taxpayers have to pay 35 cents more on the property tax but I think it represents the optimum thinking of what the City would like to have and I want to talk with the mayor — which of course I will do this afternoon. I'm not ready to accept those figures at the present time. It all depends on how much you're going to spend, and perhaps the City is going to have to pull in its belt a little bit.

Q. Would you discourage them from turning to that when you're getting 47 million dollars if the plan did get through?

A. I would think, with the money to be provided by the new tax plan, it should be possible to hold the City's property tax rate in line. I don't know whether a small increase is absolutely necessary or not at this point. I'll have to hear from the mayor and Mr. Benton and his advisers.

Q. Well wasn't this tax plan drawn originally to satisfy the City as much as possible?

A. Oh, no, Mr. Cottin, not to satisfy anybody, but to do what we thought was the right thing to provide sufficient revenue to allow the subdivision, whichever one it may have been, to meet its legitimate needs. This is the area where we always run into conflict. What are legitimate needs? And the mere fact that additional spending may be desirable doesn't mean that it can all be accomplished in one year.

Q. Well the point next, Governor, didn't the City tell the Commission that it needed 50 million dollars? Wasn't that the amount given the Commission?

A. I think that the City has set this figure, yes.

Q. Are you saying now that they are going back to this?